

# A HISTORY of The AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

1900 - 1975

By Beatrice Vogel 2011

## I PROLOGUE

This is the first chapter of this history. Much of it is from my own memory and experiences, and those of my contemporaries. I extend my thanks to those who responded to my queries and prodded my recollections. I especially thank Paula Cushing and Charles Dondale for suggestions and proofing. The next chapters of the history, after 1975, I leave to others who were actively involved in the affairs of the society, as I was not.

Charles Dondale, President of the American Arachnological Society in 1978, addressed a session during the annual meeting in Gainesville about the beginning of the Society.

“When I was a young lad I decided to trace a stream to its source. For hours I struggled upstream over cliffs and under bridges while the flow of water grew smaller and smaller. Finally I came to a level swampy place where the water no longer flowed but merely lay about in small puddles. These puddles, I perceived, were the source of the stream. The America Arachnological Society is a little like that stream. It didn’t gush from an already spring or fountain. It began de novo from small puddles that didn’t seem to be moving anywhere. “

## II ENVIRONMENT

Arachnological activity in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century might be the “swampy place” in Dondale’s metaphor. A handful of arachnologists were around in the early decades. Nathan Banks published numerous faunal lists, not only of the United States, but also Mexico and the Caribbean. George W. and Elizabeth G. Peckham, a husband and wife team worked on *Phiddipus* and other salticids. James Henry Emerton, a prolific writer with more than 70 publications, specialized in New England spiders but also published “Common Spiders of the United States” in 1902. Much of his work was later incorporated into “The Spiders of

Connecticut” by B.J.Kaston. Thomas H. Montgomery wrote about Lycosidae and Pisauridae. Elizabeth Bryant wrote of New England spiders and also of spiders in Barbados and Antigua. She lived in Boston and her collections are at Harvard. Cyrus R.Crosby and Sherman C.Bishop. worked on linyphids and theriidids and named many species. They published sometimes as Bishop & Crosby and just as frequently as Crosby & Bishop.

Ralph Vary Chamberlin was an influential presence in Arachnology. He was born in Utah in 1879, attended the University of Utah from 1902-1904, obtained his PhD in 1905. His employment history is a bit peripatetic: He was a professor at the University of Utah from 1904-1911, University of Pennsylvania 1911-1913, the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard 1913-1926, and back to the University of Utah in 1926 where he remained until his death 1967. He was reputed to have the ambition to name 1000 new species of invertebrates. He contributed indirectly to future generations by producing two brilliant students who attended the University at the same time: Willis John Gertsch and Wilton Ivie. But Chamberlin was not a well-liked man. It appeared that Ernst Mayr banned him from the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard in his later years.

Alexander Petrunkevitch was one of the longest reigning arachnologists during the first part of the Century. He was born in Ukraine in 1875, came to the US in 1903. He had a brief tenure at the Smithsonian, and was Curator of Arachnology at the American Museum of Natural History in 1909. He then went to Yale University in 1910 until his death in 1964. He worked in cytology and paleontology, but also published many faunal lists, and in 1911, he published an ambitious “A Synonymic index-catalogue of spiders of North, Central and South America with all Adjacent Islands – Greenland, Bermuda, West Indies, Tierra del Fuego, Galapagos, etc”. Petrunkevitch is somewhat of an enigma. He seems to have garnered much academic respect but

his work is not top notch. Perhaps his eyesight may have been failing in his later years and his work may have suffered from lack of interaction with his peers. When Harriet Exline was invited to Yale University in 1966 to complete Petrunkevitch's unfinished manuscript on amber spiders, she found too many errors to correct or complete it.

A story attributed to B.J.Kaston refers to a conversation occurring the first time a group of arachnologists met. When Harriet Exline was asked how she got interested in spiders, she explained that she had a vivid dream in which God came to her and told her to do her thesis on agelenids and pisaurids of the Pacific Northwest. Willis Gertsch said "That's remarkable, as I had the same dream, only God told me to work on crab spiders instead." Wilton Ivie chimed in, "Good heavens, I also had a dream like that, only the Lord told me to focus on the linyphiids." And so it went, around the room - Herb Levi was told to work on theridiids, Martin Muma was directed to work on coelotines, etc, etc, until it was Pertunkevitch's turn. He looked around the room and said, "Sorry, but I really don't remember telling any of you folks any of those things."

In the 1930's several arachnologists appeared who would be a major impact on the shape of Arachnology for the rest of the century: Willis Gertsch, Harriet Exline, Wilton Ivie, Benjamin J. Kaston, Arthur Chickering, Herb Levi, Stanley Mulaik, and Howard K. Wallace.

Willis Gertsch probably had the most impact on other arachnologists than any other person. He was a kind, generous, friendly man, helping and encouraging students, identifying and sharing specimens for and with all interested. His position as Curator at the American Museum of Natural History gave him high visibility and accessibility. He answered letters promptly and cordially. If he knew his correspondent he usually added personal remarks or asked after ones family. He mentored many budding araneologists. The only bad word about another person Gertsch ever said was when Chamberlin died "His natural meanness finally got him".

