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Edwin B. Payson, 1893–1927

Roger L. Williams

Abstract

While still a high school student in Montrose, Colorado, Edwin Payson began his study of local flora based on Aven Nelson's *New Manual of Rocky Mountain Botany*. He began sending Nelson unidentifiable plants for determination. Once Nelson had published one of Payson's plants, naming it for him, Nelson established a loyalty that secured Payson as an undergraduate at the University of Wyoming. His quick advancement enabled him to publish plants collected in 1914 while still an undergraduate. His graduate work was completed at Washington University and the Missouri Botanical Garden, then returning to Wyoming to teach. In the few remaining years of his life, he collected plants throughout the West, publishing a remarkable number of species that still stand, mostly in the Brassicaceae and Boraginaceae. An illness that struck him in 1926 was not satisfactorily diagnosed, leading to his unexpected death in 1927 at the age of 34. The genus *Paysonia* O'Kane & Al-Shehbaz was dedicated to him in 2002 as the first monographer of *Lesquerella*. He had raised the practicality of combining *Lesquerella* and *Physaria* in 1921, accomplished in 2002. His botanical correspondence remains in the Aven Nelson Papers in the archives of the American Heritage Center in Laramie, Wyoming.

Ars longa, vita brevis

Little is known of Edwin Payson's (Fig. 1) formative years. He came from Naturita, Colorado, a farming village in Montrose County, a county established as late as 1883, and with a population of only 4,535 by 1900. He attended high school in the county seat, Montrose. Somehow he acquired copies of P. A. Rydberg's *Flora of Colorado* (1906) and Aven Nelson's *New Manual of Rocky Mountain*

Botany (1909), suggesting the influence of a dedicated science teacher.

His difficulty in understanding Rydberg's treatment drove him to write to Nelson (1859–1952; Fig. 2) in Laramie to seek help: "I am ambitious to rise high in the botanical world and am willing to work" (Edwin B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 7 October 1912, Aven Nelson Papers, American Heritage Center, Laramie, Wyoming). He then began to send unidentified plants to Nelson for determination.

Payson hoped that a funnellily he had collected might be a new species, and Nelson named it *Brodiaea paysonii* (Aven Nelson to Edwin B. Payson, 17 October 1912, Nelson Papers). He published the species the following year. The plant, unfortunately, would turn out to be *Androstephium breviflorum* S. Watson, published in 1873. Nelson's kindly response, however, determined Payson to choose the University of Wyoming for his undergraduate instruction; and Nelson provided him with a subsidy for a midsummer collecting trip in 1913 on the nearby Uncompahgre Plateau (Aven Nelson to Edwin B. Payson, 26 July 1913, Nelson Papers). He collected again near Naturita during the summer of 1914, depositing the following set in the Rocky Mountain Herbarium (Payson 1915):

Aquilegia pallens Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60: 375.

1915. → *Aquilegia micrantha* Eastw.

Cleomella montrosae Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60: 375.

1915. → *Cleomella palmeriana* M. E. Jones



Figure 1. Edwin Blake Payson (1893–1927), unknown location and date, 18 × 12.5 cm, photograph by an unknown photographer, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation Archives portrait no. 2.

- Lupinus crassus* Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60: 376. 1915.
 → *Lupinus polyphyllus* Lindl. var. *ammophilus*
 (Greene) Barneby
- Lupinus fulvomaculatus* Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60:
 376. 1915. → *Lupinus argenteus* Pursh var.
fulvomaculatus (Payson) Barneby
- Astragalus naturitensis* Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60:
 377. 1915.
- Astragalus amplexus* Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60: 378.
 1915. → *Astragalus lentiginosus* Douglas ex
 Hook. var. *salinus* (Howell) Barneby
- Psoralea aromatica* Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60: 379.
 1915. → *Pediomelum aromaticum* (Payson)
 W. A. Weber
- Orogenia linearifolia* S. Watson var. *lata* Payson,
 Bot. Gaz. 60: 379. 1915.



Figure 2. Aven Nelson (1859–1952), unknown location, 1921, 17.78 × 12.7 cm, photograph by Spalding of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation Archives portrait no. 2.

