

Donald Culross Peattie (DCP), naturalist, author, and editor, was born in Chicago on June 21, 1898, the son of Robert Burns Peattie (1857-1930) and Elia Cahill Wilkinson (1862-1935). He grew up in Chicago and Omaha, where his father was a leading newspaper editor and his mother (EWP) became a well-known literary critic for the *Chicago Tribune*. She also was a poet and novelist, her works including *Pippins and Cheese* (1897), *Lotta Embury's Career* (1915), *Sarah Brewster's Relatives* (1916), *Newcomers* (1917), and *Painted Windows* (1918). Several of her books were designed by Bruce Rogers.

As a child, Peattie accompanied his mother to the Great Smokies region of western North Carolina, which he later described in his books *Flowering Earth* and *Road of a Naturalist*. It was at Tryon, North Carolina, that he began to discover the beauty of nature that was a dominant theme of his work.

Peattie first attended the University of Chicago, studying French, but a tramp along the Appalachian Trail, together with a visit to the famous 'glass flowers' at Harvard, convinced him that his future lay in science. He talked his way into Harvard as a student of botany and graduated cum laude in 1922.

Following Harvard, Peattie began his career with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, working in the Division of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction, under the leadership of the brilliant plantsman and explorer David Fairchild. He came to Fairchild as the winner of the Witter Bynner Poetry Prize, and also as the author of a book eventually published as *Flora of the Tryon Region of North and South Carolina*. Fairchild perceived his divided loyalties as plantsman and writer, and encouraged him to seek horizons other than the world of botanical exploration.

In 1923 Donald Culross Peattie married Louise Heegaard Redfield, who he had known since high school. They collaborated on their first books, *Down Wind and Cargoes & Harvests*, and DCP wrote a column for the Washington Star, some of which later became part of *An Almanac for Moderns*. In 1928 they moved to the southern part of France, where they lived for five years and produced several books. On their return they lived at the farm in Glenview, Illinois, which was the birthplace of Louise Redfield. In 1937 they moved to Santa Barbara, California.

DCP achieved his greatest fame with *An Almanac for Moderns* (1935), which was awarded the Limited Editions Club's gold medal. He also was author of numerous other works, including: *Cargoes and Harvests* (1926), *Bounty of Earth*, with LRP (1926), *Up Country*, with LRP (1927), *Down Wind*, with LRP (1929), *Flora of the Sand Dunes and the Calumet District of Indiana* (1930), *Vence, the Story of a Provençal Town* (1930), *Port of Call*, with LRP (1932), *Flora of the Tryon Region of North and South Carolina* (six parts; 1928-1932), *Sons of the Martian* (1932), *Natural History of Pearson's Falls* (1933), *The Bright Lexicon* (1934), *Singing in the Wilderness* (1935), *The Happy Kingdom: A Riviera Memoir*, with LRP (1935), *Green Laurels* (1936), *A Book of Hours* (1937), *A Child's Story of the World* (1937), *A Prairie Grove* (1938), *This Is Living*, with Gordon Aymar (1938), *A Gathering of Birds* (1939), *Flowering Earth* (1939), *Audubon's America* (1940), *The Road of a Naturalist* (1941), *Forward the Nation* (1942), *Journey into America* (1943), *Immortal Village* (1945), *American Heartwood* (1949), *A Cup of Sky*, with Noel Peattie (1950), *A Natural History of Trees of Eastern and Central America* (1950), *Sportsman's Country* (1952), *A Natural History of Western Trees* (1953), *Lives of Destiny* (1954), *Parade with Banners* (1957), and *The Rainbow Book of Nature* (1957). He also was a roving editor for *Reader's Digest* (from 1943), writing dozens of articles for it and other magazines. He died in Santa Barbara on November 16, 1964.

Birth: 1898

Death: Nov. 16, 1964

Botanist and nature writer.

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Burial:

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Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara County

California, USA

Plot: Central Section, S.G. 168, Block D

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