

3. Highlights of the Early Years

The Association has passed through the period of infancy and childhood and has just reached its majority or state of legal adulthood. . . . it was yesterday christened the "American Academy of Ophthalmology and Oto-Laryngology," a title suggestive of its present dignity and importance.

. . . now that it has reached adulthood its workshop is the entire so-called American world. . . .

All hail! then, to the Academy. . . . to the inspiration that led to its organization.

All hail. . . . to the Academy as she is to-day, and to her as she will be on the morrow.

WILLIAM L. BALLENGER
PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, 1903

1897 THE SECOND annual meeting of the Western Ophthalmological, Otolological, Laryngological and Rhinological Association was held April 8 and 9, 1897, at the Planters Hotel in St. Louis, with President Adolph Alt presiding (Fig 4 and 5). Seventy-five papers were presented and eight new men elected to membership. Names of prospective candidates were submitted by a Committee on Admissions, with the Association voting to elect them. An amendment to the constitution reads: "All applicants must be eligible for membership in the American Medical Association and all applications must be endorsed by at least three members of this Association. . . ." ^{8(p2)}

The business part of the meeting was devoted primarily to amending the constitution, electing officers, and setting up committees. B. E. Fryer, Kansas City, was elected president; J. Elliott Colburn, Chicago, first vice-

president; Frank M. Rumbold, St. Louis, second vice-president; A. E. Bulson, Jr, Ft. Wayne, Ind, third vice-president; Hal Foster, secretary; and W. L. Dayton, treasurer. Four committees were established for the ensuing year: program, publication, admissions, and arrangements.

Beginning in 1897 and continuing throughout the early years of the Association, deaths of members were announced at the meetings and a specially appointed Committee on Necrology often wrote eulogies to be spread upon the minutes. The first obituary, that of W. C. Pipino, appears in the printed transactions of the 1897 meeting. ^{9(p79)}

1898 There are no minutes from the 1898 meeting held in Chicago on April 7 and 8, but the Academy retains a frayed and torn flier which must have been sent out announcing the meeting (Fig 6). From this flier



Fig 4.—Adolph Alt, 1851–1920. Dr Alt served as president of the Association in 1896 and 1897. Born in Mannheim, Germany, Dr Alt was the son of a physician. He took his medical studies at Heidelberg University, graduating in 1875. Shortly afterward, he departed for New York where he served two years as assistant to Herman Knapp and as house surgeon in the New York Ophthalmic and Aural Institute. He practiced briefly in Toronto and became a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. But he soon returned to the States and settled permanently in St. Louis in 1880.

Dr Alt is perhaps best remembered for founding the *American Journal of Ophthalmology* in 1884. He served as editor of the journal until it was merged with other journals in 1918. In his own day, Dr Alt was widely known for his work in ophthalmic pathology, which was both his professional passion and his personal hobby. Most of his 206 published articles dealt with pathology of the eye.

In 1882, Dr Alt was elected to membership in the American Ophthalmological Society. In 1886, he was made professor of ophthalmology at the Beaumont Hospital Medical College. When the medical college merged with another to form the Medical Department of St. Louis University, Dr Alt was given the chair of ophthalmology. He resigned in 1910 to accept appointment as Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology in the Washington University Medical School in St. Louis. In 1917 he was retired as Professor Emeritus of Ophthalmology.

Dr Alt's last years were plagued by illness that made him an invalid. He died in 1920, just two weeks shy of his 69th birthday.

