

Two Centuries of Academy Publications



In 1824 the Academy published the first issue of *Annals*—at that time, *Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History in the City of New York*. Today *Annals* is one of the oldest continuously published scientific journals, and it remains the Academy's flagship publication. But that's not to say it has remained the same. Over the years *Annals* has evolved alongside the needs of the Academy and its Members, and the Academy has published other periodicals as well.

Early editions of *Annals* shed light on how scientists worked and thought in the 1800s, when much of North America remained to be explored. Articles in the first issue, all authored by Lyceum Members, reported on new species of plants, fish, and insects, and described trilobite fossils and mineral deposits. Many naturalists who later became famous for their scientific contributions—including ornithologist and painter John James Audubon—published their observations in *Annals*.

By the late 1800s, Academy Membership had grown, and science had become more specialized. Members began meeting in "sections" that reflected their more focused interests and training—such as geology, physics, biology, and mathematics, among others. In 1881, the Academy launched a new journal, *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, to present the proceedings of these scientific sections. The run of this journal, published until 1897, displays in fine-grained detail the rich history of the sciences at this time.

Transactions resumed publication in 1938, a time when a new director, [Eunice Miner](#), was revitalizing the Academy. This second series of *Transactions*, like the first, was organized around the Academy's sections, and was published until 1983.

In the meantime, under Miner's leadership, the Academy began convening international conferences on cutting edge scientific topics. *Annals* became a vehicle for disseminating these new conference proceedings. Among the new volumes were groundbreaking papers on antibiotics in 1946, 1948 and 1950; on manned space travel in 1957; and on the biological effects of asbestos in 1964.

While scientific conferences and symposia remain central to the Academy's mission today, *Annals* has added a new set of volumes consisting of eight highly regarded scholarly reviews, each published annually. All articles are commissioned, and each series is edited by its own board.

The Sciences magazine is the Academy's third notable periodical. Published from 1961 to 2001, in the heyday of print magazines, *The Sciences* gave prominent researchers a venue for engaging the public. With contributions from Nobelists and other luminaries, including Roald Hoffmann and Oliver Sacks, the magazine took a multi-faceted approach to examining the social and cultural relevance of scientific issues. Known also for its use of fine art to illustrate articles, *The Sciences* gained a reputation for elegance in both design and writing, winning seven National Magazine Awards.

Academy publications have enriched scientific exchange and advanced research for nearly two centuries. The complete archive of *Annals*, *Transactions* and *The Sciences* is available [free to Academy Members](#) online. In addition, a diverse menu of open online publications, including eBriefings, podcasts and the *Academy Magazine* carry forward our commitment to the wide dissemination of science.

Further Reading:

- [Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences](#)
- [eBriefings](#)
- [The Sciences](#)
- ["Dispatches from the Democratization of Science"](#)
- ["The Little Magazine that Could"](#)

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