



100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

Author: Smith, Kimberly G.

Source: The Auk, 124(1) : 365

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: [https://doi.org/10.1642/0004-8038\(2007\)124\[365:YAITAO\]2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1642/0004-8038(2007)124[365:YAITAO]2.0.CO;2)

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union



The Auk 124(1):365–366, 2007
© The American Ornithologists' Union, 2007.
Printed in USA.

In 1907, the AOU held its 25th annual congress in Philadelphia and published volume 24 (new series) and volume 32 (old series) of *The Auk*. Charles F. Batchelder continued as President, Edward W. Nelson and Frank M. Chapman continued as vice presidents, John H. Sage entered his 18th year as Secretary, and Jonathan Dwight, Jr., served his 4th year as Treasurer. The Council consisted of seven members and six ex-presidents. J. A. Allen continued as Editor of *The Auk* for his 24th volume, and Chapman was Associate Editor.

The annual business meeting was called to order by the President on the night of Monday, 9 December, in the Council Room at the Academy of Natural Sciences. Twenty Fellows were in attendance. The membership was 850 individuals, the same as the year before, in five categories: 48 Fellows, 14 Honorary Fellows, 61 Corresponding Fellows, 72 Members, and 655 Associates. During the year, the Union lost 81 members: 11 by death, 32 by resignation, and 38 for nonpayment of dues. The report of the Treasurer showed the finances of the Union to be in a satisfactory condition. The Council thanked Jonathan Dwight, Jr., for his hard work in assembling the 25-year index to the *Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club* and *The Auk* for the period 1886–1900.

No Fellows had died in 1907, but two Honorary Fellows, both famous British ornithologists, and a Corresponding Fellow had passed away. Alfred Newton (1829–1907) was elected Professor of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy at Magdalen College at Cambridge University in 1864, a position he held until his death. He was one of the 20 original members of the British Ornithologists' Union, founded in November 1858 at Magdalen College. He was Editor of *The Ibis* from 1865 to 1870 and of *Zoological Record* from 1870 to 1872. His magnum opus was *A Dictionary of Birds* published in the mid-1890s. At the time, the introduction was described as "a critical review of the literature of ornithology of value for all time."

Born into a well-known merchant family in London, Howard Saunders (1835–1907) spent five years as a young man exploring South

America before returning to England in 1860. He was twice Editor of *The Ibis*, from 1883 to 1886 and from 1895 to 1900, and finished the last two volumes of *British Birds* after Newton had completed the first two. Considered the world authority on gulls, his greatest work was the *Manual of British Birds*, published in 1899.

Rudolph Blasius (1842–1907), a Corresponding Fellow, died in Braunschweig, Germany. The son of famous European ornithologist Johann Heinrich Blasius (1809–1870), Rudolph had a medical degree from the University of Göttingen and was Professor of Hygiene and Bacteriology at the Technical High School of Braunschweig from 1879 until his death. Many of his publications were on bird migration, and he was an editor of the German journal *Ornis*. His brother, Wilhelm August Heinrich Blasius (1845–1912), was also a Corresponding Fellow.

Richard C. McGregor (1871–1936) was the only Fellow elected in 1907. Born in Australia, he arrived in the United States with his widowed mother in the 1880s. He matriculated at Stanford University in 1893 and was involved with the formation of the Cooper Ornithological Club. After graduating, he collected widely in California and Colorado, naming a number of new subspecies. While he was traveling back from a summer in Alaska in 1901 aboard the *U.S.S. Pathfinder*, the ship was sent to Manila, Philippines. McGregor spent the rest of his life there and, at the time of his death, was Editor of the *Philippine Journal of Science* and Chief of the Publicity Division of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. He named a number of new species for the islands. His most famous work was the two-volume set, *A Manual of Philippine Birds*, published in 1909.

Two Corresponding Fellows were elected. Carl R. Hennicke (1865–1941) published several books on the birds of Germany and Europe and edited the third edition of *Naturgeschichte der Vögel Mitteleuropas*. Sergius A. Buturlin (1872–1938) was one of the most prominent Russian ornithologists of his time and an authority on Palearctic birds. He discovered the breeding grounds of Ross's

Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) and was the author of more than 2,000 works, including a three-volume set, *Complete Synopsis of the Birds of the U.S.S.R.* He was associated with the Zoological Museum of the University of Moscow and became an Honorary Fellow in the AOU in 1916.

