

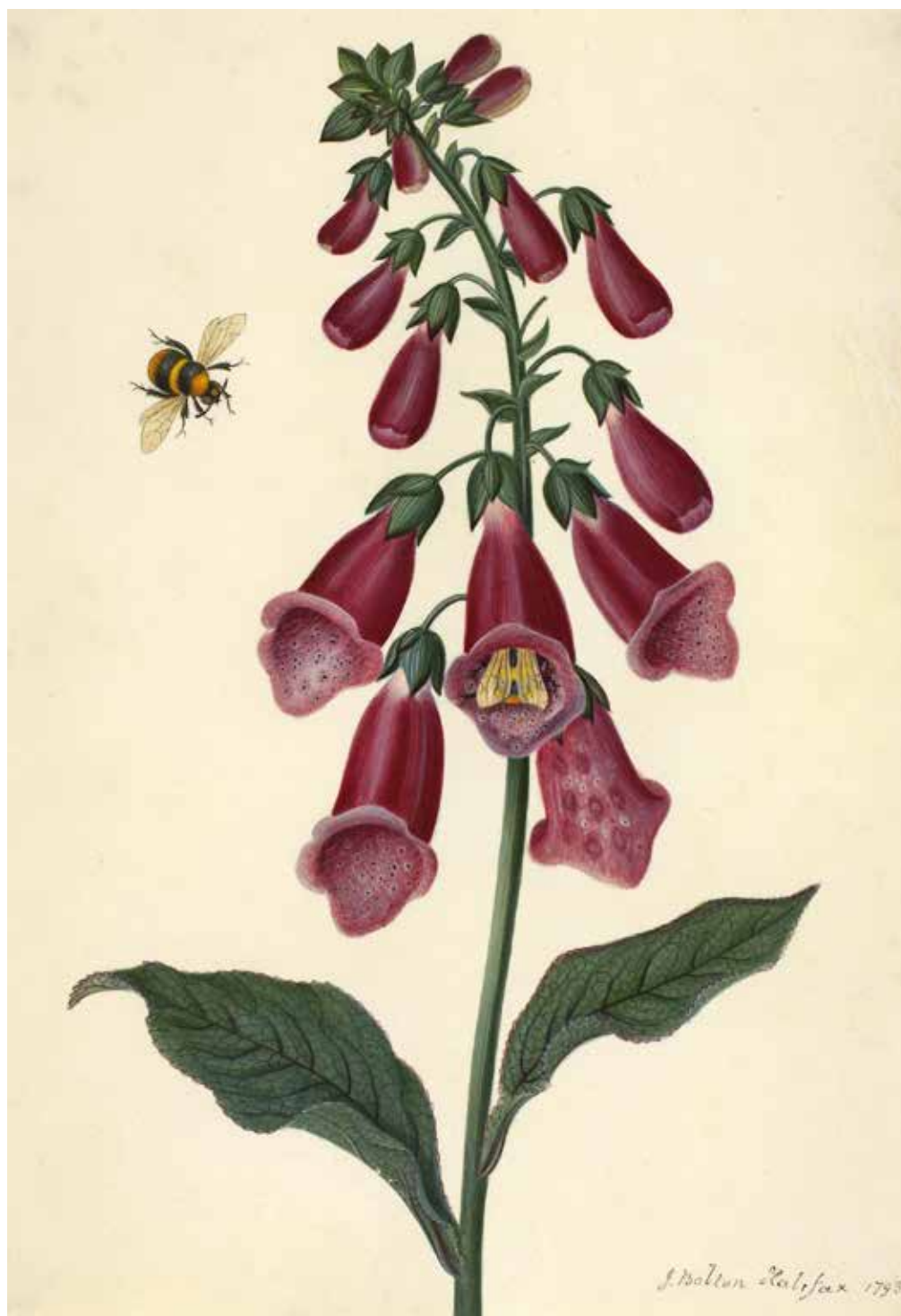


Bulletin

of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation

Carnegie Mellon
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Digitalis purpurea, w [?] *Apis formido*. Foxglove and bumble-bee [*Digitalis* Linnaeus, Plantaginaceae], watercolor on vellum by James Bolton (ca.1735–1799), 1793, 26 × 18 cm, HI Art accession no. 0847.08, gift of Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt, one of the artworks included in *To Make a Prairie: Pollination and Human Understanding* on display through 30 June 2026.

News from the Art Department

This spring we invite you to learn about pollination and the history of how we came to understand, and depict, such a complex system. Through artworks, books and specimens, we trace how our knowledge of plant reproduction changed over time, how the concept of coevolution developed, and how some of these relationships have been depicted over the centuries. We have been delighted to be interviewed about the show by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and Carnegie Mellon University’s student newspaper, *The Tartan*, and radio station, WRCT 88.3 FM. Join us before 30 June and learn a little bit about what those birds and bees are up to.

In addition to the exhibition, this winter and spring have seen us working with classes across a variety of subjects to introduce students to botanical art, the history of plant science, the interesting world of library and archives and the stories we keep. One highlight was collaborating with colleagues at the Posner Center for Special Collections, University Libraries, Carnegie Mellon, on their final Open Stacks event of the school year, titled “Botanical art and Enlightenment,” where guests were invited to discover how artists and scientists collaborated to depict, study and classify the natural world during the Enlightenment and to make a botanically inspired collage.

Recent acquisitions

Since our *Contemporary Botanical Art & Illustration* [1st International] in 1964, the Art Department has sought to expand our collection with the best contemporary botanical art and illustration happening around the world. These masters of tomorrow included published and unpublished work by artists in nearly every artistic medium, and as a result our collection has grown to be one of the largest and most well-regarded in the world. However, we have not always been successful in adding every artwork in our *International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration* series to our collection, either because the work was unavailable or circumstances precluded acquisition, but now we are filling in some of those gaps. I am pleased to report that, in the last year, we have acquired artwork by the following artists: Juan Castillo (16th International), John Gist (12th International), Linda Gist (13th International), Craig Lidgerwood (16th International), Maria Luisa Palanca (15th International), Hillary Parker (12th International) and Adele Rossetti (11th International). Artwork by the Gists, Parker and Rossetti was purchased by the T. D. Jacobsen Endowed Acquisition Fund.

We also have been incredibly lucky to receive several generous donations of artwork. At the close of 2025 Monika de Vries Gohlke (11th International) donated 32 original artworks, all examples of her printmaking prowess and including both black-and-white and hand-colored aquatints and aquatint with chine coll  . Her aquatint and photogravure of *Sambucus* Linnaeus can be seen in our spring exhibition, *To Make a Prairie: Pollination and Human Understanding*.



Sambucus: Elderberries with bugs [*Sambucus* Linnaeus, Adoxaceae], aquatint and photogravure on paper by Monika de Vries Gohlke (1940–), printer’s proof, 33.4×31.5 cm, HI Art accession no. 8674.01, gift of the artist.

