

SCIENCE

VOL. LIX

APRIL 25, 1924

No. 1530

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SCIENCE: A Weekly Journal devoted to the Advancement of Science, edited by J. McKeen Cattell and published every Friday by

THE SCIENCE PRESS

Lancaster, Pa. Garrison, N. Y.
New York City: Grand Central Terminal.
Annual Subscription, \$6.00. Single Copies, 15 Cts.

SCIENCE is the official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Information regarding membership in the association may be secured from the office of the permanent secretary, in the Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D. C.

Entered as second-class matter July 18, 1923, at the Post Office at Lancaster, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE*

ORIGIN: EARLY EVENTS

THE American Association for the Advancement of Science had its inception in geology, and by the geologists of the New York Geological Survey. A bronze tablet on an old residence in Albany, New York, corner of Hudson Avenue and High Street, bears this inscription:¹

In this house, the home of
Dr. Ebenezer Emmons,
the first formal efforts were made, in
1838 and 1839, toward the organization of the
Association of American Geologists
the parent body of the
American Association for the
Advancement of Science
by whose authority this tablet is erected
1901

The several narratives of the early history differ only with reference to the credit for first suggesting the conference of American geologists. In a memorial to Lardner Vanuxem (1, 1848, 91-2) James Hall gave the credit to Vanuxem, and indicated that the purpose of the conference was the harmonizing of the Paleozoic stratigraphic nomenclature. At the Albany meeting of the association in 1856, Hall again describes the circumstances of the conversations, in 1838, 1839, of the New York Board of Geologists (10: 231).

The report of the committee on the Emmons House memorial (50: 392) quotes a letter, of date November 9, 1838, from W. W. Mather to Emmons, suggesting a conference, but saying that he had received the idea from Edward Hitchcock. And Hitchcock also recounted the early events in his address at the inauguration of the Geological Hall in Albany, Au-

* Address at the Seventy-fifth Anniversary Meeting of Association, Cincinnati, December 29, 1923.

¹ The association is indebted to Dr. John M. Clarke, for the conception and execution of the memorial project. The proposal was made through Section E in June, 1900. (49: 383). The expense was borne by a member and friend of the association, Hon. T. Guilford Smith. The story of the memorial tablet is told in the New York State Museum Bulletin, No. 52, pages 452-456.

Numerals in parenthesis, unless otherwise noted, refer to volume and page of the Association Proceedings.

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GEO. M. GRAY,

Curator, Woods Hole, Mass.

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