

SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE MARYLAND ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.¹

The first successful efforts to organize an association in Maryland for the promotion of science were made in the year 1822, although the actual beginning of the present academy does not antedate 1855. Sundry associations had been previously contemplated and some had actually gone into operation, but they soon disappeared after an ephemeral existence. The Maryland Academy of Science and Literature was opened in 1822 under more favorable auspices. A large number of persons presented themselves who were willing to advance the objects of such an organization and in a short time the Academy found itself in possession of an extensive collection of minerals and an herbarium, the nucleus of a cabinet around which new materials might daily accumulate.

A strong appeal was then addressed to members of the learned professions in Baltimore and throughout the state which was in some measure responded to. The number of contributing members became sufficiently large to justify the steps of procuring an apartment where the meetings of the Academy could be regularly held. After various removals a location was finally secured in a spacious hall where the collections increased from year to year until an unfortunate fire in 1835 consumed the entire property of the Academy, including many valuable scientific books.

Not discouraged by this calamity, members of the Academy in 1836, acting under a charter obtained in the year 1826, determined to reorganize the society and place it upon a basis of permanent prosperity. Large numbers of books and specimens were again collected and commodious apartments were secured. Five sections were established to facilitate investigation along special lines—Section 1, Mathematics, Astronomy and Physics; Section 2, Chemistry; Section 3, Mineralogy and Geology, including Physical Geography; Section 4, Zoology; Section 5, Botany. In 1837 a volume of Transactions was

¹ This sketch is mainly compiled from a chapter prepared in 1838 by Professor Philip R. Uhler, President of the Maryland Academy of Sciences, and from the Introduction to the Transactions of the Maryland Academy of Science and Literature, published in 1837.