

# The AAAS on the Pacific Slope

Robert C. Miller  
*Secretary of the Pacific Division*

IT IS NOW A COMMONPLACE EXPERIENCE to have dinner in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, or Los Angeles and lunch the following day in Washington, Philadelphia, or New York; or, pursuing the sun in its westward course, one may easily travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific seaboard between dawn and dusk. But in the earlier years of the present century the continent still seemed very wide; and most people contemplated its crossing, if not with trepidation, at least with a sense of its being a major undertaking. To residents of the Pacific Coast, New York seemed almost as remote as London or Paris; on the other hand, persons living along the Atlantic seaboard found it actually easier to get to Europe than to California.

Under these circumstances it was inevitable that regional organizations of scientific workers should be formed in the rapidly growing West, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science was well advised to authorize the formation of western regional divisions.

Curiously enough, the initial steps leading to the formation of a Pacific Division were taken at Cleveland, Ohio, in the absence of most of the persons most vitally concerned and, indeed, in a certain sense because of their absence. At the Cleveland meeting of the Association, December 30, 1912–January 4, 1913, D. T. MacDougal, then a member of the highly important Committee on Policies of the AAAS, pointed out to his fellow committee members that, of the several hundred members of the Association residing on the Pacific Coast, only two were in attendance at the annual meeting. It was obvious that the distance was too great and the time and personal expense involved were too much to permit any large attendance of members from the Far West at eastern meetings.

Dr. MacDougal was himself particularly in a position to appreciate and to convince his colleagues of the difficulty. As director of the Laboratory of Plant Physiology of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, he had his headquarters in Washington, D. C., and his laboratory in Tucson, Arizona. The journey by rail took 5 days each way and if, as sometimes occurred, he had to make the round trip three times in a year, he found himself spending one month out of 12 on the train.

Of considerable importance in its bearing on subsequent events was the circumstance that the Associa-

tion had already decided, at its 1911 meeting, to hold a special meeting on the Pacific Coast in 1915, in honor of the international expositions that were being planned at San Francisco and San Diego to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. A committee to make arrangements for this meeting was accordingly appointed at the Cleveland meeting referred to above. This committee, as first appointed, included the following: W. W. Campbell (chairman), John C. Branner, Wm. Alanson Bryan, H. S. Carhart, Charles Lincoln



D. T. MacDougal

Edwards, William T. Foster, George Ellery Hale, M. W. Haskell, E. W. Hilgard, George H. Howison, O. P. Jenkins, David Starr Jordan, Thomas F. Kané, Vernon Kellogg, C. A. Kofoed, A. L. Kroeber, Andrew C. Lawson, E. P. Lewis, J. H. McBride, D. T. MacDougal, Lillian J. Martin, John C. Merriam, Agnes Claypool Moody, John Muir (died in 1914), W. E. Ritter, H. J. Ryan, Fernando Sanford, W. A. Setchell, John M. Stillman, and Benjamin Ide Wheeler. Subsequently it was enlarged through the addition of

Maxwell Adams, Melvin A. Brannon, Enoch A. Bryan, Henry Landes, A. O. Leuschner, Joseph F. Merrill, and Lyman B. Stookey.



All of the members of the committee were residents of the West or of Hawaii. They were authorized "to hold in the name of the Association meetings of its members resident in that region, for the purpose of considering the relations of the Association to the exposition in question, and if desirable, for the presentation of scientific programs. The expenses incurred shall be met from funds in the hands of the permanent secretary. . . ." It appears further to have been understood, as a result of Dr. MacDougal's representations to the Committee on Policies, that the western regional committee would also explore the possibility of setting up a Western Division of the Association, although this was not recorded as a part of the formal instructions of the committee, possibly because there was at that time no provision in the Association's constitution for the formation of regional groups. At all events, the new committee, whether with or without authorization, began immediately to study this problem and, though officially designated the Committee on the San Francisco Meeting, it became also in effect a committee for the organization of a Pacific Division.