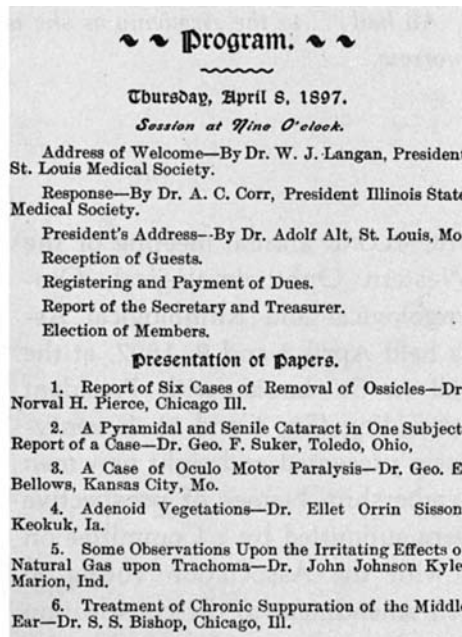
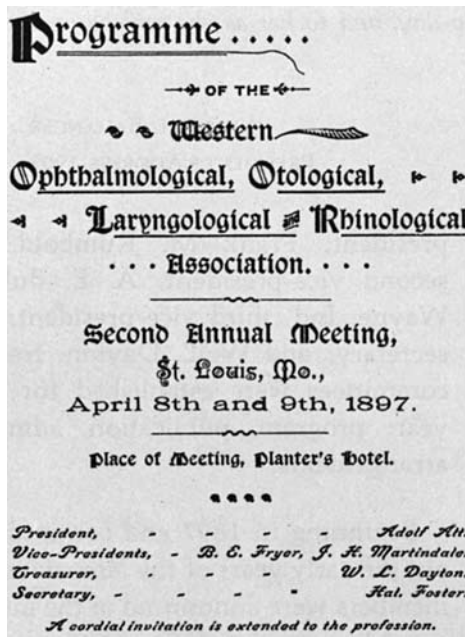


Fig 5.—Original 1897 program. Left, Front page. Right, Verso of front page announces opening session and begins listing papers to be presented.

we learn that as early as the third meeting, the presentation of scientific papers was divided into sections. The flier also indicates something of the qualifications for membership: "Regular physicians in good standing are eligible for membership, provided they have been engaged in special work from 3 to 5 years. Annual dues

are Five Dollars (\$5.00). This includes entrance fee."

Although there is no record that the society adopted a new name in 1898, we can assume it did, because the minutes of the 1899 meeting bear the somewhat shorter title "Western

DR. B. E. FEYER, *President*,
Kansas City, Missouri.

DR. HAL FOSTER, *Secretary*,
Kansas City, Missouri.

DR. W. L. DAYTON, *Treasurer*,
Lincoln, Nebraska.

—=—WESTERN=—

Ophthalmological, Otolological, Laryngological & Rhinological Association.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

- 1st—Dr. J. E. COLBURN, Chicago, Illinois.
2nd—Dr. F. M. RUMBOLD, St. Louis, Missouri.
3rd—Dr. A. E. BULSON, Jr., Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

DR. ADOLF ALT, St. Louis, Missouri, Ex-President

The 3rd Annual meeting will be held in Chicago, Illinois, April 7 and 8, 1898.

In order that each paper may be discussed thoroughly the Committee on Program suggest that a joint morning session be held. The afternoons and evenings will be divided into Eye and Ear, and the other for Throat and Nose papers. In this way each paper can receive the attention it deserves.

Regular physicians in good standing are eligible for membership, provided they have been engaged in special work from 3 to 5 years. Annual dues are Five Dollars (\$5.00). This includes entrance fee.

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS:

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| Dr. Casey A. Wood, Chairman, Chicago, Ill. | Dr. Wilson E. Driver, Norfolk, Va. |
| " F. B. Tiffany, Kansas City, Mo. | " Robert Leavy, Denver, Colo. |
| " Geo. Knapp, Vincennes, Ind. | " E. O. Sisson, Keokuk, Ia. |
| " M. A. Goldstein, St. Louis, Mo. | " Charles Walker, Denver, Colo. |
| " Hamilton Stillson, Seattle, Wash. | " H. Z. Gill, Pittsburg, Kans. |

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION.

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| Dr. Adolf Alt, St. Louis, Mo., Chairman. | Dr. Geo. E. Bellows, Kansas City, Mo. |
| " W. L. Dayton, Lincoln, Neb. | " F. M. Rumbold, St. Louis, Mo. |
| Dr. A. E. Bulson, Jr., Ft. Wayne, Ind. | |

COMMITTEE ON PROGRAM.

