

100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

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Not all the reviews written by Editor J. A. Allen in 1905 were about books. Occasionally, he reviewed articles published in other journals. For example, William E. D. Scott had published two papers in *Science* concerning hand-reared Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) and Eastern Meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna*). In the first, Scott (1904a) reported that in his “opinion,” two male grosbeaks that he had hand-raised from nestlings came into breeding plumage without molting their wing feathers, an obvious reference to aptosochromatism. As mentioned in this column before, Allen was the main critic of the notion that feathers could change colors without molt, and he stated “we naturally await with interest for some *proof* that this opinion has some basis of fact....” More interesting are Scott’s observations on the ontogeny of song acquisition. The grosbeaks were removed from the nest when they were four days old, so Scott (1904a) assumed that it was “improbable that they acquired much appreciation of the song of the male,” although the male was constantly singing around the nest. The grosbeaks had a normal *chip* note, but when the males started to sing the following spring, the song was nothing like a Rose-breasted Grosbeak song. Scott (1904b) then placed the males next to the cage of a male Orange-bellied Leafbird (*Chloropsis hardwickii*), and soon all three males were singing the leafbird song. The grosbeaks sang the leafbird song so well that Scott could not tell the three birds’ songs apart without looking into the cages. Likewise, he put some young male meadowlarks into an aviary with three male Eurasian Blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), and one meadowlark started singing a blackbird song. From all this, Scott (1904b) concluded that *chip* notes are inherited, but the “song of the males was an imitation of the song of a bird that strongly impressed them during the period when they were cultivating this secondary sex characteristic.”

At the time, Scott (1852–1910) was Curator

of the Department of Ornithology at the Princeton College Museum of Biology, where he maintained an aviary with 400 to 500 birds. He was a freshman in the first class at Cornell University in 1868, but then transferred to Harvard University, where he obtained a B.S. in 1873, working with Louis Agassiz. His most important works were on the birds of Patagonia, co-authored with Richard B. Sharpe, who was Curator of Birds at the British Museum. Scott was one of the original members of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, a Corresponding Member of the AOU when he lived in Arizona in 1884, and a member of the AOU from 1886 to 1894 (Auk 27:486–488).

It was reported that two exhibitions were nearing completion at the American Museum of Natural History: one depicted the irrigated portion of the San Joaquin Valley in California, near Los Barios, and the other a flamingo colony in the Bahamas. Frank M. Chapman was involved in securing specimens for both, and there is an amusing account of the difficulties he encountered in getting fresh, waterlogged flamingo nests back to New York City (Auk 22:108). He also spent considerable time studying and photographing flamingos—confirming, among other things, that flamingos actually sit on the nest during incubation, rather than straddling the nest with their legs outside it as was previously believed. He published his observations later that year (Chapman 1905). Prior to that, almost nothing was known about breeding flamingos in the New World.

The National Committee of Audubon Societies formally incorporated in New York City as the National Association of Audubon Societies for the Protection of Wild Birds and Animals. The main objectives were “(a) To hold meetings, lectures and exhibitions in the interest of the protection of birds and animals, and to use all lawful means for the protection of birds and animals. (b) To publish and distribute documents or other printed matter on these or

other subjects, and to acquire and maintain a library. (c) To cooperate with the national and state governments and regularly organized natural history societies in disseminating knowledge relative to birds and animals." William Dutcher, who had been head of the Committee and also head of the AOU Committee for the Protection of Birds, continued as President of this new organization. John E. Thayer was First Vice-President, Theodore S. Palmer was Second Vice-President, and Frank M. Chapman was Treasurer. Dutcher, Palmer, and Chapman were fellows in the AOU, whereas Thayer was a member. A board of 30 directors managed the society, 20 chosen from state societies, 3 chosen by the AOU, and 7 serving at-large. The board had engaged Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson of Greensboro, North Carolina, "to take the field as a propagandist in the cause of bird protection to awaken public interest and secure financial assistance for the National Association, for which special work he is eminently fitted by his energy and earnestness, and his well-known effectiveness as a public speaker." A member of the AOU, Pearson (1873–1943) would serve as Secretary of the National Association from 1905 until 1920, President from 1920 until 1934, and President Emeritus from 1934 until his death in 1943. Although Dutcher was the first president of what was to become the National Audubon Society, Gilbert is generally considered to be the architect who guided the society through its early years. Audubon is currently celebrating "100 Years of Conservation" in 2005.

Sadly, Dutcher was to report the murder of Guy M. Bradley later in the year (Auk 22:443–444). Mr. Bradley was a warden hired in 1902 by the AOU to protect colonial nesting birds in southern Florida. In 1905 he was now an employee of the National Association of Audubon Societies. By all accounts, he was a model warden. On 8 July 1905, Bradley was apparently ambushed by a well-known plume hunter, William Smith. Dutcher relates that Smith had sent his two sons to shoot birds illegally near Bradley's residence. Bradley attempted to arrest

the elder boy, but was confronted by the father, who shot him in the chest at near point-blank range. Other accounts suggest that Bradley was investigating Smith's activities and that Smith had threatened him for arresting his sons on a previous occasion (McIver 2003). Regardless, the following day, Bradley's body was found in his boat, adrift off the island that now bears his name, Bradley Key. Smith turned himself in and, unable to post the \$5,000 bail, spent five months in jail. He claimed that Bradley had fired first with a pistol and missed, after which Smith shot Bradley with his rifle. Smith went to trial and was acquitted by a jury as acting in self defense. However, the incident aroused public outrage, and laws were soon enacted to protect the birds' nesting colonies. In 1988, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation established a national award, The Guy Bradley Award, to recognize achievements in wildlife law enforcement.—KIMBERLY G. SMITH, *Department of Biological Sciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701, USA. E-mail: kgsmith@uark.edu*

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