

## HISTORY OF THE ACADEMY CONFERENCE

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The state academies were associated organizations of the AAAS prior to 1919. A revision of the AAAS constitution that year gave the academies the right of representation in the Council, and they were then known as "Affiliated Academies." There were then eight academies representing Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Michigan, Oklahoma, Nebraska and New Orleans.

Dr. John T. McGill of Tennessee in 1925 conferred with the officers of the AAAS regarding the matter of an organization of state academies. The next year in Philadelphia a committee of academy representatives composed of Dr. McGill, Dr. Alexander of Ohio, Dr. Miller of Virginia, and Dr. Cunningham of North Carolina met with President Bailey and Permanent Secretary Livingston of the AAAS. Both Bailey and Livingston were agreeable to the proposition of an organization and suggested that a meeting be held immediately following adjournment of the Council meeting.

Eleven of the eighteen affiliated academies had representatives at this first meeting. Considerable discussion resulted, and a motion was passed that it was the desire of the group that a federation be established. A committee of five was chosen to make plans for the next meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1927. This committee had H. E. Enders, Indiana, as chairman, with four other members: Dr. McGill; W. A. Gardener, Alabama; G. F. Hull, New Hampshire; and A. Richards, Oklahoma. Another committee of members of the AAAS was appointed to study ways and means by which this academy movement might be activated. Members of this committee were Henry Ward, J. McK. Cattell, and Burton Livingston.

During the summer of 1927 plans were formulated for the Nashville meeting. Dr. Enders, the chairman of the committee, was out of the country during the summer and named Dr. McGill as acting head. McGill assumed the major portion of the work, and in his correspondence we find Dr. Livingston, Permanent Secretary of the AAAS, offering considerable support. Livingston wrote McGill that the AAAS could do much of the work of the proposed federation and save the Academy Conference Secretary a great deal of work. Dr. Livingston suggested that the Conference be composed of one person from each academy and two members of the AAAS, with a chairman and a secretary. He recommended meetings be held annually after the first council meeting of AAAS. Livingston's belief that the Academy problem "is the most important one at present in the organization of scientific men in America" pleased Dr. McGill very much, since, obviously, the support of the AAAS was a prerequisite to the success of the organization. To quote Dr. Livingston: "Our

dream is that the Academies may come to play the part of local sections of the AAAS and may be federated with common aims."

The committee of three representing the AAAS was requested to prepare a constitution for presentation at the Nashville meeting. Twelve academy representatives met in Nashville in December, 1927, in joint session with these three AAAS representatives, Cattell, Livingston, and Ward, for consideration of the tentative constitution. The Academy members favored a constitution, but Dr. Ward spoke of the multiplicity of organization, the duplication of efforts and costs, and urged reduction of machinery to a minimum and the election of only the presiding officer and a secretary. Dr. Cattell proposed the resolution, which was adopted unanimously, that "the Academy Conference be held at the time and place of the annual meeting of the AAAS, and that the Council of the Association be requested to authorize such conference." Two days later the Council authorized the Conference of the representatives of the Academies of Science, to be arranged by the Executive Committee of the Association, and in the course of the next year it was given recognition under the present name "Academy Conference." Thus we were born twenty-five years ago today.

The first officers for the new Academy Conference were: W. H. Alexander, Ohio, Chairman; and H. E. Enders, Indiana, Secretary. These officers were requested to prepare a program for the New York meeting in 1928. Upon adjournment the members of the Conference were invited to a complimentary dinner arranged by the AAAS, and this has been continued each year since that time.

Correspondence during the year indicated a consensus of opinion that the Secretary automatically become Chairman after each meeting is called to order and the minutes of the previous meeting are read, thus "enabling the person responsible for the arrangement of the program to preside."

Details of each annual meeting to the present have been compiled and are available, so need not be considered here. The number in attendance at these early meetings was: 11, 13, 14, 11, 18, 12, 12, and 15, representing the academies, and always "three representatives of the AAAS." Dr. Enders was Secretary in 1926, 1927, and 1928, and chairman in 1929, while Dr. Alexander was chairman in 1926, 1927, and 1928. In 1931 it became apparent that the same officers should hold office at least two years, and a plan was adopted to elect a Vice-chairman who would automatically succeed the Chairman and elect a Secretary who would serve four years to coincide with the quadrennium of the Association. Dr. Enders was Vice-chairman in 1932, again Chairman in 1933, and was still active in the Conference in the 1940's. Dr. S. W. Bilsing, of Texas, came in 1930 as academy representative, was elected Secretary in 1931, and held this office until 1940; he was then elected Vice-chairman and was Chairman from 1940 to 1946.

Much of this early history was obtained from a paper presented by Dr. Enders in St. Louis in 1935 on "A Brief History of the Academy Conference," and from the detailed files of Dr. McGill.

The gaps have been filled in by Dr. Bilsing, with whom I have had considerable correspondence. Dr. Bilsing initiated a biannual news letter among the affiliated academies during his term of office and strongly advocated that each representative be re-elected by his academy each year. Dr. Otis Caldwell of the Association followed Dr. Livingston and served for more than fifteen years in advising and guiding the Conference.

In 1938 we still had Cattell, Livingston, and Ward meeting with us and representing the Association. Our Chairman for 1938 was Dr. E. C. L. Miller of Virginia, who has been active in the Conference for at least thirteen years. I hesitate to mention others, as many valuable members might be overlooked because of incomplete records. It should be worthwhile, however, to briefly summarize the activities in a few of the Academies. Alabama has had a representative every year; Iowa has also, with Dr. J. C. Gilman since 1932 until this year; Dr. Middleton has represented Kentucky every year except two; North Carolina had someone every year until 1944; Ohio had someone every year through 1946; Tennessee had someone every year, with Dr. McGill from 1925 until 1936; Dr. L. E. Noland represented Wisconsin for many years; and every year since 1926 these academies have had representatives: Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New Orleans; West Virginia and South Carolina have had representation almost every year since 1927. Many others have had representatives here since they became affiliated, such as: Washington, D. C., American Institute of New York, and Colorado-Wyoming.

There were thirty affiliated academies in 1940. The discussion of the Junior Academy began in 1929 with reports from Illinois, and three years later eight states made reports on Junior Academy activities. The Collegiate Academy was introduced to us in 1941 by the Texas Academy. Watson Davis has been associated with us since 1935. In 1938 the duration of our Conference was extended from two hours to one-half day, but by 1946 it was again for only two hours. The usual number in attendance was about fifteen, even though there were 30 affiliates. Dr. E. E. Degering represented Indiana several years and was chairman in 1946; the meeting lasted all day and has been at least one day long since that year. Last year we sponsored the Pennsylvania Academy meeting and the Junior Scientists Assembly, in addition to one day of actual Conference.

Several subjects have had repeated discussions at our meetings, such as:

- Administration of AAAS research grants to academies;
- How to finance academy publications;
- Junior and Collegiate Academy promotion;
- Methods for increasing membership in academies and the AAAS.

The records are not complete; too many of the reports given in the past are no longer available. I believe we need an archivist or historian.