

## THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST AND ITS PREDECESSORS<sup>1, 2</sup>

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**I**T is now 75 years since the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, the offspring of another Ottawa society, put out its first scientific publication. In Transactions no. 1, page 7 we read in the Presidential Address: "Circulars were sent to the members of the Ottawa Literary and Scientific Society, calling a meeting of all those favourable to the formation of such a society [i.e. a society in this city devoted to the investigation of the natural history of the vicinity]. To the great satisfaction of those interested, fully forty gentlemen attended the meeting held on the 19th March, 1879. After a lengthy discussion as to the form the organization should take, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club was born...".

From the very beginning the publication of a scientific journal was a major part of the activities of the Club and this emphasis may account for the continuity of publication for three-quarters of a century.

During the same period, the name of the Club has remained unchanged, but its publication has repeatedly seen changes in name and presentation. These modifications have coincided more or less with changes in scope and purpose of the Journal. These changes may be stated briefly as follows:

Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, Transactions, vol. 1-2, 1880-87, in 7 numbers; numbers 1-4 being paged separately and constitute vol. 1. Continued as:

The Ottawa Naturalist, vol. 1-32; 1887-1919; being vol. 3-34 of the Transactions of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. Continued as:

The Canadian Field-Naturalist, vol. 33-67, 1919-1953; vol. 33 being vol. 35 of the Transactions of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. The latter title was dropped after vol. 33 of The Canadian Field-Naturalist.

### THE TRANSACTIONS

The minutes of the first year of the Club tell us about the genesis of the Transactions.

We read: "Moved by Mr. Billings, seconded by Mr. Harrington, 'That in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable that the papers read before the Club during the past season, including the Inaugural address and Secretary's report, which dealt with the original researches of members, or with the Natural History of the Ottawa district, should be printed as the Transactions of the Club for the year 1879-80.' Carried." (Quoted from Transactions no. 1, p. 11).

Seven numbers of these Transactions were published at the rate of one a year as follows:

**OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB, TRANSACTIONS**, vol. 1, nos. 1-4. These four issues of the Transactions are paged separately and were later considered to form vol. 1 although no mention of volume on the title pages or covers. No index. No volume title page.

Vol. 2, nos. 1-3. This volume comprises nos. 5, 6 and 7 of the Transactions, the numbering of issues being continued from the first volume. The paging is now continuous throughout the 3 issues. It seems fairly obvious that the first four numbers of the Transactions, 1880-83, were not originally intended to form a volume of their own. The treatment in volumes seems to have been an afterthought which first took shape around 1884, as Transactions no. 5 is the first number to carry the mention of volumes. The only mention of the change is in Transactions no. 6 (vol. 2, no. 2), p. 158 where one reads: "Transactions no. 5, Vol. II, No. 1, were published in due time and contained 152 pages." No index or volume title page was ever prepared for volume 2 of the Transactions.

### THE OTTAWA NATURALIST

From the very beginning the scope of the Transactions was somewhat broader than the scope of the Club, for it included the publication of "the original researches of members" while for a long time the object of the Club remained "the study of the Natural History of this locality", namely Ottawa. This difference in scope probably played an important role in the next modification of the Club journal.

<sup>1</sup>) Received for publication December 22, 1953.

<sup>2</sup>) Contribution No. 1339 from the Botany and Plant Pathology Division, Science Service, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.



The first number of the Ottawa Naturalist carries on page 9, the following editorial announcement:

"The Ottawa Naturalist is issued by the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club in continuation of its Transactions already published; the second volume of which was completed by the number for 1885-1886. For eight years the Club has earnestly carried on the field for which it was organized — "The study of the Natural History of this locality." Nor has it confined itself to this rich and extensive field. It has gradually extended its influence, and, by excursions, classes and lectures, has sought to foster a love for Natural History and a desire in all its members to investigate the marvellous realms of nature.

"After careful consideration of suggested changes in the method of carrying on the Club's work, it has been decided that its value, not only to members but to scientific observers in other places, will be greatly increased by the issue of a portion of its Transactions each month. This will ensure an earlier publication of the papers prepared for its soirees, which is especially desirable when new species are described, and will keep the members more fully informed as to the progress of its work."

This phenomenon of increase in scope is not peculiar to the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. A similar case is that of the Torrey Botanical Club, a society responsible for the publication of a journal now international in scope, the Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club. The latter was started in 1870 as a four page monthly by W. H. Leggett with the object "to form a medium of communication for all those interested in the Flora of this vicinity" (i.e. New York City).

