

100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

Author: Smith, Kimberly G.

Source: The Auk, 128(1) : 198-199

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1525/auk.2011.128.1.198>

The BioOne Digital Library (<https://bioone.org/>) provides worldwide distribution for more than 580 journals and eBooks from BioOne's community of over 150 nonprofit societies, research institutions, and university presses in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences. The BioOne Digital Library encompasses the flagship aggregation BioOne Complete (<https://bioone.org/subscribe>), the BioOne Complete Archive (<https://bioone.org/archive>), and the BioOne eBooks program offerings ESA eBook Collection (<https://bioone.org/esa-ebooks>) and CSIRO Publishing BioSelect Collection (<https://bioone.org/csiro-ebooks>).

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Digital Library, 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 Digital Library 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 is an innovative nonprofit that 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 128(1):198–199, 2011

© The American Ornithologists' Union, 2011.

Printed in USA.

The 29th stated meeting was held in Philadelphia, and the annual business meeting was called to order by President Edward W. Nelson on the night of Monday, 13 November 1911, in the Council Room at the Academy of Natural Sciences. The meeting was attended by 18 Fellows. The membership had decreased to 887 individuals, 10 less than the year before, in five categories: 48 Fellows, 11 Honorary Fellows, 60 Corresponding Fellows, 78 Members, and 690 Associates. During the year, the Union lost 66 members: 8 by death, 24 by resignation, and 34 for nonpayment of dues. The report of the treasurer showed the finances of the Union to be in a satisfactory condition. Frank M. Chapman was elected president, A. K. Fisher continued as vice president and was joined by Henry W. Henshaw, John H. Sage entered his 22nd year as secretary, and Jonathan Dwight, Jr., served his eighth year as treasurer. In addition to those five, the Council consisted of seven elected members and eight ex-presidents. J. A. Allen, who had been editor of *The Auk* for the first 28 volumes, resigned because of health issues and Witmer Stone was chosen to be the journal's second editor.

Henry Augustus Purdie (1840–1911) had died in the year preceding the meeting. He was one of the five founding members of the Nuttall Ornithological Club in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and one of the founding members of the AOU. At one time, the length of the memorial for a Fellow in *The Auk* was directly related to the stature of the person in the field of ornithology, but here that is not the case. William Brewster's lengthy memorial (*Auk* 29:1–15) eulogizes his close friend, who had no professional career in ornithology and was more interested in botany in his later years.

One Honorary Fellow and two Corresponding Fellows had also died during the year. Honorary Fellow Adolf Bernhard Meyer (1840–1911) was born in Hamburg, educated in Berlin, and served as director of the Royal Museum of Zoology, Anthropology, and Ethnography in Dresden for 34 years, stepping down in 1896. He spent a number of years exploring southeastern Asia, and one of his major publications was *On the Birds of Celebes and the Neighboring Islands*, published with his assistant, L. W. Wilesworth, in 1898. His other major work was a two-volume set of illustrations of bird skeletons.

The two Corresponding Fellows who had died were Gustav Adler von Hayek (1836–1911) and George E. Shelley (1840–1910). Trained in natural history in Vienna, von Hayek became a professor at the new Realgymnasium in 1869, a position he held until he retired in 1900. In 1880, he took over the Ornithology Association (Ornithologische Verein) in Vienna, and he was responsible for organizing the first International Ornithological Congress,

which took place in Vienna during April of 1884. A nephew of the famous English poet Percy B. Shelley, George Shelley was sent to Africa by the British government in the late 1860s on a geological survey project, but he quickly became interested in birds and spent the rest of his life studying African birds. His major opus was the multivolume *Birds of Africa*, the first volume of which appeared in 1896 and the fifth in 1906. A stroke in 1906 prevented him from finishing the series, which was completed by William Sclater (1863–1944), who at the time was curator at the South African Museum in Cape Town. After a brief stint in Colorado, Sclater returned to London in 1909 as curator of the bird room at the Natural History Museum. Elected an Honorary Fellow in the AOU in 1917, he was killed during a bombing raid on London during World War II.

