

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT GULF COAST ASSOCIATION OF GEOLOGICAL SOCIETIES



David E. Pope

On behalf of the newest kid on the block, the Baton Rouge Geological Society, Welcome to Baton Rouge! This year we celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of GCAGS, whose birthday was May 15, 1951. Our first annual meeting was in New Orleans, November 15-17, 1951. This is our Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting, and the first to be held in the city in which the concept of an association of Gulf Coast geological societies originated, Baton Rouge.

The original seven societies of the Association were: Corpus Christi, East Texas, Houston, Mississippi, New Orleans, Shreveport, and South Louisiana. The latter has since become the Lafayette Geological Society, and we have added the South Texas, Southeastern, Alabama, and Austin societies. We have added and lost Beaumont; and, we have added (1952), lost (1959), and added again Baton Rouge. The present Baton Rouge Geological Society was founded in 1979 and became the twelfth member in 1980, with no further changes in GCAGS to date.

The idea of a Gulf Coast regional meeting is said to have originated in 1946 with the then president of AAPG, Earl B. Noble. Consequently, four such meetings were sponsored by AAPG and hosted by local societies in the fall of 1946, 1947, 1948, and 1949 at Biloxi, San Antonio, Houston, and Biloxi, respectively. Some of our area geologists were not completely happy with the results because of disagreement with the AAPG editorial policies and publication timetable, their more stringent membership requirements, restricted flexibility in convention management policies, and other considerations. Coincidentally, officers of the New Orleans Geological Society (Leslie Bowling, A. P. Claudet, and D. D. Utterback) met with their counterparts of the South Louisiana Geological Society (Philip R. Allin, Francis B. Stein, and W. B. Neal) in Baton Rouge on May 12, 1950 to discuss cooperation between the two societies. An informal meeting of these representatives and Thomas H. Philpott of Shreveport followed, at which the concept of the GCAGS evolved. These gentlemen arrived at the proposal that an association of local geological societies be established in order to generally promote the understanding of Gulf Coast geology and advance petroleum geology, and specifically to sponsor annual regional meetings, with attendant presentation of technical papers, field trips, and publication of the proceedings of these meetings, along with provisions for the desired flexibility. Invitations were extended to all local Gulf Coast societies, and on March 14, 1951 a steering committee met in Houston with the following in attendance: Leslie Bowling, Chairman, New Orleans; E. L. Earl, Houston; William F. Farley, South Louisiana; T. H. Philpott, Shreveport; John Sandidge, South Texas; R. D. Sprague, Mississippi; R. K. Theis, East Texas; and, W. H. Wallace, Jr., Corpus Christi. At this meeting, specific proposals were submitted, discussed and sent back to the local societies for their consideration. On May 15, 1951, essentially the same committee (substitute R. W. Eaton for R. K. Theis of East Texas and delete John Sandidge of South Texas) met and adopted the resolutions previously presented. Hence, the birthday of GCAGS cited in the opening statement above.

But all was not well, not yet. Some societies strongly wanted affiliation with AAPG while others just as strongly did not. Houston temporarily withdrew from GCAGS in protest of nonaffiliation. South Texas delayed joining until 1953, the year after the Association had applied for affiliation. GCAGS petitioned AAPG for affiliation on January 7, 1952, but it was not until July 10, 1967 that AAPG was officially advised that GCAGS has approved an amended resolution and accepted the invitation for affiliation. GCAGS has since been designated as the Gulf Coast Section of AAPG, but also retains its original name. The affiliation has certainly been mutually beneficial, while none of the fears of the early dissenters have materialized. Meanwhile, despite such disagreement on both sides, study and debate, and opinions by lawyers, some progress towards conciliation had been made. In 1959, the GCAGS requested that the AAPG designate the Ninth Annual Convention in Houston as a joint regional meeting with AAPG. This was agreed upon, and the practice has been continued. Now, everyone should be happy!

The GCAGS has performed many good works over the years, thanks to the many geologists who have given so freely of their time and talents. In addition to the *Transactions*, which has become a very widely known and highly respected professional journal, we have a large number of special publications. These are listed in the preliminary pages of this volume, and are available at very reasonable prices. We maintain our inventory, as a service to the profession, so that our publications are always available.

