

West Indies (1912-1917). He published 207 papers on mosquitoes, including his classic revision of mosquito classification, *Mosquitoes of the Americas* (1928). In 1924 he was named a captain in the Sanitary Department, Officers Reserve Corps, based on his mosquito work.

Dyar also continued research on the evolutionary classification of North American Limacodidae. He was noted for studies of larval stages of macro- and microlepidoptera, especially slug caterpillars, and for his innovative comparisons of adult and larval characters. Dyar's law of geometric growth, based on studies of the geometric progression in head capsule widths, became a standard tool for studying immature insects. He described hundreds of species and genera, revised several families of Lepidoptera, and brought new, more precise standards to larval descriptions, higher classification, and life histories.

From 1904 to 1907 Dyar was editor of the *Journal of the New York Entomological Society*, and from 1909 to 1912 he edited *The Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington*. From 1913 to 1926 he published *Insecutor Inscitiae Menstruus*. Noted for his strong opinions in taxonomic matters, he engaged in legendary debates with John B. Smith and Henry Skinner, among others. Because of Dyar's contributions to the national collection of Lepidoptera, Leland Ossian Howard, chief of the Bureau of Entomology, U.S. Department of Agriculture, appointed him a salaried "expert" around 1910.

Midway through his career, Dyar encountered problems in his personal life that had serious effects on his professional life. His marriage to Zella Peabody ended in 1915 amid charges of bigamy, and he was dismissed from the USDA for conduct unbecoming a government employee. It became known that in 1906 Dyar, using the alias Wilfred Allen, had married Wellesca Pollock, an educator and ardent disciple of the Bahá'í faith. They had three sons, whom Dyar legally adopted after he and Allen married legally in 1921. He became active in the Bahá'í faith, a movement that accepts the divine inspiration of all religions and seeks to reconcile science with religion. Dyar edited *Reality*, an independent Bahá'í journal, from 1922 until his death, but his unorthodox opinions, voiced in the magazine, were rejected by mainstream Bahá'ís. In *Reality* Dyar published a fascinating series of short stories replaying central themes in his life--including bigamy.

During the 1920s Dyar's most peculiar hobby came to light. When a truck fell into a labyrinth of tunnels near Dyar's old home in 1924, newspaper speculation attributed these to World War I spy nests, Civil War trysts, and mad scientists. Eventually Dyar accepted responsibility for the tunnels and similar works behind his new home, saying he found relaxation in digging underground. The brick-walled tunnels extended for hundreds of feet and measured six by six feet. (See article offsite [Hidden tunnels, bugs, and bigamy.](#))

Dyar continued to work at the National Museum as an honorary curator after his dismissal from the USDA. He was not a successful businessman and spent much of his inheritance on legal cases and on his interests in entomology and the Bahá'í faith; thus by the end of his life he found himself in straitened financial circumstances. In 1928 he appealed to the USDA for reinstatement and was awaiting his appointment when he suffered a stroke at his desk. He died two days later at Garfield Hospital in Washington, D.C.

One of the most colorful figures in turn-of-the-century entomology, Dyar was notorious for his lively debates with colleagues and his acerbic personal style, as well as for his Bahá'í faith, two marriages, and tunnel-digging. He was equally known, however, for his contributions to the evolutionary classifications of insects and for his warm friendships with colleagues such as Leland Ossian Howard, Frederic Knab, and Andrew Caudell.

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Bibliography

The Harrison Gray Dyar Papers are located in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, along with the Records of the Division of Insects of the United States National Museum and the papers of many of Dyar's colleagues. The Bureau of Entomology Records at the National Archives and Records Administration contain rich correspondence between Dyar and his colleagues, especially his supervisor, Leland Ossian Howard. Marc E. Epstein and Pamela M. Henson, "Digging for Dyar: The Man behind the Myth," *American Entomologist* 38 (Fall 1992): 148-69, is an overview of his life and career. Arnold Mallis, *American Entomologists* (1971), includes a profile of Dyar. Leland Ossian Howard's *Fighting the Insects: The Story of an Entomologist* (1933) captures the environment at the Bureau of Entomology during Dyar's tenure. For information on the Dyar family, see Harrison Gray Dyar, Jr., *A Preliminary Genealogy of the Dyar Family* (1903). Dyar's mosquito research is summarized in K. L. Knight and R. B. Pugh, "A Bibliography of the Mosquito Writings of H. G. Dyar and Frederic Knab," *Mosquito Systematics* 6 (1974): 1-26. Obituaries are in the *Washington Post*, 23 Jan. 1929; the *New York Times*, 22 Jan. 1929; Leland Ossian Howard, "Harrison Gray Dyar," *Science* 69 (8 Feb. 1929): 151; W. T. M. Forbes and John M. Aldrich, *Entomological News* 40 (1929): 165-68; and L. Robinson, "Our Editor," *Reality* 17 (Feb. 1929): 4-5.

More links and notes (by Rob Stauffer, 2011)

The research was first posted at
thelocation.wordpress.com/2011/05/25/hidden-tunnels-bugs-and-bigamy-a-strange-and-true-d-c-story

Additional details on the tunnels are found at www.shorpy.com/node/9542

Not online: Marc E. Epstein and Pamela M. Henson, "Digging for Dyar: The Man behind the Myth," *American Entomologist* 38 (Fall 1992): 148-69

Here are more links pertaining to the matter of the Dyars.

Mr. Dyar was into his family genealogy, having published a book:
www.archive.org/stream/preliminarygenea03dyar/preliminarygenea03dyar_djvu.txt

Present day descendants of Dyar are around on genealogical links.

The Smithsonian has Harrison Dyar's papers:

siris-archives.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?uri=full=3100001~!229005!0

collections.si.edu/search/results.jsp?q=Dyar+Wellesca+Pollock+Allen

The Dyar's book on talks of the Faith is here:

www.h-net.org/~bahai/diglib/books/A-E/D/dyar/Dyar.htm.

"Aseyeh" was the name which presumably 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave Mrs. Dyar, though evidence of this is sketchy. She also wrote many articles on the Faith published in the Washington newspapers during WWI.

Mrs. Dyar was listed in *The Who's Who* at google books

Mrs. Dyar had relatives in Seattle's earliest Bahá'í community (see attachment), and her daughter, Dorothy Dyar was a minister of the Unitarian Church in Seattle for a number of years where Bahá'ís were invited to give talks.

Allen v. Allen court case is available online at google books

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— Dyar, Harrison Gray, Jr. (Used by permission of the curator)