The two (Elected) Members who had died were Charles Otis Whitman (1842–1910) and Manly Hardy (1832–1910). Whitman was born in Maine, obtained an undergraduate degree and M.A. from Bowdoin College, and completed a doctoral degree at Leipzig University in Germany in 1878. He held a number of positions here and abroad, eventually becoming head of the Department of Zoology and curator of the Zoological Museum at the University of Chicago in 1892, positions he held until his death. Much of his research was on the evolution of color characters in pigeons and the natural history of this group. A member of the National Academy of Sciences (1895), he also founded the *Journal of Morphology* and served for a number of years as its first editor. Hardy was also born in Maine, and he spent his entire life there. Through his fur-trading business, Hardy became known as a talented naturalist and an authority on languages and traditions of the Native Americans with whom he traded. After 1890, when he gave up his active business, he amassed a private collection of mounted and unmounted birds regarded as one of the finest private collections in the country, having specimens of nearly every species of bird that occurred in North America. For over 40 years, he contributed natural-history articles to *Forest and Stream*, most often attempting to correct erroneous statements made in articles by previous authors.

Five Honorary Fellows were elected. Alphonse Dubois (1839–1921) was Belgium's leading ornithologist, appointed in 1869 as Conservator of the Section of Higher Vertebrates in the Royal Museum of Natural History in Brussels, a position he held until he retired in 1914. C. E. Hellmayr (1878–1944) of Munich was considered the authority of his time on Neotropical birds. From 1922 to 1931, he was in residence at the Field Museum in Chicago, where he worked to complete Cory's *Catalogue of the Birds of the Americas*, for which he received the Brewster Medal from the AOU in 1929. Hermann von Ihering (1850–1930) was born and raised in Germany

and arrived in Brazil in 1880, where he would reside for the next 40 years before returning to Germany. In 1893, he was named Director of the State Museum of São Paulo, a position he held until he resigned in 1916 when Brazil entered World War I. Herman Schallow (1852–1925) was one of the first foreign members of the AOU, being elected in 1884. A banker by trade, he had a remarkable career in ornithology, publishing books on many topics, including biographies of famous ornithologists. W. P. Pycraft (1868–1942) was an assistant in the Zoology Department of the Museum of Natural History in London for 35 years, retiring in 1933. He was a prolific writer of popular articles and books on natural history.

Four Corresponding Fellows were also elected. A leading authority on the birds of Australia, Gregory M. Mathews (1876–1949) would become an Honorary Fellow in 1927. Also an authority on Australian birds, W. H. Dudley Le Souëf (1856–1923) was one of the founding members and the first secretary of the Royal Australian Ornithologists' Union. John Lewis James Bonhote (1875–1922) was very active in the British Ornithologists' Union and the British Ornithologists' Club and was the Secretary for the Fourth International Ornithological Congress in 1905. The son of the famous painter Sir John Everett Millais, John G. Millais (1865–1931) was a soldier, naturalist, big-game hunter, writer, and explorer. He also was considered one of the best bird artists of his time, and his illustrated works are collectors' items today.

For the first time, the majority of the talks presented during the next three days were "illustrated by lantern slides." Also, Louis Agassiz Fuertes presented a talk on "Call Notes of Tropical American Birds" that was "audibly illustrated," which may have been the first time that bird songs were played during a talk at an AOU meeting. On the first night, members were invited to the home of William L. Baily (1861–1947), one of the founders of the Delaware Valley Ornithology Club, among the oldest bird clubs still in existence today. On the second night, there was a smoker at the museum hosted by the ornithology section.

At the end of the meeting on the afternoon of the third day, resolutions were adopted thanking the academy, the local committee, Mr. and Mrs. Baily, and the Zoological Society of Philadelphia. Another resolution accepted J. J. Allen's resignation as editor of *The Auk* and thanked him for his 36 years of continuous editorial service. A last resolution regretted that William Dutcher was unable to attend the meeting and wished that "his health will soon be restored." Unfortunately, that was not to happen. Dutcher had suffered a stroke in October 1910, at the peak of his distinguished career as a bird conservationist, that left him paralyzed and unable to speak until his death in 1921.—KIMBERLY G. SMITH, *Department of Biological Sciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701, USA; e-mail: kgsmith@uark.edu.*