A FOOTNOTE TO THE HISTORY OF MALACOLOGY
IN THE UNITED STATES
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Mrs. Martha B. Williamson of Los Angeles, California, was an active member of the American Association of Conchologists in the early 20th century. After she died in 1922 her collection went to the Los Angeles County Museum. What became of her extensive correspondence I do not know, except that one small box of it was brought to Stanford University by a friend of hers for deposit in the Stanford Library by her son. Among the Williamson material were several letters of special interest to us during the AMU’s 50th anniversary — from the founder of the American Association of Conchologists, John H. Campbell of Philadelphia. First, he sent to her a printed letter that was the initial membership letter and membership card to early members. Dated April 26, 1890, the letter comprises 29 pages, with addresses and statements of special interest. John H. Campbell heads the list as President, interest Cypraeidae. Charles W. Johnson is secretary, interest South American molusks. Among the 27 others one notes most of the preeminent malacologists of the period. Below the list Mr. Campbell wrote a special note to Mrs. Williamson: “I am honored to be included on your list.”

A transcription of this letter follows an appendix to the present note.

The actual correspondence consists of five letters from Mr. Campbell to a span of eight months. Did he, by one wonders, find time to write such missives? We are told Mrs. Williamson’s collection (not preserved) which he advocated to the museum.

LETTERS FROM JOHN H. CAMPBELL, ATTORNEY,
TO MRS. M. B. WILLIAMSON
Philadelphia, May 5, 1890. Madame: Yours of 28th ult. re-ceived is much pleased to have your name upon the rolls of the Association. Dr. Allyn, I expect several others. By same mail with your letter came one from Prof. Josiah Kent Mills College, Col., so that now are 29 California members. We have been growing rapidly and have now 39 members — pretty good for less than five weeks work! That doesn’t appear to be a bad start for the Association and I trust it will accomplish some useful results. We shall be pleased at any time to hear from you.

May 21, 1890. — Thanks for kind letter. As to suggestions you make, I think it would be well to defer action upon them until we have gathered in nearly all the conchologists in America, which at the present rate of increase is likely to take place before the end of the year. We are thus on the move. We have started from West Coast, and will come. The Association must be filling a want, for it seems to be popular from the start.

Nov. 11, 1890. — Thanks for the kind offer, but we promised when we started the Association that the members should be no expense. I had long thought that persons interested in shells would be willing to pay a little with a spirit of cooperation and that if we could get them to associate in systematic study, science would be benefited — and for that reason I booted the idea of not Association. After all the talk and writing it must be able to hold a convention and then we could provide for a small annual payment to cover expenses and could also employ a prominent scientist as president, instead of an amateur like myself. We would have done so in the beginning but we thought it better to

put a business man, used to organization, in at first to get the association started and then receive replaced by a prominent scientist. I am glad you take kindly to the idea of a U.S. Collection, and you can help it materially. I would suggest that you send 1) some very small specimens of the Halicotides, as we have already some magnificent big specimens; 2) a pair of fine N. easterlandi Dal.; 3) suites of the Pacific Coast Fossillae, except Loxo-
cerne crenulata, which we have.

Dec. 1, 1890. — Your list of San Pedro shells will be exceedingly valuable and I will be much pleased to receive a copy when published. If all the members would prepare similar lists, easy it would be to straighten out the nomenclature of American shells.

When I go to the Academy next, I will count the number of species of Malacites in the collection and send you word. It is a very fine and large collection, but with austerity and perseverance one can make a lot of it. I have mailed an invitation to Mr. Weeks of Brooklyn and hope to recruit him. I had already sent one to Dr. Draper but have not yet received a reply. Mr. E. H. White, Astoria, Oregon has joined, and by the way, Dr. J. C. Cooper, Wayward, Colo. has also joined. I am very much pleased. Members are coming in rapidly. 12 have been added since the Catalogue and some 20 new members have been suggested. The U.S. Collection will be a great success. We have already half filled our second case, and the specimens are very fine. If you ever get East, you will be delighted to see how creditable to the Association the Collection is.

Jan. 15, 1891. — I regret very much that your request not to announce your donations in Nautilus arrived too late. Mr. Pilbrow had promised to send me a proof of the association article but failed to do so. I think it would be well, though, to announce your donations with the others, but of course will comply with your wishes if you insist on it in the future.

Thank you for your promise to ask Dr. Cooper for his list of fossils.

In January Nautilus I announced my list of catalogues, with the Halicotides. If you find any error in it, kindly let me know. We must endeavor to straighten out the nomenclature if we can.

You might send, from time to time for the Collection, if you have them to spare, the Fossillaea. Flabellaria columna Revoue is the only species, the rest being removed from West Coast.

Mr. G. W. Lichtenstaller is now in San Francisco, and will probably publish a work on the Diatoma. He will doubtless collect some fine things for the Collection.

What happened to the Association and to the Collection? We may guess that the latter may have been merged into the holdings of the Philadelphia Academy, but why, after so brisk a start, did it fail? It was a failure of individualism, isolation, and if we could get them to associate in systematic study, science would be benefited — and for that reason I booted the idea of not Association. After all the talk and writing it must be able to hold a convention and then we could provide for a small annual payment to cover expenses and could also employ a prominent scientist as president, instead of an amateur like myself. We would have done so in the beginning but we thought it better to

THE AMERICAN MALACOLOGICAL SOCIETY
1931-1981
Marguerite C. Teckey

The American Malacological Union began as an idea in the fertile mind of Mr. Erland Longmire, an energetic and individualistic Norwegian gentleman who operated a small natural history museum and herbarium in Thomason, Maine. After discussing the merits of each in such an organization with his good friend, William J. Clench of Harvard ("Over a bowl of chop suey" recalls Dr. Clench), he dispatched a few of his friends to every person of his acquaintance of whom he had knowledge as being in any way interested in mollusks or their shells.

Response was so favorable that he named his movement the American Association of Conchologists, and called a meet ing to organize. The meeting was held by invitation of Dr. Henry A. Pilbrow at the Academy of Sciences in Philadelphia, in April, 1931, and as a result 56 members of twenty-five cents each were enrolled as charter members, and 29 of them attended the organizational meeting. Six charter members remain with the AMU, and three attended the half-century meeting.

A constitution and by-laws were adopted, and the name American Malacological Union proposed and accepted, and Dr. Pilbrow was elected to be the first president. Mr. Longmire declined to enroll. He chose instead to be Corresponding Secretary, but was not active. So many his members were incorporated with those of the Philadelphia Society Ingege S. Robertson of Buffalo, aided by her husband, Harold.

The following year a meeting was held at the U.S. National Museum at Washington, D.C. Several additions were made to the Constitution, and Dr. Paul Ritter was elected to succeed Dr. Pilbrow and to encourage 1933 meeting at Harvard.

Over the following decade the AMU grew slowly but at a steady pace. Annual meetings were held at Stanford University (Charles Henderson, President), Boston Museum of Science (President Longmire being out of the country and so unable to preside), the meeting was conducted by Vice-President Cahn
A revised Constitution was adopted in 1954, containing a clause relating to the Pacific Division and its prerogatives. In 1955, that group presented its annual meeting and went on to establish the AMU (Alf A. C. Smith). Peabody Museum at Yale University sponsored the event for the 1957 meeting (Ruth D. Turner). Dr. Pidley attended this meeting but died three months later at the age of ninety-five.

A report visit to the University of Michigan was made the following year (Alma La Roche). Then for the third time the AMU returned to its birthplace in Philadelphia (R. Tucker Abbott). Redpath Museum at McGill University at Montreal, Canada, hosted the 1960 convention (Katherine V. W. Palmer), and next year the AMU paid a third visit to the U.S. National Museum (Thomas E. Pullay). St. Petersburg again in 1962 (William R. Emerson) and the following year a third visit was made to the Buffalo Museum of Science (Albert R. Mead).

By now the AMU had achieved a recognized place among the scientific societies of the world, and listed among the corresponding members were names from such distant lands as Japan, the Philippines, Australia, South Arabia, the Netherlands. Today, twenty years later, may be added Germany, France, Oman, New Zealand, South Africa, Brazil, Belgium, Ireland, China, Thailand, Hong Kong, Austria, and Arab Gulf.

The annual report Bulletins have become a valued reference source that are eagerly sought after. Full papers of most of the papers read at annual meetings, together with a constantly updated membership list, are currently addressed.

The AMU went to New Orleans in 1964 as guest of Louisiana State University in New Orleans (John Q. Bucher), and adopted an extensive constitution, incorporating the By-Laws of the Pacific Division. Next year an invitation to return to Wagner College on Staten Island was accepted (J. J. Paredes), and the annual report of this meeting contained an index of all papers read since 1949.

By now membership approaches 800 had created an intolerable workload for Secretary-Treasurer, though relieved of a portion of her duties when in 1954 the Executive Council had created a new office, that of Publications Editor. George M. Moore was elected to fill it, succeeded in 1962 by Karl Jacobson who held the office until 1972 when he resigned and his duties assumed by Arthur H. Clarke. In 1962 the office of Secretary-Treasurer was separated and Jean M. Cate was elected AMU Treasurer, a post she held for three years. She was succeeded by Max Dean Richart who resigned in 1966 and Mrs. H.B. Baker elected. She served until 1971, then upon her retirement Myra Taylor was elected to the office, a post she now holds. Arthur H. Clarke served as Publications Editor from 1972 to 1975, when succeeded by Dee Durkee, Marion Hubbard served as Secretary from 1970 to 1974. Paul E. Jannetti was made Corresponding Secretary in 1971, and Constance E. Boone became Recording Secretary in 1976. Durkee, Taylor Jannetti and Boone continue to serve today and seem to have consolidated into a highly regarded body to conduct AMU business and produce the AMU Bulletin.

So the years rolled by, the annual AMU meetings red letter days on the calendar of most of the country's malacologists, professional and amateur alike. The friendly attitude of the professional malacologist towards the amateur has long been remarked upon, creating camaraderie reflected by the success of half a century's happy reunion.