The Lessons of History

A Historian Reflects on 100 Years of American Botany

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Part 1. Early History of American Botany and Founding the BSA
(Unidentified American Botanist)
Liberty Hyde Bailey (1858-1954) (becomes President in 1926)
Charles Reid Barnes (1858-1910)
Author of Minority Report Recommending Founding the
BSA (President in 1903)
“Founding Father of BSA”
Initial Twenty-Five Members

- J. C. Arthur
- G. F. Atkinson
- L. H. Bailey **
- C. R. Barnes
- C. E. Bessey
- N. L. Britton
- E. G. Britton
- D. H. Campbell
  ** Resigned in 1898
- * Did not accept election
- F. V. Coville
- D. C. Eaton *
- W. G. Farlow *
- E. L. Greene
- B. D. Halstead
- A. Hollick
- C. Macmillan
- B. L. Robinson
- C. Sargent
Initial Twenty-Five Members (continued)

- F. L. Scribner
- J. Donnell Smith
- R. Thaxter **
- W. Trelease
- L. F. Ward*
- W. P. Wilson
- L. M. Underwood
- * Did not accept election
- ** Resigned in 1898
William Trelease (1857-1945)
First President of Society in 1894
Proposed Names

- American Botanical Society
- Botanical Society of America
- Society of American Botanists

- Botanical Society of America was selected for no other discernable reason than how it sounded to members
First Council Minutes of BSA,
Hotel St. George, Brooklyn 1894

...
Nathaniel Lord Britton (1857-1934)  
First Vice President of BSA  
(becomes President 1897)
Beverly Thomas Galloway (1863-1938)
President 1903-1904. Address of 1903 Expresses Concern with “Multiplication of Botanical Organizations”
ELEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING COUNCIL

The Council met in the
Herbarium of the time
of Dunn at 10th Avenue
Feb. 29, 1904.
Present Cowles, Barron
Robinson, Hollick and
MacDougall.

The Appliciaon for a
grant of $2,000 to be used in
an investigation of Ferns;
was discussed. The plan
presented entailed making
some collections in Finne
Schweiterland, and Scania.
The applications was trans
mitted to the Society with
a recommendation of
favorable action.

D. J. Cowles was nomi
nated as the official delegates
to the International Botanical
Congress to be held in Vienna
in June 1904.

The annual report of
the Committee on the affairs
of the Botanical Society of
America to other biological
organizations together.
with a transcript of the result of the canvass of the membership of all of the societies concerned was presented.

The report of the committee was as follows:

1. The committee, in accordance with instructions, made a full canvass of the question of merging, and conferred with committees appointed by the society for Plant Morphology and Physiology, and the Mycological Society.

2. As a result of this canvass and conference, certain tentative propositions for merging were agreed upon by the members of the respective committees, and then submitted to the members of the respective societies for a tentative vote.

3. To record this vote, the circular containing the propositions was sent to one hundred and five botanists representing the different interested societies, and in answer eighty-five replies were received. As a result of this tentative vote, it appears that a considerable majority of the botanists are agreed upon the following propositions:

   a. To merge existing societies under the name of the Botanical Society of America.

   b. To divide the new society into sections.

   c. The society to consist of members and fellows.

   d. Fees of members and fellows to be two dollars per year; no grants; fees to cover running expenses only.

   e. Members to be nominated by sectional committees, to be approved by council, and elected in the usual way; requirements for membership to be agreed upon by council, after federation.

   f. Fellows to be chosen by council from among members; requirements for fellowship to be agreed upon by council.

   g. Each section to elect alternately, every two years, a chairman and recorder.
h. Government of society to be vested in a council, consisting of the chairman and recorder of each section, and the president and secretary of the society; the president to serve two years, the secretary five years; the other members each for two years; the election of chairman and recorder taking place alternate years enables half the council to hold over each year.

i. Meetings to be held annually; place and program to be arranged by council; one day to be devoted to general meeting; remainder of time to be given to sectional meetings.

Your committee submits the foregoing for such action as the Society deems best.

Respectfully,

E. T. Galloway,
C. R. Barnes,
Charles H. Bessey, per E.
Committee.

EXHIBIT.

A. Propositions presented to interested botanists and their votes thereon.

B. Summary of vote; actual vote; vote on percentage basis.

C. Vote by Societies.
In January, 1906 Committee on the Federation of Botanical Societies recommends that BSA merge with Society for Plant Morphology and Physiology and the American Mycological Society.

Total combined membership stands at 119.

First meeting of the new Council of the BSA takes place on December 19th, 1906 at NYBG.

Name used for first three years: A Union of the Botanical Society of America, The Society for Plant Morphology and Physiology and the American Mycological Society.
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF BOTANY

VOL. 1
JANUARY, 1914
NO. 1

INTRODUCTORY

With this issue the American Journal of Botany takes upon itself to assume the responsibility of the Botanical Society of America and the American Botanical Council. This journal is dedicated to the advancement of botany, botanists, and botanical science. The purpose of the journal is to stimulate and maintain an active interest in botany among botanists. It is to serve as a means of communication among botanists, botanic gardens, and universities.

