

ITEMS FROM THE CLEVELAND MEETING

BY ROBT. L. BAIRD

Some of us went to the banquet Tuesday evening half wishing we were triplets, at least, so that we might attend two or three other good meetings at the same time. Perhaps we dreamed that we would leave early and go to one of them anyway. But not on your life, once there we stayed there all evening. The Cleveland Bird Club and the local committee did themselves brown in entertainment that night. Not only was there a banquet, in every course of which we were reminded that we were bird lovers, for birds were pictured, carved, and modeled, to say nothing of the splendid ones broiled; but the entertainment afterward capped the climax of the whole meeting. C. M. Finrock of the Cleveland Bird Club, was the magician toastmaster who presided. Dr. H. C. Oberholser of the Biological Survey, Washington, gave a brief address. The audience was then requested to about face toward the stage from the depths of which the toastmaster summoned forth the Herr Doctor Ein Z. Dreistein who explained and demonstrated his new baliscope. After straining the machine to the utmost it finally brought forth Wilson, the central figure on the first epoch away back in 1800-1825 among the hills of Pennsylvania. He was collecting birds in characteristic fashion with apparently the selfsame rifle which produced a terrific kick when it snapped. Very modern field glasses though brought the birds close to hand. In the second epoch Audubon was painting pictures from life down in the Tennessee woods, with the help of an enormous jug. No, the jug did not contain his paint but other incentives for cool morning work. Altogether he produced a wonderful turkey (we heard its realistic gobble) and an admirable lyrebird (I am not sure how the first part of that was spelled).

Baird was shown standardizing subspecific characters from 1850-1875 and then Coues was skinning birds in airy fashion at the Smithsonian. Delicate instruments like corn cutters and hand saws made the feathers of a midnight snipe fluff about like the light of day. The moving spirit of the fifth epoch was Herrick after a very movable white eagle which he tried to photograph with a moving camera which moved the crowd to a showdown.

We've just started the last epoch and Baldwin is its central figure. Listening to the intimacies of the heart life of the House Wrens, he has determined that the great question to be solved for them is the problem of birth control. As 1950 dawns he shouts, "Eureka" and slashes the pestiferous egg in two.

The good Herr Doctor* interpreted the whole show in a most delightful German-American-English brogue with the most brilliant scientific hits which kept the audience convulsed. We'll say he was a master showman and his machine—well, the audience demanded to see the wonderful baliscope, and carefully it was opened up, disclosing a food grinder and a string of baloney.

*Since the meeting there has been some dispute as to the identity of Herr Doctor Einstein, but the consensus of opinion favors Mr. Brandt. The visitors were under deep obligation to Mr. Brandt and his assistants for so pleasant and novel an entertainment.—EDITOR.

The characters in the pantomimes were:

Wilson.....	Dr. Vinal, of Western Reserve University
Audubon.....	Frary, of the Cleveland Art School
Baird.....	Phelps, of Elyria
Coues.....	Fuller, of the Cleveland Natural History Museum
Herrick.....	Shipman, of Willoughby, photographer for Prof. Herrick in his Eagle work
Baldwin.....	Williams, of the Cleveland Natural History Museum
Kendeigh, Baldwin's associate.....	Brandt, Jr.

A SYMPOSIUM SUGGESTED AS A PART OF EACH ANNUAL MEETING.—There was such a fine get-together spirit among the members of the Wilson Ornithological Club at the Cleveland meeting and a number of ways were suggested by which we might further coöperate to make our work more valuable. Coöperation is necessary these days in every big project. It was illustrated in many ways in various sections of the science meetings. The A. A. S. prize of \$1,000 was awarded this year for the work of three men together. Some of the groups have the whole annual program a symposium of the work of many during the whole year. One suggestion deserves some consideration from members of this Club. We had three sessions this meeting with papers presented in serial order and one session devoted to movies almost entirely. Why not have one session devoted to a symposium on which the members of the Club have worked in common during the year?

It has been suggested that at each meeting the President appoint a committee to choose a subject for special field study during the coming year. Some subject should be chosen not requiring too technical work but one that would have wide spread interest and on which information is needed from all parts of the country. In the fall all members who had worked up anything along that line could announce their titles to the Secretary who would then build the symposium into the program in such a way as seemed proper.

Perhaps at once or early in the year there would be some members who would want to head up certain phases of the investigation and that might be announced in the BULLETIN. All observations and notes might be sent at once direct to the interested parties. Sometimes we are not inclined to make use of our own separate observations as being of enough value for publication. Here they might be the very thing to round out valuable researches.

Possibly another object of such work would be the development of more of a community of feeling and acquaintance among the Club members. For many of us we meet once a year and that ends it. It would be rather enjoyable to hunt over our own territory in the common cause. Maybe we would be surprised and happily, too.

Some of us thought Prairie Chickens had all but gone the way of the Passenger Pigeon. But here we saw they had posed as actors for the movies within fifteen miles of Chicago. But a step more and we are almost persuaded that we may believe Henri Fabre's love stories of the insects. Too bad he didn't have a movie camera too. And then discussion brought out the fact that Prairie Chickens are becoming quite abundant again in some parts of Michigan.

But if Grant has peeked at the birds at their courting antics, Baldwin is boldly entering into their holy of holies. He is listening to their heart beats under all kinds of thrills. He gave a wonderful exhibition of his work and let us listen to a Canary's heart beating. As we stood before the amplifier it sounded like a roll of thunder all of a sudden. Some one had opened the door of the dark room where the bird was resting and it registered excitement immediately. Baldwin says a bird's heart goes more than pit-i-pat sometimes. It may beat from 200 to 800 times a minute. It makes the amplifier sound like a loud speaker with lots of static when the bird is roused.

If you get tired of your dog but still want something to tag you around, raise a Ross Goose. Chester K. Brooks, of Cleveland, raised one of these rare birds and it was unutterably distressed when shut up alone. It simply had to have a companion of some kind other than adults of its own species—a dog, a bantam hen, the children, or Mr. Brooks himself. A beautiful little goose, almost pure white, and no one knows where the wild ones nest as yet. But it is up near the north pole somewhere.

They reported progress in banding Chimney Swifts in Chattanooga. Some people never do things in a small way. They have banded 30,000 already. Most people would call that an achievement now.

The fine oil painting just presented to Western Reserve University of Dr. Herrick, who has made the finest study of the Bald Eagle, was on exhibition at the first day's sessions.

It was a happy planning of the program to have side trips out of the central states region. Dr. Van Tyne took us on his expedition to French Indo-China and Mr. Todd took us on a trip up the east coast of Hudson Bay.

Several expressed the hope that Mrs. Taylor's paper on "Pioneers in Economic Ornithology" would be published. She gave much interesting information that is not readily available, some of it gathered at first hand. She came from Berkeley, California, to give the paper.