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100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

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In 1908, the AOU held its 26th annual congress in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and published volume 25 (new series) and volume 33 (old series) of *The Auk*. At the annual business meeting, Edward W. Nelson was elected president. Frank M. Chapman continued as Vice-President and was joined by A. K. Fisher. John H. Sage entered his 19th year as Secretary, and Jonathan Dwight, Jr., served his fifth year as Treasurer. The Council consisted of seven members—Ruthven Deane, Thomas S. Roberts, Witmer Stone, William Dutcher, Charles W. Richmond, Henry W. Henshaw, and F. A. Lucas—and seven ex-presidents. J. A. Allen continued as Editor of *The Auk* for his 25th volume, and Frank M. Chapman was Associate Editor.

The annual business meeting was called to order on the night of Monday, 16 November, in "Mr. William Brewster's museum," the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) at Harvard University. Sixteen Fellows were in attendance. The membership was 888 individuals, 38 more than the year before, in five categories: 48 Fellows, 13 Honorary Fellows, 62 Corresponding Fellows, 75 Members, and 690 Associates. During the year, the Union lost 79 members: 9 by death, 41 by resignation, and 29 for nonpayment of dues. The report of the Treasurer showed the finances of the Union to be in satisfactory condition.

One Fellow, an Honorary Fellow, and seven Associates had died during the previous year. One of the founding members of the AOU, Charles Aldrich (1828–1908), died at age 79 in Iowa. Not an ornithologist, Aldrich was a lover of nature and an early conservationist. He was invited to join the AOU by his friend, Elliott Coues. A native of New York, he had moved to Iowa in 1857, where he started several successful newspapers. He collected signatures as a hobby and donated his collection of several thousand famous signatures to the State Library of Iowa. Many of the signatures were of famous ornithologists with whom he had corresponded. An Honorary Member of the AOU, J. V. Barbosa du Bocage (1823–1907), died at his home in Lisbon at the age of 84. For many years, he was Professor of Zoology in the Royal Polytechnic Institute and Director of the National Zoological Museum at Lisbon before entering politics. He was especially known for his investigations in African ornithology, to which he contributed a long series of papers. His *Ornithologie d'Angola*, published in two parts in 1877 and 1881, was a work of about 600 pages, with 10 colored plates, and gave a very complete summary of the avifauna of the Portuguese Possessions in Africa. The zoology collection at the Lisbon Museum was named the Bocage Museum in his honor.

No Fellows or Members were elected that year. F. DuCane Godman (1834–1919) was elected an Honorary Fellow. He was a famous natural historian and a co-author of *Biologia Centrali-Americana*, a multivolume series on the natural history of Central America. He was a founding member of the British Ornithologists' Union and served as Secretary and President of that society. When Godman died in 1919, only Count Tomasso Salvadori survived from the founding Corresponding Members of the AOU elected in 1883. Ottó Herman (1835–1914) was elected a Corresponding Fellow. In 1901, he had published the first scientific book on the birds of Hungary. Later, he was responsible for finding the first prehistoric remains in the Bükk Mountains near his native city of Miskolc, where there is an archaeological museum named in his honor today. Ninety-three persons, including 16 women, were elected Associates, also including three future Fellows: Ludlow Griscom (1890–1959), Alexander Wetmore (1886–1978), and John T. Zimmer (1889–1957).

Having grown up in New York City, Griscom was a protégé of Frank M. Chapman and was Arthur A. Allen's first graduate student at Cornell University. He worked at the American Museum of Natural History until 1927, when he resigned to go to the MCZ to work with Thomas Barbour. The subject of a delightful biography, in which he is called the "Dean of the Birdwatchers" (Davis 1994), he trained a generation of people who relied on field marks, song, and binoculars to distinguish species, rather than shotguns and rifles. Griscom was elected president of the AOU in 1957 but promptly resigned because of failing health and was replaced by Ernst Mayr. In his obituary in *The Auk* (82:598–605), Roger Tory Peterson, one of Griscom's most famous disciples, wrote:

> Today, wherever one goes in all parts of our country one finds that the sharpest local field observers were trained either by Griscom, his protegés, or his protegés' protegés; or they can be traced indirectly to his influence through some eastern club in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, or Washington where his influence was felt most strongly.

Having been influenced by another of his protégés, Wallace Bailey, in Massachusetts, I count myself as one of Griscom's "grandson" birders.

