April 27, 1978

HISTORY OF THE WYOMING GEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

1943 - 1953
William H. Curry, III

1943

The Wyoming Geological Association started with a letter dated December 15, 1943, from C. J. Hares to the following geologists in the Casper area:

Paul E. M. Purcell R. O. Mitchell
T. C. Hiestand R. J. Dilger
John L. Fosness R. M. Larsen
A. W. Cullen Ernest E. Hanson
A. F. Barrett J. G. Crawford
E. W. Krampert R. D. Ferguson
R. W. McCane J. R. Schwabrow
P. W. Reinhart E. A. Swedenborg
H. L. Thomsen O. L. Schnitt
R. S. Spalding George Bystrom
R. L. Sielaff George Gaul
W. S. McCabe
M. D. Hubley

"Gentlemen:

Several of the geologists in Casper have indicated they would like to get together for luncheon occasionally. In order to discuss this matter we are to meet this Saturday, December 18, at my home, 628 East 11th Street at 8:00 P.M. (Eat before you come or else bring your ration books since there are over twenty of you rockhounds.)

It is quite possible several of you will be out of town but that would be the case no matter what night is chosen. You might let me know if you plan to come.

If someone is not on this list, you invite him.

Yours in the Spirit, C. J. Hares"

Of this meeting, Phil W. Reinhart recalls:

"I didn’t keep his letter nor any notes on the meeting, but I recall that it was well attended and that we got off to a start of the new club. I think that meeting served to crystallize into action the various discussions that had been taking place among Casper geologists."

William H. Curry recalls:

"... as early as 1943, there was private discussion about forming a small luncheon group of geologists where discussions and presentations might be given. C. J. Hares of Ohio was a prime mover in crystallizing action. He invited Casper resident geologists to a meeting at his residence... for the purpose of seriously discussing the formation of a local geological society. Others who happened to be in town were also invited, as was myself. Those who had experiences with similar groups in California, Mid Continent, and Texas were enthusiastic. Denver was the city of the Rocky Mountains and with Cy Dobbins, the USGS was a strong voice in geological affairs. But with overnight train travel difficult at times and because companies were viewing Wyoming as the first exploration grounds of the Rocky Mountain renaissance, the prevailing thought was to have an independent Wyoming based society. Shortly thereafter, Art Brainerd, Continental Oil Company, Dobbin, and others suggested the Wyoming group join Denver in becoming one official association. Informal discussions were had at luncheons, but the idea of autonomy had been planted in Wyoming, which has prevailed ever since.

It is interesting to note the distribution of geologists in this early organizational group because it reflects the geologic activity in Casper at that time.

1 Consulting Geologist, Casper, Wyoming.

The Rocky Mountain Petroleum yearbook published in 1944 by the Petroleum Publishers, Inc., Denver, Colorado, (pp. 61-62) pictured 22 members of the new association under the headline "Wyoming Geologists' Ass'n." and noted:

"In December, 1943, a group of Wyoming Petroleum Geologists and Engineers were called together by C. J. Hares to discuss the idea of forming a luncheon group or organization of some kind to promote better acquaintance, good fellowship, and co-operation among those interested. Those present were strongly impressed with the idea and made arrangements to meet every Friday noon at the Townsend Hotel. This arrangement has been continued since January 7, 1944. From 10 to 40 men have attended each luncheon, with an average attendance of about 24.

The organization and meetings the first year were informal. Charles J. Hares was elected President and Raymond M. Larsen, Secretary-Treasurer. Later T. C. Hiestand, Chairman, E. A. Hanson, and R. L. Sielaff were appointed as a program committee...

The club is now perfecting a more formal organization to accord
with the desires of petroleum geologists and others of similar interests throughout the State. A more distinctive and inclusive name may be chosen."

The first dinner meeting was held June 4, when Dr. S. H. Knight gave a chalk talk on the History of the Rocky Mountains. The first informal field conference was August 12-13, by the University of Michigan at Camp Davis in the Hoback Canyon, south of Jackson Hole. The program on September 15 was a movie "Oil for Tomorrow" by J.O.C.C. and on November 4, another informal field conference was led by Dr. David Love at Lander on the stratigraphy of the Wind River Basin.

Thomas C. Hiestand recalls:

"After Charlie Hares was elected first President, he approved my suggestion to have Jim Crawford talk on chemistry of oil field waters in intermontaine basins with solids as low as 1600 ppm in many cases where wells encountered flows; and jointly to have M. Tixier speak on interpretation of SP and lateral electric log curves in view of brackish water contained in most aquifers."

Accordingly, on the evening of November 6, J. G. Crawford gave a talk on "Characteristics and Significance of Oil Field Waters in the Rocky Mountain Region," followed in the same meeting by a talk by M. P. Tixier on the "Influence of Oil-Field Waters on Electric Logging in the Rocky Mountain Region." On December 18, C. W. Sternberg gave a talk on "Hunting Dinosaurs" illustrated by slides taken while excavating for fossils. Lastly in 1944, a talk on December 29, by T. F. Stipp concerned "The Paleozone Section in the Shoshone Canyon near Cody, Wyoming."

During the fall, the Constitution and By-laws Committee composed of W. H. Curry (Atlantic), Chairman, P. W. Reinhart (Shell), and J. R. Schwabrow (USGS) worked on the WGA Constitution and By-laws. Phil Reinhart recalls in February, 1976:

"I have a memo from you (Curry) to me and Jack Schwabrow dated December 4, 1944, requesting our consideration of various lines of