THE EVOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA ENTOMOLOGIST

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Nearly 50 years ago 11 men interested in entomology met on the campus of the University of Florida to organize the Florida Entomological Society. Their constitution, as drawn up, set forth certain objectives which have been followed since the founding of the Society. These were (1) to promote the study of entomology; (2) to distribute widely knowledge pertaining to insects; and (3) to publish an entomological journal. In addition to supporting professional entomologists, these men also wished to encourage the development of a body of amateur entomologists who also were dedicated to the accumulation of more information about insects.

One year after the founding of the Society at the April 1917 meeting, Dr. E. W. Berger proposed that the Society undertake to publish a periodical to be known as The Florida Buggist; the first issue appeared on 21 June 1917. Professor J. R. Watson, University of Florida Agricultural Experiment Station, was selected as Editor, a position in which he continued to serve until his death in 1946.

The name of the journal, The Florida Buggist, persisted for the first three volumes. With Vol. 4, No. 1, the name of the publication was changed to The Florida Entomologist. I should like to quote from a sad note by Dr. E. W. Berger in the March issue of 1920.

"In accordance with the vote of the Society at its February meeting, The Florida Buggist will, with the new volume, become The Florida Entomologist.

"Yes, and the Business Manager regrets that this change of name was made without at least a month's previous notice, and without getting the vote of the non-resident members. It is the writer's belief that changes of name of a publication should not be hastily made, especially when it is considered that The Buggist has completed three years of an honorable record, being successful far beyond the anticipation of its originators. A few people, somewhere in the United States, have been critical of the name Buggist, and so the movers for a change, Buggists who visited the Entomological meetings at St. Louis in December, rushed home and oblige it must be with 'all other ologies whatsoever'. Verily, like a rush to cover of chickens from a shadow.

"If those who are similarly minded will voice their sentiments by writing at once to the secretary, there is still time for reconsideration. If the name must be changed, the writer would suggest The Florida Insectist—a name that is new and different, and not stale."

Certainly Dr. Berger made a strong but futile request for the preservation of this unique name. Most scientists are rather conventional and entomological scientists are no less so. Therefore, rather than accept Dr. Berger's suggestion of changing the name to The Florida Insectist, the Society decided that the title must be The Florida Entomologist, a name which has been consistently used since 1920.

Article 3 of the By-laws of the Constitution provides for publications and Section I of this article reads as follows:

"The Society may issue a publication containing the transactions of the organization's meetings and such other matters as may be of interest to entomologists. A copy of each issue (The Florida Entomologist) shall be sent to each member of the Florida Entomological Society. The direction of the publication of this Society shall be entrusted to a Board of Managers consisting of an Editor, Associate Editor, and a Business Manager, who shall be the Treasurer of the Society. This Board shall be elected annually unless otherwise provided for. The official publication shall be issued at such intervals as may be determined by the Society or by the Board of Managers."

Until 1964 it was the policy of the Society to elect the Editor and Associate Editor of the journal each year. On my recommendation after my years of experience in the office of Editor, I felt that it would be far wiser for the Society to have an Editor appointed by the Executive Committee; this would assure the continuity of editorial policy and take the hazards of election out of the position. I believe that this system of editorial appointments will work far more effectively than the system under which we operated in the past. With this recommendation made, a change was proposed in the By-laws at the 1963 annual meeting of the Society. In essence the Article read very much as the earlier one except for the substitution as follows:

"The direction of the publication of the Society shall be entrusted to a Board of Managers. This Board shall consist of a Business Manager, who shall be the Treasurer of the Society, and an Editor and an Associate Editor. The Executive Committee shall appoint the Editor and Associate Editor, each of whom shall serve for a period of three (3) calendar years. Previous to December 1, the Editor's third year in office, the Executive Committee shall make appointments for the ensuing year term. The official publication shall be issued at such intervals as may be determined by the Society or the Board of Managers."

This change was adopted and the Society is now operating under the revised Article, with Dr. Thomas Walker as Editor and Dr. S. H. Kerr as Associate Editor.