- Euphorbia fendleri* Torr. & A. Gray var. *dissimilis*
 Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60: 379. 1915. →
Chamaesyce fendleri (Torr. & A. Gray) Small
 var. *chaetacalyx* (Boiss.) Wooton & Standl.
- Oreocarya gypsophila* Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60: 380.
 1915. → *Cryptantha paradoxa* (A. Nelson)
 Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 330.
 1927.
- Penstemon cyanocaulis* Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60:
 380. 1915.
- Helianthella scabra* Payson, Bot. Gaz. 60: 382.
 1915. → *Wyethia scabra* Hook.
- During 1914, meanwhile, J. Francis
 Macbride (1892–1976; Fig. 3), a senior and
 brilliant student in botany, who had come to
 Wyoming from a fruit farm in Idaho, was



Figure 3. J. Francis Macbride (1892–1976), unknown location and date, 18 × 13 cm, photograph by an unknown photographer, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation Archives portrait no. 2.

believed to have a great professional future. Aven Nelson chose Harvard, with its Gray Herbarium, to be Macbride's graduate school. Once in Cambridge, Macbride soon developed a contempt for both the botanical facilities and the botanical faculty at Harvard in contrast to what he had known at Wyoming. Although he agreed to return for his second academic year, in retrospect, the seeds of his ultimate professional decline had been sown (J. Francis Macbride to Aven Nelson, 17 October 1914, Nelson Papers). Macbride, in fact, suffered from a chronic depression, a mitigating factor from which he never would recover.

He returned to Laramie in June of 1915 and was met by Edwin Payson. Upon recognizing Macbride's depressed state, Payson abandoned his own summer plans in order to take Macbride on a collecting trip to the Grand Canyon and the West Coast (Edwin B. Payson

to Aven Nelson, 10 June 1915, Nelson Papers). They took along plant presses, working until the end of July when Macbride was called home (Edwin B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 3 August 1915, Nelson Papers).

Although Payson was not scheduled to graduate from Wyoming until the spring of 1917, Macbride's reaction to Harvard moved Nelson to begin seeking to place Payson in the Shaw School of Botany at Washington University, in proximity to the Missouri Botanical Garden. Yet, not wanting to forgo the Harvard connection, Nelson completed contractual terms with Harvard to make a Macbride–Payson collecting trip in 1916 a joint Harvard–Wyoming venture (Edwin B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 24 May 1916, Nelson Papers; and Aven Nelson to B. L. Robinson, 31 May 1916, Gray Herbarium).

The two students met at the Macbride farm at New Plymouth, Payette County, Idaho in mid-June 1916. They botanized for two months: from Boise east to Arco, then north to Challis, finally southward through the Sawtooth Mountains to Hailey. They brought back considerable material, including that for a new genus (Macbride and Payson 1917). The new genus has never comprised more than one species: *Anelsonia eurycarpa* (A. Gray) J. F. Macbr. & Payson.

Payson published an additional article that year in the Brassicaceae, introducing a number of new species collected during the two recent trips (Payson 1917):

Draba asterophora Payson, Amer. J. Bot. 4: 263. 1917.

Draba cruciata Payson, Amer. J. Bot. 4: 265. 1917.

Draba cyclomorpha Payson, Amer. J. Bot. 4: 263. 1917. → *Draba lemmonii* S. Watson

Draba globosa Payson, Amer. J. Bot. 4: 257. 1917.

Draba incerta Payson, Amer. J. Bot. 4: 261. 1917.

Draba oreibata J. F. Macbr. & Payson in Payson, Amer. J. Bot. 4: 257. 1917.

Draba pterosperma Payson, Amer. J. Bot. 4: 266. 1917.

Draba sphaerocarpa J. F. Macbr. & Payson in Payson, Amer. J. Bot. 4: 266. 1917.

Draba sphaeroides Payson, Amer. J. Bot. 4: 265. 1917.