The new year brought with it the donation of two watercolors of *Crataegus nitida* (Englemann ex Britton & A. Brown) Sargent and of *Iris pseudacorus* Linnaeus by New York artist and educator Albert Lee Massimi. He earned a degree in liberal arts from State University in Buffalo, New York, and then volunteered with the Peace Corps in Buyeo County, South Korea, where his lifelong love of art was influenced by study of traditional brush and ink painting. These paintings are completed in his signature style, a blend of ethereal watercolor washes with layers of rich colors. We are very pleased to have Massimi’s work in our collection and look forward to sharing his elegant paintings with visitors.

Derek Norman expanded our collection of his original artwork by adding over 30 paintings and drawings to the over 250 already in our holdings. This new group includes watercolor and graphite illustrations, pen-and-ink drawings and larger pieces he calls “concept boards,” or large-scale paintings depicting the life cycle of different plants, which he created to help deepen his understanding of each plant for future illustrations. Adding these examples of Norman’s colorful work is very exciting, and we anticipate these studies and process pieces to become favorites for our student visitors.

Finally, we were pleasantly surprised to be contacted by collectors Randy and Bobbie Stadler as they embarked upon what must have been an enormous task: downsizing their vast collection of historical botanical prints. This huge gift included over 350 prints, primarily hand-colored engravings,

from a variety of important publications. This group spans the 16th–20th centuries and includes work by important authors and artists, such as Basilius Besler (1561–1629), Elizabeth Blackwell (1699–1758), Sydenham Edwards (?1769–1819), Walter Hood Fitch (1817–1892), Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), Pierre-Joseph Redout   (1759–1840) and James Sowerby (1757–1822). This gift greatly strengthens our holdings of artwork for several publications, particularly *Flora Londinensis* (London, printed for and sold by the author and B. White, 1777[1775]–1798) and *Curtis’s Botanical Magazine*, and we are very excited to add these important resources for researchers and scholars, and incredible works of art in their own right, to our collection.

Kate Elizabeth Cole (1854–1932)

We are thrilled to announce the acquisition of 29 works by Cole, a fascinating and underrecognized figure in California art and natural history and a genuinely unusual addition to



Below, *Crataegus × nitida* ‘Glossy Hawthorn’ [*Crataegus nitida* (Englemann ex Britton & A. Brown) Sargent, Rosaceae], watercolor on paper by Albert Massimi, 2005, 50.8×35.5 cm, HI Art accession no. 8689, gift of the artist.



our permanent collection. Cole was a San Francisco–born artist and botanical enthusiast who spent more than 25 years documenting the wildflowers of California. Cole combined a painter’s eye with serious botanical study, painting over 300 studies of rare and native plants from the streams, marshes and mountains of the state. The pieces in our collection include single branches and small groupings set against a neutral ground, maintaining the conventions of traditional botanical art while infusing the work with an almost impressionistic looseness. Her work was well regarded in her own time. She worked with the State Floral Society in 1892 to arrange the exhibition of several of her artworks in both the Alameda County and Women’s Department exhibits of the California Building at the World’s Columbian Exposition, or World’s Fair, held in Chicago in 1893. There she exhibited oil paintings on ivory of native California wildflowers, a subject upon which her artwork focused throughout her career. An article published by the *San Francisco Call* in 1913 noted that Cole studied at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art of the California School of Design (later San Francisco Institute of Art) and learned botany through private study. So accurate were her paintings that her work was requested for the reference room of the Carnegie Free Library of Oakland, California, where it would be used by botany classes in the Oakland public schools and where it was still being exhibited as late as 1929. She also described traveling through difficult terrain for her studies of native flora, scaling mountains in the “high Sierras, Tahoe and Mendocino

(continued on page 4)

County” (Anonymous 1913) to collect specimens. “Wildflowers have souls and individualities much the same as people,” she stated and concluded, “Every group is taken from life, never changing or adding to the group. I only try to put in the peculiar mannerisms of the plant. I just paint its soul” (Anonymous 1913).

Outside of her art practice, Cole was an active member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, along with her sister Lillian, neither of whom ever married, and was an advocate for the arts. Cole came from a prominent family in the area, one of five children born to Dr. Rector Elisha Cole and Mary Philinda Finney, including her sister Lily and brothers William, Charles and Henry. Her father was a practicing dentist; served as the president of the board of education in Oakland; was very active in the Congregation Church and the local Republican party; and, according to his obituary (Anonymous 1890a, b), turned down the offer to be mayor several times because his moral stance on abstaining from alcohol conflicted with the required duty of the mayor to sign liquor licenses.

These 29 works are painted on ivory, a brand name for celluloid, one of the earliest synthetic materials, commercially manufactured in the United States from 1870. Celluloid was developed as an imitation ivory, used for a variety of purposes and, when manufactured as a painting surface, comes in stiff, slightly translucent sheets with a faint striated pattern not unlike vellum. Paint sits on the surface rather than being absorbed, giving Cole’s studies a particular clarity and brightness. Since Cole proposed an ivory exhibit for the 1893 World’s Fair, her use of the material was intentional, an unusual choice that suits the delicacy of her subjects remarkably well.

Future exhibitions

With *To Make a Prairie* in full swing, we look forward to taking a little extra time this summer and fall to

focus on the extensive research and collaboration for our spring 2027 show on the work of John Tyley. There will be no show this fall so that all our energies can be devoted to telling the story of this incredible man, an Antiguan artist and free person of mixed race living and working at the St. Vincent Botanical Garden under the colonial rule of England and the direction of Alexander Anderson. We will be devoting an issue of *Huntia*, our journal of botanical history, to articles about Tyley, Anderson and the garden by Dr. Isabelle Charmantier, head of collections at the Linnean Society of London; Dr. Julie Chun Kim, associate professor of English at Fordham University; Dr. Christina Welch, faculty member at the University of Winchester; and Dr. J’Nese Williams, assistant professor of the history of science, technology and the environment at Wake Forest University. We look forward to sharing these important stories and beautiful botanical paintings with you beginning 1 February 2027.

Information has been added to our Web site about our *18th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration*, slated to open in September 2029. On our [International series](#) page are the submission guidelines, forms and all-important dates. As always, if you have any questions not answered in the guidelines, please reach out directly. We look forward to seeing your submissions in 2028.

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—Carrie Roy, Senior Curator of Art

Delectus Huntiana 64

Bernard Lowy (1916–1992) correspondence with R. Gordon Wasson (1898–1986)



Bernard Lowy (1916–1992), unknown location, 1961, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 1, gift of Bernard Lowy.

