

Association Affairs

The Boston Meetings of the Association: A Bit of Background

Raymond L. Taylor

Associate Administrative Secretary

THE 120th Meeting of the AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, the annual meeting for the year 1953, is also, officially, the Seventh Boston Meeting. The AAAS was conceived in Boston 106 years ago and, in some respects, this can be considered the ninth meeting in Boston and the tenth on the banks of the Charles—since the precursor of the Association met twice in that city and the young AAAS held its second meeting in Cambridge, in 1849. This year's gathering of scientists, industrial leaders, administrators, educators, engineers, and other science-minded professional people from all over the continent will come together for a common purpose suggested by the theme: "Scientific Resources for Freedom." In the final week of the year, it will be time once more to take stock both of current scientific research and of the problems that confront all scientists. Particular attention will be given to the nation's resources of scientific men, materials, and methods.

In meeting in Boston, again, the Association is returning to the city where its founding was planned and authorized, on September 24, 1847. It was at the eighth and terminal meeting of the Association of American Geologists and Naturalists on this date, more than a century ago, that the decision was made to reorganize the society as an enlarged American Association for the Promotion of Science. The chairman of the society at that time was William Barton Rogers (1804-1882), professor of geology and natural history in the University of Virginia, who, later, was to select Boston in which to found the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and to serve as its first president. When the new organization, renamed the AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, met in Philadelphia, September 20, 1848, a special resolution was passed that Professor Rogers, last president of the AAGN, henceforth should be recognized as the first president of the AAAS, and, in fact, he presided until his elected successor, William C. Redfield of New York, took office.

The AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE has other links with Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, from which, in 1874, it received its charter of incorporation. In 1837, John Collins Warren of Boston read a paper before the British Association for the Advancement of Science and was so impressed with the value of one large meeting devoted to all the sciences that, upon his return the following year, he began the active promotion of a parallel organization in America. He, too, was pres-

ent at the September 1847 meeting when the AAGN was reorganized. Since the British Association for the Advancement of Science, founded in 1831, is the prototype of the AAAS and of all similar associations for the advancement of science subsequently established throughout the world, it is particularly appropriate that a recent past president of the British Association, Dr. A. V. Hill, will deliver an address at this Seventh Boston Meeting.

The official First Boston Meeting of the AAAS, held in August, 1880, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, then located between Copley Square and the Public Gardens, was an occasion, scientific and social, long to be remembered. Lewis H. Morgan, the renowned anthropologist, was president of the Association, which then had 1,555 members. The address of the retiring president, George F. Barker, an outstanding chemist of the period, was on "Some Modern Aspects of the Life-Question." There were 979 registrants from more than 30 states, Canada, England, and Cuba, and 276 papers were read. As first past president of the Association and also as first president and founder of M.I.T., the host institution, it was eminently fitting that William Barton Rogers, though now 76 years of age, should serve as General Chairman and deliver an address of welcome. The local "Committee at Large" included Charles Francis Adams, Charles W. Eliot, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Asa Gray, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry W. Longfellow, Francis Parkman, and Josiah Quincy—to name but a few. Samuel H. Scudder and Edward Burgess were secretaries.

In this more leisurely, less complicated period, M.I.T. served complimentary lunches daily. The President and Fellows of Harvard University entertained the entire attendance at dinner in Memorial Hall. There were receptions, notably those by President and Mrs. Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, Mr. and Mrs. S. Endicott Peabody, and many open houses—including those sponsored by the Athenaeum, the Boston Society of Natural History, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society—and the City of Boston provided an excursion boat trip down the harbor complete with a collation. To facilitate reaching the sessions from the downtown hotels, "those cars passing by the Institute [were] designated by a white flag, with the letters A.A.A.S. . . ." The Western Union Telegraph Company and the American Bell Telephone Company transmitted the messages of the delegates gratis, the Post Office arranged to be open on Sunday morning, and the railroads not only had special rates for general convention travel but operated free trains to the White Mountains.

The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Association was celebrated at the Second Boston Meeting of August, 1897, with another distinguished anthropologist, Fred-

eric W. Putnam, who had served the AAAS as permanent secretary for 25 years, now the president. M.I.T. again was the host institution. The Copley Square Hotel was AAAS headquarters—with single rooms at \$1.00 to \$2.50. The address of Wolcott Gibbs, retiring president, and one of five surviving founders of the Association, was "On Some Points in Theoretical Chemistry." The Honorary President, Governor Roger Wolcott, took a personal interest in this meeting and delivered an excellent address. The papers read totaled 443 and the registration was 903.