The following year, two more drabas were added to the list (Payson 1918a; MacBride 1918):

Draba standleyi J. F. Macbr. & Payson in Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 5: 150. 1918.

Draba paysonii J. F. Macbr., Contr. Gray Herb. 56: 52. 1918.

The outbreak of war in April 1917 meant military service for Edwin Payson, if not for Francis Macbride, whose mother, a dominating influence in his life, had persistently demanded he resign from the Gray Herbarium and return to the Idaho farm. She finally succeeded in 1918 before Nelson could intervene and with Payson absent to prevent the loss (Aven Nelson to J. F. Macbride, 26 March, 8 April and 9 August 1918, Gray Herbarium).

Before Payson's departure for military service, Nelson had been anxious to inform him he had been awarded a teaching fellowship in Saint Louis (G. T. Moore to Aven Nelson, 12 April 1917, Nelson Papers). Moreover, that after he had completed his graduate work at Washington University, a position in the Wyoming Botany Department would be his. Payson replied: "That possibility is certainly alluring, but the thing that pleased me most was the fact that you thought I might be able to go on with *your* work. Perhaps it may come to pass—who can tell?" (E. B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 6 July 1917, Nelson Papers). Aware that his professional future was assured, Payson then married Lois Elizabeth Butler (Fig. 4), also a botany student at Wyoming.

While Payson was still in military service, a short article in the Brassicaceae was published, which confirmed his interest in the *Physaria-Lesquerella* complex (Payson 1918a):

Physaria osterhautii Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 5: 146. 1918.

Physaria didymocarpa (Hook.) Gray var. *australis* Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 5: 144. 1918.

Dithyrea clinata J. F. Macbr. & Payson in Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 5: 150. 1918.

An additional short article on *Aquilegia* also appeared that year (Payson 1918b):

Aquilegia coerulea E. James ssp. *albiflora* Payson, Contr. U.S. Natl. Herb. 20: 152. 1918 →

Aquilegia coerulea E. James

Aquilegia micrantha Eastw. ssp. *ecalcarata* (Eastw.) Payson, Contr. U.S. Natl. Herb. 20: 153. 1918.

Aquilegia formosa Fisch. ex DC. ssp. *truncata* (Fisch. & C. A. Mey.) Payson, Contr. U.S. Natl. Herb. 20: 143. 1918.

Aquilegia formosa Fisch. ex DC. ssp. *dissecta* Payson, Contr. U.S. Natl. Herb. 20: 144. 1918. → *Aquilegia shockleyi* Eastw.

Aquilegia wawawensis Payson, Contr. U.S. Natl. Herb. 20: 145. 1918. → *Aquilegia formosa* Fisch. ex DC.

Aquilegia coerulea E. James ssp. *alpina* (A. Nelson) Payson, Contr. U.S. Natl. Herb. 20: 153. 1918.

Aquilegia triternata Payson, Contr. U.S. Natl. Herb. 20: 147. 1918. → *Aquilegia desertorum* (M. E. Jones) A. Heller

Aquilegia chaplinei Standley ex Payson, Contr. U.S. Natl. Herb. 20: 156–157. 1918. → *Aquilegia chrysantha* A. Gray var. *chaplinei* (Standl. ex Payson) E. J. Lott

Although the war ended in November 1918, Sergeant Payson remained in Europe through the spring of 1919 to teach botany in the American Expeditionary Force University in Beaune, formerly in Burgundy (Lois B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 17 April, 12 May 1919, Nelson Papers). By autumn, however, Edwin and Lois had moved to Saint Louis to begin graduate work in botany. He received his Ph.D. in 1921, then returning to Laramie



Figure 4. From left, Aven Nelson (1859–1952), Edwin Blake Payson (1893–1927), Lois Butler Payson (?–1969) and J. Francis Macbride (1892–1976), unknown location, ca.1926, 10 × 12.5 cm, photograph by an unknown photographer, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation Archives portrait no. 1.

for an associate professorship (Minutes of the Board of Trustees, University of Wyoming, 2 May 1921).

While still in graduate school, Payson had been working on a monograph of the genus *Lesquerella* S. Watson, which became his next publication (Payson 1922a):

Lesquerella garrettii Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 8: 213. 1922.