Gertsch was born 1906 in Montpelier Idaho the oldest of four children. He became interested in nature in high school and collected butterflies. In 1924 the family moved to Salt Lake City so college would be affordable. There he met Chamberlin and soon began working on

spiders and other arachnids. He earned a BS in 1928 and an MS in 1930. He then went to the University of Minnesota to work on his doctorate. There he met Jean Moore, another graduate student, whom he married in August 1932. Gertsch also met Dr. Frank Lutz, Chairman of the Entomology Department at the American Museum of Natural History. Dr. Lutz offered him a position as Assistant Curator, and the Gertschs moved to New York City that fall. A year later they bought a house in Ramsey New Jersey near Dr. Lutz. The commute was about 90 minutes, which Gertsch always used to write or read his notes. He continued his doctoral thesis and received his PhD in 1935 from the University of Minnesota. Gertsch was not a man glued to his office, going to the field to collect at every opportunity. His travels took him all over the United States, especially western states, Mexico and Caribbean Islands. His publications were endless; species descriptions, revisions of genera and families, reports on collecting trips, and a book, *American Spiders*, which he wrote at home in the evening in his “office” in the basement by the furnace. He retired in 1968 and moved to Portal Arizona. He remained fairly active into his 70s, but declined in his last years and lived in a nursing home where he died at the age of 92.

Harriet Exline was a warm outgoing person who enjoyed helping and encouraging students and persons interested in spiders. She mentored young arachnologists, William Peck and Beatrice Vogel, among others, and shared knowledge and specimens with them. She was born in Washington in 1909, attended Reed College and earned her PhD at the University of Washington in 1936. Exline was awarded the Sterling Fellowship at Yale for postdoctoral studies with Petrunkevitch. In 1938 she married Don Frizzell, a paleontologist in Ecuador where they lived for five years. Frizzell then obtained a position at the University of Texas, where Exline worked as guest researcher in spiders. The Frizzells moved to the University of Missouri in Rolla where Harriet continued as an independent researcher, but was named a Fellow and Research Associate of the California Academy of Sciences. After her death in 1968 her collections were given to the California Academy.

B.J. Kaston was another luminary who impacted many future arachnologists who followed. Born in 1906 he was academically inclined but did not immediately enter the study of spiders. He graduated high school in 1926 and received a B.S. in 1930 at North Carolina State University in zoology. It was there his interest in photography developed. He worked as a teaching assistant in zoology and botany, and also as a lifeguard. After NCSU he entered Yale in a PhD program with Alexander Petrunkevitch who suggested Kaston study spiders. His

dissertation “A Study of the Senses and Sense Organs Involved in the Courtship of Some Vagabond Spiders” was finished in 1934. His employment history is somewhat checkerboard. After Yale he worked at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station for four years. In 1938 he taught at Brenau College in Gainesville Georgia until 1945, interrupted by one year in the army (1943-1944) identifying mosquitoes as part of a malaria control project. In 1945, Kaston had a summer research fellowship at Harvard, then obtained a teaching position at Syracuse University in New York. After a year he moved to the Teachers College of Connecticut, which provided him access to the Yale University library and Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station while he updated *Spiders of Connecticut*. He retired in 1963, but in 1964 he became a lecturer at San Diego State College. In 1976 he received a NIH grant to study black widows, and finally retired from San Diego State. He continued his writing and correspondence with other arachnologists until his death in 1985.

Wilton Ivie was born in Utah in 1907. He attended the University of Utah, was a friend of Willis Gertsch and a student of Chamberlin. Ivie was an extraordinary arachnologist, but was not ambitious or aggressive. He seemed to be content to be Chamberlin’s research assistant for a pittance. Ivie eventually realized that while he did most of the work collecting, identifying, describing and illustrating the new species, Chamberlin was the author of the paper. To keep Ivie in his laboratory Chamberlin condescended to add him as junior author to the publications. A 1944 Chamberlin & Ivie publication “The Spiders of the Georgia Region” was an attempt to properly name the spiders that Walkenaer had named in 1837, based on drawings made by Abbot, a pioneer, in 1792. In 1933 and 1935, Wilton toured Georgia by bicycle, collecting spiders. He returned in 1943 and in 30 days collected 350 species, bringing the total for the region to 580. Ivie finally left Chamberlin in 1947. In 1969, Gertsch had obtained a grant for Ivie to work at the American Museum of Natural History, but Ivie was tragically killed in an automobile accident while driving to New York.

Arthur Chickering was born in 1887 in Vermont, studied at Yale with Petrunkevitch. His graduate degrees were in cytology (an MS in 1913 and a PhD in 1918). His thesis was on spermatogenesis of insects. He taught at Beloit College from 1913 to 1918 and at Albion College from 1919 to 1957. From 1953 to 1971 he was a research associate in arachnology at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard. Chickering made many collecting trips to Central

America and the Caribbean. He described 14 genera and 342 species mostly from Central America and the West Indies.

A Canadian spider pioneer, Albert Turnbull was born in 1917 in B-Say-Tah, Saskatchewan. He went to school in Regina and graduated from Balfour Technical School. Turnbull enrolled in the Canadian Army in 1939 and fought in Europe. After returning to Canada he entered University of British Columbia and earned a BS in 1951 and a MS in 1959 in forestry. He then worked in Agriculture Canada's Biological Control Laboratory in Vancouver and was given leave to study Oxford University. Turnbull received a DPhil in 1957 and moved to Belleville Ontario at Agriculture Canada's Entomology Laboratory. He worked there for 10 years and had collaborated with Charles Dondale. In 1967 he accepted an academic post at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. Turnbull had two PhD students, Mike Hardman 1972 and Robert Holmberg in 1979; and four master's students: W.T.Nash, G.E.Miller, H.M.Thistlewood, and Dominic Colletti. He retired in 1982 and lived a quiet life in retirement. He died in 2007.

