

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
Nova-Scotian Institute of Natural Science.

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VOLUME II. PART II.

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ANNIVERSARY MEETING, OCTOBER 9, 1867.

In accordance with the Bye-Laws of the Institute, the Anniversary Meeting was held on Wednesday, October 9, 1867, at 8 p.m., when the following gentlemen were elected office-bearers for the ensuing year:—

*President*—J. MATTHEW JONES, F. L. S.

*Vice-Presidents*—J. BERNARD GILPIN, M. D., J. R. DEWOLFE, M. D.

*Treasurer*—W. C. SILVER.

*Secretary*—W. GOSSIP.

*Council*—J. HUNTER DUVAR, P. S. HAMILTON, JOSEPH BELL, Capt. KING, R. A., J. RUTHERFORD, Capt. L'ESTRANGE, R. A., T. F. KNIGHT, J. CAMPBELL.

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ORDINARY MEETING, NOVEMBER 4, 1867.

J. M. JONES, *President, in the Chair.*

Professor LAWSON (Dalhousie College) read a paper by Professor HOW, of King's College, Windsor, which was a continuation of his former "*Notes on the Economic Mineralogy of Nova Scotia.*" (See *Transactions.*)

The PRESIDENT read a paper entitled, "*Contributions to the Natural History of the Bermudas—Corals and their allies.*" Specimens of every species described were exhibited, including a singularly formed *Mycedium fragile*. (See *Transactions.*)

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ORDINARY MEETING, DECEMBER 2, 1867.

J. M. JONES, *President, in the Chair.*

Dr. J. B. GILPIN read a paper on "*The Food Fishes of Nova Scotia,*" being the fifth and concluding part of a series delivered under that title. (See *Transactions.*)

Dr. STERRY HUNT, F. R. S., stated that the Shad was taken as far up the St. Lawrence as Montreal.

A Member, in alluding to the taking of the different kinds of edible fish on the north-east coast of America, remarked upon the local fishery laws at St. John, New Brunswick, which apportioned the harbour in lots to fishermen, a measure found to work well, as the whole harbour was thereby kept in a state of strict preservation as regards its fisheries.

The PRESIDENT read a short note "On *Hyla squirella*, a batrachian new to the Province." (See Appendix.) It was discovered by Mr. ARTHUR SILVER on his father's estate at Preston.

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ORDINARY MEETING, JANUARY 6, 1868.

J. M. JONES, *President, in the Chair.*

Dr. FRASER read a paper "On the Magnetic Telegraph." (See Transactions.)

Dr. J. B. GILPIN read a paper "On some of the Fishes of the Coast." (See Transactions.)

The Pollack (*Gadus virens*, Gunth.), and the Hake (*Phycis Americanus*, Gunth.) were described, and very carefully prepared drawings of each exhibited

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ORDINARY MEETING, FEBRUARY 3, 1868.

Dr. J. B. GILPIN, *Vice-President, in the Chair.*

Mr. T. F. KNIGHT read a paper "On Oyster culture." (See Transactions.)

Mr. J. H. DUVAR stated that an attempt had been made at Prince Edward Island to form oyster beds, but the result had not yet been ascertained. The oyster was found at various places on the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, but chiefly on the northern shores, within the Gulf of St. Lawrence, viz., at Pictou, Tatamagouche, Merigomish, Wallace, Pugwash, &c. They did not exist on the Bay of Fundy shore of Nova Scotia.

Mr. HENRY POOLE's paper "On the Meteorology of the Caledonian Coal Mines, Cape Breton, in 1867," was read by the SECRETARY. (See Transactions.)

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ORDINARY MEETING, MARCH 3, 1868.

J. M. JONES, *President, in the Chair.*

The following Resolution having been duly moved and seconded, was carried by the vote of a majority of the members present:—

"That for the future the Ordinary Meetings of the Institute, for the reading of papers, be held on the second Monday of each month, instead of the first, as formerly."