While many pages could be written about Bernard Lowy’s (1916–1992) contributions to mycology and the ethnographic study of fungi in Central American cultures, this article instead aims to highlight an interesting interpersonal story brought to light by his correspondence. Bernard Lowy spent many years in the latter portion of his career as an ethnomycologist studying the use and prevalence of “mushroom stones” (small statues depicting mushrooms) in Mayan cultures. His correspondent in this story is R. Gordon Wasson (1898–1986), another prominent ethnomycologist who is most famous for his 1954 *Life* article “Seeking the Magic Mushroom,” which some credit with introducing the idea of psychedelic mushrooms to American culture (Wills 2021). After meeting in 1960 when Wasson gave an annual address to the Mycological Society of America, the two began to collaborate and consult each other on their shared interest in the historical importance of fungi in indigenous cultures. However, ten years into their professional relationship a sudden disagreement threatened to separate the two mycological giants, as shown in a series of correspondence from the Hunt Institute’s Bernard Lowy papers.

The disagreement starts with a claim in the first two sentences of Lowy’s 1971 article “New Records of Mushroom Stones from Guatemala”:

At the turn of the century, when the artifacts now known as mushroom stones first came to the attention of archaeologists, little beyond the surmise that they may in reality have represented mushrooms was then put forward. Sapper (1898) was the first to suggest this ... (Lowy 1971).

This claim was disputed initially by Wasson in correspondence on 31 March 1970, in a thought that amounts to little more than an aside. A month earlier he had written to Sigma XI in support of a grant application by Lowy; two months later Wasson would cut Lowy off in a fury, writing on 27 May 1970: “So far as I am concerned the correspondence is closed.” The question at hand: what could cause such a rift between these two so quickly?

Lowy’s claim, in summary, is that 19th-century explorer and antiquarian Karl Sapper was the first to specifically describe the Mayan stones as being mushroom shaped in his 1898 article “Pilzförmige Götzenbilder aus Guatemala und San Salvador” (Mushroom-shaped idols from Guatemala and San Salvador). Wasson disagrees—he instead posits that the first true description of the stones as mushrooms comes from “Mushroom-shaped images” by D. G. Brinton, published on 29 July 1898 in *Science*. This counterclaim is published in “The hallucinogenic mushrooms of Mexico and psilocybin: A bibliography,” in a note that describes the Brinton publication as a response to “Sapper’s suggestion ... that an anthropomorphic mushroom stone illustrated from El Salvador was a phallic symbol ...,” and ends “Historically, this is the first known, published reference to mushroom stones as mushroom representations” (Wasson 1962). While this text was written by Wasson’s colleague Steve Borhegyi, the



R. (Robert) Gordon Wasson (1898–1986), unknown location, January 1971, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 1, gift of R. Gordon Wasson.

publication is under Wasson’s name, and he voices his support for the claim in a later letter.

These two publications are the powder and fuse for the ticking bomb that would ultimately shatter the collaboration between Wasson and Lowy; their professional relationship of 10 years would be jeopardized by a semantic disagreement over 2 short articles from nearly 100 years before. For what it is worth, your humble author thinks that Lowy is correct in this disagreement—in his article Sapper clearly disputes the idea that the statues are phalluses and proposes the mushroom shape as a counterpoint. Regardless of who is correct, however, it is clear how this minor disagreement could grow into a full-on feud: both men are defending their publications, and thus it has become a matter of credibility and pride.

The first signs of agitation arise on 11 April 1970, when Wasson writes, “Sapper was the first to see that the mushroom stones looked like mushrooms...but the idea that they truly represented fungi never crossed his mind, did it?”, which Lowy has underlined and responded to in red pen (seemingly for his own benefit): “Yes, certainly it must have occurred to him!”. Lowy would respond officially

(continued on page 6)

Bernard Lowy (1916–1992) correspondence with R. Gordon Wasson (1898–1986)

ten days later, his letter accompanied by both articles with relevant passages underlined, writing an analysis of both papers in which he begins to discredit the rest of the claims made by Brinton.

However, the correspondence at this point is still cordial—Lowy’s letter ends with an aside mentioning he was sorry he had missed a performance he meant to attend with Wasson.