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|---|-------------------------------------|
| Dr. Hal Foster, Kansas City, Mo., Chairman. | Dr. W. T. Grove, Eureka, Kans. |
| " J. H. Martindale, Minneapolis, Minn. | " G. W. Gains, Kansas City, Mo. |
| " Dudley S. Reynolds, Louisville, Ky. | " J. W. Bullard, Pawnee City, Neb. |
| " J. O. Stillson, Indianapolis, Ind. | " A. C. Corr, Carlinville, Ill. |
| " J. Elliot Colburn, Chicago, Ill. | " W. H. Baker, Lynchburg, Va. |
| " S. S. Bishop, Chicago, Ill. | " Gilbert I. Cullen, Cincinnati, O. |
| " G. F. Suker, Toledo, O. | " Frank Allport, Minneapolis, Minn. |
| " C. Barek, St. Louis, Mo. | " J. D. C. Hoit, Elmwood, Ill. |
| " H. W. Loeb, St. Louis, Mo. | " C. W. Kollock, Charleston, S. C. |
| " H. B. Young, Burlington, Ia. | " W. C. Tyree, Kansas City, Mo. |
| " F. M. Rumbold, St. Louis, Mo. | " W. E. McVey, Topeka, Kans. |

Dr. Wm. Sheppegrell, New Orleans, La.

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

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|---|---------------------------------|
| Dr. J. Elliot Colburn, Chicago, Ill., Chairman. | Dr. E. L. Holmes, Chicago, Ill. |
| " Casey A. Wood, " " | " Allen T. Haight, " " |
| " W. E. Casselberry, Chicago, Ill. | " C. D. Wescott, " " |
| " Henry Gradle, " " | " S. S. Bishop, " " |
| " Franklin Coleman, " " | " Wm. A. Fisher, " " |
| " Homer M. Thomas, " " | " J. F. Oaks, " " |
| " Geo. F. Fiske, " " | " E. Pynchon, " " |
| " J. H. Coulter, " " | " Norval H. Pierce, " " |
| " Oscar Dodd, " " | " W. S. Fowler, " " |
| " J. Holinger, " " | " W. E. Gamble, " " |

Dr. Chas. H. Beard, Chicago, Ill.

A request for papers will be mailed in September. The final program will be mailed early in February, '98.

Fig 6.—Flier announcing 1896 meeting.

Ophthalmologic and Oto-Laryngologic Association." This title was retained until the present name was adopted in 1903 (Table 1).

1899 The fourth annual meeting was slated for February in New Orleans. Thirteen new members and eight honorary members were elected. There is no indication of what constituted an honorary mem-

bership at this time; however, seven of the men so designated were from foreign countries, and the eighth, George T. Stevens, New York, had addressed the Association as a guest of honor.

1900 In 1900 the members traveled back to the Planters Hotel in St. Louis for their fifth meeting, April 5 through 7. W. L. Dayton would later recall that in 1900 the

Association was "tottering."^{2(p5)} A lack of finances coupled with the delinquency of members in payment of dues made it necessary for one of the officers to pay the meeting expenses and depend on the collection of dues for his reimbursement.

Additionally, the Association was losing support from some of its members. Because of this, members at the meeting took two important steps to save their fledgling organization. They removed regional limitations on membership to make it possible for all physicians in the United States, duly qualified in the specialties of ophthalmology and otolaryngology, to become members. And they elected William L. Ballenger, of Chicago, as secretary. Dr Ballenger made the first real attempts to generate new membership. Dr Dayton refers to the "propaganda" campaign he instituted to stimulate interest in the Association.^{2(p6)}

1901 At the sixth annual meeting, April 11 and 12, 1901, in Cincinnati, the Association added a record 40 new members to the roster. President Max A. Goldstein, of St. Louis, referred to the expansion of the Association and planted the seed which led to the final name change.

Those of you who are old members of the society know that the name Western Ophthalmologic and Otolaryngologic Association may be considered a misnomer. . . . Our membership is drawn from points as far south as the Coast, from the far West, different points in the North, through Ohio and as far as the Alleghany mountains on the East. So the name "Western" is hardly to be considered adequate to our society geographically considered. But we have changed the name two or three times and I think we may continue it as it is.^{10(p5)}

Leaders decided to expand future meetings to three days, with the forenoons devoted to one department and the afternoons to the other, "so arranged that members may attend both sections."^{11(p7)} Also, the sections were to be divided somewhat differently than they had been in the past, that is, one section in ophthalmology and one section in otolaryn-

gology.^{11(p7)} This set a precedent for the scheduling of papers.

