

**Theodore Pergande—Early Student of Ants**

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It is not generally known that Theodore Pergande played an unusually important role in the founding of North American myrmecology and that he should therefore be given full credit for this. I am sure he little realized when he was carrying out his ant studies that his work would eventually form the basis for the cornerstone of North American myrmecology. One naturally wonders not only why he became interested in ants but also at what period he actually began serious work on them. I might have been able to answer these and many other questions pertaining to Pergande had I known him personally. He died in March 1916 and unfortunately I did not come to Washington, D. C., to work in the Truck Crop Insect Investigations, Bureau of Entomology, U. S. Department of Agriculture until the fall of 1917.

At this late date (1966) we will probably never know why Pergande became interested in ants but at least we can hazard a guess as to the approximate date he began work on them. I believe Pergande started work on ants as an avocation after he came to Washington, D. C., in the seventies, and he maintained a deep interest in them until his death although his greatest period of activity appears to have been from the seventies until the early years of nineteen hundred. When Pergande embarked on the work North American myrmecology was in an incipient and chaotic state. Most of the ants that had been described (and there were very few of them) were described by Europeans (Fabricius, Latreille, DeGeer, Roger, Smith, Mayr, et cetera) and the types were in European museums. Even the descriptions were in European journals. Our native workers (Say, Haldeman, Cresson, Fitch, Walsh, and others) were not primarily interested in ants but described them only incidentally.

Only one native worker, S. B. Buckley, a geologist by profession had made a rather serious and extensive attempt to