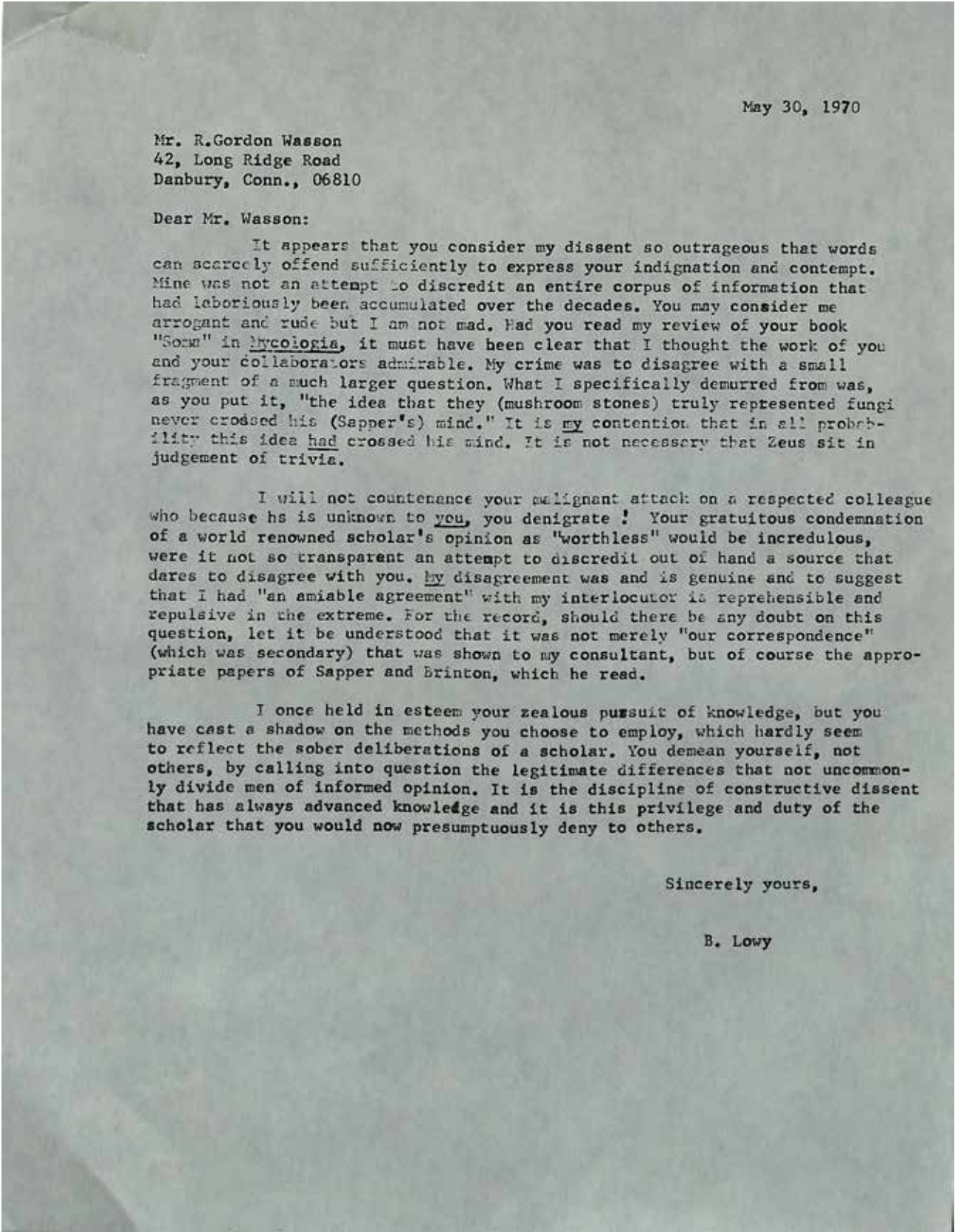
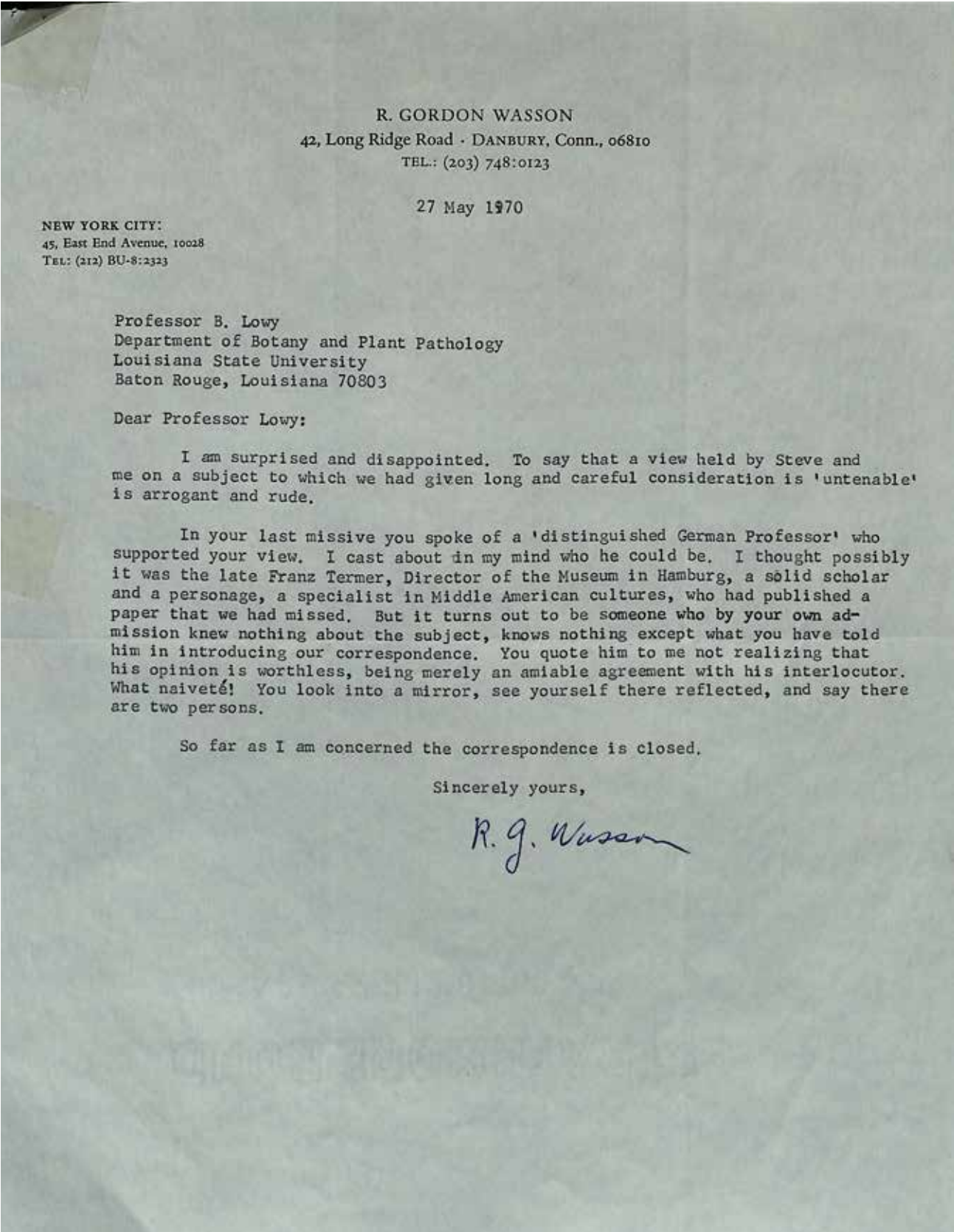
Over further correspondence Wasson refused to assent, so Lowy sought outside help in Professor Rudolf Heberle, whom he considered an unbiased judge as the professor had

no prior knowledge of the conflict or of the mushroom stones at all. He reported back to Wasson on 20 May 1970, describing the consultation and ending his letter “Consequently, I

would reiterate that your opinion... is untenable.” This was the last straw for Wasson, who replied scathingly on 27 May 1970. The fury communicated cannot be done justice with anything

less than presentation of the full letter (below left). The reply is no less incensed (below right).

(continued on page 8)



Following this fallout, there is no correspondence for over a year. It seems there was no contact at all between the two until 12 November 1971, when Wasson suddenly broke the silence with a letter praising Lowy’s recent publication in *Mycologia*, which ends: “I wish to apologize for that letter of mine dated May 27, 1970. It was quite inexcusable and I have regretted it from the day I mailed it. I hope you will accept my apology.” Lowy accepted the apology five days later in a response letter, and the two returned to frequent communication regarding ethnomycological research. They would continue to be close colleagues from there on, citing each other’s work, consulting each other on research topics, and sending each other letters over the next two decades. In 1983 Lowy spoke at the dedication of the Tina and R. Gordon Wasson Ethnomyological Collection, praising Wasson’s years of research. Near the end he speaks on his personal opinion of Wasson:

I cannot adequately sum up the significance of Gordon Wasson’s contributions to mycology in its broadest connotation, as well as to the arts and sciences. But I am reminded that the Japanese have honored a few of their compatriots by designating them as National Treasures. We might do well to emulate them. If we did, Gordon Wasson, I believe, would be among them.

This disagreement, fallout and subsequent rekindling of a fruitful research relationship is just one of the many stories that can be found in the Bernard Lowy papers (Archives collection no. 296). The collection was donated to us by Lowy’s daughter, Dianne Maxine Lowy, according to Lowy’s wishes as put forth in his will. The papers document Lowy’s professional career, roughly 1949–1990, made up of eight boxes of correspondence, documentation and articles, both pre- and post-publication. Much of the correspondence referenced here can be found in Box 1, Folder 30: “Lowy–Wasson. Off to a bumpy start. 1969–1970, 17 September 1969–19 November 1971.” The collection has been digitized and soon will be available on the Hunt Institute Archives Web site.