By the time of the Third Boston Meeting, in 1909, once more on the former campus of M.I.T., the Association had changed its time of meeting from summer to the last week of December (primarily, because of the development of summer sessions on campuses), and the pattern of participation by a large number of scientific societies was well established. David Starr Jordan, eminent zoologist and university president, was president of the Association; the retiring presidential address, "A Geologic Forecast of the Future Opportunities of Our Race," was given by Thomas C. Chamberlin. Harry W. Tyler was General Chairman. There were 1,140 registrants, making this the largest AAAS meeting up to that time. Among the 404 papers read was "The Chemist's Place in Industry" by Arthur D. Little, founder of the firm which bears his name today. A national Bureau of Mines was recommended by the AAAS.

The Fourth Boston Meeting of December, 1922, with the celebrated Canadian anatomist, J. Playfair McMurrich, as president, was held principally on the new campus of M.I.T. though, as on previous occasions, there were events at Harvard University in Cambridge. The address of retiring president Eliakim H. Moore was "What Is a Number System?" Professor Samuel C. Prescott of M.I.T. was General Chairman. The Somerset was AAAS headquarters hotel. The exhibits, arranged for by a committee headed by Robert P. Bigelow, for the first time included a number installed by commercial exhibitors. It is gratifying to note that some of these pioneer exhibitors not only are still in business but will participate in this year's Exposition. The first of the annual addresses of the Society of the Sigma Xi at AAAS meetings was given by President Livingston Farrand of Cornell University on "The Nation and Its Health." The papers read totaled 1,019 and the registration was 2,339.

All local institutions of higher learning were hosts of the Fifth Boston Meeting of December, 1933. Sessions were held, principally, at Harvard, M.I.T., and at the Hotel Statler, AAAS headquarters. The exhibits, now the responsibility of a staff member, were in Harvard's Memorial Hall and, in number, exceeded those of all previous Expositions. It was a large and successful meeting despite the extremely low temperatures experienced by the entire East during this exceptional winter. The famous astronomer, Henry Norris Russell, was president of the Association, and presided at the address of the retiring president, John Jacob

Abel, eminent pharmacologist, on "Poisons and Disease." Again, Samuel C. Prescott served as General Chairman; A. Lawrence Lowell was Honorary Chairman. A much appreciated event was a complimentary testimonial concert given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra with Dr. Serge Koussevitsky conducting. The eleventh winner of the AAAS Thousand Dollar Prize was Reuben L. Kahn for the paper, "Tissue Reactions in Immunity," in the program of Section N. About 1,500 papers were read and there were 2,351 registrants, as usual from nearly every state and Canadian province.

Though, again, all local institutions were hosts of the Association, the Sixth Boston Meeting of December, 1946, was characterized by a much more intensive use of downtown hotels for session rooms. The Annual Science Exposition was located in the Cadet Armory near the Hotel Statler, AAAS headquarters. President of the Association was James B. Conant; the retiring president, Charles F. Kettering, gave his address, "A Look at the Future of Science," in Symphony Hall. David M. Little of Harvard University was General Chairman. The twentieth winner of the AAAS Thousand Dollar Prize was shared equally by T. M. Sonneborn, Ruth V. Dippell, and Winifred Jacobson for several papers on the mechanism of heredity in *Paramecium*, read before the American Society of Zoologists; and by Quentin M. Geiman and Ralph W. McKee for "Cultural Studies on the Nutrition of Malarial Parasites," read before the American Society of Parasitologists. A total of 2,736 persons registered and 1,332 papers were read. The first AAAS-George Westinghouse Science Writing Award was won by James G. Chesnutt of the San Francisco *Call-Bulletin* for a story on a bubonic plague preventive.