The committee held its first meeting at the University of California (Berkeley) on April 12, 1913, with about 20 members present, Dr. Campbell in the

chair and E. P. Lewis serving as secretary. Plans for the 1915 meeting in San Francisco were discussed and subcommittees were appointed. Then, according to the report of the secretary, "the question of the organization of the Pacific Coast members into a geographical division with power to hold meetings and present scientific programs was discussed at length."

David Starr Jordan, a man of tremendous influence at this period, did not accept the idea readily, fearing that the national association would disappear in a group of ever-increasing divisions. Dr. Campbell, on the other hand, was convinced of the wisdom of Dr. MacDougal's view, and their joint counsel prevailed, with the result that "a motion that it be the sense of the committee that such a division should be established was unanimously carried; but it was the general feeling that the success of such a step would depend upon the attitude of the Pacific Association of Scientific Societies."

"It is to be hoped," Dr. Lewis' report continues, "that this association will merge itself into the Pacific Coast Division of the American Association and its constituent societies become affiliated with the latter. The executive committee [consisting apparently of Dr. Campbell alone] was asked to consider the whole matter and to endeavor to secure the cooperation of the various scientific societies on the Pacific Slope."

Ten days later, on April 22, 1913, Dr. Campbell attended the meeting of the Council of the Association held in Washington, D. C., where he presented the views of his committee, with the result that the committee was authorized to secure an associate secretary for the Pacific Coast and "in the absence of constitutional authority, to designate its meetings at which scientific programs are presented as 'Meetings of the Pacific Coast Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science,'" (*Science*, May 2, 1913, p. 662). At this meeting of the Council, powers were also delegated to the Committee on Policies of the AAAS "with respect to all arrangements concerning the organization of the Pacific Coast Division of the Association, including all matters relating to the affiliation of the individual societies composing the present Pacific Association of Scientific Societies."

In the minutes of this meeting the western committee, originally designated as the Committee on the San Francisco Meeting, is referred to simply as the "Pacific Coast committee." However, it was authorized to and did carry out all arrangements for the very successful San Francisco meeting of the Association, August 2-7, 1915, which was a national, not a divisional meeting.

The Pacific Association of Scientific Societies, which figured prominently in discussions of a regional

division of the AAAS, had been formed in 1910 to promote cooperation among western scientific organizations. After successful annual meetings in 1911, 1912, and 1913, it had come to embrace 14 societies and represented a constituent membership of 2,167. Clearly, the attitude of this organization could be a determining factor in the success or failure of the new proposal. As Dr. Campbell stated subsequently (*Science*, April 30, 1915, p. 638):

The men and the societies that were making a success of the Pacific Association were identically the men and the societies that would be expected to make a success of the Pacific Division of the American Association. Evidently there must be no duplication. The only practicable solution required that the Pacific Association should give up its identity and that the forces which were active in the Pacific Association should be active in the work of the Pacific Division. It was evident that the Pacific Division offered important advantages over the existing organization, in part from the resulting unification of general scientific interests throughout America. The problem was approached in a sympathetic and unselfish spirit by all concerned, especially by the officers and more active members of the Pacific Association. . . .

The second meeting of the Pacific Coast committee was held in San Francisco on February 7, 1914, with Dr. Campbell in the chair and E. P. Lewis again serving as secretary. At this meeting Albert L. Barrows was elected associate secretary for the Pacific Coast, the position which the Council of the Association had authorized the previous year. George D. Louderback was present as a representative of the Pacific Association of Scientific Societies. A general plan of organization was adopted, the word "Coast" was dropped and the name shortened to "Pacific Division," and a subcommittee was authorized to draft a constitution.

The constitution was ready in time to be approved at the fourth and last annual meeting of the Pacific Association of Scientific Societies, held in Seattle on May 21-23, 1914, and was referred to the constituent societies of that association for their action. Since there would be no separate meeting of the Division in 1915, the change "whereby the Pacific Association was to become the Pacific Division of the American Association" was planned to take place at the end of the 1915 meeting of the Association in San Francisco, "provided that by that time two-thirds of the constituent societies have approved and signed the constitution and also provided that the Pacific Division is ready with its officers to take up the work of the Pacific Association."