The PRESIDENT read an extract of a letter from Dr. A. GUNTHER, F. R. S., (British Museum,) relating to his recent discovery as to the Whitebait of England (*Clupea alba*, Yar.) being merely the young of the common Herring (*Clupea harengus*, Gunth.)

The PRESIDENT also read a communication from Mr. HURDIS, of Southampton, England, (*Cor. Memb.*), embracing his views upon revolving storms, particularly those of the North Atlantic. (See Appendix.)

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ORDINARY MEETING, APRIL 13, 1868.

J. M. JONES, *President, in the Chair.*

Dr. J. B. GILPIN read a paper "On the Mammalia of Nova Scotia," being the fourth part of a series read before the Institute, and published in former numbers of the Transactions. (See Transactions.)

The author illustrated his paper with life-like drawings of each species.

The PRESIDENT alluded to the "slides" made by otters on the margins of lakes and streams, a fact mentioned by the doctor, and stated that he had seen such slides on the sloping margin of a lake frequented by otters at the base of the Blue Mountains, Shelburne Co.

Mr. W. C. SILVER stated that the otter, which was plentiful some thirty or forty years ago in the neighborhood of Halifax, was extremely scarce now, and might, indeed, be considered rare all over the Province.

Dr. REID mentioned that the Skunk (*Mephitis chinga*) was very numerous in the Red River and Lake Winnipeg valleys, and in the vicinity of the town of Winnipeg. The Indians used it as food, and the camps smelt strongly of the animal, as the skins were hung about the wigwams, and the meat often boiling in the pots. He related an incident in connection with the habits of the Skunk, which took place at an encampment where he was staying. One of these animals, during night, came into the camp, and being suddenly surprised, voided its offensive fluid into one of the cooking pots in which was a mess of pork and beans ready for the next day's meal, which was thereby rendered uneatable, and he and his friends had to fast in consequence. The Indians did not consider the fluid poisonous. The skunk frequented the traps set for minks, and ate the bait. He had not observed the Raccoon in the Red River or Winnipeg districts, and thought its existence there was doubtful.

The PRESIDENT read a short paper "*On some of the rarer birds of Nova Scotia,*" giving notices of the occurrence of the Great American White Egret (*Ardea alba*), King Eider (*Anas spectabilis*), Curlew Sandpiper (*Tringa subarquata*), Pectoral Sandpiper (*T. pectoralis*), Schinzs Sandpiper (*T. Schinzi*), and others. (*See Transactions.*)

Dr. REID remarked that from observations he had made in regard to the migration of birds in North America, he was inclined to believe that the birds arriving from the south in Spring followed the receding snow to the northward, and so worked their way up to their usual breeding places. He considered that currents of wind in mid-air, in which migratory birds were occasionally caught, conveyed them with a rapidity far greater than that of their usual flight, and instanced the case of a balloon voyage that had been made a few years ago between St. Louis, on the Mississippi, and Canada, when, although there was no gale on the surface of the country, the voyagers had been blown on a current at the rate of 60 miles an hour.

Mr. W. C. SILVER had noticed, at the time of the autumnal migration, that at least three or four distinct species of birds intermixed and travelled in company.

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ORDINARY MEETING, MAY 11, 1868.

J. M. JONES, *President, in the Chair.*

Mr. F. ALLISON read a paper entitled "*Meteorological Observations and Periodic Phenomena for 1867.*" (*See Transactions.*)

The Rev. J. AMBROSE read a paper, which was a continuation of his "*Observations on the Fishes of St. Margaret's Bay.*" (*See Transactions.*)

At the close of the proceedings, Dr. J. B. GILPIN moved a Resolution expressive of the regret of the members of the Institute generally at the departure from the Province of Mr. ANDREW DOWNS, whose name as an ornithologist was not only familiar to all Nova Scotians, but likewise favorably known to science abroad. It was seconded by the PRESIDENT, who, in congratulating Mr. DOWNS upon his well-deserved and suitable appointment in the United States, expressed a hope, that although the Province and the Institute would greatly feel his loss, he would gain in his new home that respect and esteem to which his well-known talent as a naturalist, and his kindly disposition as a man, so well entitled him.