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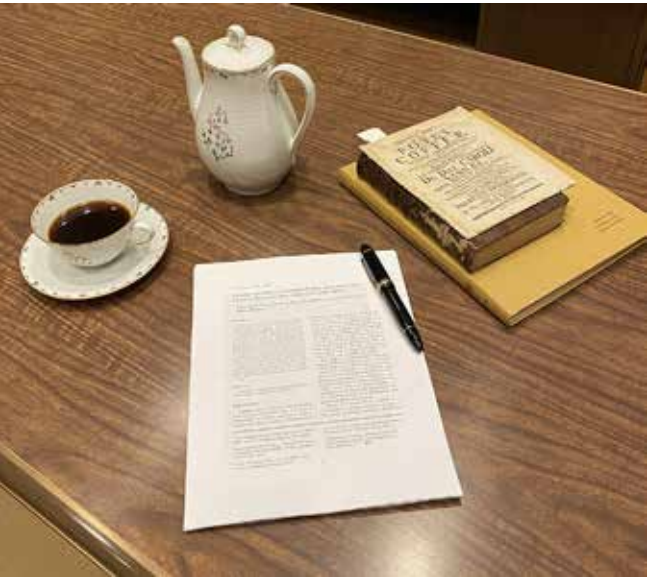
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—Christi Thomas, Computational/Archival Assistant

Huntia published

In the [22\(1\) Huntia](#), published 16 December 2025, we explore the foundation of academia, the relationship between graduate students and their major professor. Using Linnaeus, our starting point for most things botanical, and his students, we see the beginning of that relationship that has evolved into what we have today. In “Linnaeus and coffee: An annotated English translation of the Linnaean dissertation *Potus Coffeae* (The coffee drink)” Fernando E. Vega, Alexander Vega, Maxwell Vega, Aaron P. Davis and Hanna Hodacs offer fresh insights. Grab a cup of coffee and enjoy this stimulating read. Using a Linnaean china cup is optional but encouraged.

Our Linnaean china comes from Rachel Hunt’s desire for a tea set patterned after one used by Linnaeus. Reproducing a replica set for her new library proved impractical. However, A-B Rörstrands Utställning of Stockholm, Sweden, sold a tea set designed for the Linné jubilee by Louise Adelborg. It bears a realistic reproduction of *Linnaea borealis*, the plant named by Linnaeus. Our original set included 144 teacups with saucers, 216 plates in 2 sizes and 12 each of tea pots, sugar bowls, cream pitchers and hot water pots. In 1967 the coffee cups and pots were added. Whether you have the original or a homage, lift a cup in honor of Linnaeus, his students and graduate students everywhere who continue to toil in the service of botany.



If you’re ready to take us on a new journey in the pages of our journal of botanical history, check out the topics and submission guidelines available on the [Huntia](#) page.

—Scarlett T. Townsend, Publication and Marketing Manager and Editor, *Huntia*

[Delectus Huntiana 65](#)

The glass lantern slide collection and accompanying lecture by Mrs. Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt

Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt (1882–1963) was a bookbinder and an avid book collector, who had a special interest in botanical materials sparked by a childhood gift of *How to Know the Wild Flowers* (1895) by Frances Theodora Smith Dana Parsons (1861–1952). In 1936 Hunt built a library in her home, Elmhurst, in Pittsburgh’s East End, to store her ever-growing collection of botanical literature. This collection grew in size and academic recognition until the dedication of the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library in 1961, which would continue to expand in size and scope into the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation of today.

Hunt was also a frequent lecturer at institutions, local and national, notably being the first woman to lecture at the Grolier Club, a then male-only bibliophiles’ club. She was also a member of multiple botanical clubs, especially the Garden Club of Allegheny County, where she most likely presented the materials found in this very collection. It is possible that she had these slides commissioned in response to a January 1920 *Bulletin of the Garden Club of America*, which called for local clubs to produce photographic slides of local members’ gardens to contribute to a larger, Garden Club-wide collection (Sloan 1920).

Most slides are labeled “Edward Van Altena,” the name of a late-1800s photographer and slide colorist. He, alongside John Scott, ran a firm in New York City that primarily produced colored

lantern slides. They were renowned for their hand-painting technique that utilized, in Altena’s own words, ““dyes, the same as are used in fabrics,”” as ““these colors are very bright, transparent, and are easily applied to black and white negatives . . .”” (Phelps 1979). He worked frequently with the Garden Club of America, both in photography and in slide coloring. His slide coloring services were recommended in the aforementioned bulletin (Phelps 1979).

Archives collection no. 405 consists of 168 hand-colored glass lantern slides, numbered 001–171 (slides 42, 50 and 116 are not included in this collection). Also included in this collection is the typed copy of the lecture written by Hunt describing the slides’ contents. The slides depict gardens and are labelled with owners and often locations. A [finding aid](#) for this collection is available online.

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—Christi Thomas, Computational/Archival Assistant



Slide 054—Mrs. Roy A. Hunt, featuring her garden at Elmhurst with her lecture text: The floor of the garden is almost two feet lower than the perennial border around the walls, and has a pool, copied from one of the Italian villa pools. The planting in the four beds is kept quite low. The color scheme is usually blue, lavender and soft pink. This slide shows the view from the little arbor toward the entrance gate.

William Winfield Ray collection of 20th-century botanists’ correspondence and other materials

[Archives collection no. 48](#) is an arrangement of letters, postcards and other materials relating to botanists and naturalists throughout the 20th century. The material was received by the Hunt Botanical Library (now Hunt Institute) on 18 January 1968 from Professor William Winfield Ray (1909–1995). According to our correspondence from the time, the materials were sent to us as part of a larger collection amalgamated from various sources by Professor Ray, including materials given to him by Thomas J. Fitzpatrick (1868–1952) and Charles E. Bessey (1845–1915). The materials presented here were isolated from their original collection around July 1968 and put into their current organization by our founding director, George H. M. Lawrence (1910–1978; director, 1960–1970). It is expected that these items may be used both for their historical interest and as a sampling of handwriting for the botanists represented within.

This collection includes roughly 900 letters, postcards and related items from botanists and their correspondents who were active in the 20th century. The materials themselves range in creation date from the late 19th through the 20th centuries. The collection includes both handwritten and typed letters, almost all of which are signed by their authors. There are few items in the collection that are not accompanying letters (roughly 20), including manuscripts, checks, receipts and other miscellaneous documents.

