

A FOOTNOTE TO THE HISTORY OF MALACOLOGY IN THE UNITED STATES

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Mrs. Martha B. Williamson of Los Angeles, California, was an active malacologist around the turn of the century. After she died in 1922 her collection went to the Los Angeles County Museum. What became of her extensive correspondence I do not know, except that one small box of it was brought to Stanford University by a friend of hers for deposit in the Stanford library's archives.

Among the Williamson material were some letters of special interest to us during the AMU's 50th anniversary — from the founder of the American Association of Conchologists, John H. Campbell of Philadelphia. First, he sent to her a printed flyer that was the initial membership list and memorandum to early members. Dated April 26, 1890, the list comprises 29 names, with addresses and statement of special interests. John H. Campbell heads the list as President, interest Cypraeidae. Charles W. Johnson is secretary, interest South American mollusks. Among the 27 others one notes most of the professionals of the time. Below the list Mr. Campbell wrote a special note to Mrs. Williamson: "10 additional to May 5, including yourself." A transcription of this flyer forms an appendix to the present note.

The actual correspondence consists of five letters from Mr. Campbell in a span of eight months. Did he, one wonders, find time to write so often to all the members? Perhaps Mrs. Williamson's replies (not preserved) whetted his enthusiasm.

LETTERS FROM JOHN H. CAMPBELL, ATTORNEY, TO MRS. M.B. WILLIAMSON

Philadelphia, May 5, 1890. Madam: Yours of 28th ult. received. We are much pleased to have your name upon the rolls of the Assoc. You are the first lady enrolled, although we expect several others. By same mail with your letter came one from Prof. Josiah Keep, Mills College, Cal., so that there are now 2 Californians on the list. The Assoc. is growing rapidly and has now 39 members — pretty good for less than five weeks work! There seems to be a field for the Association and I trust it will accomplish some useful results. We shall be pleased at any time to hear from you.

May 21, 1890. — Thanks for kind letter. As to suggestions you make, I think it would be well to defer action upon them until we have gathered in nearly all the conchologists in America, which at the present rate of progress is likely to take place before the end of the year. We have now 55 members and still they come. The Association must be filling a want, for it seems to be popular from the start.

Nov. 11, 1890. — Thanks for the kindly offer, but we promised when we started the Association that the members should be at no expense. I had long thought that persons interested in shells were not doing effective work because of isolation and that if we could get them to associate in systematic study, science would be benefitted — and for that reason I broached the idea of our Association. At the end of a year we might be able to hold a convention and then we could provide for a small annual payment to cover expenses and could also elect a prominent scientist as president, instead of an amateur like myself. We would have done so in the beginning but we thought it better to

put a business man, used to organization, in at first to get the association started, and afterwards we could replace him by a prominent scientist.

I am glad you take kindly to the idea of a U.S. Collection, and you can help it materially. I would suggest that you send 1) some very *small* specimens of the Haliotidae, as we have already some magnificent *big* specimens; 2) a pair of fine *H. assimilis* Dall; 3) suites of the Pacific Coast Fissurellidae, except *Luca-pina crenulata*, which we have.

Dec. 1, 1890. — Your list of San Pedro shells will be exceedingly valuable and I will be much pleased to receive a copy when published. If all the members would prepare similar lists, how easy it would be to straighten out the nomenclature of American shells!

When I go to the Academy next, I will count the number of species of *Haliotis* in the collection and send you word. It is a very fine and large collection, but with assiduity and perseverance you can readily excel it.

I have mailed an invitation to Mr. Weeks of Brooklyn and hope to enroll him. I had already sent one to Dr. DeCamp but have not as yet received a reply. Mr. E.H. White, Astoria, Oregon has joined, and by the way, Dr. J.G. Cooper, Haywards, Cal. has also joined, at which I am very much pleased. Members are coming in rapidly; 12 have been added since the pamphlet and some 20 new members have been suggested.

The U.S. Collection will be a great success. We have already half filled our second case, and the specimens are very fine. . . . If you ever get East, you will be delighted to see how creditable to the Association the Collection is.

Jan. 15, 1891. — I regret very much that your request not to announce your donations in *Nautilus* arrived too late. Mr. Pilsbry had promised to send me a proof of the association article but failed to do so. I think it would be well, though, to announce your donations with the others, but of course will comply with your wishes if you insist on it in the future.

Thank you for your promise to ask Dr. Cooper for his list of fossils.

In January *Nautilus* I announced my list of catalogues, with the Haliotidae. If you find any errors in it, kindly let me know. We must endeavor to straighten out the nomenclature if we can.

You might send, from time to time for the Collection, if you have them to spare, the Fissurellidae. *Fissurella volcano* Reeve is the only species, thus far, received from West Coast.