In summary, the records of all previous meetings in Boston do not fail to mention the warm spirit of hospitality and interest in the Association and its work shown by the people of this cultural center. The group of cities and suburban communities which comprise the Boston Metropolitan Area—now with a population of two and one-half millions—has one of the country's greatest concentrations of institutions of higher learning, and of libraries, museums, and scientific laboratories. New England is compact and New York is nearby, so that local and regional attendance added to the several thousand persons who will come from all parts of the continent to attend the programs of the Association's 18 sections and subsections, and the national meetings of the zoologists, geneticists, science teachers, meteorologists, the History of Science Society, and others, may make the Seventh Boston Meeting the second largest in the annals of the Association. In all, in national and regional meetings and cosponsored sessions, some 57 organizations will participate. With sessions for contributed papers, symposia, distinguished evening addresses, and a growing number of conferences, the Seventh Boston Meeting will be one of the most significant annual conventions in the long history of the Association. Of

the 15 past presidents of the Association now living, five are residents of New England. It is hoped that they—Karl T. Compton, James B. Conant, Harlow Shapley, Edmund W. Sinnott, and Kirtley F. Mather¹—and the others will be able to attend this year's meeting.

With its many historical landmarks, Boston itself is worth a visit at any time. Indeed, the "Points of Interest" are too numerous to describe in this year's General Program-Directory. Instead, each registrant will receive a complimentary printed handbook at the Main Registration-Information Center in the Mechanics Building. Founded in 1630, since colonial times, Boston has been a seaport, the banking and commercial metropolis of New England, and a great industrial center. In recent years, this city has become noted as the site of new and important developments in chemistry, electronics, and nuclear physics. Many of these new "scientific resources for freedom" will be on display in the 160-booth Annual Exposition of Science and Industry in Mechanics Building. It is particularly fitting that the General Chairman of this year's 120th AAAS meeting is Earl P. Stevenson, president of Arthur D. Little, Inc. Not only is he the leader of a company that has pioneered in the organized applications of science, but he is active in a number of national scientific organizations. His committees—the many persons who are working to make the Seventh Boston Meeting an unqualified success—will be listed later. The fruits of their contributions of time and thought will be apparent to those who attend this year's meeting.

The AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE continues to grow, both in personal membership and in affiliated professional societies and academies of science. In just the seven years since the Sixth Boston Meeting, the AAAS, now with a membership of approximately 50,000, has experienced a net

¹The other ten living past presidents are Liberty Hyde Bailey, Robert A. Millikan, Henry Norris Russell, Albert F. Blakeslee, Irving Langmuir, Arthur H. Compton, Anton J. Carlson, Charles F. Kettering, Elvin C. Stakman, and Roger Adams.

gain of more than 21,000 members. In 1946 there were 200 affiliates and associates; at this time, the number of affiliated and associated organizations is nearly 250. The Association's capacity for service to science, to scientists, and to society has been correspondingly enhanced. Fundamentally, the Association is its membership. Those who attend the Seventh Boston Meeting will do much to help chart its future course.

Montana and Wyoming Join the Western Divisions

As a result of requests from members in the states of Montana and Wyoming, the question of the incorporation of these states in the Southwestern and Pacific Divisions of the Association was given careful study by the administrative office. A poll of the members was taken to determine their preferences. Of the 76 replies received, 69 favored affiliation with one of the Divisions. Wyoming voted 24 to 1 for the Southwestern Division. The Montana vote was a tie with a majority in the eastern part of the state favoring the Southwestern Division and a majority of those in the west expressing a preference for the Pacific Division.

The Executive Committee of the AAAS at its meeting December 26–29, 1952, authorized the administrative officers to work out an acceptable distribution of Montana between the Divisions and approved the incorporation of Wyoming into the Southwestern Division. By action of the Executive Committees and Councils of the two Divisions (the Southwestern Division at Tempe, Arizona, April 22, 1953, and the Pacific Division at Santa Barbara, California, June 19, 1953), Wyoming and Montana east of the Continental Divide were made a part of the Southwestern Division and Montana west of the Divide was formally accepted as part of the Pacific Division.

Bozeman, Billings, Great Falls, and Helena are the major Montana membership centers which now become part of the Southwestern Division. Missoula, Hamilton, and Butte are now in the territory of the Pacific Division.



A New AAAS Emblem

THE Board of Directors of the Association has approved the design reproduced at the left as a symbol of identification with the AAAS. In the future, this design will appear on the symposium volumes and will be used for other appropriate purposes.

The Association will soon make available to its members lapel buttons and pins. (Keys will also be

provided if a sufficient number of orders for them is received.) The size will be identical with the illustration. The scalloped border and the lettering will be in rolled gold, the background in blue enamel, and the torch in red enamel. The key, if provided, will have the basic design superimposed on a black enamel background with a second rolled gold border.

Information on prices and how to order insignia will be sent to all members and will appear in our journals in the fall.