During the early years of the journal's life, it was published on a touch-and-go basis, particularly during the 1930s, when the Society was in dire financial straits. Professor Watson, because of his sincere interest in the continuation of the Society and its voice, The Florida Entomologist, advanced money from his personal funds to continue publication of the journal. There were other strong friends who came to the aid of The Florida Entomologist during these trying times. Among those who were outstanding in their contributions were Pepper Printing Company of Gainesville, Florida, and the Tobacco By-Products and Chemical Corporation. Pepper Printing Company extended credit for publication costs and was very patient for a period of several years while the accumulated bills were gradually paid off. At one time, during the depression years, the Society was more than $1500.00 in debt to Pepper Printing Company. During this whole period of difficulty in the depression years, the Tobacco By-Products and Chemical Company carried a full page advertisement. The
income from this ad made a great contribution toward continued publication. Because of the scarcity of money and sometimes because of a scarcity of manuscripts, Professor Watson occasionally combined two numbers of the journal into one. The continuation of the journal over these earlier years prior to World War II was due almost entirely to the efforts of the dedicated J. R. Watson. During the war years, publication of the journal was hampered, not so much by a shortage of funds, as by a shortage of manuscripts; however, Professor Watson continued to bring out an occasional issue. Even though the journal was scheduled to appear quarterly, it was often late, sometimes as much as a year. Professor Watson found manuscripts so scarce that once, during the latter part of the war years, he published a paper dealing with mammals and another dealing with crawfish. As far as I am aware these are the only occasions in which the journal digressed from its interests in insects and closely related arthropods.

Following Professor Watson's death, the journal was briefly edited by Mr. George Merrill and Dr. H. K. Wallace. In 1950, I assumed the editorship which I held through 1963. Beginning with the March issue, 1964, Dr. Thomas Walker was appointed to this task.

As I am talking about the evolution of an entomological journal, I feel that it was necessary to give you some of the background history and some of the charges laid down to the Editor in its publication. I must certainly say that there has always been complete freedom from any control being exercised by the Executive Committee. I have, in all my years of serving in this capacity, never felt hampered by any restrictions placed upon me.

During the early years of the journal, each issue consisted of 12-16 pages. Because of practical considerations, we print in units of four pages; therefore, the journal must consist of an even number of pages based on a unit of four. I soon found, when I took over the editorship, that it was necessary to increase the size of the journal and for most of the period during which I served as Editor, I maintained the issues at an approximate level of 48 to 52 pages.

In 1950 manuscripts were scarce and often I would have to go out and scour the countryside for papers from people whom I thought might have something available. I was always successful in getting enough to fill out an issue. I always tried to publish the issue during the month in which it was scheduled to appear, a situation which was usually not the case in the past. After I had served as Editor for a year or two at a time when universities were enlarging, the number of people going into the field of entomology was increasing, and the pace of research accelerating, it became apparent that there would be no deficit of manuscripts. This plethora has persisted and at the time that I turned the files of the journal over to Dr. Walker in 1964, there were enough manuscripts on hand to fill four issues of the journal.

During the early years, there was no cover on the journal. It was the practice to begin an article on the first page of each issue. There was a masthead and somewhere on the inside of the journal there was another masthead which listed the Editor, Associate Editor, and Business Manager and a minimum of information about the Society. I had always felt that the journal was deficient in not having a cover and one of the
first changes that I made was to add one printed on the same weight of paper on which the remainder of the Journal was printed. Because it was not necessary to use special paper, the cover did not add appreciably to the cost of the issue. Further, the first inside page of the cover was reserved for data about the Society, suggestions for preparation of manuscripts, and cost of reprints. As far as I am aware, the members and authors have found the information to be a useful adjunct. I believe further that the addition of the cover improved considerably the appearance of the journal, making it look more professional and more acceptable to entomologists in general.

In 1956, I felt it was time to give our cover and the general format of the journal a facelift and so I developed a new format for it. In a conversation with the printer I discovered that we could get about a 30% increase in material on a page for a relatively small additional cost by reducing the size of our type. So in this same year, 1956, the size of the type-face was changed to a smaller, but still a very readable one. This change has also been very acceptable to the members and we have continued to use this smaller type-face since that time.

With the change in the type-face it became possible for us to increase the content of the journal appreciably without increasing publication costs at an equal rate. Further, in publishing items such as minutes, even more space was saved by cutting down on the interval between lines. In spite of this change, there have been no complaints from any of the members, and, in fact, the general impression was that the appearance of the journal was improved.

I indicated earlier that the Tobacco By-Products and Chemical Company had subsidized the journal for many years by carrying a full-page ad on the back cover. From the first issue there had been an advertisement on the back of the journal. Further, in the first few numbers there were also advertisements on the inside of the back cover. All of these soon disappeared, except for the single advertisement of Tobacco By-Products. It was not until a very active Business Manager, G. W. Dekle, was elected in 1948, that there was an increase in the amount of advertising carried in the journal. Within a few months after the election of the new Business Manager the number of pages devoted to advertising was raised from one to nine and has remained at that level. The income from the increase has enabled us to continue publishing a journal of the present size.

