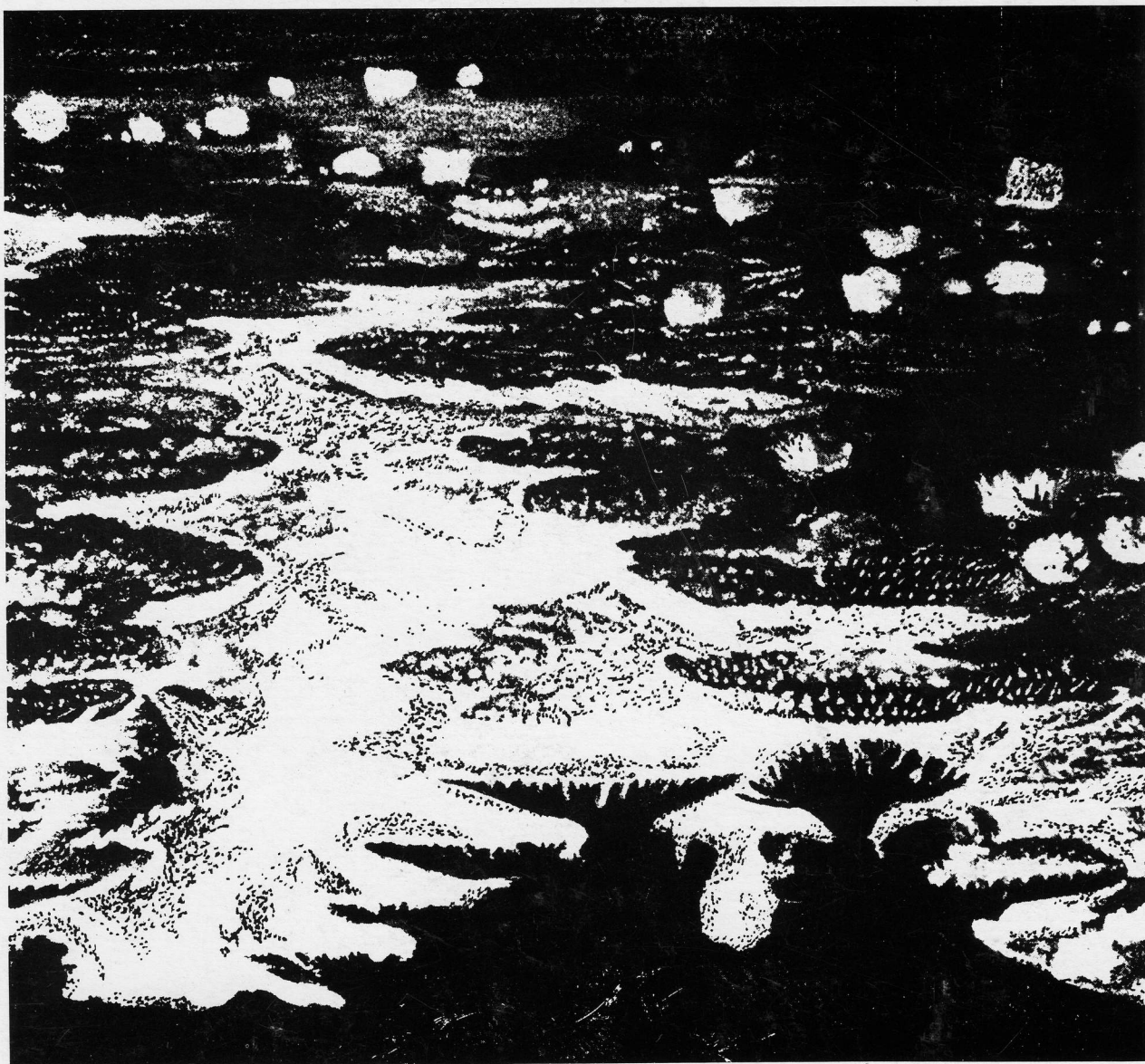


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"Coral Reefs of Sinai Peninsula" 1888, by Johannes Walther, a color lithograph, adapted by Ronald Le Van and Gene Tobler for publication in Special Publication No. 14 of the Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, 1969 (Gerald M. Friedman, Editor).

PREFACE: HISTORY OF REEF STUDIES

In 1985 the Geological Society of America held its annual meeting in Orlando, Florida. Several sessions of the meeting, field trips, and division symposia dealt with carbonate deposits, which are responsible for many features of Florida Geology. The History of Geology Division presented a one-half day symposium on the History of Investigations of Recent and Ancient Reefs, at which the following papers were given:

Matthew J. James: Charles Darwin and Coral Reefs: an historical perspective.

William Montgomery: The reception of Charles Darwin's theory of Coral Reefs.