Lesquerella arizonica S. Watson var. *nudicaulis* Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 8: 208. 1922. → *Lesquerella arizonica* S. Watson

Lesquerella condensata A. Nelson var. *laevis* Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 8: 212. 1922. → *Lesquerella condensata* A. Nelson.

Lesquerella alpina (Nutt. ex Torr. & A. Gray) S. Watson var. *spatulata* (Rydb.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 8: 210. 1922. → *Lesquerella alpina* (Nutt.) S. Watson

Lesquerella gracilis (Hook.) S. Watson var. *repandu* (Nutt. ex Torr. & A. Gray) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 8: 186. 1922.

Lesquerella montana (A. Gray) S. Watson var. *suffruticosa* Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot.

Gard. 8: 200. 1922. → *Physaria montana* (A. Gray) Greene

As the first monographer of *Lesquerella*, Payson was honored belatedly with the genus *Paysonia* O’Kane & Al-Shehbaz in 2002, segregated from *Lesquerella*. They also combined the remainder of *Lesquerella* with *Physaria*, the practicality of that combination first suggested by Payson in 1922. He had previously published *Physaria osterhoutii* Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 5: 146. 1918 → *Physaria floribunda* Rydb. ssp. *osterhoutii* (Payson) O’Kane, Novon 17(3): 379. 2007.

In that year he also published annuals he had collected in Montrose County (Payson 1922b):

Sisymbrium juniperorum Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1: 12. 1922. →

Thelypodopsis juniperorum (Payson) Rydb.

Sisymbrium ambiguum (S. Watson) Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1: 11. 1922. → *Thelypodopsis ambigua* (S. Watson) Al-Shehbaz

Sisymbrium aureum (Eastw.) Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1: 13. 1922. → *Thelypodopsis aurea* (Eastw.) Rydb.

Sisymbrium elegans (M. E. Jones) Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1: 13. 1922. → *Thelypodopsis elegans* (M. E. Jones) Rydb.

A longer article published the following year featured several new species in Brassicaceae (Payson 1923):

Thelypodium crispum Greene ex Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 264. 1923.

Thelypodium rhomboideum Greene var. *gracilipes* (B. L. Rob.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 277. 1923. → *Thelypodium integrifolium* ssp. *gracilipes* (B. L. Rob.) Al-Shehbaz

Thelypodium lilacinum Greene var. *subumbellatum* Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 281. 1923.

Thelypodium laciniatum (Hook.) Endl. var. *streptanthoides* (Leiberg) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 274. 1923.

Stanleyella wrightii (A. Gray) Rydb. var. *tenellum* (M. E. Jones) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 317. 1923.

Thelypodium milleflorum A. Nelson → *Thelypodium laciniatum* (Hook.) Endl. var. *milleflorum* (A. Nelson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 274. 1923.

Caulanthus anceps Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 303. 1923.

Caulanthus hallii Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 290. 1923.

Caulanthus simulans Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 295. 1923.

Caulanthus cooperi (S. Watson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 293. 1923.

Caulanthus flavescens (Hook.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 301. 1923.

Caulanthus heterophyllus (Nutt.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 298. 1923.

Caulanthus stenocarpus Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 300. 1923. → *Caulanthus lasiophyllus* (Hook. & Arn.) Payson

Caulanthus lasiophyllus (Hook. & Arn.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 303. 1923.

Caulanthus major (M. E. Jones) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 9: 291. 1923.

Edwin Payson had first experienced a debilitating illness in the late spring of 1923. His physician thought a tick bite could have been the source, evidently an educated guess not based on any evidence (E. B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 2, 22 June 1923, Nelson Papers). As he soon regained strength, Lois and he collected plants that summer near Afton in the Star Valley of Wyoming.

During the summer of 1924, the couple returned to his home country around Naturita, Colorado. Soon finding the heat oppressive, they moved westward across the Utah line into the higher La Sal Mountains (E. B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 25 June, 14 July 1924, Nelson Papers).

