

## Short note

### Publication history for *Evolution: a journal of nature*

The 1925 trial of John Scopes for teaching evolution (Metzger and Hilleary, 1978) is best understood as part of a wider debate in the United States over the roles educational institutions should play for imparting values to children (Larson, 1997). This debate involved the entire school curriculum. It focused partly on the question of authority: who should decide which values will be imparted? One centre of attention concerned the moral implications of science's core principles, such as scepticism and materialism. All sides in this cultural debate hoped to put science to work for moral training. They simply differed on means and ends.

We know a good deal about the means and ends of Christian fundamentalists in this contest. Numbers (1992, 1995) expertly studied how they engaged the evolutionists and has overseen facsimile editions of relevant fundamentalist books and pamphlets.

Much less is known about how evolutionists responded to fundamentalist criticisms. Focusing on science education, Grabiner and Miller (1974) and Skoog (1979) argued that textbook publishers fled from the evolution controversy after 1925. This conclusion was supported by the recollections of key evolutionary biologists (Muller, 1959; Simpson, 1961). However, Pauly (1991, 2000) revised this conclusion, showing that curriculum designers in the life sciences had little interest in evolution during this period. Instead, they focused on the laboratory's experimental ideal and on moral values imparted by "civic biology". This emphasis, Pauly (1991) argued, was underway well before fundamentalist Christians set their challenges into play. It also pervaded science teaching through the remainder of the twentieth century.

Civic biology aside, what was the evolutionists' moral agenda during the inter-war period? How did this manifest in the public presentation of professional thinking? Surprisingly little historical research has been undertaken on the relationship between evolution and moral education in this period. This is despite a wealth of material, such as innumerable press opportunities taken during the Scopes trial and much contemporary writing on the subject by professional (such as Baitzell (1922) and Mason (1928)) and popular (for example Parker (1925) and Randolph (1926)) writers. Even the scientists who entered evidence at the Scopes trial remain unstudied (Tompkins, 1965: 145–173). Larson (1997) began to cover some of this ground, but he barely scratched the surface. Bowler's (2001) study of scientists' efforts to reconcile evolution and religion in inter-war Britain offers a useful comparison, as does Numbers' (1998) study of American naturalists in the late nineteenth century. Ruse's (1996) distinction between public and professional discourse in evolutionary studies sets a crucial context.

One opportunity to study the perspectives of evolutionists in the United States during the inter-war period is found in the all-but-forgotten periodical *Evolution: a journal of nature*. This illustrated magazine was launched in December 1927 as a monthly platform for pro-evolutionist perspectives and as a device for rebutting anti-evolutionists. It also aimed to bolster the resolve of teachers caught in the centre of curriculum debates. *Evolution* was partisan and aggressive, aiming to "combat bigotry and superstition and develop the open mind by popularising natural science." The title was chosen because it "symbolizes the entire conflict between those who see life through the eyes of science and those who

look upon it chiefly through the misty superstitions of the past” (Katterfeld, 1927). Feature articles in *Evolution* emphasised proofs of biological evolution, such as paleontological and embryological evidence, as well as cosmological evolution and astronomical evidence. Over time, *Evolution* widened its scope to promote scientific humanism and scepticism more generally as well as a radical left perspective on civil liberties.

*Evolution* seems to have been the only publication of the Evolution Publishing Corporation in New York. (This corporation should not be confused with the Evolution Publishing Company, a book publisher active before 1920.) *Evolution's* managing editor was Kansas-born, New York political activist Ludwig Erwin Katterfeld (1881–1974). A passionate defender of civil liberties and political radicalism, Katterfeld stood unsuccessfully as a Socialist candidate for several political offices, including Governor of New York in 1916. Allan Strong Broms (1886–1965), an engineer and inventor, became Science Editor in July 1928 (for *Evolution*, number 6) and later republished some of his writings for the journal in book form (Broms, 1961, 1968). Interestingly neither Katterfeld nor Broms were research specialists in evolutionary studies. Contributing editors appeared in June 1930 (for *Evolution* number 16); an advisory board appeared in February 1931.

*Evolution* was not a success. The monthly schedule lasted less than a year – while anti-evolution campaigning moved from Tennessee to Arkansas. In all, 21 issues were published in 11 years. Publication ceased early in 1938. Table 1 presents a complete publication history

Table 1: Publication history for *Evolution: a journal of nature*

This table lists the issues of *Evolution*. On page 8 of *Evolution* 2 part 5, the editor told readers to expect the next issue would be part 6 of volume 2 and would be published in October 1929. In fact the next part, correctly called “issue 16”, appeared in June 1930 and was numbered volume 3 part 1.

issue	volume (number)	number of pages	date
1	—	16	December 1927
2	—	16	January 1928
3	—	16	February 1928
4	—	16	March 1928
5	—	16	April 1928
6	—	16	July 1928
7	—	16	August 1928
8	—	16	September 1928
9	—	16	October 1928
10	—	16	November 1928
[11]	2 (1)	16	January 1929
12	2 (2)	16	March 1929
[13]	2 (3)	16	April 1929
[14]	2 (4)	16	July 1929
[15]	2 (5)	14	August 1929
16	3 (1)	20	June 1930
17	3 (2)	20	February 1931

for *Evolution*.

Today, *Evolution* is a rare piece of ephemera. Complete sets are difficult to find. The magazine was printed on highly acidic paper, and remaining copies are in poor states of preservation. Records of holdings often are confusing or erroneous; information in Brown (1965) is out-of-date. Confusion over holdings is not helped by ambiguous publication information in the issues themselves. For instance, numbers 1–10 were not accorded a volume number; however, because the January 1929 number was listed as volume 2, number 1, the first ten numbers of *Evolution* normally are treated as “volume 1”.

Complete series of *Evolution* are confirmed in the following institutions:

American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia  
 American Museum of Natural History, New York  
 Northern Regional Library Facility of the University of California Berkeley Library  
 at Richmond Field Station, Richmond  
 Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole

The Online Computer Library Center's (OCLC) First Search database indicates 20 other repositories with partial holdings. Most of these institutions hold only a few issues; however, Cleveland Public Library holds all but one issue (no. 3), as does New York Botanical Garden (no. 5). No holdings are known in the United Kingdom.

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