

HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CONCHOLOGY

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In connection with his very useful index of papers published in the *American Journal of Conchology* (Philadelphia, 1865-1872), Aurèle La Rocque raised some questions (STERKIANA, Columbus, Ohio, no. 5, p. 43-51) which prompted us to search through the Department of Mollusks' files for the answers.

Although the Civil War had just ended, George W. Tryon was impatient to organize the Conchological Section at the Academy of Natural Sciences. Financially independent, the young 27-year old conchologist had already written several papers, including a bibliography of the conchological works of his 73-year old mentor, Isaac Lea. He was surrounded by an enthusiastic group of other naturalists who were vitally interested in mollusks and were willing to give time, money and specimens. The Journal was the rallying venture, as is attested in the "By-Laws established for the government of the Conchological Section (1867)." The charter members included Isaac Lea (age 73), Dr. Joseph Leidy (age 42), Dr. W. S. W. Ruschenberger (age 58, navy surgeon, author of a popular book on conchology), John Ford, (age 38 and of *Olividae* fame), S. Raymond Roberts (age 20 and, later, author of the *Cypræidae* in the *Manual of Conchology*), T. A. Conrad (age 62 and never very sympathetic towards Tryon), and others.

The Journal came at an interesting time. The Academy was 53 years old, Thomas Say had been dead 30 years, the Smithsonian was awakening conchologically under William Stimpson, Edward S. Morse was raking the ashes of the Portland Museum and getting ready to join Putnam and Hyatt at the Essex Institute. Pilsbry was three years old, and Charles W. Johnson was being born. Within carriage drive of the Academy, and attendants of the Conchological Section meetings were S. S. Haldeman, Charles M. Wheatley, W. D. Hartman, W. G. Binney and others.

A prospectus was written by Tryon, passed on by the above gentlemen, and sent out in late 1864. The first number was published on February 25, 1865. Tryon financed the Journal. It evidently was too much of a drain on his resources, and he stopped the publication after the May 15, 1872 issue (vol. 7, no. 4). Simultaneously Tryon was Chairman of a fund raising committee to raise money for the new (and present) building for the Academy on Logan Circle.

The Publication Committee (C. F. Parker, shell collector, librarian for the section, and owner (?) of Godey's *Lady's Book Office* at 6th and Chestnut, and Tryon) in 1868 reported that 250 copies of each number had been printed,

As of 1867, they had only 52 paid subscribers and 17 gift or exchange subscribers. The 1872 books show a total 109, but there must have been other sales, as indicated by receipts from such book dealers as A. E. Foote (Philadelphia), Trübner and Co. (London), Asher and Co. (Berlin) and Bailliére Bros. (Paris). Each dealer took about 12 sets on consignment. Bailliére went bankrupt in 1869. Among the exchanges were Crosse and Fischer (for the *Journal de Conchyliologie*), A. Morelet (France), Showalter (Alabama), Troschel (Prussia) F. Poey (Havana), P. P. Carpenter (Montreal), O. A. Mörch (Copenhagen) and the Smithsonian.

The list of purchasers is very instructive. Isaac Lea paid for Hugh Nevill (India) and Dr. James Lewis (Mohawk, N. Y.) in exchange for shells. Morse was in arrears at a time when the Smithsonian owed him money for drawings. The address changes are interesting: Gabb's was San Francisco, then Santo Domingo; R. E. C. Stearns' was Petaluma, Calif., then 11 Auburn St., Boston (visiting Gould or Anthony?), then California again; Robert Swift's was 1616 Locust St., Philadelphia, then c/o Thos. Bland, New York; Newcomb was Oakland, Calif., then Ithaca, New York. Among the other subscribers were well-known conchologists such as A. O. Currier, W. H. Pease (Sandwich Is.), Semper, J. G. Cooper, Dall, Meek, and Andrew Garrett (c/o Capt. W. H. Kelly, Papeeti, Tahiti).

The *Journal* was printed by Merrihew and Son, Philadelphia, who charged \$175.91 for printing vol. 3, no. 1. Lithographing for vol. 3 was \$370.00. Postage for a complete mailing of one number was evidently under \$3.00. Cost of hand coloring plate 17 (1869) was \$12.00; plate 1 (1870) was also \$12.00. On Oct. 14, 1870, the expressage on Dall's reprints was 35 cents. The subscription price was \$10.00 per volume. Tryon permitted a 25 percent discount to dealers. By 1868 the *Journal* was \$650.00 in debt (to Tryon) and the committee on publication stated "that the circulation of the *Journal* has declined to the extent

of 18 subscribers during the present year, and considerably more than half of the subscriptions yet remain unpaid."