Mr. G.W. Lichtenthaler is now in San Francisco, and will probably be there for a month or more yet. He will doubtless collect some fine things for the Collection.

What happened to the Association and to the Collection? We may guess that the latter may have been merged into the holdings of the Philadelphia Academy, but why, after so brisk a start, did the Association evaporate? Did failing health dampen Mr. Campbell's zeal? He died, according to Dr. R. Tucker Abbott's "American Malacologists," only a few years later, in January, 1897, at the age of 50. But why did no one else take over care of the infant organization? Perhaps it was that the time

was not right. Surely it would seem that this willing and ambitious amateur, working in the malacological metropolis of Philadelphia, had a viable society under way. Contrast the early demise of the American Association of Conchologists with the burgeoning of the American Malacological Union 40 years later, when another amateur, Norman W. Lermond, who lived in relative isolation in Maine, pointed out in a few letters to East Coast workers the need for a formal society. That time the suggestion was like a seed that fell on fertile ground and took root.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CONCHOLOGISTS List of members: April 26, 1890

John H. Campbell, President,
740 Sansom St., Phila. Cypraeidae
Charles W. Johnson, Secty.,
Wagner Institute, Phila. S. American moll.

Frank C. Baker, Acad. Nat. Sci., Philadelphia Muricidae
Theo. G. Brinton, 755 Corinthian Ave., Phila. Mitridae
F.C. Browne, Framingham, Mass. Nassidae
H.F. Carpenter, 29 Page St., Providence, R.I. Moll. of R.I.
Prof. Wm. B. Clark, Johns Hopkins Univ.,
Baltimore Eocene moll.
Wm. H. Dall, U.S. Natl. Museum,
Washington, D.C. Abyssal moll.
Rev. A. Dean, Munsey, Pa. Fusidae
George W. Dean, Kent, Ohio Strepomatidae
John Ford, Philadelphia, Pa. Olividae
Geo. W. Harper, Woodward High School,
Cincinnati, O. Land & f.w. shells
Dr. W.D. Hartman, West Chester, Pa. *Partula*, etc.
A.A. Hinkley, Dubois, Ill. Strepomatidae
Rev. A. Kendig, 11 Hanson Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y. *Amphidromus*
F.R. Latchford, 19 Elgin St.,
Ottawa, Ont. Limnaeidae, N. Amer.

James R. Morison, Lexington, Va. Specific variation
Wm. J. McGinty, Philadelphia, Pa. Marginellidae
H.A. Pilsbry, Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia . . . Land & f.w. shells
S. Raymond Roberts, Glen Ridge, N.J. Cypraeidae
Edward W. Roper, Revere, Mass. Cypraeidae
John Shallcross, Philadelphia, Pa. Volutidae
J.A. Singley, Giddings, Tex. Land shells, N. Amer.
Charles T. Simpson, U.S. Nat. Museum,
Washington Geogr. distr.; nomencl.
Uselma C. Smith, 707 Walnut St., Philadelphia Conidae
Bryant Walker, 18 Moffatt Block,
Detroit, Mich. Land & f.w., N. Amer.
Rev. John Walton, Lakeside, N.Y. Cypraeidae
R.P. Whitfield, American Mus. Nat. Hist., N.Y. . . . Fossil moll.
Joseph Willcox, 1810 Chestnut St., Philadelphia *Fulgur*

To the members

Phila., Apr. 26, 1890

The Association is meeting with great favor and evidently seems to supply a want. As you will see by the foregoing list, the Association is growing rapidly and if the members will interest themselves in sending to me additional names of persons who would make suitable members, there is no reason why the membership should not reach 100 in a very short time.

Any suggestions looking to the advancement of the Association will be gladly received by

Yours very truly,
John H. Campbell

You will be notified from time to time of further additional membership.

(Note by Myra Keen: A printed membership list of the Association dated Oct. 1, 1890, was given to Stanford University library by Mrs. Ida Oldroyd in the 1930's.)

HALF-CENTURY OF AMU 1931-1981

Margaret C. Teskey

The American Malacological Union began as an idea in the fertile mind of Mr. Norman Lermond, an energetic and individualistic Norwegian gentleman who operated a small natural history museum and arboretum in Thomaston, Maine. After discussing the merits of such an organization with his good friend, William J. Clench of Harvard ("Over a bowl of chop suey!" recalls Dr. Clench), he dispatched the first of a series of letters to every person of his acquaintance of whom he had knowledge as being in any way interested in mollusks or their shells.

Response was so favorable that he named his movement the American Association of Conchologists, and called a meeting to organize. The meeting was held by invitation of Dr. Henry A. Pilsbry at the Academy of Sciences in Philadelphia, in April, 1931. By then 169 persons had sent in dues of twenty-five cents and were enrolled as charter members, and 29 of them attended the organizational meeting. Six charter members remain with

the AMU, and three attended the half-century meeting.