Rhodes W. Fairbridge: A history of coral reefs and sea level.

Joshua I. Tracey, Jr.: Deep Drilling of Atolls.

D. R. Stoddart: Darwin, Jukes, and the theory of reef development in Australia in the nineteenth century.

Robert N. Ginsburg: The first hundred years of research on western Atlantic coral reefs 1850-1950.

Robert H. Shaver: A case history: Silurian reefs of northeastern North America, one of the great fossil reef systems.

J. Keith Rigby: Permian reefs of Texas and New Mexico: History of their study and scientific influence.

Emphasis was obviously on studies of modern reef formation. The two excellent contributions by Shaver and Rigby provided interesting insights on how ancient reefs came to be recognized within stratified deposits in North America. Still this aspect of the subject was incompletely presented even within the limited scope of the North American Paleozoic. There was no reference to important Devonian or Carboniferous reef facies, nor to the many reef formations of the Mesozoic.

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EDITORIAL

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This issue completes our seventh year of operation, and we are looking forward to a successful operation extending into the 1990's and beyond. Our membership and readership are truly interdisciplinary. They include geologists and other earth scientists, historians, and archivists. This interdisciplinary bridge between the sciences and the humanities allows for a mutually beneficial exchange of ideas. Yet this kind of membership and readership composition creates problems which frustrate an editor. As an example, this journal welcomes papers from geologists relating to the development of specific geologic concepts and ideas, or the history of a geological society or survey, department of geology, or prominent workers in the field. A historian serving as a reviewer may reject such a paper on the grounds that "here are scientists doing history." Yet the paper may have important data or implications that otherwise may be forever lost, and this journal has in part been established to serve as an outlet for this kind of information. As editor my frustrating task is clear. Learn from the historian and make sure that this questioned paper becomes acceptable for publication. *Isis* may reject such a paper outright, but *Isis'* focus differs from that of our journal. Conversely we receive papers from historians whose technical facts geologists question and whose papers may be recommended for rejection. Here again a compromise solution has to bridge the interdisciplinary gap. As an issue goes to press I sometimes feel less than satisfied when I view this broad interdisciplinary spectrum of contributions whose authorship ranges from scientists to historians, classicists, and cognitive sociologists. The product is like a tapestry with clashing themes. I sometimes even question if the level of the issue is to my satisfaction. Yet, as editor, after seven years of operation I feel that our society can be proud of its authorship who hailing from such a broad interdisciplinary spectrum has produced a unique product. Our journal even allows differences in editorial style and format which no geological journal tolerates. Historians and archivists may prefer the editorial style and format of *Isis*, whereas earth scientists may follow that of geological journals.

Our operation aims to keep the society's dues structure low enough so that financially we are open to all. As a result our society's membership is worldwide. To maintain a low dues structure we follow the practice of all scientific journals, not yet adopted by historians: we have a program

of voluntary page contributions. Since the early - to mid-1960's the geological community requests voluntary page contributions from authors of articles in the journals of professional societies to help defray cost of publication. This is accepted practice. In fact some societies, like the American Geophysical Union, have established mandatory page charges. After a paper has been accepted for publication our editorial office mails out requests for voluntary page contributions to authors; the wording of this request is identical to that of the Geological Society of America. Many of our authors have contributed, others have no source of funding. The program is entirely on a voluntary basis. Historians may likewise someday request page contributions for their journals; currently, however, such a procedure is not practiced. To support the society and this journal our treasurer requests voluntary contributions and hopefully many of our members are financially in a position to contribute. The Northeastern Science Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation, of which I serve as president, affiliated with Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, picks up some of the cost of running this journal. Once again I want to express my thanks to the Board of Directors of the Foundation for their generosity. As an expression of gratitude I want to name the members of the Foundation's Board: Dr. Christoph Kimmich, distinguished historian of nineteenth century European history and provost of Brooklyn College, director, geologists Dr. Kenneth G. Johnson and co-editor of a special issue of *Earth Sciences History* Dr. Robert F. Fakundiny, directors, Dr. John E. Sanders, Secretary, Dr. Peter J.R. Buttner, Vice President, and Ms. Sue Tyler Friedman, Treasurer. The Northeastern Science Foundation has just completed its tenth year of operation and is looking to its second decade.

For the past year our Managing Editor has been Sheila Kopaska-Merkel whose performance has been most enthusiastic. In this editorial I want to thank Ellis Yochelson, outgoing book-review editor. The entire membership is indebted to Dr. Yochelson for his contributions. His service is not lost to the society, he continues as President of the History of Earth Sciences Society. Our new book-review editor is Dr. Gretchen Luepke of the United States Geological Survey. I want to welcome and thank Dr. Luepke for accepting this task and continuing the tradition of editing this most important section of our journal.