In 1938 a young man emigrated from Germany to New York with his parents. Herb Levi could speak no English so he was sent to public high school to learn the language. He also enrolled in the Art Students League, which he attended at night. A year or two later he worked as a lab assistant in his uncle's textile mill in Shelton Connecticut. When War broke out in 1941 Levi was drafted, but rejected as an enemy alien and restricted to Shelton. However, Shelton was close to New Haven, and Levi went to Yale Library and was permitted to use of the library. He borrowed books of natural history and found McCook's *American Spiders*. In 1943 he decided to go to college and tried Harvard, but didn't get admitted, so instead went to the University of Connecticut. He studied chemistry and zoology. He could get course credit by exam, which he did for German and Art, but got failing grades in English. Levi took a class from John Rankin in invertebrate zoology, mostly covering marine phyla. Rankin asked Levi to lecture on arachnids. Rankin also hired Levi to illustrate his *Hemiptera of Connecticut*. Herb graduated in 3 years and went on to graduate school at the University of Wisconsin. He took various courses in biology, with an emphasis on invertebrates, but systematics was not permitted. In 1949 he finished his PhD thesis on pseudoscorpions, got married to Lorna Rose and took a job in Wasau Wisconsin, an extension of the University. Eventually he taught in Madison and became tenured. At

meetings and during travels he met many other spider workers including Archer, Chamberlin, Exline, Kaston, Gertsch, Petrunkevitch, Ivie, and Mulaik

In 1956, Harvard offered Levi a job as curator at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, with no student contact, at half his Wisconsin salary. He decided to try it for a year and look for a better job. His wife Lorna, got a job assisting Ernst Mayr which increased the family income. After only three months, Carpenter, the chairman, offered him a teaching job. He continued curating and teaching until he retired in 1981. He probably holds the world record for the number PhD students in Arachnology that he supervised: Abalos (post doc), Leticia Aviles, Joe Beatty, Allen Brady, Jim Carico, Ken Christianson (post doc), Jonathan Coddington, Fred Coyle, Cay Craig, Bill Eberhard, Ray Forister (post doc), Peter van Helsdingen (post doc), Gershon Levy (post doc), Wayne Madison, Brent Opell, Bill Piel, Jackie Palmer, Larry Pintar, Norman Platnick, Dio Quintero, Jon Reiskind, Bill Shear, Mark Stowe, Paulo Tongiorgi (post doc), Andy Weaver and possibly others. Many of Herb's students became university professors and produced another generation of arachnologists.

Northern California had its share of arachnological activity. Evert Schlinger was born in Los Angeles in 1925. He graduated high school in 1946, earned a BS in entomology in 1950 at the University of California, Berkeley, and a PhD in systematic entomology in 1957 at the University of California in Berkeley. Schlinger was a man of broad interests and while he was not an arachnologist, he produced a number of arachnology students. He did, however, study Acroceridae a parasitic fly on spiders. Some of his PhD students were Mike Bentzien, Frank Ennik, Jack Fraser, Matt Greenstone, Charles Griswold, John Hjelle, Sue Hydhorn, Vincent Lee, Carolyn Mullinex, Ken Yeorgan and Lenny Vincent. He also had numerous Master's students.

Literature available in the first few decades might be considered a "puddle", to continue with the Dondale's metaphor. An early text book was McCook's *American Spiders and Their Spinning-Work* in 3 volumes published from 1883 to 1893. John Henry Comstock, professor of entomology at Cornell University, published *The Spider Book* in 1912. This was a comprehensive treatment of arachnids with descriptions and illustrations of the lesser known classes and a thorough treatment of spiders including anatomy and keys to families and genera. Gertsch revised it in 1948, just one year before his own book *American Spiders* was published. *The Spider Book* was a text book. *American Spiders* is accessible reading and was written to provide general information about life histories, behavior, and diversity of spiders. The book

contains many photographs of spiders in black and white as well as full page color. A third important book *The Spiders of Connecticut* by Kaston was finished in 1941 but not published until 1948. This was the first book (and still the only) that could be used to identify species. It consisted not only of keys of genera and species but species descriptions and illustrations. It was found to be exceedingly useful for much of the United States, from the east to the Rockies. It has been reprinted once, but has been permanently out of print since the 1970s. A second book by Kaston, *How to Know the Spiders* in the Picture Key Nature Series, published in 1953, with several later editions, is still widely used, but provides keys only to the generic level.

In France, Pierre Bonnett produced *Bibliographia Araneorum*, a monumental opus which includes all spider species in the world through 1940. The six volumes list the species within families and genera, arranged alphabetically, gives synonyms, references and some geographic information. There are indices to family, generic and specific names as well as a complete bibliography to all publications. The first volume contains short biographies of European and American arachnologists including portraits or photographs of many. This opus was an indispensable reference for arachnologists worldwide for the next few decades.

The fifth (1940-1949) decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the beginning of cultural and scientific changes that would increase throughout the century. World War II had ended, the Atom Bomb had been dropped, and the GI bill in the United States and veteran's credit in Canada, made possible a college education for thousands of returning soldiers. The Atomic Bomb showed us that Government money poured into a scientific, albeit a military, project would achieve vast results. By the end of the decade federal grants began to be available for more peaceful projects, primarily in the sciences. Increased enrollment in colleges and universities promoted expansion of curricula reflecting the interest of the students rather than the need of industry and commerce..

