

A HISTORY OF THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Preparing a history of an organization such as the Wilson Ornithological Society is a challenging task. For the first few years the Society was held together as much by personal correspondence as by its fledgling journal, and most of that is not available. The journal provided a means of recording the Society's activities, although more often it was just an organ for disseminating the results of members' studies. When annual meetings were held, the formal Minutes generally were published, but we all know that the Minutes tell only a fragment of the story. Fortunately others have prepared sketches of our history before us, foremost of which is a history prepared for our fiftieth anniversary by R. M. Strong. Far from dull, the history of the Wilson Ornithological Society has all the elements of a good novel: heroes and villains, tribulations and celebrations. By studying it we have learned about ourselves. We hope this review will better prepare the Wilson Society for the challenges of the next century.

In preparing this history of the Wilson Ornithological Society we have relied on the earlier efforts, the archives at the Josselyn Van Tyne Memorial Library at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, the published records of the Society in *The Wilson Bulletin* and elsewhere, and our own recollections spanning nearly half of the Society's existence. We have all served as President and in other capacities on the Wilson Council, two of us (Hall and Jackson) as Editor of *The Wilson Bulletin*. We thus feel that we can offer a special insight into the past and present character of the organization, its activities, membership, and journal. Our efforts have been substantially improved by conversations and correspondence with other members, by the materials ferreted from the Wilson Society archives by Janet Hinshaw, and by careful critiques of the manuscript by current Council members and by Richard Banks, Charles Blem, Abbot Gaunt, Bette Jackson, Kim Smith, Peter Stettenheim, and Elliot Tramer.

Some portions of the history presented here are more detailed than others because of the extent of available details. Perhaps on reading this, others will recall additional details or be able to provide copies of cor-

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respondence and other materials relevant to the history for the Society's archives and for the use of future historians. We hope so.

Our approach to the history was to divide the effort among ourselves: Mayfield covered the first third, Hall the middle third, and Jackson the final third of our first one hundred years. Our writing styles and perspectives vary, and although we have collated our manuscripts and made an effort to avoid discrepancies and redundancies, we each assume the responsibility for our individual sections. Lists of the officers who have served the Society and of the sites of our annual meetings are included in appendices. The literature citations are summarized at the end of the third section.