

# Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame



Frederick Hamerstrom  
Frances Hamerstrom

Inducted, 1996



*“The Hamerstroms have led a life of adventure and public service. They leave the world a better place than they found it.”*

## Facts

about  
Fran and Frederick  
Hamerstrom

Frances was the only woman to earn a graduate degree under Leopold; second woman to be employed as a wildlife professional in Wisconsin

Together, the Hamerstroms revolutionized wildlife study

Through their research and commitment, they preserved the existence of prairie chickens in Wisconsin.

Frederick Hamerstrom 1909-1990  
Frances Hamerstrom 1907-1998

Frances and Frederick Hamerstrom are internationally renowned for their work with prairie chickens and other wildlife. Together they headed a research team that was credited with pinpointing the type of habitat needed by prairie chickens at a time when the bird was apparently about to disappear from Wisconsin.

Francis Flint was born in Boston in 1907. As the only daughter in a wealthy family, she spent much of her childhood being raised by a governess. Frederick was born in New Jersey in 1909, but grew up in Boston. The two were married in secret in Orlando, Fla. in 1931.

“The police were after us because we were traveling together and we weren’t married,” Fran told reporters. They had a more formal ceremony later that year.

Frederick was a research fellow at Iowa State from 1932 to 1935 where he and Francis studied pheasant nesting, winter ecology of the bob-white quail and raptor food habitats. The couple made their first research contacts with prairie chickens in 1935 when Frederick became Project Game Manager for the US Resettlement Administration Central Game Project near Necedah, Wis.

The Hamerstroms were research fellows at the University of Wisconsin – Madison under Aldo Leopold. In 1940 Fran became the only woman ever to earn a graduate degree under Leopold. A year later, Frederick became the only person to earn a doctorate under Leopold.

They continued their research on prairie chickens and sharp-tailed grouse in Wisconsin.

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**About Wisconsin's  
Conservation Hall of Fame**

**Location:**

Schmeckle Reserve  
Stevens Point, Wis.

**Attractions:**

Displays, information on Wisconsin's conservation history and leaders. Schmeckle Reserve, owned by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, provides hiking and wildlife viewing opportunities.

**Purpose:**

To educate and inspire people with information about how resource conservation has shaped our environment and our lives.

**Hours:**

M-F: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Sat: Noon - 4 p.m.  
Sun: Noon - 4 p.m.

**Support:** The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame is funded solely by contributions. Donations are tax deductible and may be sent to:

WCHF Foundation Inc.,  
Schmeckle Reserve,  
UW-Stevens Point,  
Stevens Point, Wis. 54481  
715-346-4992.

**Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame**  
Honoring our state's rich conservation history

**The Hamerstoms**

(continued)

sin during the spring seasons of 1941 through 1943, and then again in 1947 and 1948 while Frederick was Curator of the Edwin S. George Reserve. From 1944 through 1946, Frederick served in the US Air Force as an Aviation Physiologists, while Fran was a medical technician in Beaumont General Hospital.

The Hamerstoms' research on prairie chickens provided tools for other ornithological studies. They were among the first to color-mark wild birds by using the falconer's technique of imping cocks, which lead to the discovery that cocks were territorial on booming grounds.

Frederick was employed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources from 1949 through 1972 as Project Leader of the Prairie Grouse Management Research Unit headquartered in Plainfield, Wis. While Fran was the Assistant Leader and only the second woman ever employed as a wildlife professional in Wisconsin.

Francis Hamerstrom published at least 100 professional papers in addition to about 100 reviews of ornithological literature, mostly in German. She also published 10 books. Frederick was a highly skilled technical writer and editor. In addition to editing the books that Fran wrote, the last one only two days before his death, he edited technical papers for several journals and was the Principal Referee for Raptor Research.

Besides their research, writing and academic advising contributions, the Hamerstoms have been strongly involved in many state, national and international organizations. After their retirement, the Hamerstoms continued to work in the environmental field, urging such things as concern for the needs of wildlife and populations control. Every summer they worked with Wildlife apprentices at their home.

Despite their international reputation, the Hamerstoms lived in a pre-Civil War home with few modern additions.