Arachnology was a minor science, an uncomfortable step sister of entomology. Many students working on arachnological projects were mentored by professors who knew little or nothing about arachnology, but were broad minded enough to be effective supervisors.

By the 1960's there was a robust and growing population of arachnologists who corresponded with each other and were familiar with each others work. Frequent exchange of information and specimens was routine.



### III ACTORS

Charles Dondale was born and raised in Nova Scotia, spent a year in the Canadian Merchant Marine. He received a BS at McGill University in 1952, an MS in 1955 at Ohio State University and a PhD at McGill in 1959. Dondale was a student assistant at Nova Scotia Agricultural College in pest control when he noticed many spiders on the beating trays in minimally sprayed apple orchards. He wondered if the spiders could provide growers with a sort of biological control. Dondale visited Gertsch at the American Museum of Natural History, who suggested a revision of *Philodromus* as a doctoral thesis, and was hooked. Dondale teamed up with Bert Turnbull and Jim Redner on a 5-year study of spider predation. Then Dondale and Redner moved to the Biosystematics Research Institute in Ottawa. Redner had only a high school education but was a superb illustrator. He had been recruited as a technical assistant to Turnbull. The move to Ottawa was the beginning of a career-long collaboration between Dondale and Redner. They produced numerous publications of spider families in the series *Insects and Spiders of Canada* by the Department of Agriculture. Dondale generously shared knowledge and specimens with other workers, and mentored many students. He retired in 1990.

Beatrice Vogel was born in Billings, Montana in 1930. She graduated from Stanford University in 1952 with a BS in mathematics. Vogel stayed in California until 1959 when she enrolled at the University of Colorado in Boulder in mathematics and education. The first semester taught her that she was not a mathematician so she changed her major to biology. She heard about a recent donation of a spider collection to the University Museum. When she inquired about it the director, Dr. Hugo Rodeck put her in charge of it. Vogel immediately became fascinated. Rodeck suggested she visit the American Museum of Natural History in New

York and talk to the curator. She visited Gertsch over Christmas break, a visit that changed her life. Gertsch suggested she study *Pardosa*. Vogel met Harriet Exline at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Denver in 1960. Harriet invited Bea to visit her for 2 weeks in Rolla Missouri the next summer. It was the best arachnology course possible: collecting most every morning and identifying in the afternoon. Vogel received a National Science Foundation Grant in 1963 and entered Yale and received her PhD in 1968. During the first year at Yale she married Chris Durden who worked on fossil insects. They had two children and moved to Texas 1968. The marriage broke up in 1974. Vogel and children moved to Montana and in 1976 to Seattle. Vogel struggled to survive financially, and dropped out of active participation in Society activities.

Don Lowrie was born in 1910. He attended the University of Chicago, obtained a BS in 1932, and his PhD in 1942. His dissertation was on the spiders of xeric dunes in the Chicago area. He worked at the Chicago Academy of Sciences, served in the Navy during WWII and the Korean War. He taught briefly at the University of Idaho and New Mexico Highlands University, then taught at California State University, Los Angeles from 1956 to 1972. At retirement he moved to Sante Fe, New Mexico and continued studying spiders. In 1979 Lowrie joined the Peace Corps and spent a year in Paraguay. He was involved in an car accident in 1990 and died in 2000.

Robert Schick received his PhD in 1965 on, crab spiders and it was published in the Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History. He then worked on mosquitoes with his major professor and on a study of reproductive isolating mechanisms in *Misumenops*. He was a member of the Arachnologists of the Southwest, and a Director of AAS. He attended the

organizing meeting in Portal. Somewhat after that his interests shifted to cacti and he began creating hybrids of the genus *Echinopsis*.

Stan Williams received his PhD at the University of Arizona in 1968. He joined the Department of Biology at San Francisco State University in 1967 and as of 2011 is still on the faculty. In the 1970s SFU did not have a doctoral program, but Williams supervised two or three dozen MS theses, mostly on scorpions. He does much of his own research at the California Academy of Science in San Francisco.

Vince Roth was born in Portland Oregon in 1924. At 14 he entered Benson Polytechnical High School taking automotive and trade classes. In 1941, Roth entered the Navy and was at Pearl Harbor. He stayed in the Navy until 1946 and was able to study steam and diesel engines and machining. While in the Navy he visited ports throughout the South Pacific. His interest in entomology was triggered by reading *Grassroots Jungle* by E.W. Teal. Roth entered Oregon State College in Corvallis and earned a BS (1949) and MS (1951) in entomology. While in college he contacted Willis Gertsch, who recommended reading Comstock's *The Spider Book*. Vince also met Harriet Exline who shared information, literature and helped him with the pronunciation of spider names. He worked for the Oregon State Department of Agriculture and then the University of Arizona Experimental Station in Yuma where he fell in love with the Southwest. During that time he joined Gertsch on many field trips in the Southwest. The crown of his professional life was being appointed Resident Director of the Southwest Research Station near Portal Arizona. SWRS had been a ranch purchased by the American Museum of Natural History in 1955. It was directed by Mont Cazier until 1962 when he retired giving Gertsch, who was nearing retirement, a year's tenure. It was Gertsch who urged Roth to apply for the position. Roth retired in 1986. Vince was concerned about the lack of publications to identify spiders. He

was deeply interested in taxonomy and began creating generic keys for Agelenidae. In 1972, *American Arachnology* #8 included his a proposal for a nearctic spider catalogue. In 1982, he published a handbook for identification, entitled *Spider Genera of North America*, which he continued to improve and expand. A 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of 203 pages was published in 1993, but Vince died in 1997 before the 3rd edition was revised.