Ned Dearborn, E. Howard Eaton, William L. Finley, and Ora Willis Knight were elected to the class of Member. Dearborn was associated with the Field Museum of Natural History and was an assistant to and collector for Charles B. Cory (1857–1921), one of the founders of the AOU. Eaton (1866–1934) was a Professor at Hobart College, was State Ornithologist for New York (1908–1914), and published the two-volume work, *Birds of New York*, which, at the time, was called “the most comprehensive state ornithology that has yet appeared.” Finley (1876–1953) was one of the leading bird photographers of his time and one of the first to make movies about wildlife. He was the first State Game Warden in Oregon and one of the leading conservationists in the United States in the early part of the last century. Knight (1874–1913) published *The Birds of Maine* in 1908.

Associates elected in 1907 numbered 123, including Alfred O. Gross, Margaret Morse [Nice], Aretes A. Saunders, and Althea R. Sherman. Gross (1883–1970), who had a long and distinguished career at Bowdoin College in Maine, was elected Fellow in 1930. In 1907, Morse (1883–1974), one of the founders of the field of modern animal behavior, was a graduate student at Clark University, having completed her undergraduate degree at Mt. Holyoke College in 1906. In 1909, she married Leonard Blaine Nice, and she left the AOU in 1910. Rejoining in 1920, she was elected as Fellow in 1937 and was awarded the Brewster Medal for her studies on Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*) in 1942. Saunders (1884–1970) spent most of his career as a high school science teacher in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and was elected Fellow in 1950. He wrote *A Distributional List of the Birds of Montana* in 1921, but his most famous works were *Ecology of the Birds of Quaker Run Valley, Allegany State Park, New York* (1936) and *Summer Birds of Allegany State Park* (1942), both of which demonstrate that he was ahead of his time in terms of ecological thought and the role of ecological succession. In later life, he published several important works on bird

song. Sherman (1853–1943), who was a mentor to Nice, was one of the first ornithologists in Iowa, most noted for her pioneering work on Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) using a specially built tower. Her careful observations of the behavior of House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*), concluding that they were destroying nests, eggs, and nestlings of other species, caused a controversy that lasted for decades (e.g., Sherman 1925).

The largest-ever meeting of the AOU was called to order by President Batchelder the following day. Presentations the first day included “Preliminary Report of an Investigation of the Cause of Moulting and the Seasonal Change of Color in Birds,” by C. William Beebe, and “The Expression of Emotion in Birds as Shown by Photography,” by Clinton G. Abbott. A banquet followed that evening at Boothby’s Café on Chestnut Street, where after-dinner speeches reflected on the organization, growth, and high standing of the AOU.

The second day’s presentations included “The Value of Colors and Color-patterns as a Generic Character in Ornithology,” by Witmer Stone, and “The Psychologic Development of Young Hawks,” by E. Howard Eaton. A smoker was held at the Academy that night, hosted by the Ornithological Section of the museum. “It was conceded by all present to have been a most enjoyable gathering.”

The third day’s presentations included “The Geographical Distribution of the Juncos (or Snowbirds),” and “The Probable Significance of their Color Variations,” both by Dr. Jonathan Dwight, Jr. On Friday the 13th, a field trip was conducted by Stewardson Brown and George Spencer Morris to the historic Bartram’s Garden so intimately associated with the life of Alexander Wilson. On the 14th, a “pilgrimage” was made to Mill Grove, on Perkiomen Creek, the first American home of J. J. Audubon. The estate today is the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove, a museum and educational center, located in Audubon, Pennsylvania.—KIMBERLY G. SMITH, *Department of Biological Sciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701, USA. E-mail: kgsmith@uark.edu*

LITERATURE CITED

- SHERMAN, A. R. 1925. Down with the House Wren boxes. *Wilson Bulletin* 37:5–13.