1902 A battered program, half of which is missing, from the 1902 meeting, held April 10 through 12 in Chicago, reveals the first printed reference to a Joint Session and an Ophthalmologic Section, listing the papers to be presented in each. In this program there is also the first reference to "Pathologic Exhibits" (the early predecessor of the scientific exhibits) and to "Exhibition of Instruments, Office Equipment and Electric Apparatus" (the forerunner of the technical exhibits). For the pathologic exhibits, members were requested to send or bring pathologic or anatomic specimens, photographs, drawings, instruments, or other items of interest and to provide a typewritten description of each exhibit. In referring to the technical exhibits, the program announced: "This will be one of the most complete exhibits relating to the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat ever given in this country."¹²

The membership drive started in 1900 had reached substantial proportions by 1902. Prior to the meeting, Dr Ballenger had sent out 1,000 provisional programs, 600 circular letters, and 300 personal letters to publicize the work of the Association and attract new members. President Christian R. Holmes, of Cincinnati, had sent an additional 1,000 programs for the same purpose. Results of these efforts were beginning to show—75 men were elected to membership.

Derrick T. Vail, of Cincinnati, subsequently to play such an important role in the expansion and nationalization of the Academy, was first elected to office in this year. He was named secretary for 1903, replacing Dr Ballenger, who was accorded the honor of the presidency.

The most important event which occurred at the 1902 meeting was appointment of a committee by President Holmes to revise the constitution and bylaws and report back at the next meeting. Casey A. Wood, of Chicago, was

designated chairman of the committee. Other members of the committee were Adolph Alt; J. O. Stillson, Indianapolis; B. E. Fryer; Edward Jackson, Denver; H. V. Würdemann, Milwaukee; and Harold Gifford, Omaha. The document which these men wrote, although changed, revised, and updated throughout the years, provided the initial architecture on which the Academy was built.

1903 On April 9, 1903, at the eighth annual meeting in Indianapolis, Casey Wood addressed the 88 members assembled, reading parts of the Revised Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE I

The name of this society shall be "THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY AND OTO-LARYNGOLOGY." Those composing it shall be known as Fellows and Members.^{13(p29)}

ARTICLE II

The object of the Academy shall be to encourage the study and practice of medicine and surgery in their relations to the eye, ear, nose and throat.^{13(p29)}

THE CONSTITUTION

Types of Membership

The new constitution provided for three classes of membership: Members, Fellows, and Honorary Fellows. Eligibility for Membership required a candidate to be in good standing in the AMA, to have devoted himself to practice of the specialties for two years previous to election, to be endorsed by two members of the Academy, and to pay the annual fee of \$3.

Fellowship could be conferred on those who had been Members of the Academy for at least two years and who had confined their practice to the specialties for the previous five years. The Council nominated candidates for Fellowship, and election was contingent on a three-fourths favorable vote of the Fellows present. In addition, the Council could nominate for Fellowship at any annual meeting ten non-

members, provided such men had confined their practice to the specialties for seven years and were of good standing. Candidates for Fellowship had to present a thesis on some topic relating to the eye, ear, nose, or throat. Annual fee for Fellows was \$5. Those who were members of the Academy at the close of the 1903 session, who were of good standing, and who had limited their practice to the specialties for five years were considered Charter Fellows of the Academy.

Honorary Fellowship was reserved for those who had "signally aided the progress of medicine in its relation to diseases of the eye, ear, nose or throat."^{13(p30)} The Council recommended candidates, and they had to receive the unanimous vote of the Academy at any annual meeting.

Member vs Fellow

The two classes of active membership distinguished between new practitioners just finishing their period of study and embarking in practice and those of established reputation. The "Member" classification allowed men and women who, because of their lack of experience or other qualifications, were precluded from other societies to become members of the Academy and thereby improve their knowledge and competence through its educational stimulus. From its inception, the Academy strove to be thoroughly democratic, with the purpose of teaching and of enhancing the quality of all those practicing the specialties, rather than an elite organization limiting its membership to the well-established few.