Robert Mitchell, a consummate Texan, was born in Wellington in 1933. He earned a BS in zoology in 1954, an MS in 1955 at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, a PhD in 1965 at the University of Texas in Austin. In the 1970s, a friend reported that he had visited Bob at his house in Lubbock and found him rebuilding a car engine with the parts spread out in his living room. A slender man, Mitchell was a passionate biospeleologist, wrote his thesis on troglobitic carabid beetles. From 1965 to 1969 he taught at the University in Austin and from 1969 until he retired (1988?), he taught at Texas Tech in Lubbock. Mitchell made countless visits to caves in Texas and Mexico, studying invertebrates with an emphasis on arachnids. He was able to keep ricinuleids alive in the laboratory and documented their slow and long life cycle. He was the founding editor of the *Journal of Arachnology*.

William Peck was born in 1920. He received a BS in entomology from Iowa State University, an MA from Central Missouri State University and his PhD from the University of Arkansas. Peck served in the Navy during World War II. From 1965 to 1967 he was a research assistant in arachnology at CMSU and then professor of biology at that University until he retired in 1982. Peck was second President on the American Arachnological Society 1975-1977, was member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Arachnology* and later served as an associate editor for the *Journal of Arachnology*. He was also vice president of the Centre International de

Documentation Arachnologique of Paris, France from 1977 to 1980. Bill died in McAllen, Texas in 2001 where he and his wife Marica, had lived for 12 years.

Oscar Francke was born in Mexico City in 1950. His family moved to Lima Peru in 1960, he graduated from high school in 1966 and had acquired a liking for insects and arachnids. He earned a BS in entomology at Arizona State University, and while there met Monty Cazier and Willis Gertsch who got Oscar interested in scorpions. Francke received his PhD in 1976 from ASU, then taught at Texas Tech in Lubbock, where he met Bob Mitchell. In 1986 he returned to Mexico City to assist in the family business, metal-packaging. His work in scorpions continued and in 2004 he became curator of the National Arachnid Collection at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico UNAM). He continues to help students interested in arachnids of all classes, and supervises masters and PhD theses.

#### IV NACENCY

Dondale, continuing his 1974 metaphore, said:

“One of these puddles was the gathering, in November 1967 of about 25 arachnologists for a symposium under the umbrella of the American Entomological Society in New York. The symposium was organized by Will Whitcomb, and among the attendees were Willis Gertsch, BJ Kaston, John McCrone, Vince Roth. The thing I remember the most about the meeting was the sheer fun at meeting some other arachnologists – people who understood. The idea of an arachnological society may have been born there.”

Another “puddle” was a California organization “Arachnologists of the Southwest” (ASW), born at a meeting of the California Academy of Sciences in San Diego in 1966. Don Lowrie was the organizer and the initial membership was about 15. They met at the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum. In March 1968 the meetings were transferred to the Robert M. McCurdy Nature Study Center in Eaton Canyon. The program featured talks about wolf spiders

by Lowrie, crab spiders by Bob Schick and trap door spiders by Mel Thompson. At the conclusion of the program, officers were elected: B.J. Kaston, President, R.X. Schick, Vice-president and Mel Thompson, Secretary-treasurer. For the next couple of years, the meetings consisted of only a dozen or so attendees. By 1970 ASW had grown to nearly 30 members, and there was talk of publishing a journal. After AAS was formed in 1972 the Notes of the Arachnologists of the Southwest were to be published in the Journal of Arachnology, and in 1973 it was announced that AWS had been absorbed by the new society.

Again, in Dondale's metaphor, Dondale, himself, was the trickle that started the stream. In September 1968, he sent out a questionnaire titled "American Arachnology Issue No 1" to about 50 people asking what kind of newsletter they wanted. There were 32 responses, and the newsletter was born. John McCrone had accepted the job of reproducing and mailing the newsletter..

American Arachnology (AA) #2 was issued in February of 1969, including information about other arachnological societies, a book review of *Spiders and their Kin* by Levi & Levi, a list of four formal courses of Arachnology in universities, and a biography of Harriet Exline. Also included was a list of over 100 subscribers to AA, with 70 including information about their research and occupations.

During the summer of 1969, Dondale received a Fellowship from the (Canadian) National Research Council to spend a year in Montpellier France to study with Legendre. He asked Beatrice Vogel, who had been corresponding with him since 1966, if she would like to take over editing AA. She readily agreed and AA #3 was issued November 1969. It contained a report from Dondale about his stay in France, a remembrance of Wilton Ivie who died in August,

and announcement that John A.L. Cooke had been appointed as interim Curator of Arachnology at the American Museum of Natural History.

AA #4 issued June 1970 listed 6 formal university arachnology courses: California State College Los Angeles by Don Lowrie; California State College San Francisco by Stan Williams; San Diego State College by BJ Kaston; Oklahoma State University Stillwater by William Drew; Texas Tech University Lubbock by Bob Mitchell; University of Dayton Ohio by James MacMahon; and Western Carolina University Cullowhee North Carolina by Fred Coyle. This issue of AA also included information about arachnologists, their projects and names of new members.