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In 1908, (Frank) Alexander Wetmore was a young assistant at the University of Kansas Museum, having moved there from Wisconsin with his mother in 1904. Having obtained a B.A. degree from the University of Kansas in 1912, he was promoted to an Assistant Biologist in the Biological Survey and moved to Washington, D.C., where he completed a doctoral degree at George Washington University in 1920 on *The Birds of Porto* [sic] *Rico*. In 1925, he was named Assistant Secretary at the Smithsonian Institution and was in charge of the U.S. National Museum, a position he held for 20 years. In 1945, he became the sixth Secretary of the Smithsonian and only the second ornithologist to hold that position, the first being Spencer Fullerton Baird (1823–1887). Wetmore traveled widely and led many expeditions in search of bird specimens. His *magnum opus* was *The Birds of the Republic of Panamá,* the first three volumes appearing in 1965, 1968, and 1972. The fourth volume was published after his death in 1984, co-authored with Roger Pasquier and Storrs Olson. He also was interested in avian paleontology, and a Festschrift entitled *Collected Papers in Avian Paleontology* was published on the occasion of his 90th birthday. Wetmore was President of the AOU from 1926 to 1929 and was named Honorary President from 1975 until his death, the first person to be so honored. He also was the Chair of the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature that produced the fifth AOU *Check-list* in 1957. In 1972, Wetmore was the first recipient of the Elliott Coues Award from the AOU for his contribution to the classification of birds of the world, having been awarded the Brewster Memorial Award in 1959 primarily for his contributions to avian paleontology.

Only a 20-year-old undergraduate at what is today the University of Nebraska–Lincoln at the time of joining, Zimmer would go on to have a distinguished career in ornithology, first at the Field Museum in Chicago and then atthe American Museum of Natural History in New York, where he eventually became Chairman with the retirement of Robert Cushman Murphy in 1954. Working primarily on birds of Peru, he was awarded the Brewster Medal by the AOU in 1952. He also served as the fourth editor of *The Auk* from 1942 to 1948 after the sudden death of editor Glover M. Allen in 1942.

Hosted by the Nuttall Ornithological Club and Harvard University, the 26th annual meeting lasted three days and was one of the biggest meetings of the AOU at that time. Frank Chapman made a presentation that was accompanied by moving pictures, which may have been a first for an AOU meeting. On Tuesday night, there was a reception at the home of Charles Batchelder, followed by dinner at the Oakley Country Club, which will celebrate its 110th anniversary in 2008. On Wednesday night, the women were invited back to the Batchelder residence, while the men had a reception hosted by Brewster at the MCZ. On Friday, after the meeting was adjourned, 70 people journeyed to Lancaster to visit John Thayer (1862–1933) and examine his museum and library. Thayer had opened his Museum of Ornithology to the public in 1904. The first floor had skins and the second floor had mounted birds from all over North America. More than 10,000 people visited the museum in the first six years. Just before his death, he donated the collection to the MCZ in 1931 and the ornithological library was sold and dispersed.—KIMBERLY G. SMITH, *Department of Biological Sciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701, USA. E-mail: kgsmith@uark.edu*

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Message from the Editor

Several important changes have been made to *The Auk* and the delivery of manuscripts, beginning with the January issue (Volume 126, 2008). Coincidentally, this coincides with the 125th Anniversary of the American Ornithologists' Union. Over the past several months, the AOU has moved to a new publisher, University of California Press (UC Press). This accomplishment has involved the efforts of many—the AOU Council, the Publications Committee, and the staffs of *The Auk* and UC Press.

The most obvious change is in the printed journal. The decrease in the number of pages from 2007 is offset by the increase in page size. Another important change will be the availability of regular papers, perspectives, and commentaries online "ahead of print" on the UC Press Caliber interactive platform. This will greatly broaden the circulation of papers and will decrease the time from acceptance to publication. UC Press will also be marketing *The Auk* to increase the subscription base.

"Perspectives in Ornithology" will remain an important feature of *The Auk*. These are now peer-reviewed and will continue to be open-access on the AOU website. "Overviews" are no longer published, but occasionally the Editor will invite "Special Reviews" to be published in lieu of the perspective.

We have added a statement on the front cover to remind readers that our journal is international in scope. Original artwork, tied to a paper published in the same issue, will remain a feature of the front cover. I hope you enjoy the new format.

—Spencer G. Sealy, Editor

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