

Diggles, Silvester (1817-1880). Aust. Diet. Biog. 4:73-74.

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DIGGLES, SILVESTER (1817-1880), naturalist, artist and musician, was born on 24 January 1817, the eldest son of Edward Holt Diggles, ironmonger of Liverpool, England, and his wife Elizabeth, née Silvester. In May 1839 he married Eliza, daughter of John Bradley, tutor of Liverpool; they had two daughters and a son. With them he arrived at Sydney in November 1853, and moved to Brisbane in November 1854. There he taught drawing and music and also practised as a tuner and repairer of musical in-

struments. His wife died in August 1857 and in January 1858 he married Albina, daughter of John and Sarah Birkett of Barnby in the Willows, Nottinghamshire; they had two sons. Genial, friendly and an enthusiastic supporter of community activities, Diggles became a well-known and beloved citizen. He was a founder of the Brisbane Choral Society in 1859 and the Brisbane Philharmonic Society in 1861 and accompanist at church services and concerts. When the musicians of the city gave him a grand benefit concert in 1877, he was termed 'the father of music in Brisbane'. Sincerely religious, he had joined the New Jerusalem Church in 1846 and acted as its leader in Brisbane for some years; he also was a Mason.

Diggles helped to found the colony's first scientific institution, the Queensland Philosophical Society, on 1 March 1859 and published several papers in its *Transactions*; he also worked hard for the infant Queensland Museum which the society commenced in 1862. His special interests were ornithology and entomology, through which he had a wide circle of friends and correspondents. His outstanding publication was *The Ornithology of Australia* of which twenty-one parts were issued in 1865-70. Each part contains six lithographed hand-coloured plates, imperial quarto size, with accompanying descriptive notes. Between 1863 and 1875 he completed 325 plates illustrating about 600 birds, and the text but had no funds to publish more. His original plates and manuscript are in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Diggles's major contribution to the knowledge of Australian fauna, however, was through the extensive collections of insects, particularly butterflies, moths and beetles, which he sent to overseas entomologists for description. In 1875 his health began to fail, due partly to worry over the *Ornithology*. He died at Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, on 21 March 1880, survived by two daughters of his first marriage and two sons of the second.

E. N. Marks, 'Silvester Diggles—a Queensland naturalist one hundred years ago', *Old Naturalist*, 17 (July 1963), and for bibliog; E. N. Marks, 'Notes on Diggles "Ornithology of Australia"', *Old Naturalist*, 17 (June 1965).

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