AA #5 March 1971 included notes by Willis Gertsch, who had moved to Portal Arizona, about spiders of the Chiricahua Mountain region. AA #6, October 1971, contained a Directory of American Arachnologists, 149 in number. In addition to the usual notes and announcements was a suggestion that there should be a Journal of Arachnology separate from a Journal of Entomology.

In January 1972, Bea Vogel mailed the following letter to about 170 persons.

“Texas Memorial Museum  
24<sup>th</sup> & Trinity  
Austin Texas 78705  
3 January 1972

“ARACHNOLOGICAL COLLEAGUE:

“Would you be interested in the formation of a SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGY?

“In compiling the Directory of American Arachnologists for the last newsletter, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that there are now so many of us. And for the 170 or so who are listed, there are probably half again as many interested, who have not yet sent their names.

“I can think of at least two reasons why we should consider the formation of such a society at this time. The first reason is to support a journal. The Arachnologists of the Southwest have been

talking about expanding their Notes into a journal for the whole continent. Some of us, including both residents of Southern California and elsewhere, think it would be more appropriate for a SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGY to be sponsoring such a journal. There is no conflict here. The matter was discussed at the last meeting of the Arachnologists of the Southwest, and if we cannot form a continental society, they will probably go ahead with the expansion of the Notes.

“The second reason for forming a SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGY is for the reinforcement of our common interest in the exploration of the biology of arachnids. Many of us work on small budgets and the unfortunate tendency in these days is to equate importance with budget. There is also a tendency in some scientific circles to downgrade Natural History. I feel that a formal Society would counteract both these tendencies and could improve the image of our research. Such a Society might help others understand the importance of biological exploration at the organismic level. I think there is a very real chance that we will know 90% of the Martian biota before we know 90% of our own. This is a misplaced priority. Lest I be misunderstood, may I say that by ‘biological exploration’ I do not mean alpha taxonomy, I mean all phases of biology of arachnids.

“I have been discussing the formation of a Society with Don Lowrie and we would like to see an organizational meeting this year. Since arachnologists like to congregate in Portal Arizona during the summer, Lowrie suggests Portal in August as a place and time of an organizational meeting, probably an al fresco one. For those of you who don’t know Portal, it is a small village about 4 miles from the Southwestern Research Station of the American Museum, of Natural History. There are National Forest campgrounds around Portal, and a few motel accommodations in Portal [names can be supplied]. Reservations at the Southwestern Research Station must be made in advance, probably before summer.

“If you are interested in a SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGY, please answer the enclosed questionnaire [sorry, no copy remains] and add any remarks that you wish. Please return before March because I will publish the responses in the next newsletter, AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGY, in April 1972, including the place and time of the meeting.

“NOTE; IF I DO NOT HAVE YOUR CORRECT ADDRESS, PLEASE SEND IT TO ME!

Beatrice R. Vogel”

There were enough positive responses to pursue the idea. AA # 7 was issued April 1972 announcing the time August 12-13 at a Rustler’s Park Campground in Chiricahua National Forest. It would be an open air meeting at Rustlers Park, the suggested starting time was 10 AM.

The meeting did happen as scheduled. August 12, 1972 in the Chiricahua mountains at 6000’ feet of altitude on a sunny Arizona morning, some 37 people were assembled around



concrete picnic tables. The meeting was called to order by Bea Vogel at the suggested hour. All present readily agreed that a society should be formed and the name AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY was chosen with the inference that it included the entire western hemisphere. The main rationale for forming a society was the journal, which created considerable discussion as to content, languages, frequency of publications, and editorial staff. Robert Mitchell had volunteered to be editor and was accepted by the assembly. The question of language was tabled, and frequency of publication would be at least annually. In practice most of these issues were modified by discretion of the editor. After a brief intermission for lunch the business session continued.

A constitution committee was chosen that included John A.L. Cooke, ; Russel Gable and Dave Marqua. Cooke \ his degree from Oxford University. and was the interim curator of spiders at the American Museum of Natural History after Gerstch retired. Russ Gable, a professor in the biology department of San Francisco State University, was fond of tarantulas. Dave Marqua was a member of the Arachnologists of the Southwest. All three were present at the meeting. Bea Vogel was elected president pro-tem with an expectation that a slate of officers and a draft of the constitution would be published in the fall. Membership dues were set at \$10 annually, and a category of charter membership was established to increase the treasury. For an extra \$10 paid within a year, anyone, whether attending the meeting or not, would be listed as a Charter Member (see Appendix).

By mid afternoon a rain storm was pending so Vince Roth invited all attendees to reconvene at the Southwestern Research Station. The afternoon ended in a surprise picnic of barbecued chicken hosted by Willis and Jean Gertsch at their house. A detailed report of the day was published in AA #8, October 1972.

By some strange oversight, neither Vogel nor Peck who took several pictures of the gathering, nor any other attendee thought to gather a list of names of the 37 arachnologists participating. A partial list, aided by the photographs, is included in the Appendix.

By the end of the year a copy of the constitution was mailed to the AA mailing list for approval (see Appendix).

Further items of interest in AA #8 were announcements that the University of Utah arachnological collection had been transferred to the American Museum of Natural History and that Bob Schick had been appointed Curator of Spiders at the California Academy of Science on a five year grant.