We have also built a reserve of approximately \$500,000, and will make every effort to maintain it at that level so that we can continue to

use the interest for worthwhile projects. For instance, we have progressively increased our financial aid for geologic research to deserving Gulf Coast students from \$5,000 in 1979 to \$21,000 this year, while the number assisted annually has increased from 7 to 21. We have contributed \$15,000 in recent years, in two increments, to the AAPG Tectonic Map of North America project; and, we have also funded a \$10,000 endowment, the interest from which is used for an annual award for best poster at AAPG conventions, in the name of the late Jules Braunstein who initiated these poster sessions. We have awarded \$4,200 for the curation and preservation of the paleontologic and stratigraphic collection of the late E. H. Rainwater. We have contributed \$10,000 this year to the Houston Museum of Natural Science to help retain a very valuable and useful collection of minerals in the Gulf Coast. We continue to lend funds, interest free, to member societies to aid them in worthwhile projects.

The GCAGS performs two basic functions. The first is to plan and stage the annual convention, including publication of the *Transactions*, while the second is to discharge the business affairs of the Association. The former is, of course, done by the General Chairman and the Convention Committees. The latter is done by the Executive Committee, with the advice and assistance of our Standing Committee Chairmen. This combination meets as a body twice annually, once during the annual GCAGS meeting and once at a midyear meeting. They have done their jobs well and are to be highly commended. Many thanks are due to our officers: Vice President Richard H. Sams, Secretary Brenda D. David, Treasurer Fonda E. Lindfors, and Past President E. G. Wermund, Jr. The Standing Committees have also performed well. Lee H. Meltzer has done an outstanding job as Awards and Nominations Chairman for the past three years. He will turn that duty over to Scott J. Lysinger after this annual meeting. Clifford S. Foss will continue in his fine performance for the second year as Finance Chairman. John McCarty, who has done a great job as chairman of the Financial Aid to Students Committee, will relinquish his duties to Allen J. Scott after this meeting. Robert E. Boyer has done yeoman service for several years as our publications chairman. He will continue in that endeavor, and now also serves as our representative on the AAPG Advisory Council, effective July 1, 1986, replacing Paul M. Strunk who has served with distinction in that capacity for the past three years. Edward C. Roy, Jr. will continue as chairman of our Long Range Planning Committee, a job that he is handling extremely well. All of these, and their committee members, are due our profound thanks and everlasting gratitude. Of the Standing Committee chairmen, that leaves only the Historian, who feels more historical than historical at this point, but I am trying to put together the information for a comprehensive history of GCAGS for publication at a future date.

Many thanks are due our General Chairman, Harry L. Roland, Jr., and the Convention Committees who have worked long, hard, and diligently to bring you an outstanding convention. Special thanks go to the Baton Rouge Auxiliary. We couldn't have done it without them. I would also like to thank Jerry Wermund and Ed Garner of Austin, and John Palmer of Shreveport and James M. Forgotson, Jr., formerly of Shreveport, for much valuable advice. We offer our heartiest congratulations to our honorees of this year, and our best paper awards of last year. Congratulations are certainly in order to Jim Forgotson for his election as Vice President of AAPG and his appointment as Director of the Oklahoma University Department of Geology and Geophysics, and to Anthony Riso of Houston for his election as Treasurer of AAPG.

We are very happy to co-sponsor this meeting with the Gulf Coast Section of SEPM, and appreciate the cooperation of President Susan Conger Morris, and those assisting with the SEPM program, editing, and judging. The GCS-SEPM was founded in 1953 and has participated fully in our annual meetings since 1954. It is an autonomous body of some 500 plus individual members from around the Gulf Coast. It should be added that their members usually contribute papers in much higher proportion than their membership numbers, often a majority of the papers published in the *Transactions*. This continued support and participation is certain worthy of our recognition and sincere appreciation.

Even though times are tough in the oil patch, we have tried very hard to bring you an informative and enjoyable meeting. We hope you like it, and we also hope for and expect a brighter tomorrow.

Next year the convention will be in San Antonio. We wish them well and offer any assistance that they may request.

I have greatly enjoyed working with the dedicated geologists on the Executive Committee, the Standing Committees, and the Convention Committees. Thank very much for the opportunity to serve you, and thanks for the memories.

David E. Pope, President 1985-86
Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies