

EARLY HISTORY OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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As the early minutes of the Academy are missing I think it may be of interest to give some details of its origin.

On Nov. 6, 1891, a small band of scientific students met and formed "The Science Association" of Los Angeles. Of that number Major E. W. Jones and I are, I think, the only surviving members. Some years later the name was changed, as "Christian Science" had entered the religious field and the notice of a science meeting led to confusion.

The primary inception of the society followed on a visit of C. R. Orcutt a botanist from San Diego who desired to see science associations established in all the towns of Southern California to be affiliated in one organization. This did not appeal to our members and our association was organized as an independent unit.

Our association flourished from the beginning. Its purpose then, as now, was to furnish free lectures on scientific and natural history subjects. Sections were formed in geology, botany, and astronomy for special study by those specially interested.

Our lectures were very well attended, proportionally better than they are at present when the population is so much more numerous.

The advent of the movies has seriously affected attendance at the public lectures unless they are accompanied by lantern illustrations.

In 1901 we began the publication of a monthly bulletin hoping to continue it as such. The expense of printing was more than we could assume so the monthly number was discontinued. Some years not more than 2 issues were published. Now we are able to support a quarterly issue. We may congratulate ourselves on even that modest accomplishment as we are the only scientific body in California that has been able to publish continuously for so many years. That we have been able to do so is due to the enthusiastic support of our members and especially to the late J. D. Hooker who was a generous contributor to our funds when an occasional deficit appeared.

It has been the ambition of some of our members to have, some day, a home of its own to house its library and possibly maintain a museum. Personally I do not favor the latter as we have in The Southwest and Exposition Park ample accommodations and facility for study in all branches of science. Before the present museums were

established we conceived the idea of combining a museum building and public library in one building in the Central Park, now Pershing Square. Mr. Guinn of the historical society, Miss Kelso then librarian, and myself approached the town council on the subject. Mr. Sumner Hunt the architect presented a plan to cost \$40,000 and the council agreed to put the matter to a vote at the next election. On the ballot there was joined to this an appropriation of \$25,000 to buy the block south of the present West Lake Park, and extend the lake.

The public looked on the latter as an attempt to load a mud hole on the city at an exorbitant price and defeated the bonds by a small margin. To the members of the Academy the city owes the museum in Exposition Park. When we from our funds and donated contributions revealed the wealth of fossils in the Brea pits there was no possibility of presenting them to view except by establishing a museum. By the efforts of Mr. Bowen who had generously devoted years of his time to prevent the exposition park from being appropriated by the old agricultural association; to Mr. Howard Robinson of the Audubon Society; Mr. Guinn of the Historical Society and the members of the Academy the supervisors were induced to consider the feasibility of establishing a museum. Fortunately for the public and all concerned we had an unusually intelligent body of supervisors who were heartily in accord with us.

The museum has been built but is already too small, so the architectural association have evolved a plan whereby the existing unit can be gradually added to and all combined in a harmonious manner.

But for the initiative action taken by the Academy of Sciences it is doubtful if any museum would have been built for many years to come. The Academy has done and is doing good work for southern California. The funds acquired by life memberships is devoted to the publication of the Bulletin. The members ought therefore to make a special effort to augment this fund as it is only through the printing press that we can fill our niche in the scientific world.



It is learned with regret that Samuel Bonsall Parish passed away in Berkeley, Cal., June 5, 1928. He was born in Patterson, N. J., January 13th, 1838. Mr. Parish contributed many noteworthy botanical papers to the "Bulletin."