By the following spring the required two-thirds vote had been secured, with two societies dissenting

and two not having taken action. J. N. Bowman, secretary of the Pacific Association, published the results of the balloting (*Science*, April 9, 1915, p. 526) and announced that the archives of the Pacific Association would be turned over to the new Pacific Division in August.

The societies making up the Pacific Association at the time of its voluntary dissolution were as follows:

Astronomical Society of the Pacific  
Biological Society of the Pacific Coast  
California Academy of Sciences  
Cooper Ornithological Club  
Cordilleran Section of the Geological Society of America  
Geographical Society of the Pacific  
Pacific Coast Paleontological Society  
Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association  
Pacific Slope Association of Economic Entomologists  
Philological Society of the Pacific Coast  
Puget Sound Section of the American Chemical Society  
San Francisco Section of the American Chemical Society  
San Francisco Section of the American Mathematical Society  
San Francisco Section of the Archaeological Institute of America  
Seismological Society of America  
Technical Society of the Pacific Coast

The position of the newly formed Pacific Division as successor in interest to the Pacific Association of Scientific Societies gained for it the immediate support of the most active scientific workers and organizations in the West and also, to a degree, influenced its character. The Division, for example, has never formed sections along the lines of the national organization, but has depended on its affiliated and associated societies, now 42 in number, to provide suitable technical programs in their respective fields. The character of the Division as a unified organization is maintained through annual meetings of the Council, interim meetings of the Executive Committee, and certain general sessions held at each annual meeting. One of these is the divisional symposium; another is the convocation for the presidential address. Additional general sessions are held as occasion may require or render desirable.

The first annual meeting of the Pacific Division was held in San Diego on August 9-12, 1916, with W. W. Campbell serving as president, A. L. Barrows as secretary, and D. T. MacDougal as chairman of the Executive Committee. An interesting feature of the meeting was the dedication on August 9 of a new museum and library building and a new concrete pier at the Scripps Institution for Biological Research (now the Scripps Institution of Oceanography) at La Jolla. Seven societies took part in the scientific program of the San Diego meeting, and the total registered attendance was 120.

It is interesting to compare with this the second San Diego meeting, held 31 years later (June 16-21, 1947), at which 19 societies held sessions for the reading of scientific papers, and the total registered attendance was just under 1,000. Apparently the founders of the Division were right in their belief that such a regional organization would serve an important function.

At the meeting of 1920, held in Seattle, action was taken—in accordance with similar action by the national organization—transferring to the jurisdiction of the newly formed Southwestern Division the States of Chihuahua and Sonora in Mexico, and the State of Arizona, which had figured prominently in the formation of the Pacific Division. Dr. MacDougal, who had served as president of the Pacific Division from 1917 to 1919, was subsequently elected president of the Southwestern Division, a combination of honors few are likely to achieve.

The Pacific Division, as presently constituted, includes all members of the Association residing in Alaska, British Columbia, California, Hawaii, Idaho,

Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Meetings have been held each year since 1916, with the exception of 1918 and the period 1943-45, the lapse in each case being due to conditions imposed by war.

The 1948 meeting was held at the University of California, Berkeley, on June 21-26, under the presidency of Roy E. Clausen, with Howard S. Reed serving as chairman of the Executive Committee. Twenty societies participated in a program of some 350 scientific papers. The secretary was pleased to be able to state that membership in the Division had risen to the unprecedented figure of 3,644.

Dr. Clausen announced the election, as president for the ensuing year, of L. S. Cressman, professor and head of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Oregon and also that the Division had accepted the invitation of the University of British Columbia to hold its next meeting on the campus of that institution. The 30th annual meeting of the Pacific Division will accordingly be held in Vancouver, B. C., June 13-18, 1949. The Division looks forward with pleasure to its first Canadian meeting.



L. S. Cressman