Wanting to be in western Wyoming for the summer of 1925, they established a base on the W. P. Jenkins ranch near Cora in Sublette County, enabling them to collect in the Green River valley and around the Green River lakes (E. B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 24 July, 14 August 1925, Nelson Papers). Recognizing that western Wyoming was relatively unexplored, they based themselves on the Goodman ranch in 1926, 27 miles south of Evanston, from which they could collect in the Uinta Mountains. They found it to be a fruitful region. They also recognized young George Goodman (1904–1999), 21 years old and not yet in college, to be highly intelligent. They convinced Aven Nelson to provide him with a fellowship to enter the University of Wyoming as a botany student (E. B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 5, 13 July, 5 August 1926; and Aven Nelson to E. B. Payson, 23 July 1926, Nelson Papers).

Meanwhile, Payson had been devoting his months on campus preparing new publications (Payson 1926a, b):

Thlaspi idahoense Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1(6): 159. 1926. → *Nocca fendleri* (A. Gray) Holub ssp. *idahoensis* (Payson) Al-Shehbaz & M. Koch

Thlaspi glaucum (A. Gray) var. *pedunculatum* Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1(6): 152. 1926 → *Thlaspi montanum* L. var. *montanum*

Thlaspi glaucum (A. Gray) var. *hesperium* Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1(6): 152. 1926 → *Thlaspi montanum* L. var. *montanum*

Oreocarya rugulosa Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1(6): 166. 1926.

Oreocarya osterhoutii Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1(6): 167. 1926.

Oreocarya jonesiana Payson, Publ. Sci. Univ. Wyoming, Bot. 1(6): 168. 1926.

The short article on *Oreocarya* (Payson 1926b) was greatly expanded into a monograph published the following year (Payson 1927):

Cryptantha aperta (Eastw.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 295. 1927.

Cryptantha sobolifera Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 305. 1927.

Cryptantha bakeri (Greene) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 331. 1927.

Cryptantha breviflora (Osterh.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 318. 1927.

Cryptantha caespitosa (A. Nelson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 281. 1927.

Cryptantha cana (A. Nelson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 316. 1927.

Cryptantha celosioides (Eastw.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 299. 1927.

Crptantha confertiflora (Greene) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 256. 1927.

Cryptantha elata (Eastw.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 285. 1927.

Cryptantha flava (A. Nelson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 259. 1927.

Cryptantha flavoculata (A. Nelson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 334. 1927.

Cryptantha fulvocanescens (S. Watson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 319. 1927.

Crypantha humilis (Greene) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 278. 1927.

Cryptantha interrupta (Greene) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 296. 1927.

Cryptantha jonesiana (Payson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 323. 1927.

Cryptantha jamesii (Torr.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 242. 1927. → *Cryptantha cinerea* (Greene) Cronquist

Cryptantha leucophaea (Douglas ex Lehm.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 262. 1927.

Cryptantha longiflora (A. Nelson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 326. 1927.

Cryptantha mensana (M. E. Jones) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 333. 1927.

Cryptantha nubigena (Greene) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 265. 1927.

Cryptantha osterhoutii (Payson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 329. 1927.

Cryptantha paradoxa (A. Nelson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 330. 1927.

Cryptantha propria (A. Nelson & J. F. Macbr.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 317. 1927.

Cryptantha pustulosa (Rydb.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 252. 1927.

Cryptantha modesta Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 277. 1927. → *Cryptantha abata* I. M. Johnston.

Cryptantha rugulosa (Payson) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 295. 1927.

Cryptantha salmonensis (A. Nelson & J. F. Macbr.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 263. 1927.

Cryptantha sericea (A. Gray) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 286. 1927.

Cryptantha setosissima (A. Gray) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 268. 1927.

Cryptantha stricta (Osterh.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 264. 1927.

Cryptantha spiculifera (Piper) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 298. 1927.

Cryptantha tenuis (Eastw.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 327. 1927.

Cryptantha thyrsiflora (Greene) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 283. 1927.

Cryptantha virgata (Porter) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 270. 1927.

Cryptantha virginensis (M. E. Jones) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 273. 1927.

