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HISTORY OF ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

BY WALLACE WATERFALL

(As read at the beginning of the business meeting on May 10th)

It is usually difficult to assign a definite day or place to the conception of the idea which leads to the formation of an organization. Subsequent developments of the idea are more definite. In the following paragraphs I am giving a brief account of the happenings which have lead to the present organization of the Acoustical Society of America.

During the past five years my activities have brought me in contact with a large number of professional men engaged in experimental work in connection with architectural acoustics. There was a noticeable lack of coördination of activities. For greater development of the subject these professional men needed a more intimate knowledge of the rapidly growing practical requirements in architectural acoustics and there was no question but what the public would benefit by a more complete knowledge of the work being done in the laboratories. There were many differences of opinion on fundamental points which should be submitted to discussion for proper solution. These conditions in the field of architectural acoustics made the need of some sort of organization quite obvious and from time to time I discussed the possibility of this with many professional men I met.

The idea took its first definite form during the latter part of the summer of 1928, when Professor F. R. Watson and I happened to be on the West Coast at the same time. I am not exactly sure of the date but believe it was one day during the first week of September that Professor Vern O. Knudsen invited Professor Watson and me to accompany

him to his Beach Club near Los Angeles for dinner one evening. During the evening we discussed the formation of a society and it ~~was~~ definitely agreed that letters were to be sent to a group of about fifteen men who had been contacted regarding such an organization. Professor Watson and Professor Knudsen agreed to supplement my letter to these men with a letter of their own regarding the desirability of the organization.

My first letter was sent to the following group of men.

Professor F. R. Watson	Mr. V. L. Chrisler
Professor A. L. Foley	Dr. Paul R. Heyl
Professor G. R. Anderson	Dr. Harvey Fletcher
Professor F. A. Saunders	Professor Dayton C. Miller
Professor D. L. Rich	Dr. Paul E. Sabine
Mr. C. M. Swan	Professor V. O. Knudsen
Professor W. R. Barss	

Replies were not received from all of these men but the letters which were received expressed interest and added some new ideas to the program. Up to that time we had considered the organization more as a society of acoustical engineers and had thought chiefly of architectural acoustics. Professor Miller pointed out the desirability of enlarging the scope of the society so as to make it a more stable organization. At about the same time Professor Knudsen and Dr. Fletcher advanced the same idea.

Enlarging the organization to include workers in all branches of acoustics brought many new possibilities. I happened to be in New York about this time and had quite a talk with Dr. Fletcher. He suggested that it might be advisable to get a group together during the meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He offered the use of the Bell Telephone Laboratories as a meeting place and between us December 27th was chosen as the date of the meeting. On December 10th letters were sent to all of the men in the previous list and in addition, to Mr. R. V. Parsons, Mr. M. A. Smith and Mr. B. J. Graham. In this letter to these sixteen men they were told of the date of the meeting and the fact was mentioned that the proposed organization had been enlarged in scope to include workers in all branches of acoustics. It was mentioned that there were many men who might be interested in such an organization and each person who received the letter was asked to take it upon himself to write as many persons as he thought might attend the first meeting or be interested in the society. Most everyone cooperated and the result was the meeting on December 27th at the Bell Telephone Laboratories.

At that meeting the following men were in attendance.

- G. R. Anderson, University of Toronto
F. R. Watson, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.
John Bellamy Taylor, General Electric Company, Schenectady, N. Y.
Dayton C. Miller, Case School of Applied Science, Cleveland, Ohio
Harvey Fletcher, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
Bert. J. Graham, Macoustic Engineering Company, Cleveland, Ohio
Charles Fuller Stoddard, American Piano Company, N. Y. C. (Research Lab.)
C. N. Hickman, American Piano Company, N. Y. C. (Research Lab.)
Horatio W. Lamson, General Radio Company, Cambridge, Mass.
V. L. Chrisler, Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C.
H. C. Harrison, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
Irving Wolff, Radio Corporation of America, VanCortlandt Pk. S. & Saxton Ave., N. Y. C.
Joseph B. Kelly, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
Vern O. Knudsen, University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, Calif.
E. C. Wentz, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
Warren C. Jones, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
R. V. Parsons, Johns-Manville Corporation, N. Y. C.
Lonsdale Green, Jr., Johns-Manville Corporation, N. Y. C.
Wallace Waterfall, The Celotex Company, Chicago, Ill.
H. A. Frederick, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
J. P. Maxfield, Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J.
Walter A. MacNair, Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J.
R. F. Mallina, Victor Machine Co., Camden, N. J.
D. G. Blattner, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
A. T. Jones, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.
John H. Boland, U. S. Gypsum Co., 17 State St., N. Y. C.
Frederick A. Saunders, Jefferson Physical Lab., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
H. D. Arnold, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
E. J. Schroeter, Macoustic Engineering Co., Cleveland, Ohio
H. A. Erf, Nor. O. Tel. Co., Bellevue, Ohio
Robert H. Schroeter, Macoustic Engineering Co., Cleveland, Ohio
Donald MacKenzie, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
F. K. Richtmeyer, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.
L. J. Sivian, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.
R. L. Wegel, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.

N. R. French, American Telephone & Telegraph Co., N. Y. C.

E. L. Norton, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.

W. P. Mason, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.

Clarence W. Hewlett, General Electric Company, Schenectady, N. Y.

John C. Steinberg, Bell Telephone Laboratories, N. Y. C.

Dr. Harvey Fletcher was elected as chairman of the meeting and a general discussion was started in which many reasons both for and against the formation of the society were given. After the discussions were concluded a vote was taken and it was decided to form a society which should be known as the Acoustical Society of America. A temporary set of officers was elected as follows:

President, Harvey Fletcher

Vice President, V. O. Knudsen

Secretary, Wallace Waterfall

Treasurer, Charles Fuller Stoddard

All of the persons present signified their desire to become members of the Society. A committee of ten, consisting of the four temporary officers and the men named below, was appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws.

D. C. Miller

J. P. Maxfield

F. A. Saunders

R. V. Parsons

F. K. Richtmeyer

F. R. Watson