

ORAL PRESENTATION

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DIATOM STUDIES AT IOWA LAKESIDE LABORATORY

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Lakeside Laboratory, because of its location in the naturally eutrophic recently glaciated region of central United States, attracted the interest of many Phycologists. This included such luminaries as Gilbert Morgan Smith and Gerald W. Prescott. The latter a native Iowan and returned to the University of Iowa to complete his M.S. and Ph. D. Diatoms, however, received relatively little interest from these investigators. The earliest regional records of diatoms were published by C.G. Ehrenberg, based on samples from Fort Dodge. Dr. Robert E. Buchanan, who would later achieve renown as editor of *Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology*, completed a M. S. thesis on algae, which mentioned some diatom species from the local region. Real interest in the group began with Dr. John D. Dodd, long-term instructor in Phycology at Lakeside Lab. Under Dodd's subtle guidance I, in a very real sense, became something of a vehicle for his vision. When presented with my proposal to study diatoms, he first demurred, but presented me with an application for a fellowship at the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, at that time the only institution in the U. S. actively working on freshwater diatom systematics and ecology. Through the kindness of Dr. Ruth Patrick, the application was successful. When presented with a wildly over-optimistic dissertation proposal, Dodd indicated that it would be impossible with departmental funding, but presented me with a grant application form. Dodd skillfully converted my initial scribbles into a grant titled "Diatoms in Hard Water Habitats" that rode the first wave of environmental consciousness to support the research and training of a succession of students. When I proposed, at the completion of my terminal degree, to stay on at Iowa State University to do research on diatom ultrastructure he was not particularly pleased, but acquiesced under the condition that I "give something back" by initiating a diatom clinic at Lakeside Lab. When I finally did leave Dodd's lab I approached Dr. Charles Reimer, one of my major mentors at Philadelphia with the proposal that he continue the course. Charlie at first expressed reluctance to "spend his summer in the cornfields of Iowa", but Dodd somehow inveigled him to come "for one year". As the old saying goes, "it was all downhill from there". Charlie brought a broader vision, a more structured approach, and his reputation, that attracted a nation and international audience. The forward momentum that Charlie developed continues today.