

Notices

of the American Mathematical Society

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AMS in the Twentieth Century

The *Bulletin* and the Start of the *Proceedings*

This is the second in a series of columns about important figures and activities of the AMS during the past century. It is based on histories of the first and second fifty years of the AMS, written by Raymond Clare Archibald and Everett Pitcher, respectively. The first column in the series discussed Maxime Bôcher and the founding of the *Transactions*.

The *Bulletin* was the original publication of the Society, and the *Proceedings* grew out of it. Concerning the founding of the *Bulletin* in 1891, Archibald writes, "President McClintock reported...that the proposed bulletin should...contain, primarily, historical and critical articles, accounts of advances in different branches of mathematical science, reviews of important new publications, and general mathematical news and intelligence. ...The *Bulletin* started out with the title, *Bulletin of the New York Mathematical Society. A Historical and Critical Review of Mathematical Science*, and the only change in title during the next thirty years was the substitution of the word 'American' for 'New York', beginning with the fourth volume." This change occurred in 1894 at the time of the renaming of the Society, and the numbering of the volumes was started again from 1, the new volumes being called the second series. The subtitle was dropped in 1931.

Archibald writes about the early editors of the *Bulletin* and the quality of the articles: "For the 45 volumes of the *Bulletin*, 1891-1936, there were only three editors-in-chief [T. S. Fiske, the Society founder; F. N. Cole; and E. R. Hedrick]; with Hedrick's resignation this term was changed to 'managing editor'." Archibald reports that the first seven years of the *Bulletin* included eight articles by M. Bôcher, six by L. E. Dickson, four by J. E. McClintock, fourteen by G. A. Miller, seven by E. H. Moore, four by W. F. Osgood, and one by F. Klein. As to Cole, he writes, "The minute care and wisdom exercised in...editing is noticeable in every volume." He continues, "During Hedrick's administration the standard for the acceptance of material became necessarily high, and the effective presentation of the complex contents notable. The Society's debt to Hedrick in this regard alone is great, calling as it did for an enormous amount of personal attention to details. By order of the Council the *Bulletin*, v. 44, 1938, was dedicated to him, and has his portrait as frontispiece."

Pitcher takes this volume as a typical one from the point of view of its content: "The volume 44 of 1938...contained reports of meetings, book reviews, notes on conferences, appointments and deaths, abstracts of contributed papers, and research papers. There was a list of contributed papers (i.e. abstracts) with bibliographic information on subsequent publication, and an index. Finally, the list of officers and members, the bylaws and the report of the treasurer were a part of the volume in a separate issue."

He continues, "In 1930, the journal had been separated into gray issues, consisting exclusively of short papers, and green issues, consisting of everything else, though the color differentiation of the cover did not appear until 1931. The supplement constituting the membership list was covered in a bright yellow. ...After World War II, the volume of material offered for publication increased and so did the backlog of the two journals [the *Bulletin* and the *Transactions*]. ...An Emergency Publication Committee...was appointed. ...With some modification [its 1949] report was adopted by the Council and the committee discharged. There were two sets of recommendations.

"First, the gray issues of the *Bulletin* were to be published beginning in 1950 as a separate journal known as the *Proceedings of the American Mathematical Society*. The green issues were to continue as the entire content of the *Bulletin*. ...Second, a new publication called the *Memoirs of the American Mathematical Society* was to be created."

These recommendations were approved and were implemented partly in 1949 and partly in 1950. Pitcher continues, "With the year 1950, the gray issues of the *Bulletin* assumed independent identity as the...*Proceedings*.... Volume 55 from 1949 is the last volume of the *Bulletin* with the dual character. In 1950 the editors of the *Proceedings* reported that their backlog had been reduced but was still large and requested additional pages for the coming year. By the end of 1951, the *Bulletin*, the *Proceedings*, and the *Transactions* all stated that their backlogs were small."

—Anthony W. Knapp