A constitution was drafted and adopted, the name American Malacological Union proposed and accepted, and Dr. Pilsbry was elected to be the first president after Mr. Lermond had declined the office. He chose instead to be Corresponding Secretary, but was not active. Soon his duties were incorporated with those of Financial Secretary Imogene S. Robertson of Buffalo, aided by her husband, Harold.

The following year a meeting was held at the U.S. National Museum at Washington, D.C. Several additions were made to the Constitution, and Dr. Paul Bartsch elected to succeed Dr. Pilsbry and to conduct the 1933 meeting at Harvard.

Over the following decade the AMU grew slowly but at a steady pace. Annual meetings were held at Stanford University (Junius Henderson, President), Buffalo Museum of Science (President Clench being out of the country and so unable to preside, the meeting was conducted by Vice-President Calvin

Goodrich), St. Petersburg, Florida (Goodrich), University of Michigan (Joshua L. Baily, Jr.), University of Havana, Cuba (Carlos del a Torre), Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology in Toronto, Canada (Maxwell Smith), again at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia (H.B. Baker), then at the invitation of Mr. Lermond, at Rockland, Maine (Harald A. Rehder).

A part of the program at the Maine meeting (1941) was in the form of a collecting symposium, and several papers were read on the subject of the collecting of land, freshwater and marine mollusks. The Annual Report (a continuing publication) in which these papers were printed was a handy reference source, so much in demand that in 1955 the symposium papers were incorporated into the first printing of the popular AMU publication, *How to Collect Shells*.

World War II interrupted annual meetings for a period of four years, but by carrying on voluminous correspondence Imogene Robertson was able to compile and issue annual report bulletins for 1943 and 1944-45; in this last was reported the death of Norman Lermond at age 83.

The 1946 meeting was the twelfth, and a return visit to the U.S. National Museum; since President Louise M. Perry had resigned, Vice-President Henry van der Schalie occupied the chair. It was an especially joyous occasion, as old friends and new gathered to exchange news and experiences after so long an absence.

The offices of Corresponding and Financial Secretaries had been held by Mrs. Robertson since the second year; at this meeting they were formally incorporated into one and her husband, Harold R. Robertson, elected to fill the newly created office of Treasurer.

The following year the AMU met for the second time on the Pacific coast, at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, in California. President van der Schalie again conducted the meeting, and on this occasion the idea of forming a west coast division was broached. It received such favor that the following year (1948) the Pacific Division of the American Malacological Union was organized, and held the first annual meeting at Stanford University.

The AMU convened that year at the Carnegie Museum at Pittsburgh (A. Myra Keen) and during the succeeding years at the University of Miami (Elmer Berry), Chicago Natural History Museum (Fritz Haas), then again at the Museum of Science, Buffalo (J.P.E. Morrison).

Harold Robertson had passed away earlier that year (1951), and Mrs. Robertson had assumed his duties along with her own. Her health, however, was failing and at the meeting in August she tendered her resignation. Termination of her long and faithful service was accepted with regret, and upon her recommendation Margaret C. Teskey was made Secretary-Treasurer.

Mounting interest was increasingly evident as local shell clubs were organized in Chicago, New York, Florida, Texas. Currently sixty-six such groups are in existence in America, and the annual accounting of their activities attests to the fact that the collection and study of shells holds a reward for all.

Annual AMU meetings continued with ever-mounting attendance. The Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard was re-visited in 1952 (Jeanne Schwengel), then for the first time meetings were held at the University of Kansas (A. Byron Leonard), the University of New Hampshire (Joseph C. Bequaert), and at Wagner College on Staten Island, New York (Morris K. Jacobson).

A revised Constitution was adopted in 1954, containing a clause relating to the Pacific Division and its precepts; in 1956 that group postponed its annual meeting and went all out to entertain the AMU at a deluxe hotel in San Diego (Allyn G. Smith). Peabody Museum at Yale University provided the site for the 1957 meeting (Ruth D. Turner). Dr. Pilsbry attended this meeting but died three months later at the age of ninety-five.

A repeat visit to the University of Michigan was made the following year (Aurele La Rocque), then for the third time the AMU returned to its birthplace in Philadelphia (R. Tucker Abbott). Redpath Museum at McGill University at Montreal, Canada, hosted the 1960 convention (Katherine V.W. Palmer), and next year the AMU paid a third-time visit to the U.S. National Museum (Thomas E. Pulley). St. Petersburg again in 1962 (William K. Emerson) and the following year a third visit was made to the Buffalo Museum of Science (Albert R. Mead).