Several years ago it seemed that it would be necessary for us either greatly to enlarge the journal or to make some provisions for publishing rather large papers. With that in mind I proposed to the Society that the Editor be permitted, at his discretion, to publish supplementary issues provided the costs would not be borne by the Society. The first supplement was issued late in 1963, and contained two papers which were paid for entirely by the authors. Whether these supplements will continue, of course, is a matter of no great concern since the publication of supplements will depend on the size of manuscripts that are being submitted and on whether the authors are willing to bear the entire costs.

So much for background: now what are some of the problems of publishing an entomological journal? First and foremost, funding is of vital concern. I have indicated earlier some of the trials and tribulations that
The Florida Entomological Society had in meeting its publication costs. After our increase in the number of advertisers, and with an increase in membership dues, we soon reached the point where we no longer were operating on an issue to issue basis but we were accumulating a monetary surplus. We were able to establish a savings account in which there are presently several thousand dollars to serve as a cushion in the event that we find ourselves faced with a declining income or some other situation which requires the expenditure of large sums of money.

Secondly, what about advertisers? Do they benefit from advertising in *The Florida Entomologist*? We asked these questions of ourselves and came to the conclusion that the advertisers are really doing nothing more than subsidizing the publication of the journal. They do gain the good will of the members, who recognize the fact that these companies are helping them publish their scientific results.

We are presently charging $35.00 per issue for a full page advertisement and $20.00 for a half page advertisement. The cost of publishing a single page is approximately $10.00. That means that the residue over and above this cost is available for paying a part of the other costs of publication. Further expenses are also involved in advertising since many of the larger concerns handle all of their accounts through agencies. The agencies require a commission which reduces the amount that we actually gain from the advertising. Nevertheless, the income from this source is still substantial and pays approximately one fifth of the cost of publishing an issue.

Now let's consider some of the other problems associated with the growth of *The Florida Entomologist*. As I indicated, during the earlier years manuscripts were scarce. There is now a superabundance. For most of my term of office there was no distinction made as to whether or not an author was a member of the Society. If the paper deserved publication, it was taken care of; however, in the last few years, because of the large number of manuscripts that were accumulating, it was decided to give first priority on publication to members. Whether this is a just solution is still open to question. Another one of the major problems that the Editor has to face is whether the paper is suitable for publication in the journal. In order to answer this question I felt outside opinion was necessary, so generally the paper was reviewed by at least two competent referees. The manuscript, after having been received and acknowledged, was then sent to the reviewers for careful evaluation. Generally, the author did not know the name of the reviewer unless the reviewer had no objection to revealing his name. Provided the reviewers felt that the manuscript was suitable, the author was so notified. If the reviewers felt that the manuscript needed modification, the author was also so notified with the suggestions included. If the author refused to accept the suggestions, obviously the paper couldn't be published. However, I never had that situation arise. In every case the author was grateful for suggestions that were made to him and incorporated them into his manuscript.

Another one of the major difficulties, particularly in our early years, was the vast amount of time required for editing, for the secretarial work involved in answering correspondence and acknowledging receipt of papers, and writing to reviewers. For many years I did all of this myself in my
spare time. Later, as secretarial help became available through the University, I took advantage of that help to alleviate the situation. The Editor does require assistance in this respect, especially as the correspondence tends to build up considerably as the size of the journal increases. These, then are some of the problems of publication and the ways in which The Florida Entomologist has solved them.

There still remains one question to be answered—was it worthwhile? I must answer with an unqualified yes. The journal provides a major integrating force in bringing the members together and in allowing them to communicate their scientific efforts to each other and the world. It provides a feeling of belonging, of having something of our own of which we can all be proud. It was my goal constantly to improve the contents of the publication as well as its appearance. I feel that I made some progress in this regard but we still have a long way to go. I am sure that members of the Florida Entomological Society are doing their utmost to back the present Editor in his efforts further to improve quality and the appearance.

There are many things that still remain to be done. For example, I think that the cover of the journal can be improved. Secondly, I think that the financial situation of the journal needs to be put on a firm footing so that we are never faced with a situation such as that Professor Watson met back in the 1930s. Thirdly, I think that we must continue constantly to work for improvement in the quality of the manuscripts; making certain that the authors have something solid to say, and that they say it as concisely and as well as possible.

There are still other questions that need to be answered. Should the journal continue to become larger and larger in size? Should it increase its scope? Should it continue to restrict its publication entirely to that of the members of the organization?

I hope that I have given you some clues as to the problems, the trials, and the tribulations that are part and parcel of the development of a scientific journal. I assure you the satisfaction that the Georgia Entomological Society will feel and the spirit that will develop as a result of having your own publication will be well worth the effort.

**Literature Cited**