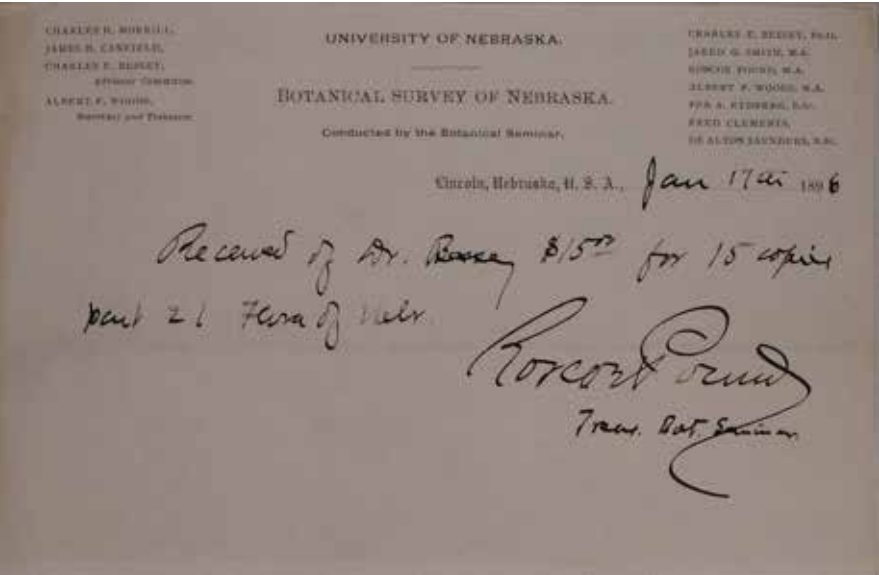
Roscoe Pound (1870–1964) to Charles Edwin Bessey (1845–1915) Roscoe Pound was a scholarly powerhouse and remains one of the most cited legal scholars of the 20th century. However, his career started in botany at the University of Nebraska, where he was a leader of the Botanical Seminar. His scientific endeavors formed the basis of his legal scholarship, with his philosophy of law developing from his ecological background; he considered the law something that



Charles E. Bessey (1845–1915), unknown location, December 1914, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 4.



Roscoe Pound (1870–1964), Kennedy Studio, Lincoln, Nebraska, ca.1894, photograph by W. D. Kilborn & W. S. Gilbert, HI Archives portrait no. 2, gift of Prof. Robert Kaul.



evolved much like a plant species might and would often use botanical terminology and examples in his writing. For example, he compared the legal textbook to a herbarium: Much like a dried sample of a plant differs from that same plant in nature, a law’s literal text often differs from that law in action (Pound 1923).

Here he writes a receipt for his professor and colleague Charles E. Bessey, a foundational force in American botany who can hardly be summed

up in a single paragraph. He was a highly respected lecturer, delivering approachable but informative lectures and introducing laboratory methods to the teaching of botany. He was also a prolific writer, publishing a series of articles surveying “the structure and evolution of all of the main groups of the plant world,” and a series of textbooks for introductory botany students. The note shown here comes from the Nebraska Botanical Survey, a project begun in 1892 for which Bessey was botanical advisor and Pound was a leading member.

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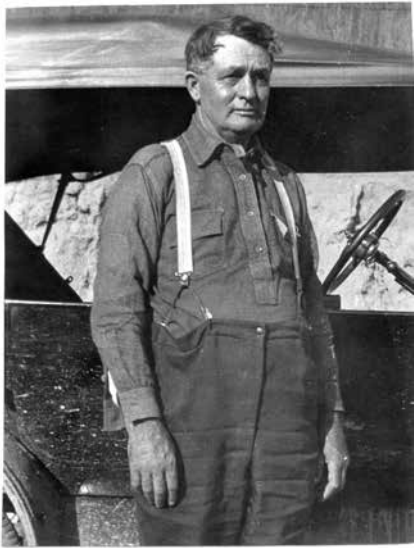
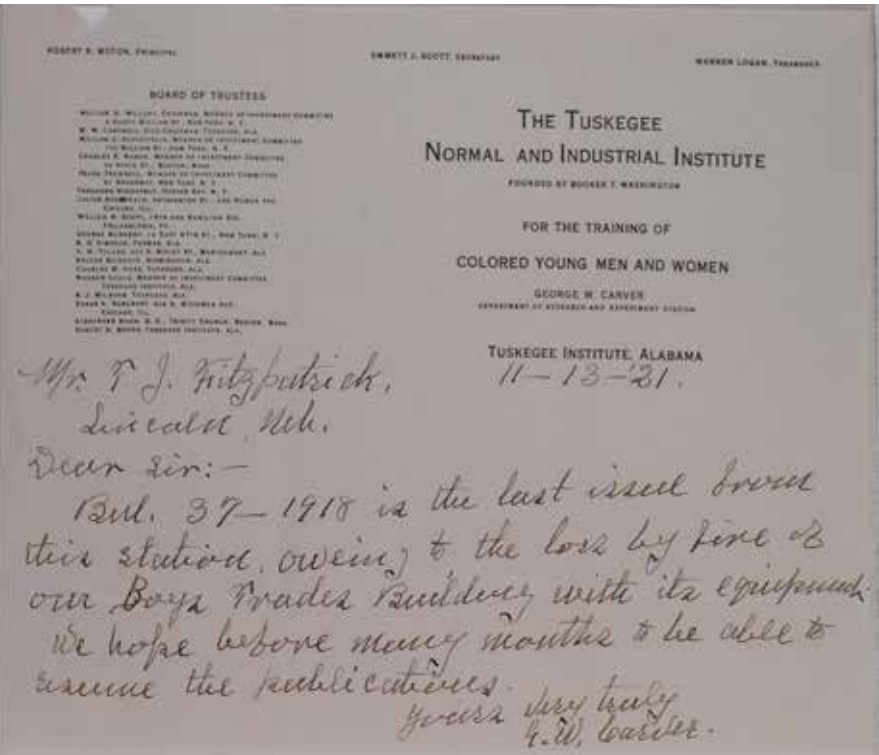
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George Washington Carver (1864–1943) to Thomas Jefferson Fitzpatrick (1868–1952)

George Washington Carver was a prominent professor at Tuskegee Institute (now University), where he taught a wide range of environmental and agricultural classes. His work primarily focused on educating local black farmers on environmentally conscious farming practices to boost productivity and income, providing alternative crops to the cotton that was prevalent in the area and educating on topics like soil maintenance and sustainable agriculture. Besides classes and conferences, this goal was achieved through a series of bulletins published by him at the Tuskegee Institute Experimental Station, which he directed and ran single-handedly. These bulletins were written with the farmer in mind and provide direct practical advice, diagrams and recipes, all backed by data from Carver’s research.

Here Carver writes to Thomas Jefferson Fitzpatrick, a professor of mathematics and assistant professor of botany who studied under Charles E. Bessey. Fitzpatrick was an avid book collector and thus was presumably inquiring here about Carver’s bulletins to add to his collection. Carver responds here mentioning a fire that took place in October 1918, destroying the Slater–Armstrong Memorial Trades Building at Tuskegee Institute and halting the publication of Carver’s bulletin after no. 37: “How to Make Sweet Potato Flour, Starch, Sugar, Bread and Mock Coconut” (1918). The building would be replaced in 1920, and the bulletin would return to publication in 1922



Thomas Jefferson Fitzpatrick (1868–1962), in front of Model T Ford, Nebraska, unknown date, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 3, gift of William Winfield Ray.

with “How the Farmer Can Save His Sweet Potatoes and Ways of Preparing It for the Table.”