The change of title to Ottawa Naturalist, which took place in 1887, was a natural one, but no justification appears to have been given in the journal. We find it mentioned in Ott. Nat. 1:16 1887 as follows:

"The Council suggests that the journal be issued on the first day of each month under the title of "The Ottawa Naturalist"."

With the change in title a new system of numbering of volumes and issues was inaugurated, but the old name, in a slightly modified form, and numbering system were carried as a subtitle throughout the 32 volumes of The Ottawa Naturalist. Thus the title page of the Ott. Nat. vol. 1 carries the following subtitle "The Transactions of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, Vol. III".

The policy of publishing monthly was not adhered to very long. In Ott. Nat. 3:6. 1889, we read: "The present number is the first Quarterly part of Vol. III of the Ottawa Naturalist." The following year the Journal reverted to twelve numbers, but was again reduced to eleven the year after. Such changes took place every few years. Joint numbers were also quite frequent. A resume of these variations is given in table 1.

### THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST

Another important change in scope of the Journal soon took place. In Ott. Nat. 3:6. 1889, we read: "The scope of the publication has also been widened so as to include papers by members of the club upon the General Natural History of Canada, without being restricted as heretofore to this locality only."

This change in scope naturally called for a corresponding change in name, but the latter did not take place until the first number of volume 33 in 1919, when the Ottawa Naturalist became The Canadian Field-Naturalist. The numbering in volumes was continued from The Ottawa Naturalist. The alternate name, minus the apostrophe, "Transactions of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists Club", along with the alternate numbering of volumes, was carried as a subtitle in vol. 33 only. Starting with vol. 34, only one title and one volume numbering system remained.

As in the Ottawa Naturalist, the number of parts per volume has varied from time to time; combined issues are also quite frequent, but irregular. The number of parts and combined issues per volume is enumerated in table 1.

### NUMBERING

Certain errors have crept into the numbering of volumes and numbers; these are enumerated in table 2. Special attention must be paid to the two numbers published in May 1924. Both are inscribed vol. 38, no. 6. The first one comprises pp. 81-100 and should be corrected to vol 38, no. 5. The second one is correctly inscribed "No. 6 (Special Number)"; it comprises pp. 101-120 and is almost completely devoted to an enumeration of the birds of Saskatchewan.

### DATING

Currently the Canadian Field-Naturalist carries on the first page of each number the date of publication of the previous issue. This policy was inaugurated in 1943 with volume 57. Earlier volumes of the Canadian Field-



Table 1. NUMBER OF PARTS AND COMBINED NUMBERS PER VOLUME

Volume	Number of parts	Combined numbers
1 (3) <sup>4</sup>	12	none
2 (4)	12	8 & 9, 10 & 11
3 (5)	4	none
4 (6)	12	none
5 (7), 6 (8)	11 each	none
7 (9)	12	11 & 12
8 (10)	10	none
9 (11), 10 (12), 11 (13)	12 each	none
12 (14)	12	7 & 8
13 (15)	12	none
14 (16)	12	1 & 2
15 (17) to 24 (26)	12 each	none
25 (27)	12	7 & 8
26 (28) to 31 (33)	12 each	3 & 4, 5 & 6 in each
32 (34)	9	none
33 (35)	6	none
34	9	none
35	7	none
(the index for volume 7 was published separately)		
36 and 37	9 each	none
38	10	none
39 to 55	9 each	none
56	9	8 & 9
57	9	2 & 3, 4 & 5, 7 & 8
58 to 66	6 each	none
67	4	none

4) The number in brackets represents the volume number of the Transactions and follows immediately the volume number of The Ottawa Naturalist.

Naturalist carry the date of publication of each number on the first page of the cover.

The Transactions indicate no exact date of publication, only the year, and even this is sometimes incorrect. Presumably each issue came out as soon as possible after the annual meeting which took place on or about the 15th of March. Presumably, Transactions 1 and 2 (vol. 1, nos. 1 & 2) came out on schedule. In the library of the National Museum of Canada the copy of Transactions 3 (vol. 1, no. 3) is stamped-dated October 4, 1882. The annual meeting for 1881-82 took place on March 21, 1882. Thus this number came out between April and September 1882, more probably in April as the National Museum does not seem to have acquired the copies of the Transactions until some time after publication.

Transactions 4 (vol. 1, no. 4) were published late as intimated in the Secretary's report for the following year: "Owing to a

series of unavoidable delays, the Transactions (No. 4) for 1882-83 were not published as early as would have been desirable...". In a lecture given on December 20, 1883, James Fletcher stated: "We have now published four parts of Transactions,...". Presumably, Transactions 4 (vol. 1, no. 4) was published in the latter half of 1883.

