

GEOLOGIC PAST

Highlighting Articles from *GSA Bulletin*

ONE INTERESTING MEETING

Proceedings of the Forty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Geological Society of America

At GSA's 44th Annual Meeting (1931), quite a few papers were presented by geologists of note. Their abstracts appear in the *Proceedings (GSA Bulletin, v. 43, p. 1–220)*; two are highlighted here.

Whose Hypothesis Was It?

Frank Bursley Taylor's abstract addressed the so-called "Taylor-Wegener Hypothesis" of continental drift (p. 173), remarking, "Since the views of the two authors differ in several respects, and the first-named author's paper preceded the earliest of Wegener's published work, it seems best to discontinue the hyphenated relation." Taylor followed with a brief explanation of his understanding of the "splitting of [Earth's] crust" and the "deforming force pulling it toward the equator," noting that Greenland "stuck fast while the crust around it moved." See Taylor's 1910 article on continental drift in *GSA Bulletin, v. 21, p. 179–226*; for a brief summary, see page 29 of the July 2005 issue of *GSA Today*, or view it on the Web at <ftp://rock.geosociety.org/pub/GSAToday/gt0507.pdf>.

How Did They Get There?

At that 1931 meeting, **Bailey Willis**, GSA President in 1928, presented the abstract (p. 120) that would develop into his seminal paper, *Isthmian Links (GSA Bulletin, v. 43, p. 917–952)*.

He began the abstract with this statement and call to action: "It is being established beyond question by biological evidence that migrations of terrestrial organisms have occurred in the past, where now wide seas intervene, the fact of former connections between such continents as South America and Africa or Africa and India demands recognition and explanation." His methodical and thorough paper published in the same volume went on to do just that.

The Penrose Legacy

Alfred C. Lane's President's Report (p. 7–9) acknowledged the generous bequest left to the Society by his friend and colleague, **R.A.F. Penrose**, just months before the 1931 meeting. Penrose's philosophy behind the bequest was clear in this excerpt from a 1929 letter included in Lane's report (p. 8–9): "... a national institution like the Geological Society of America, which is not bound to any particular institution but is on terms of friendship and good will with all of them, might be the best source through which to distribute the funds of a paleontologic or other geologic endowment."

The December 1931 meeting took place in Tulsa, Oklahoma, only the second GSA Annual Meeting to be held west of the Mississippi.

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