Botany is the science of plants, their classification, and their relationships to other living organisms. It is a branch of biology that studies the structure, function, growth, reproduction, and development of plants. Botany is divided into several sub-disciplines, including morphology, physiology, taxonomy, and ecology.

The American Journal of Botany publishes original research articles, reviews, and comments on all aspects of botany. It is a valuable resource for botanists, students, and anyone interested in the science of plants.
Annual Botanical Dinner, Washington, DC, 1916
Summer Meetings of BSA, Laramie, Wyoming, 1928
5th International Botanical Congress, Cambridge, 1930, Morphology Group
Officers of IBC Congress, Ithaca, NY, 1926
International Council of Scientific Unions, 1933 and The Relations between Botany and Zoology
Elizabeth Britton (1858-1934)
Sophia Hennion Eckerson (b. 1866-d.?), IBC, Ithaca, NY, 1926
Esther Wade, Botany Field Trip, Garrett Bay, Wisconsin, 1919
Students at University of Chicago Field Course in Botany
Local BSA Meeting with Torrey Botanical Club, NYBG, 1942
Part II. The Post-War Period
(W. J. Stern in Panama, 1959)
Plant Science Bulletin
Founded in 1954; First Issue in 1955
(Issue below on the 1993? Centennial)
A herbarium technician studies herbarium specimens of seed plants collected by Henry Thoreau when he "traveled widely in Concord." These plants were collected between 1850 and 1856.

Many people think
that botanists collect plants
and give them names,
and some do . . . .
but
Guide to Graduate Study in Botany  First Appears in 1965
Botany as a Profession Booklets
ALL BOTANISTS!

to the call! Stir your minds!
Get off your butts and begin
a phalanx of letters to Washington in support of the amendment to the Rare and Endangered Species Act of 1973 (to add the words “and plants”) so that botanists can share in the Federal research funds now flowing to the states for work on rare and endangered species (which has, so far, been because of the wording of the 1973 bill, all gone to animal work — “fish and wildlife” only)!*

* see over p. c. r. bell
univ.
BSA Goes Global

1974 Russian Festival Tours
FROM $285 plus air fare

FINNAIR
pride of scandinavia
Peter Raven President, 1975
with G. Ledyard Stebbins President, 1962
BSA’s America-China Exchange Program
First Designs for BSA Logo, 1978

A LOGO FOR THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY

As noted in the Bulletin for March 1978, the Council is considering having a logo for the Society. Designs were submitted to the Secretary, Dr. Holmgen, and are reproduced below. The membership of the Society is invited to vote for their favorite design and the choice will be submitted to the Council during the 1978 meeting in Oklahoma. Please send your choice to Dr. Patana Holmgen, The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park, Bronx, NY 10458 by 1 April 1978. Your vote is important!
The Canadian Botanical Association/L’Association Botanique du Canada
and
The Botanical Society of America

BANQUET 1980
Tuesday, July 15 - 7:00 pm

Program
Dr. Nancy G. Dangeard, President CBA/ABC, Presiding
Grace
Toasts to Her Royal Majesty The Queen
Toasts to The President of the United States of America

Dinner
Introduction of the Head Table Guests
Chairman’s Remarks
Presentation of Awards

Adjournment

The Annual Presidential Address of the Botanical Society of America entitled
"Bring Back the Amateurs to Botany" will be delivered in the P.A. Woodward
IRC Theatre #2 starting at 9:00 pm by Dr. Herbert G. Baker, President BSA.
Final Design for BSA Logo
Part III. The Living History of the BSA (1989-present)
(Grady and Barbara Webster, Past President, 1993 and 1983 Respectively)
Crisis of Identity in BSA 1990

- Select Comments in Favor of Retaining Name:
  - “Definitely!”
  - “Most adamantly!”
  - [Change Name?]-- “No way!”
  - “Don’t do it!!!”
  - “Never change the name!”
  - “A rose is a rose is a rose. We should be teaching people what the word botany means--not dropping it.”
  - “This is an absolutely ridiculous idea.”
  - “If I had 100 votes I would vote 100 times no!”
Crisis of Identity in BSA 1990 (Continued)

- “It would be suicidal to change the name!”
- “’Botanical’ is good! It fits a downsized world because it has primary producers in its portfolio.”
- “I cannot express strongly enough how much I oppose a name change.”
- “Ridiculous idea to change name.”
- “Not necessary.”
- “Change it and I’ll drop membership!”
- “Before reading the letters etc. in PSB I avoided calling myself a ‘botanist’ but I came to realize it is all right to be one!”
The BSA Enters the New Millennium
1978 Virginia
1989 Bruce Peninsula, Ontario
1998 Baltimore
1995 Baja, Mexico
2001 New Mexico
Special Thanks

- Centennial Planning Committee
- Bill Dahl, Wanda Lovan, Amy McPherson, Claire Hemingway
- Judy Jernstedt, Beth Hazen
- Karl Niklas, Chris Haufler, Scott Russell, David Dilcher, Bill Buck, Anitra Thorhaug, Arthur Galston, Peter Raven
- Doug Holland, Andrew Colligan and the Library of the Missouri Botanical Garden; Susan Fraser and the Archives of the New York Botanical Garden
- Botany Libraries at Harvard University, Archives at Cornell University, University of Chicago, University of Florida
- Lee Kass and Kim Kleinman