Transactions 5 (vol. 2, no. 1) were apparently published in April 1884, for we read in the Secretary's report for the following year: "Transactions No. 5, Vol. II, No. 1, were published in due time,...".

Transactions 6 (vol. 2, no. 2) is dated 1885 on the cover, but the title page is inscribed 1884. On the other hand, the Acting Secretary in his report for the following year given on March 16, 1886, stated: "...the issue of Transactions No. 6, (vol. II, No. 2) has, the Council regrets to state, only just been made." Therefore Transactions 6 probably came out in the first half of March 1886.



**Table 2. MISNUMBERING OF VOLUMES AND ISSUES**

(In bold face characters, the errors and corrections)

Year	Month	Numbering as issued	Corrected numbering
1894	December	vol. 8 (10) no. 8	vol. 8 (10) no. 9
1900	Apr.-May	vol. 14 (16) no. 1 <sup>5</sup>	vol. 14 (16) no. 1 & 2
1904	March	vol. 18 (19) no. 12	vol. 17 (19) no. 12
1907	June	vol. 23 (23) no. 3	vol. 21 (23) no. 3
1907	July	vol. 23 (23) no. 4	vol. 21 (23) no. 4
1907	August	vol. 23 (23) no. 5	vol. 21 (23) no. 5
1907	September	vol. 24 (23) no. 6	vol. 21 (23) no. 6
1907	October	vol. 24 (23) no. 7	vol. 21 (23) no. 7
1924	May	vol. 38 no. 6	vol. 38 no. 5
1927	March	vol. 41 no. 4	vol. 41 no. 3
1950	July-Aug.	vol. 65 no. 4	vol. 64 no. 4

5) This is inscribed No. 1 on the cover, but No. 12 on page 7.

**Table 3. OUTSIDE DATES OF PUBLICATION OF THE VARIOUS NUMBERS OF THE OTTAWA NATURALIST VOLUME I**

Month	Number	Earliest Date	Latest Date
April	1	March 15	—
May	2	March	May 7
June	3	May 21	June 4
July	4	June 25	July 2
August	5	July 21	August 6
September	6	August 13	September 17
October	7	—	—
November	8	October 23	—
December	9	November 30	December 8
January	10	December 8	—
February	11	January 19	—
March	12	February 9	February 29

Transactions 7 (vol. 2, no. 3) were also published late. In the report of the Secretary for the following year, dated March 15, 1887, we read: "The Council has, however, to express its regret that the publication of this number was unavoidably delayed, so that it was only ready for distribution at the very close of the year." Whether this refers to the end of the calendar year or to the end of the Club year is not clear. But the latter is more likely as both the cover and the title page of Transactions 7 are inscribed 1887. Presumably Transactions 7 was published in the first half of March 1887.

The Ottawa Naturalist was originally scheduled to appear on the first day of each month, but wide discrepancies occur between

scheduled and actual dates of publication. The latter is printed on the first page of the cover of each number starting with volume 3, no. 1 through the volume 8, no. 10, and again from volume 15, no. 3, to volume 32, no. 9.

A set of the journal preserved at the National Museum of Canada shows dated library stamps on most numbers. A cursory check of these dated stamps against the dates of issue as given on page one of the cover of each number of the Ottawa Naturalist, revealed that in most cases the journal was received at the National Museum from one to three days, and occasionally up to two weeks, later than the claimed publication date. Discrepancies of more than two weeks



are either obvious errors in stamping or else apply to copies acquired at a later date.

The dates of receipt at the National Museum of the numbers of the Ottawa Naturalist not dated by the printer are given in table 4. When no date of receipt appears in this table, the copy at the National Museum was either undated, or else the date stamped appeared to be irrelevant to the date of publication. For example, all fascicles of volume 1 of the Ottawa Naturalist are uniformly stamp-dated March 21, 1888 or else unstamped, but these appear to have come out quite regularly on or about the first of the month as originally planned. This can be inferred by comparing the previous excursions and lectures or meetings reported upon in each number with the dates of forthcoming activities. For example the number for August 1887 contains a report of the July 21 excursion and the announcement of an August 6 excursion. See table 3 for these outside dates.

PAGING

Irregularities and duplication in the numbering of pages occur at three major points.

Each one of the four numbers of the first volume of the Transactions is paged separately, but volume 2 et sequ. are paged continuously.

No. 12 of volume 9 published in March 1896, was reprinted in February 1922 without covers or advertising. The paging is superficially identical in both cases, but actually the text of the reprint has been generally condensed in such a way as to gain up to 1¼ pages of the text in places.