Cryptantha nana Eastw. var. *ovina* Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 314. 1927. →

Cryptantha humilis (Greene) Payson

Cryptantha wetherillii (Eastw.) Payson, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 14: 324. 1927.

Two additional *Draba* were published posthumously (Payson and St. John 1930):

Draba novolympica Payson & H. St. John, Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash. 43: 113. 1930. → *Draba paysonii* J. F. Macbr.

Draba ruaxes Payson & H. St. John, Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash. 43: 117. 1930.

In August 1926 Payson accompanied Aven Nelson to attend the International Botanical Congress in Ithaca, New York (E. B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 5 August 1926, Nelson Papers; Fig. 5). During the meeting, Payson suffered an attack that resembled a minor stroke. When he returned to Denver for examination, he was diagnosed and treated for a curable neuritis (Aven Nelson to J. F. Macbride, 27 December 1926, 21 January 1927, Nelson Papers).

Accordingly, Nelson made plans to solicit a Guggenheim Fellowship to enable Payson to collect on the Danish Faroe Islands and to study at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Aven Nelson to the Guggenheim Committee, 21 January 1927, Nelson Papers). Payson continued teaching during the spring of 1927, until the inadequacy of the medical diagnosis became apparent and prompted a return to Denver for reexamination.

The revised diagnosis cited a non-functioning gallbladder. Following surgery for its removal, and also of his appendix, he died unexpectedly of heart failure on 16 May 1927 at the age of 34. The announcement of the award of the Guggenheim Fellowship had been published in Laramie two days earlier (Lois B. Payson to Aven Nelson, 26 May 1927, Nelson Papers).

Nelson was profoundly shocked and aggrieved at the loss, as he was approaching retirement and anticipated Payson to be his successor. The letter of condolence most appreciated by him was sent by Leslie N. Goodding (1880–1967), one of his earlier students, then at Oregon State College in Corvallis:

The thing that troubles me is the way this has struck you. Every man has to die, at least we think so, and for him it is really a minor incident, but not so with his friends and his work. These must suffer. Payson was dear to you for many reasons, and I am thinking you are much like the man in the desert who cannot locate the old familiar landmark. I know I talk foolishly. In fact, I feel foolish because I somehow fail to comprehend. Somehow I have felt that you and Payson were building so surely in your taxonomic work that from it could reasonably arise a revival in this field throughout the country. May I presume to advise? Don't let Payson's death discourage you. Don't look back as men are prone to do after fifty or so. Don't look forward and measure any task by the years available. Your mantle is still with you. I fancy you were about to bestow it upon another. Forget it. Payson was one of your boys, and Payson is dead. He is probably dead because of man's ignorance. But some way I feel that he is in a land of greater wisdom now from which we dare not wish him back by our laments over uncompleted work or our own loneliness. You used to tell me to keep a stiff upper lip. I feel sure that you will do so now. With love, Leslie (L. N. Goodding to Aven Nelson, 17 June 1927, Nelson Papers).

Those plants collected in western Wyoming by the Paysons in 1926 had been neglected by his illness. It took Nelson until late in 1929 to complete their study and to prepare duplicate sets for distribution. Such sets had previously been used in exchanges with other herbaria for the benefit of the Rocky Mountain Herbarium. Under the circumstances, Nelson meant to sell them for Lois Payson's benefit. She could not bring herself to continue work in botany without Edwin. Nelson, consequently, found a position for her as a librarian at Montana State

University in Bozeman, which proved to be satisfactory (Aven Nelson to J. M. Greenman, 13 November 1929, Nelson Papers).

This experience as a librarian, when added to her botanical knowledge, recommended Lois Payson to be the librarian for the United States Department of Agriculture in 1931. Thereafter, in 1934, Francis W. Pennell (1886–1952), the monographer of Scrofulariaceae, honored the Paysons jointly with *Pedicularis paysoniana* Pennell. It stands today as *Pedicularis bracteosa* Benth. var. *paysoniana* (Pennell) Cronquist. Lois lived until 1969.

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