In regard to this double classification, President Ballenger noted that

... national associations of ophthalmology, otology and laryngology were in existence then [when the Academy was founded in 1896], but their requirements for membership were such as to practically exclude all but those of wide reputation. As a large percentage of the specialists in the middle and far west were located in small cities with no clinical, hospital or college facilities, their opportunities for distinguishing them-

selves were limited. They were thus shut off from membership in these great organizations. . . .

The new constitution recognizes the desirability of encouraging the untried worker and provides for him in the article on membership. . . . Hence . . . the doors are opened to the novice in ophthalmology, otology, rhinology and laryngology on condition that he is a member of the American Medical Association and is of good repute in his local medical society. . . . after his admission he will have ample opportunity to demonstrate his ability and moral worth to the profession, and may receive the approval and honorable recognition of this society by being elected to Fellowship. . . .¹⁴

Officers and Committees

The new constitution provided for six officers—president, three vice-presidents, secretary, and treasurer—and a Council composed of the president (who would act as chairman), two ex-presidents, and two Fellows (who would be elected at each annual meeting). Business matters were delegated to five standing committees: Council, publication, program, exhibits, and arrangements.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The quest for new members was moving ahead under the direction of Secretary Vail. Dr Vail reported he had sent out 3,000 letters to members and others requesting the names of men who would make desirable members; and from these names he compiled a list of nearly 300. These men were invited to attend the meeting. In addition, Dr Vail had gone through *Polk's Medical Directory* to glean the names of all men in the west and south who were identified with the specialties, sending invitations and programs to them and asking them to come and meet the members with a view to joining the Academy. All members of the American Laryngological, Rhinological and Otological Society also received invitations and programs. These efforts gained the Academy 48 new members.

A MATTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Since the ecologic state of our universe has become a prime issue and cause for concern at

the present time, with the problem of "noise pollution" frequently discussed and written about, a resolution passed by the Academy as far back as 1903 is a matter of interest as well as an indication that shortly after its inception, the Academy became concerned with public health matters relative to the specialties.

President Ballenger introduced the resolution as a "crusade" against the noise caused by streetcars. "Living in Chicago," he said, "I have become impressed with the tremendous disadvantage attending a noisy street. It is impossible in your own home to carry on a conversation while a car is passing"^{13(p21)} (sentiments that might well be expressed by city dwellers today). The Academy drew up a petition, directed to the boards of health in cities throughout the United States, requesting that they investigate the sanitary, therapeutic value of noiseless streetcar wheels, and in view of the rapidly increasing volume of noise, take a stand to bring about reform.

A MILESTONE

The 1903 meeting stands as a landmark in Academy history, for the Revised Constitution and By-Laws adopted at this meeting served as the foundation and the harbinger of the Academy's future growth and activities.

The officers elected to serve during the first year under the new name and revised organization were Edward Jackson, president; Dudley S. Reynolds, Louisville, Ky, first vice-president; J. J. Kyle, Indianapolis, second vice-president; John W. Murphy, Cincinnati, third vice-president; Derrick Vail, secretary; and Otto J. Stein, Chicago, treasurer.

And so, with a membership of 185 and a cash balance of \$660.79, the Academy embarked on its new road that would eventually broaden and lead it to international recognition as one of the most innovative and productive educational societies devoted to the advancement of medicine.

TABLE 1
PEDIGREE OF ACADEMY TITLE

NAME	ADOPTED
Western Society of Eye, Ear, Throat and Nose Surgeons	Name used by Hal Foster when he called the specialists together for first meeting, April 9 and 10, 1896.
Western Ophthalmological, Otological, Laryngological and Rhinological Association	Name officially adopted for new society by those attending 1896 meeting.
Western Ophthalmologic and Oto-Laryngologic Association	Revised name adopted at April 7 and 8, 1898, meeting.
American Academy of Ophthalmology and Oto-Laryngology	Revised name provided for in Article I of 1903 constitution; adopted April 9, 1903, and used through 1978.