By now the AMU had achieved a recognized place among the scientific societies of the world, and listed among the corresponding members were names from such distant lands as Japan, the Philippines, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Yap, the Netherlands. Today, twenty years later, may be added Germany, France, Oman, New Zealand, South Africa, Brazil, Belgium, Ireland, Taiwan, Thailand, Hong Kong, Austria, Arabian Gulf. The annual report Bulletins have become a valued reference source since they contain abstracts and full papers of most of the papers read at annual meetings, together with a constantly updated membership list with current addresses.

The AMU went to New Orleans in 1964 as guest of Louisiana State University in New Orleans (John Q. Burch), and adopted an extensive constitution, incorporating the By-Laws of the Pacific Division. Next year an invitation to return to Wagner College on Staten Island was accepted (Juan J. Parodiz), and the annual report of this meeting contained an index of all papers read since 1949.

By now membership approaching 800 had created an intolerable workload for Secretary-Treasurer Teskey, though relieved of a portion of her duties when in 1954 the Executive Council had created a new office, that of Publications Editor. George M. Moore was elected to fill it, succeeded in 1962 by Karl Jacobson who held the office until 1972 when he resigned and his duties assumed by Arthur H. Clarke. In 1962 the office of Secretary-Treasurer was separated and Jean M. Cate was elected AMU Treasurer, a post she held for three years. She was succeeded by Mae Dean Richart who resigned in 1966 and Mrs. H.B. Baker elected. She served until 1972, then upon her resignation Myra Taylor was elected to the office, a post she now holds. Arthur H. Clarke served as Publications Editor from 1972 to 1975, when succeeded by Dee Dundee. Marion Hubbard served as Secretary from 1970 to 1974. Paul R. Jennewein was made Corresponding Secretary in 1971, and Constance E. Boone became Recording Secretary in 1974. Dundee, Taylor Jennewein and Boone continue to serve today and seem to have consolidated into a highly regarded body to conduct AMU business and produce the AMU Bulletin.

So the years rolled by, the annual AMU meetings red letter days on the calendar of most of the country's malacologists, professional and amateur alike. The friendly attitude of the professional malacologist towards the amateur has long been remarked upon, creating camaraderie reflected by the success of half a century of happy reunion.

The 1966 meeting at the University of North Carolina

(Ralph W. Dexter) was such a meeting, as was the next when the AMU went north to meet in Ottawa, Canada at the invitation of the National Museums of Canada (Leo G. Hertlein). Then to Corpus Christi, Texas in 1968 (Arthur H. Clarke), when six Texas shell clubs united to play host in lieu of university auspices. The Pacific Division became inactive during this year and was declared dissolved in 1972.

The University of Wisconsin welcomed the AMU to its campus at Marinette (Joseph Rosewater), and at this meeting in her home town Secretary Teskey tendered her resignation to become affective the following year when the meeting was held in Key West, Florida (Alan G. Solem). A much amended and revised constitution was adopted at this 1970 meeting.

The 1971 meeting was again held in Florida, at Coco Beach (David H. Stansbery). The following year Texas again beckoned, this time to Galveston (Arthur S. Merrill); The University of Delaware hosted in 1973 (Dee S. Dundee) and the following year Harold D. Murray occupied the chair at the Museum of Science at Springfield, Massachusetts.

A joint meeting with the Western Society of Malacologists was held in 1975, when President Donald R. Moore shared his duties with WSM President George Radwin at San Diego State University, San Diego, California. And now the years pass evermore rapidly: Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio (Dorothea Franzen, 1976); Naples, Florida as guests of the Naples Shell Club (George M. Davis, 1977); University of North Carolina again, this time at Wilmington, North Carolina (Carol

B. Stein, 1978). Again joint with WSM when, as guests of Coastal Bend Shell Club the meeting was held at Corpus Christi, Texas (William E. Old, Jr., 1979); Louisville, Kentucky and hosted by the Louisville Conchological Society (Clyde F.E. Roper, 1980).

This then to 1981 and the conclusion of a half-century of AMU when at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida President Richard S. Houbrick occupied the chair and at the annual dinner introduced Charter Members, Dr. William J. Clench, Dr. Harald Rehder, and Allen F. Archer. Three others were unable to be present: Katherine van Winkle Palmer, Carlos G. Aguayo, Aurele LaRocque.

Attendance at the annual meetings averages about twenty-five percent of total membership. A program of diversified scientific papers has been followed from the beginning, though of recent years an effort is being made to group some of them into symposia. Conservation is being stressed, though to date the effort to convince shell collectors not to take live mollusks seems confined to lip service. The World Health Organization's programs of medical malacology, commercial interests served by research on behalf of the National Shellfisheries Association, promotion of mollusk-related science in schools and universities - all, together with many others, are being aided by the work of AMU. Also aided are untold numbers of people who love shells for their beauty alone. Truly, Norman Lermond built better than he knew!