



100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

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100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union



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In 1904, the AOU held its twenty-second annual congress in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and published volume 21 (new series) and volume 29 (old series) of *The Auk*. Charles B. Cory was the new President of the society, and C. F. Batchelder and newly-elected E. W. Nelson were Vice-Presidents. John H. Sage entered his fifteenth year as Secretary and Jonathan Dwight Jr. served his first year as Treasurer. The Council consisted of seven members and five ex-presidents. J. A. Allen continued as Editor of *The Auk* and Frank M. Chapman was the Associate Editor. There also was a Committee on Publications and a Committee of Arrangements for the Meeting of 1904. Both committees were chaired by President Cory.

The membership was 808 individuals in five categories: 46 Fellows (15 of whom were founding members and 5 of whom were Life Members), 18 Honorary Fellows, 66 Corresponding Fellows, 70 Members, and 608 Associates. Two Corresponding Fellows, R. A. Philippi and Samuel W. Woodhouse, died in 1904, as did one member and six Associates. Philippi, who died at age 95, was a well-known German palaeontologist and zoologist, who immigrated to Chile in 1851 where he was Director of the National Museum for nearly 45 years. He published widely on geology and flora of Chile, particularly the Atacama Desert region. Woodhouse, who died at age 83 in Philadelphia where he spent most of his life, was a famous 19th century explorer, surgeon, and naturalist (see *A Naturalist in Indian Territory: The Journals of S. W. Woodhouse, 1849–50*. [1992, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.]). Having been close friends with people like Thomas Nuttall and J. K. Townsend, he is described as the “last of his generation of scientific men” in his obituary in *The Auk* (22:104–106).

The twenty-second Congress of the AOU convened on Monday night, November 28, 1904 at Mr. William Brewster’s “museum”, probably referring to the bird collection at the Museum of Comparative Zoology where Brewster was Curator of Birds. The president called the meeting to order and 21 Fellows were present for the business meeting. No new Fellows or Corresponding Fellows were elected. Glover M. Allen, Robert O. Morris and J. Warren Jacobs were elected as Members. Allen had just completed his doctoral degree at Harvard University in 1904 and would go on to become the Curator of Mammals at the Museum of Comparative Zoology and Editor of *The Auk*. Morris, who was from Springfield, had published *The Birds of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts* in 1891. Jacobs,

who was from Waynesburg, publish a number of books and articles on the birds of Pennsylvania, mainly on distributions, natural history, and oölogy.

An unprecedented 125 people were elected as Associates, of which about 25% were women. Notable among this group were James L. Peters, who would go on to produce the *Birds of the World* series, and John Ostrom Enders, a banker from Hartford, Connecticut. Enders’ son, John, would win the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1954 for his work on polio; his other son, Ostrom, would amass a fabulous collection of over 5,000 ornithological works. The Ostrom and Alice Talcott Enders Ornithology Collection, which contains many rare and priceless volumes spanning several centuries, is now housed in the Watkinson Library at Trinity College in Hartford (<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/library/watkinson/natural.htm>). The collection is open and available to researchers by contacting the curator, Dr. Jeffrey Kaimowitz.

During the year, the Union lost 72 members: 10 died, 30 resigned, and 42 were dropped for nonpayment of dues. The Treasurer reported that the Union was in satisfactory financial condition, and all officers were re-elected, as was the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of North American Birds.

The rest of the Congress consisted of three days of sessions open to the public held at the Nash Lecture Hall at the museum. The first day, called to order by Vice-president Batchelder, consisted of five papers in the morning session and two papers in the afternoon. The second day, called to order by President Cory, had a similar format. Most all presentations were illustrated with lantern slides. William L. Finley gave two presentations on birds of Oregon. The third day was called to order by the President and consisted of three presentations and two papers read by title in the morning session. The latter two concerned the occurrence of Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) in Colorado by Horace G. Smith and the Ornithology of a Churchyard by B. S. Bowditch.

The afternoon session on the third day consisted of the report of the Committee on Protection of North American Birds, presented by William Dutcher, Chair of the committee. The year had been relatively quiet compared to the several previous years and he reported that the committee had focused on three main areas. The first was the warden program, whereby people were hired from Maine to Texas to protect colonial nesting species from poachers and feather collectors. The program, funded through the efforts of

Abbott H. Thayer, was showing real success in many states. Dutcher reported that a commercial collector in Florida had been apprehended shipping Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) skins illegally; he expressed the view that it was important that this individual be convicted "as a warning to all persons who collect birds for commercial rather than scientific purposes." The second area was legislation, and Dutcher reported that Mississippi and Louisiana had passed the AOU model bird protection law, the Louisiana law affording some protection to game birds as well. Efforts to pass laws in Iowa and Vermont failed that year. In New York, an attempt was made to repeal the law prohibiting spring shooting of wild fowl, but the Committee was able to help stop that repeal. However, in New Jersey, the committee was unable to stop a repeal of the law that prohibited the shooting of snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) and shore-birds (primarily members of the Scolopacinae) in

spring migration. Lastly, the committee fostered the Audubon movement and helped establish a group in California. A summary of Committee's report was published in *The Auk* (22:110-112), but the full report was published in the February 1905 issue of *Bird-Lore*, the official organ of the National Association of Audubon Societies.

The meeting ended with a presentation by Reverend H. K. Job on his recent experiences with "shore-birds, herons, and water-fowl." Resolutions were passed thanking the Harvard Natural History Society for the invitation to meet in Cambridge, to the Nuttall Ornithological Club for their cordial welcome and hospitality, and to Harvard University for the use of the lecture hall. The Secretary commented that the good attendance at the meeting and the record number of new members was "most gratifying." It was decided that the next meeting of the Union would be in New York City in November of 1905.