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History of the Zoology Section of the Iowa Academy of Science

PAUL MEGLITSCH¹

During the early years, all papers presented at the annual meetings of the Iowa Academy of Science were delivered at general session. Evidently a number of members felt that they would be better able to discuss and appreciate the papers if they were given at sectional meetings. This had the further advantage of permitting the inclusion of more papers in the program. Professor L. S. Ross, then secretary of the Academy, suggested in 1914 that papers be given at sectional meetings. In 1916 this was done for the first time.

As one of the original sections, the Zoology Section has had a relatively uneventful history. The cumulative interests of the Zoology Section have been altered, from time to time, by the creation of other sections, and by differing affiliations of some disciplines. In the 1917 *Proceedings*, papers were printed under six sectional headings: Geology, Home Economics, Physics, Botany, Zoology, and Chemistry. Over the next decade, a considerable number of papers in fields allied to zoology were given.

One would infer from Secretary James H. Lees' remarks in his annual report that there must have been some discussion of how the applied sciences should be fitted into the Academy program: "It should not be forgotten that all so-called 'applied science' is simply 'pure science' fitted to human needs and made to minister to human betterment. There can be no higher aim in research than that of helping humanity rise to higher planes of physical well-being, of mental achievement, and of moral powers."

Consonant with this point of view, a series of papers which reported on studies related to various applied fields, sometimes in allied fields rather than zoology *per se*, have appeared over the years as a part of the zoology program. I have chosen a few titles to exemplify this aspect of the zoology program, all given during the first decade of its existence.

The general field of health was included in the Zoology Section during those early years. As a result, some papers dealing with bacteriology appeared as a part of its program. Later, the bacteriologists met with the botanists. Some representative papers include: "Medical work in the war," by D. J. Glomset, "Swimming pool sanitation," by J. J. Hinman, and "Resistance of streptococci in germicidal agents," by Henry Albert.

Then, as now, work in fields related to agriculture was a more or less consistent constituent of the zoology program. Work on the physiological, parasitological, and ecological aspects of domestic plants and animals appears frequently. Among the early ones are: "The 1921 outbreak of clover leaf weevil in Iowa," by H. E. Jacques, and "The protein requirements of practically mature fattening cattle," by C. C. Culbertson and J. E. Evvard.

Until quite recent years, when a separate Conservation Section was organized, a series of papers devoted to fish and

game animals, and to the management of our natural environment for wildlife, generally was a feature of the zoology program. As in other fields, this interest is shown in the early years of the Zoology Section. Among the papers are: "The food of the short-nosed garpike (*Lepidosteus platostomus*) in Lake Okoboji," by G. E. Potter, "Notes on the food of the yellow perch in Cayoga Lake," by W. A. Hoffman, "Successful mink-farming in Iowa," by I. L. Ressler, "Food of fishes in relation to fish culture," by W. de Ryke, and "Keeping Iowa's waters pure," by George Bennett.

The traditional interest of the Zoology Section in various aspects of science education is reflected in some of the papers given during the first decade. An early example is H. R. Werner's 1920 paper, "Methods of teaching parasitology." Until the formation of the Science Teaching Section, such papers were a relatively regular part of the program.

In some areas the Zoology Section absorbed and later released members of more or less allied disciplines. Psychology was one of the original sections, but for several years no special session for psychologists appears to have been held. During these years one sees such titles as "Criteria of superior intelligence," by R. H. Sylvester, and "The mental and physical status of children entering the public schools," by J. H. Evans. Interestingly enough, for a time one section was called Psychology and Genetics, wherein some papers that would ordinarily have appeared in the Zoology Section were given.

During recent years the *Proceedings* has emphasized papers dealing with Iowa regional science. This is considerably less evident in the early years, where one sees such papers as "A biological reconnaissance of Okefenokee Swamp, Georgia," by E. L. Palmer and A. H. Wright, and "Some zoological notes from the Barbados-Antigua expedition," by C. C. Nutting.

Although dominated by professional reports in applied or pure disciplines, the program of the Zoology Section has included surprisingly diverse commentaries on other subjects only more or less related to the field of zoology itself. Among early examples of these are H. Hart's paper, "Sociology as a science," and Homer Dill's "The correlation of art and science in the museum."

One sees, too, something of the catholic interests of zoologists, and their alertness to the unusual in nature. Some of the eye-catching titles include: "The function of the paddle in paddlefish," by H. W. Norris, "An hermaphroditic crayfish," by I. L. Ressler, "A wasp with three pairs of wings," by J. L. Laffoon, "Notes of the occurrence of warts on cotton-tail rabbits in Iowa," by J. E. Guthrie.

It is truly fascinating to obtain old copies of the *Proceedings* and to follow the changing interests in some areas, and the enduring devotion to others, however the papers are assembled in the *Proceedings* itself. One comes to recognize in the zoologists of another generation something of one's own enthusiasm, and to see in their work the establishment of principles that are now taken for granted. I highly recommend it for a rainy afternoon.

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TABLE I. PERCENTAGE OF ZOOLOGY SECTION PAPERS IN VARIOUS CATEGORIES

Topic	Year									
	1917	1920	1925	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960
Number of papers	17	24	17	20	12	17	4	27	21	22
Anatomy and Descriptive										
Embryology	23	8	18	15	25	29		4	5	14
Physiology and Experimental										
Embryology		8	24	5	33	6	25	11	5	46
Faunistics and Systematics	59	46	12	45	17	24	50	33	10	14
Genetics and Evolution	6	4		10		6		18	10	5
Parasitology	6	8			8				24	14
Ecology		4	12			12		4		5
Behavior			12			6			10	
Science Educational				10	8	6				
Agriculture	6	4	23	20				15		
Conservation					8	6		15	33	5
Health		13				6	25			
General		4								

Such a pursuit must call attention to the changing emphasis on the subsidiary disciplines of zoology that has occurred over the past 60 years or so. The following table shows the percentage of papers that fall into the various divisions of zoology and allied fields that have been included with zoology during the years. It was not always easy to determine in what category to post some of the articles, but while someone else might have made a few different choices, the overall trends, I am sure, would remain the same.

One sees reflected in the papers presented at the annual meeting a gradual shift from the more descriptive phases of the science—atomy, descriptive embryology, systematics, and faunistic work—to the more experimental phases—physiology, experimental embryology, genetics, and the like. If anything, these shifts have occurred more slowly in the *Proceedings* than in national publications, as a result of the growing regional character of the journal.

The Zoology Section has remained one of the largest and

most stable sections of the Academy. In 1920 some 60 members of the Academy belonged to the Zoology Section, matched at that time only by the membership in the Botany Section. Some of the early members of the Zoology Section were especially active during the reorganization of the Iowa Academy of Science. Among these were C. C. Nutting, Herbert Osborne, and R. Ellsworth Call, the last of whom died in 1927.

It goes beyond the role of this short paper to list all of those who served the Zoology Section as section chairmen, or served the Academy in other ways. Their numbers would be extremely large. It is, perhaps, more to the point to encourage those who are long-time members of the Academy to devote an afternoon to the *Proceedings*, following the In Memoriam section where the last records of some of our long-lost friends and associates are to be found. It evokes memories of good times past, of men whose work was so important in the history of science and science education in Iowa.