Early in 1973 Vogel, as President Pro Tem, mailed a letter to all arachnologists inviting them to join the American Arachnological Society (See Appendix). It contained information about membership, the Journal and future meetings. The officers of the new Society were listed.

President	Beatrice Vogel
Vice President	Vince Roth
Secretary-Treasurer	Mel Thompson
Directors	Charles Dondale Jon Reiskind Bob Schick

The structure of the ruling body of the society as well as the constitution were structured after those of CIDA.

Jon Reiskind received his PhD from Levi in 1968 and was a professor at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

American Arachnology #9, April 1973, announced three regional meetings for the year. Martin Muma was hosting a western meeting in Silver City, New Mexico, an eastern meeting hosted by Robert Snetsinger at Pennsylvania State University in University Park, and a southeastern meeting in Florida at Welaka Reserve managed by the University of Florida, Jon Reiskind hosting. This issue also featured an illustrated key to Nearctic Gnaphosidae by Ubick and Roth with a species list and bibliography as an indicator of things to come in a Catalogue.

AA #10, October 1973, reported that AAS now had 175 members including 67 institutional members. Norman Platnick became Curator of Spiders at AMNH, the position vacated by John Cooke. Platnick was a student of Levi and was just finishing his PhD thesis. There would be 2 regional meetings in 1974: Eastern Section at Lynchburg College, Lynchburg Virginia August 2-3, hosted by Jim Carico and the Western Section at Las Vegas, New Mexico, August 14-16, hosted by Don Lowrie. For 1975, consensus decreed a single continental meeting set at Warrensburg Missouri. AA #11 was issued April 1975. Production and distribution of AA was taken over by Nan Lawler at Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Bob Mitchell had produced 4 volumes of the Journal of Arachnology to date. He was having problems with address changes, requests for back numbers & lost mailings.

The announcement for the 1975 meeting came in AA #12, winter 1974-1975 .

“ The American Arachnological Society will hold its first international meeting in 1975, June 24-26 at Warrensburg Missouri, close to the geographic center of North America (well, calculate it by population density if it doesn't work out topographically). A special invitation is extended to members living outside the U.S and to non-member arachnologists. There will also be a section of myriapodologists attending the meeting. Central Missouri College will make available moderately priced food and lodging. While the deadline for submitting papers to be presented passed January 1, those who have not committed themselves to attending the meeting may still do so if they hurry. It would be an exciting meeting, since it will be the first of the Society as a whole. Inquiries may be addresses to Dr. W. B. Peck, Dept of Biology, Central Missouri State University, Warrensburg MO 64093”

Also announced was that *Spiders of Connecticut* still available from Connecticut State Library for \$6.00.

A repeat announcement of the 1975 International Meeting appeared in AA #13, 1975.

“By now most everybody interested should know of our first international meeting, 24 to 26 June in Warrensburg, Missouri. As this newsletter goes to press, about 75 arachnologists plan to attend, including not only North America, but also many from Europe, South America and Asia. The meeting will start with an informal gathering on the evening of 23 June at Bill Peck's. The formal meeting will include a field trip and five sessions of papers covering phylogeny, morphology, synecology, and autecology of arachnids. It promises to be the finest meeting of the

year and we hope as some of you read this, you will change your mind and make it to the meeting. If you do, write to W.B.Peck, Dept of Biology, Central Missouri University, Warrensburg MO, 64093.”

Bill Peck mailed a four page information packet to all registrants consisting of meeting events, facilities campus maps, directions and guest rates for recreational facilities (See Appendix).

AAS #14 Reported that the First International meeting was an exciting event:

Indeed, a great deal of the credit of a successful meeting could be given to the organizer, Bill Peck. Central Missouri University had nearly ideal facilities for such a meeting. We were housed in the same building as the meetings, with the cafeteria only a block away. The meetings were well-organized, and happily, all single sessions, with none of the horror of choosing which session to attend, which is nearly an intrinsic feature of scientific meetings. But credit must also be given to participants of the meetings – the papers were generally of high quality, whether a progress report of the final result of arachnological research. It was gratifying to learn that the Society has blossomed into a well-rounded scientific fellowship, not dominated by systematics, ethology, physiology, ecology, morphology, etc, but each discipline well represented by students with common interests – Arachnology(See Appendix for a list of attendees).

The Warrensburg meeting well-attended and was also social. Contrary to popular misconception, Central Missouri is not entirely arid. The environment for basic scientific exchange was created the evening before the meeting formally opened in Bill Peck’s yard with liberal amounts of popular beverages. The seconds afternoon of the 3-day meeting was a field trip to an interesting historical site on the Missouri River, which was also arachnologically interesting. The outing was followed by an “informal” dinner of barbequed whole pig at

Warrensburg's most exotic establishment, complete with open air dining, bar and a swimming pool.

The three days of arachnology and arachnological exchange. Old friendships renewed, and new friendships established – important to Arachnology the science, because science is a human endeavor and only flourishes if its underlying humanity does.

The business meeting announced the new officers:

President,	Bill Peck;
Vice President.	Charles Dondale;
Secretary,	Nan Lawler;
Treasurer,	Mel Thompson;
Directors,	Herb Levi,
	Bea Vogel
	Willis Gertsch.