Sources

Carver, George Washington (1864–1943) letter to Fitzpatrick, Thomas Jefferson (1868–1952), 13 November 1921. Depository: William Winfield Ray collection of 20th-century botanists’ correspondence and other materials, Archives collection no. 0048, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation,



George Washington Carver (1864–1943), unknown location, unknown date, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 1, gift of J. H. M. Henderson, Director, Carver Research Foundation.

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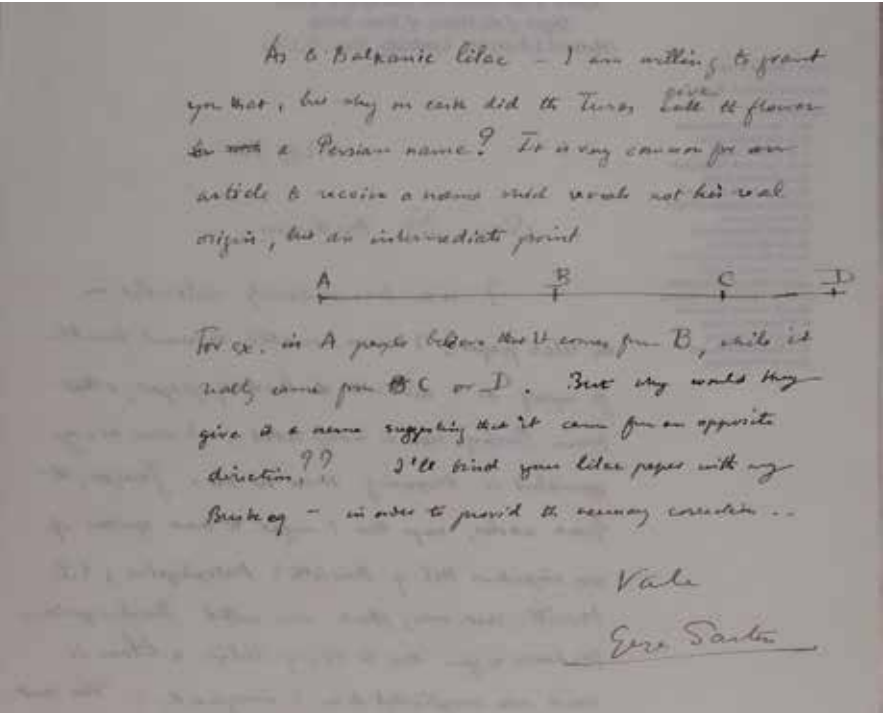
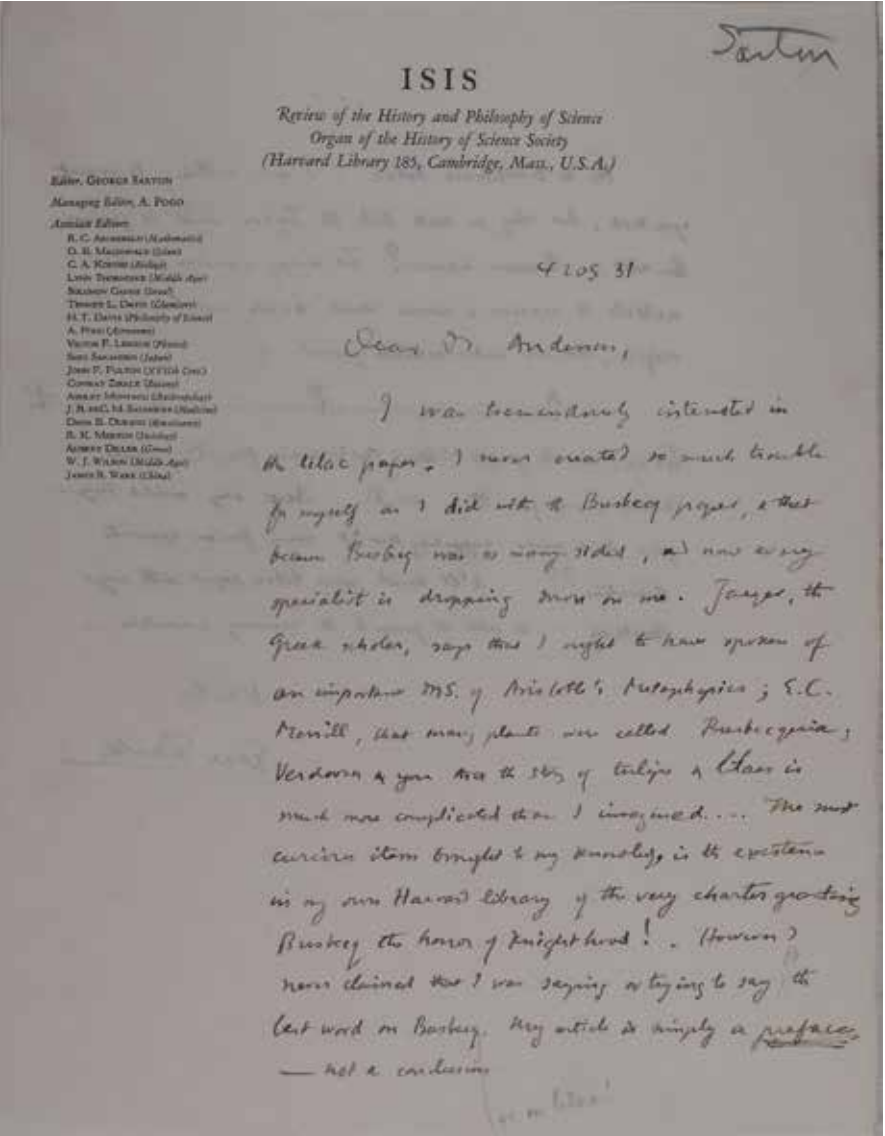
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Edgar Shannon Anderson (1897–1969), [Missouri Botanical Garden], 1948, photomechanical reproduction post card by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 10, gift of Missouri Botanical Garden.

George Sarton (1884–1956) to Edgar Anderson (1897–1969)
Edgar Anderson was an evolutionary botanist, who spent most of his career working at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Much of his research centered on the genera *Iris* Tournefort ex Linnaeus and *Tradescantia* Ruppius ex Linnaeus, which served as the basis for his most-cited publication, *Introgressive Hybridization* (1949). He is known for his innovative methods of graphing and depicting variations in specimens, such as the “ideogram” and the “whisker” method, later titled the more scientific “pictorialized scatter diagram.” His presence in this collection is limited to letters he received from George Sarton, with whom Anderson exchanged papers, questions and ideas.

