botany had no professional representative in the expedition; but considerable collecting and field work done by Mr. Willis Nutting. A fine series of two species of bats were secured at Antigua.

As already indicated, Mr. John B. Henderson will report on the Mollusca. The reef fishes will be reported on by Dr. Barton W. Evermann, Professor W. K. Fisher will attend to the Asteroidea and Holothuroidea, while the writer will probably report on the Hydroida and Aleyonaria. The other groups have not as yet been assigned.

A large series of excellent photographs, including moving picture films, was secured by Mr. Maurice Ricker, official photographer of the expedition.

C. C. Nutting

State University of Iowa,
August 30, 1918

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN CERAMIC SOCIETY

A journal that is a pioneer in its field is always the subject of most careful scrutiny. When that field is representative of one of the oldest phases of human endeavor the cause for attention to the new publication is multiplied many fold. There has now appeared the first issue of the *Journal of the American Ceramic Society,* a monthly journal devoted to science and technique of the ceramic industries.

The American Ceramic Society belongs to the older family of scientific societies in the United States. The first meeting of the society, which was in reality a little family gathering of a small group of ceramic enthusiasts, was held in Columbus, Ohio, in February, 1899, and from that meeting grew the present organization due largely to the guiding genius of Professor Edward Orton, Jr., of Ohio State University. The society is, therefore, in its twentieth year of vigorous and active life. The membership has increased from that early day until at present there are over 1,000 enrolled in the society.

In the American Ceramic Society, the term ceramic is synonymous with "silicate industries" and the interests and activities of the society include all branches of the clayware, glass and cement industries as well as enameled wares of all kinds and in addition other closely allied products are included, chief among which are abrasives, gypsum and lime. Few people realize the gigantic proportions of these ceramic industries. The products of the three major divisions alone (clayware, glass and cement) aggregate over $400,000,000 per annum.

In the earlier days the society consisted of one main organization only. With increased activities and with enlargement in its scope of usefulness it became necessary to organize local sections and student branches as shown in the following list.

LOCAL SECTIONS

St. Louis Section
Chicago Section
Central Ohio Section
Northern Ohio Section
West Virginia Section
Beaver Section
New England Section
New York State Section
New Jersey Section
Pacific Coast Section

STUDENT BRANCHES

Ohio State University Student Branch
New York Student Branch
University of Illinois Student Branch
Iowa State College Student Branch

The publication work of the society has, up to the present time, been confined to the issuing of our annual volume of *Transactions.* Twenty years ago this was a small feeble effort, very creditable for the then-existing state of our knowledge of the science of the silicate industries. This annual volume has shown continuous growth and the 1917 volume comprises 707 pages of well-edited contributions. The American Ceramic Society's *Transactions* have, for many years, been known throughout the world as the standard reference books on the silicate industries.

This remarkable growth in strength and influence of the society has made it essential that periodical publication of the researches and other activities of the society members be

undertaken and the monthly *Journal of the American Ceramic Society* is the logical result.

The first number is a very attractively prepared journal of seventy-two pages. It is well edited and well printed on good paper. The contents of the first number are as follows:

Editorials:
- To the Public
- The Fuel Curtailment Orders
- The National Research Council
- Edward Orton, Jr.

Original Papers and Discussions:
- Kaolin in Quebec—Keele
- Special Pots for the Melting of Optical Glass—Bleininger.
- The Effect of Gravitation upon the Drying of Ceramic Ware—Washburn
- Test of a Producer Gas-Fired Periodic Kiln—Harrop
- Notes on the Hydration of Anhydrite and Dead-Burned Gypsum—Gill

Meetings of the Local Sections, American Ceramic Society

The present officers of the society are:
President—Homer F. Staley,
Vice-president—A. F. Greaves-Walker,
Treasurer—R. K. Hursh,
Secretary—Charles F. Binns,
Trustees—
A. F. Hottinger,
E. T. Montgomery,
R. D. Landrum.

Membership in the society is open to any one interested in any branch of the ceramic industries and application should be made to the society. All members receive the *Journal* gratis.

C. F. B.

ENGLISH VITAL STATISTICS

THE *Journal* of the American Medical Association reports that the English registrar-general's seventy-ninth annual report on vital statistics for the year 1916, which has just been published, is of unusual interest, because in that year the war existed long enough to affect the figures considerably. The birth rate was 20.9 per thousand living, and was the lowest on record. It was 4.6 below the average for the ten years 1905–1914 (which were practically unaffected by the war). On the whole, the reduction of natality, which amounted to about 12 per cent. on the figures for 1914, is less than might have been expected, and compares favorably with the experience of other belligerent countries. The civilian death rate was 14.1 per thousand living, and was slightly below the average of the decennium before the war. The rate of 1916 is considered to be the lowest recorded, provided allowance is made for the effect of enlistment on the population. The standardized mortality of males ordinarily exceeds that of females. Up to 1860 the excess was not more than 9 per cent.; but in 1916, in consequence of the war, the excess amounted to 32 per cent. The most remarkable feature is the low death rate in the first quinquennium of life. It was much lower than any previously recorded, and was less than half the rate prevailing in the concluding years of the last century. The all-age mortality from typhoid and from scarlet fever was the lowest on record, while diphtheria and influenza were more fatal than the average. But the death rate from tuberculosis showed a further advance on the high rate of 1915, although the increase did not extend to young children, the mortality under 5 years being the lowest hitherto recorded. Cancer was more fatal in 1916 than in any other year, and cerebrospinal fever continued to be abnormally destructive. In view of the loss of life in the war statistics of childhood are of unusual importance. The births in England and Wales in 1916 were in the proportion of 1,049 males to 1,000 females, against 1,033 to 1,000 in the preceding five years. This proportion is by far the highest recorded during the last half century. It certainly bears out the old view, regarded by some as a superstition, that war increases the proportion of male births because nature endeavors to compensate for the loss of male life in warfare. Of the deaths at all ages, 41.1 per cent. were those of infants under the age of 1 year. These deaths correspond to a mortality rate of 91 per thousand births, the lowest ever recorded. It was below the average in the preceding decennium by 20 per cent. This decline was in part due to low diarrheal fatality, but the greater part of it is accounted for under other diseases less subject to climatic