Annual Dues were set at \$12.50, with student rate at \$7.50, and institutional \$15.00. AA would no longer be distributed free to non-members, instead, they would be charged \$2.00. Also listed were the names & addresses of 422 members: 12 from Canada, 82 from South America, Mexico, Europe, and Asia, and 82 institutional subscriptions!

The society was not without growing pains. There were production problems with American Arachnology. In 1974 McCrone could no longer produce the newsletter. Vogel persuaded Dondale to temporarily take the job and in 1975 Nan Lawler took over, doing the printing and mailing. Lawler was an amateur arachnologist working at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. She had attended a few meetings of the Arachnologists of the Southwest. She was plagued by incorrect addresses and requests for back issues. Also in 1975, Lawler became Secretary of AAS when the office of Secretary-Treasurer was divided. Some of the address problems abated in 1976 when Norman Platnick became

Membership Secretary and updated the mailing list. In 1978, Vogel resigned as editor of AA the newsletter and Bill Shear took over editing and production.

If the Newsletter had problems, they were nothing compared to the Journal. Robert Mitchell had offered to initiate and edit the Journal of Arachnology. Mitchell had some editorial experience with the International Journal of Speleology. He designed the Journal of Arachnology and drew the cover image of a uropygid. Publishing in the 1970s involved typing the camera ready copy on a composer, a phototypesetter. It could write in columns but couldn't make tables and the layout had to be done with scissors and glue. Mitchell had a couple of biospeleologist students for assistants. Texas Tech did the typesetting and the actual printing was done by Speleopress in Austin. Speleopress was a shop set up in a school bus by another spelologist. There was to be a new volume each year published in three issues. Issue 1 of a volume was to be published in January, issue 2, in May, and issue 3 in September. Volume 1(1) named January 1973 was mailed in November 1973, Volume 1(2) (May 1973) was mailed in April 1974, and 1(3) (September 1973) was mailed in May 1974. The first four issues were posted in Lubbock, Texas. Nan Lawler, in California, had applied and obtained non profit organization status for AAS, which allowed bulk rate postage for both JOA and AAS, so the next 3 issues were mailed from Santa Barbara, but the issues were still nearly a year late. This, of course, generated a lot of mail from annoyed arachnologists demanding their Journal, and even a loss of a few members. It was most difficult with institutional members. Mitchell shrugged off complaints by saying "they aren't late. I promised when I started that I would be behind for a year or two." Issues 3(2) and 3(3) were mailed from Lubbock. By Volume 4, the names of the issues were changed to Winter for January, Spring, for May, and Fall for September. But it didn't seem to make much of a dent in the complaints. Mitchell had a conflict of interest between publishing the Journal and carrying

out his cave research, as did his assistants. By 1976, Volume 4, Bill Peck took over mailing from Warrensburg and that end of production ran a bit smoother. Also in 1976 Oscar Francke joined the editorial staff as Assistant Editor, the position vacated by Mark Rowling who finished his PhD. James Reddell continued as an editorial assistant as did James Colkendolpher, except Colkendolpher spent half of that year in Mexico with his studies. When Francke began, more and more of the editor function came his way. In February 1977 he wrote Bill Peck, then President, that the editorial desk was totally unorganized, manuscripts were not acknowledged for months, reviewers were slow getting reviews completed and manuscripts were not being sent back to the author for retyping. Francke was attempting to eliminate some of these problems. In 1977 Francke was promoted to Editor in Chief. But Speleopress was beginning to be a problem.

Volume 7(1) in 1978 took seven months to be printed after receipt of camera ready copy, Volume 5(2) took five months, and three months after 5(3) had been sent to Austin, Francke phoned and learned that Terry Raines, Speleopress owner was in Alaska. When Raines returned to Austin, Francke traveled there and terminated the contract. Volume 5(3) was finished and 6(1) went to press because the copy was already in Austin. The next few Volumes were printed in Lubbock, and production time was improved under Francke's organized management and with the able assistance of his editorial staff of James Redell, David Sisson, and James Colkendolpher, who also were arachnologists.

#### V CONTINUENCE

After the Warrensburg International meeting in 1975, five of the next eight years held separate east and west AAS meetings. Since 1983 there has been a just a single yearly continental AAS meeting.

The newsletter American Arachnology is published bi-annually, usually consisting of abstracts of papers given at the annual meeting.

The Journal of Arachnology has continued to grow in size and quality still at the rate of three issues a year and a new arachnological image on the cover of each yearly volume.

## VI RESOURCES

American Arachnology, Numbers 1-15, 1968 -1975

American Arachnology, Number 64, 2002. Peck Biography

Biographical Memoir, National Academy of Sciences, 1991. Petrunkevitch Biography

Biography of Albert(Bert) Lloyd Turnbull. By Robin Leech

Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History V 170. Gertsch Biography

Journal of Arachnology, 14:283-291. Kaston Biography

Letters between arachnologists from 1960 to 1980

Oral and written correspondence by the author with numerous colleagues and arachnologists

Pan-Pacific Entomologist, 75(3) 121—129 1999. Roth Obituary

Robert Mitchell memorial page (internet site)

## VII APPENDIX

A1 Proposed Constitution

A2 Revised Constitution

A3 Partial List of Inaugral Meeting Attendees

A4 Charter Member List



A5 Invitation o Join the Society

A6 Peck Invitation to First International Meeting in Warrensburgh Missouri

A7 List of Attendees at Warrensburgh Meeting