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EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE: 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: 202-387-7171. Cable: Advancesci, Washington. Copies of "Instructions for Contributors" can be obtained from the editorial office. ADVERTISING CORRESPONDENCE: Rm. 1740, 11 W. 42 St., New York, N.Y. 10036. Phone: 212-PE 6-1858.

The Birthdays of Science

Science has three birthdays. On 4 January *Science* was 69 years old; on 9 February, 81 years old; and today, 3 July, *Science* is 84 years old. None of these is a particularly interesting birthday in number of years, but publication of this issue on the most ancient of the three birth dates provides an appropriate occasion for a bit of history.

The explanation of the multiple birth dates is fairly obvious; there were two false starts before the magazine got off to a record of uninterrupted publication. The first issue, a slim 12 pages and cover, appeared on 3 July 1880, with John Michels as editor. The AAAS meetings of 1880 and 1881 provided a substantial part of the content for the first two volumes. For a year and a half the magazine struggled along, with Thomas A. Edison, the magazine's behind-the-scenes backer, paying the weekly deficit of \$100 to \$150. By the end of 1881 his patience ran out; he paid the remaining debts, gave the magazine to Mr. Michels, and had no more to do with it. Michels brought out three scattered issues in early 1882, and that was the end of the first attempt.

But *Science* did not stay dead for long. Alexander Graham Bell purchased the name and good will from Michels for a generous \$5000. With his father-in-law, Gardiner Greene Hubbard, who later founded the *National Geographic Magazine*, Bell organized a distinguished editorial company headed by Daniel Coit Gilman, president of Johns Hopkins. With Samuel Hubbard Scudder as editor, publication was resumed on 9 February 1883. The new magazine had eminent contributors and wide scientific scope, but it continued to lose money—something over \$80,000 in a decade. In 1893 the AAAS voted to contribute to its support and Bell made another gift, but time was running out and publication was suspended in March of 1894.

Then another rescuer came along. James McKean Cattell, head of the department of psychology at Columbia, bought the title and good will for \$25, formed an editorial committee of great scientific competence, worked exceedingly hard as editor, secured a variety of domestic and foreign reports, symposium papers, addresses, and other materials, and succeeded in establishing *Science* so solidly that it has appeared regularly every week since Cattell's first issue was published on 4 January 1895.

In 1900 the AAAS entered into an agreement with Cattell to make *Science* the official journal of the Association. Cattell continued as editor and publisher; the Association paid him \$2 (later raised to \$3) for each member; and each member received a subscription. Circulation grew under this arrangement; the magazine increased in size; and the relationship continued until the end of 1945, shortly after Cattell's death. Under an agreement made some years earlier, the AAAS then became the owner and publisher. Payment to the Cattell estate, over a 10-year period, totaled \$270,000.

The daily work of editing and publishing a magazine with a circulation of over 100,000 must, of course, be done by an office staff. But the feeling of ownership and responsibility is shared by a great many members and subscribers, who have been generous with their criticisms and suggestions. On this 84th anniversary we invite a continuing flow of suggestions and comments from interested readers.

—DAEL WOLFLE