I do not know, as yet, why the *Journal* ceased publication. It is probable that Tryon and others believed they could never reach a subscription list of over 150. Other matters were beginning to interest Tryon. Between 1873 and 1875 he published the first sumptuous, popular book on American sea shells, entitled "American Marine Conchology." There were 44 lithographic plates. According to a clipping from the "Naturalist's Leisure Hour" (by A. E. Foote?), only about 75 (or possibly 100) copies were published (50 hand colored at \$30.00; 25 plain india tint at \$18.00; and several (?) with both types of plates at \$42.00). From this costly venture, Tryon went on to his more successful "Structural and Systematic Conchology" and finally the great "Manual of Conchology." Just before his death (age 50 in 1888), he printed up a prospectus for the third series of the *Manual* which was to be (with Benjamin Sharp's help) on the Bivalvia.

Tryon was also heavily burdened at this period with the curatorial problems of a fast-growing collection. By 1868, the Academy had the largest and most complete collection in the Americas, and was second only to that of the British Museum. Thousands of species were pouring in from Hugh Cuming, Sowerby, Pease, Garrett, Lea, Conrad, Gabb, Mörch, Haldeman, Bland, Newcomb, Brot, Redfield, Cox, and Philippi, to mention only a few who were members of the Conchological Section at that interesting time.

To judge from the present-day list of 51 institutions in the United States and Canada which possess part or all of the *Journal*, I would hazard the guess that there are about 100 sets in the Americas and 100 elsewhere in the world. Of the 51 American holders, only 11 were subscribers during Tryon's day. The majority were probably given to colleges and public libraries by the survivors of the original subscribers. Others, especially the Texas and California

institutions, probably purchased copies from secondhand book dealers. I would judge that about 20 copies are in small, town libraries.

Complete sets of the Journal were still available as late as 1930. At present, individual volumes are available by writing to the Department of Mollusks, Academy of Natural Sciences, 19th and the Parkway, Philadelphia 3, Pa. Parts of volumes 2, 3 and 4 are available only to institutions. Below is the present inventory for anyone wishing to purchase copies (all in original wrappers; originally \$10.00 each in 1872). A complete set is probably worth, today, about \$150.00.

Volume	No. of copies	Sales Price
5	18	\$20.00
6	25	17.00
7	38	15.00

Parenthetically, it should be noted that E. R. Sykes published not only a list of the papers, arranged alphabetically by author, but also broke the subjects down faunistically and taxonomically (1901, *Digesta Malacologica*, no. 1, 46 pp., London).

The prospectus prepared by Tryon to announce the American Journal of Conchology is reproduced below.

(PAGE 1)

PROSPECTUS
OF THE
AMERICAN

JOURNAL OF CONCHOLOGY.

THE undersigned proposes to issue, early in next year, the first number of a quarterly publication bearing the above title.

Believing that the status of Conchology in the United States is such as to justify and demand a special exponent, and relying on the enthusiastic love of the Science which distinguishes its votaries for a generous and liberal support, he willingly assumes the responsibility

of publisher, together with the certainty of present pecuniary loss, which must necessarily attend an undertaking of this nature.

It is surely not expecting too much, to depend upon the unanimous and hearty support, and unremitting effort of those interested in Conchology, to increase our Subscription List as rapidly as possible; -- and perhaps on our part, it may be deemed almost superfluous to say, that after paying the expenses of the publication of the Journal as now projected, any surplus funds remaining, will be expended entirely either on its enlargement, or in providing more abundant illustration.

The American Journal of Conchology will be published quarterly in numbers of about 100 pp. each, printed on fine heavy paper, making a volume of 400 pp. per annum.

Each number will contain at least two carefully executed Lithographic Plates, colored by hand, and also the Portrait and Autograph of a distinguished American Conchologist.

(PAGE 2)

The Literary contents of the Journal will consist of

- Descriptions of New Genera and Species.
- Articles on Geographical, Bathymetrical and Geological Distribution.
- Anatomical Papers.
- Synonymy and Classification.
- Elaborate Reviews of New Books.
- Editor's Table: -

Including Notices of all Works published, and of all Conchological Papers in American and foreign periodicals, and Transactions of Learned Societies, with interesting extracts from them and synopses of their contents - Announcements of new works in preparation - Notices of the various public and private Museums --- of Collections for sale or exchange - Answers to Inquiries of Correspondents - Obituary.

Conchologists are earnestly requested to contribute papers immediately, as the first

number of the Journal will be published as soon as a sufficient quantity and variety of MSS. is at our disposal.

GEORGE W. TRYON, Jr.,
625 Market Street,
Philadelphia.

November 30, 1864

(PAGE 3)

TERMS

Subscriptions in advance, Ten Dollars per annum.

The work will be sent throughout the United States post paid.

Single Numbers for sale at Three Dollars each.

In Europe all the principal booksellers and shell dealers will receive subscriptions and supply the Journal.

(P. O. address)

186

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