



## *JHB* as a Collaborative Effort

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Everett Mendelsohn somehow managed to establish the *Journal of the History of Biology*, edit it for over 30 years, make it the leading history of biology publication, have fun doing it, and initially do it all himself. With time, though, he realized that collaboration helps and brought Shirley Roe on as assistant and then co-editor, allowing him to do even more, do it even better, and reach out to an even broader community of scholars and readers.

In 1996 when Everett invited one of us (Gar) to take over the job and become the second *JHB* editor, Gar followed Everett's example and sought a co-editor (Jane). We immediately enlisted the help of a Managing Editor, the wonderful Marie Glitz, who quickly became a valued collaborator. Marie met potential authors, jollied them along when they became discouraged by reviewers' suggestions, worked with them closely on multiple drafts, and made the collaboration work by reminding us of what needed to be done, by whom, and by when. For many people Marie became the face of *JHB* for the next 8+ years. Through the good graces of Arizona State University we were able to establish an editorial office in Arizona that provided an organizational center and location where the journal's work could be carried out easily and efficiently.

From the beginning, we adopted Everett's first principle: the journal should offer a place for young scholars to contribute their early papers. All contributors received rigorous and detailed feedback from reviewers as well as the editors. Our basic approach to collaboration emphasized working *with* authors, rather than simply critiquing their drafts and *telling* them what to do.

We seldom rejected outright even those papers that clearly needed a better focus or organization but always wanted to give a second chance with extensive feedback; we tried especially hard to work with authors for whom English was not their first language to turn their prose into a more generally idiomatic and readable form. To this end we occasionally enlisted the help of generous scholars whose first language was that of the author in question for help in smoothing out the text.

One approach we used to gain submissions from not only well-established, but especially younger and less well-known scholars, was to actively recruit papers from sessions at professional meetings. This process helped us meet the potential author and encourage them to submit to *JHB*. Having that first-hand acquaintance, especially with new contributors in the field, proved invaluable in assigning reviewers and helping with critiques of the papers. It was an added plus to meet so many up-and-coming young scholars whose enthusiasm and creative new topics provided a continuing inspiration.

In our initial editorial (Vol. 32, No. 1, Spring, 1999), we noted that we "do not anticipate any radical changes, but seek to remain inclusive, creative and responsive to new ideas." Our only major change was to alter the structure of the editorial board and institute staggered, three-year rotating terms. Otherwise, our overall approach was a continuation of the outstanding tradition Everett and Shirley had established, which had established *JHB* at the outset as the journal of record for the new field of the history of biology. By the time we became editors, the field was already well established, with the journal remaining the central organ for publication. Nevertheless, we were committed to broadening the journal's coverage to include history of more recent (twentieth-century) topics, and to including more interface with philosophical perspectives. This remained true as we passed the editorship on the Paul Farber, but began to change under his leadership and especially under the direction of Michael Dietrich. More journals created competition. Biology journals began to include historical essays and articles from a range of different places.

We resisted, as Paul Farber did, the pressures from Springer to make all submissions and processing through their online management sys-

tem. The system is efficient, and Springer insisted on it when Michael Dietrich became editor, but it offers nothing quite like the personal touch of our Marie and Paul's managing editor Ginny Domka.

We carried on the tradition of publishing special issues, including one on rethinking Darwinism that involved leading senior scholars with sometimes quite divergent views. And we included one special issue based on a group of papers by young scholars on professionalization in Victorian biology derived from the 1999 Oaxaca meeting of the International Society for the History, Philosophy and Social Studies of Science known as *Ishkabibble* (Vol. 34, No. 1, 2001). We also tried, to the best of our ability to include a range of topics from many historiographic perspectives.

For example, our first issue (Vol. 32, No. 1) included articles on Darwin's references to Aristotle and Darwinians' views on the origin of life, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "theory of life", Tracy Sonneborn's work on the species problem in protozoa, two contrasting articles on Barbara McClintock, one on the reception of the theory of transposable elements and another on her use of pictorial representation, and two essay reviews. Authors included two senior scholars as well as four younger scholars just starting on what was in several cases to become the major focus of their interests. Our last issue, while not billed as a "Special Issue" turned out to focus on animal behavior, again with a preponderance of articles by younger scholars.

Co-editing this wonderful journal gave us two special pleasures. One, serving as editors provided us an immense learning experience as we met and were introduced to the work of so many scholars covering so many different topics. Discussions about papers at professional meetings (and other venues) allowed us to meet and engage with so many authors personally, including many people we might not have met or talked to so extensively. We gained tremendous respect for the diversity of ideas and approaches, and especially for the hard work of younger scholars finding their way in the challenging academic world. Second, we had fun working together. On Friday afternoons, we would summarize the week's work, led by Marie as the managing editor. She would manage to get us organized and focused, and for all the years since, she will remind us on Fridays to have a toast to the work accomplished while delighting in the opportunities to come.