The most troublesome item is the Flora Ottawaensis, a series of articles prepared by James Fletcher, The problems created by these papers are so complex that they will form the subject of a separate study<sup>3</sup>.

3) See: B. Boivin and W. J. Cody. Bibliographic Survey of James Fletcher's Flora Ottawaensis. In press. Scheduled to appear soon in the Canadian Field-Naturalist.

Table 4. DATES OF PUBLICATION OF THE OTTAWA NATURALIST  
VOL. 2 AND VOLS. 9-14

Volume	Number	Received at National Museum	Date on cover
2 (4)	1	—	April, 1888
	2	June 1, 1888	May, 1888
	3	—	June, 1888
	4		July, 1888
	5	August 13, 1888	August, 1888
	6	October 6, 1888	September, 1888
	7	November 5, 1888	October, 1888
	8 & 9	January 18, 1889	Nov.-Dec., 1888
	10 & 11	March 15, 1889	Jan.-Feb., 1889
	12	April 25, 1889	March, 1889
9 (11)	1	April 24, 1895	April, 1895
	2	May 13 ----	May, 1895
	3	June 3, 1895	June, 1895
	4	July 9, 1895	July, 1895
	5	August 19, 1895	August, 1895
	6	September 16, 1895	September, 1895
	7	October 11, 1895	October, 1895
	8	November 11, 1895	November, 1895
	9	December 6, 1895	December, 1895
	10	January 8, 1896	January, 1896
	11	February 7, 1896	February, 1896
	12	March 6, 1896	March, 1896
10 (12)	1	April 23, 1896	April, 1896
	2	May 15, 1896	May, 1896
	3	June 23, 1896	June, 1896
	4	July 6, 1896	July, 1896
	5	September 16, 1896	August, 1896



Volume	Number	Received at National Museum	Date on cover
11 (13)	6	October 20, 1896	September, 1896
	7	November 12, 1896	October, 1896
	8	December 22, 1896	November, 1896
	9	January 27, 1897	December, 1896
	10	March 11, 1897 <sup>6</sup>	January, 1897
	11	March 15 1897	February, 1897
	12	May 14, 1897	March, 1897
	1	June 3, 1897	April, 1897
	2	June 21, 1897	May, 1897
	3	July 17, 1897	June, 1897
	4	August 11, 1897	July, 1897
	5	October 29, 1897	August, 1897
12 (14)	6	December 6, 1897	September, 1897
	7	December 14, 1897	October, 1897
	8	December 27, 18--	November, 1897
	9	January 24, 1898	December, 1897
	10	February 16, 1898	January, 1898
	11	March 5, 1898	February, 1898
	12	April 4, 1898	March, 1898
	1	April 12, 1898	April, 1898
	2	May 7, 1898	May, 1898 <sup>7</sup>
	3	June 15, 1898	June, 1898
	4	August 5, 1898	July, 1898
	5	August 26, 1898	August, 1898
13 (15)	6	—	September, 1898
	7 & 8	November 17, 1898	Oct. & Nov., 1898
	9	December 27, 1898	December, 1898
	10	February 6, 1899	January, 1899
	11	March 4, 1899	February, 1899
	12	March 14, 1899	March, 1899
	1	April 7, 1899	April, 1899
	2	—	May, 1899
	3	June 7, 1899	June, 1899
	4	July 10, 1899	July, 1899
	5	August 14, 1899	August, 1899
	6	September 19, 1899	September, 1899
14 (16)	7	—	October, 1899
	8	November 4, 1899	November, 1899
	9	December 4, 1899	December, 1899
	10	—	January, 1900
	11	January 30, 1900	February, 1900
	12	March 28, 1900	March, 1900
	1 & 2	—	April-May, 1900
	3	June 7, 1900	June 6, 1900

6) This date is probably correct as this issue contains the abstract of a lecture given as late as February 3, 1897.  
7) This number is inscribed April 1898 on the first page of text. This is obviously an error.

Because of the difficulties created by this duplication in paging, librarians are strongly urged to check carefully on the completeness and sequence of the set preserved in their library and be especially explicit in their instructions in sending their volumes to be bound. Covers of the various issues should not generally be discarded. They often carry useful additional information, including dates of publication.

Of the library sets consulted of the Ottawa Naturalist, none was without missing pages, and only one had preserved the original covers with dates of publication and other useful information.



Cody, William J. and Boivin, Bernard. 1954. "The Canadian Field-Naturalist and its predecessors." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 68(3), 127–132.

<https://doi.org/10.5962/p.341544>.

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