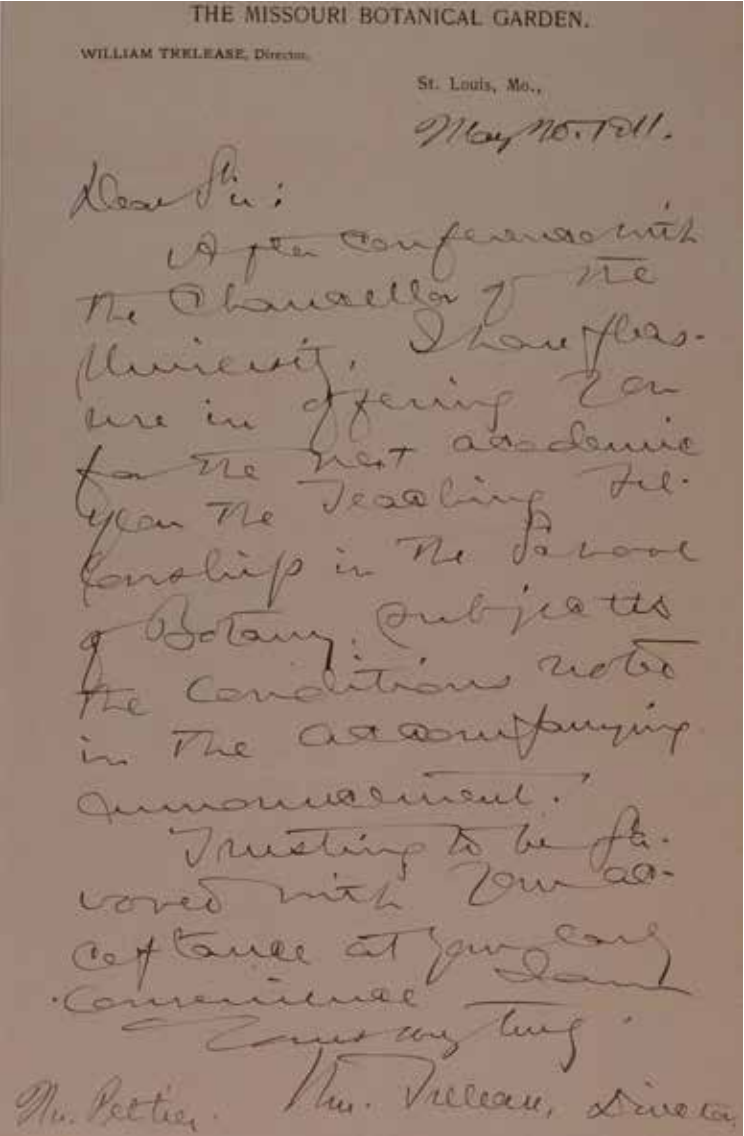
Sarton is best known for being a pioneer in the study of the history of science, establishing it as a field through the founding of the journal *Isis* and the publication of *Introduction to the History of Science*, his 3-volume magnum opus. Here Sarton mentions the “Balkan lilac,” *Syringa vulgaris* Linnaeus, which Anderson wrote about in “A Visit to the Home of the Lilac,” published in the *Arnold Arboretum Bulletin of Popular Information* in 1935; this may in fact be the paper referenced in the letter, as it appears to be his only publication prior to 1942 mentioning the species.



George Alfred Leon Sarton (1884–1956), unknown location, 1941, halftone reproduction of original public domain photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 1.

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William Trelease (1857–1945) to George Leo Peltier (1888–1975)
William Trelease was a scientist of many talents, who despite his early works in natural history, fungi, pollination and bacteria, is most known as an avid taxonomist. Over the course of his career he served as a professor of botany at Washington University, St. Louis (1885–1913); director of the Missouri Botanical Garden (1889–1912); and professor of botany (1913–1926) and professor emeritus (1926–1945) at the University of Illinois. In addition he served as president of numerous scientific associations and societies, notably as the first president of the Botanical Society of America. As stated in his National Academy of Sciences



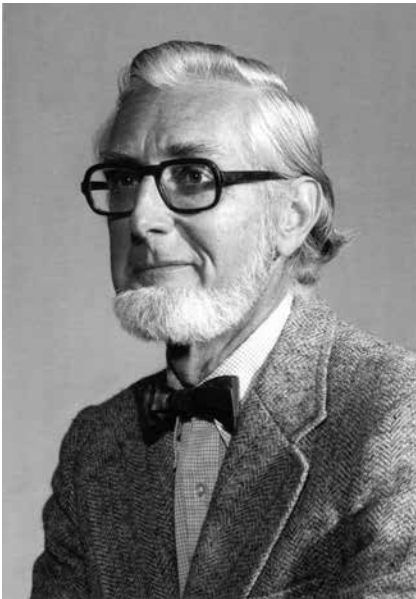
Above, William Trelease (1857–1945), unknown location, 1913, photograph by H. H. Bartlett, HI Archives portrait no. 1, gift of Rogers McVaugh.

Left, George Leo Peltier (1888–1975), unknown location, unknown date, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 1.

biography, he described nearly 2,500 species (Kunkel 1961), including *Agave*

Linnaeus, American oaks and the tropical Piperaceae.

(continued on page 14)



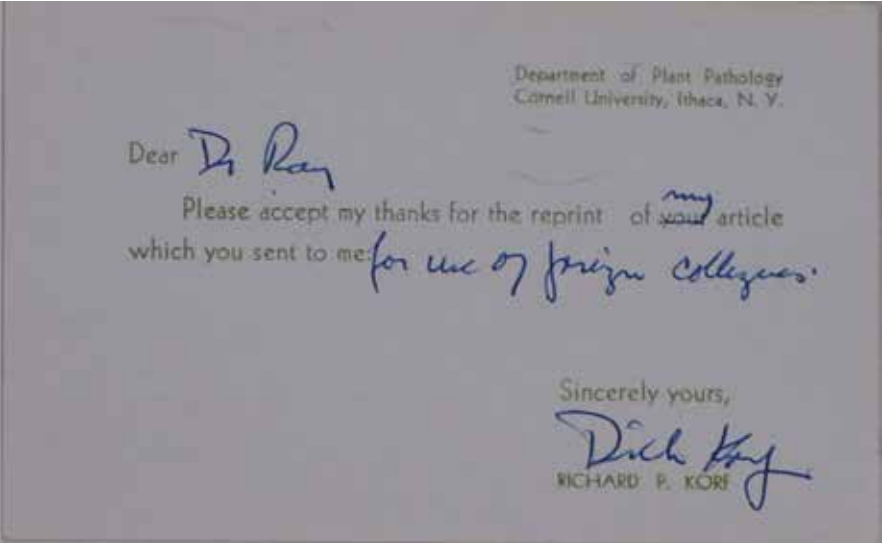
Richard Paul Korf (1925–2016), unknown location, ca.1980s, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 3, gift of Richard Paul Korf.

Here he writes to Dr. George Leo Peltier, notable for his later work at the University of Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station. The letter grants Peltier a teaching fellowship at the Missouri Botanical Garden; one year later Peltier would publish “A consideration of the physiology and life history of a parasitic *Botrytis* on pepper and lettuce” in the *Report (Annual) of the Missouri Botanical Garden* based on his work there.

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Richard Paul Korf (1925–2016) to William Winfield Ray (1909–1995)
Richard Paul Korf, who focused much of his work on the Discomycetes group of cup-shaped fungi, was a mycologist at the Cornell University Department of Plant Pathology. Beyond his extensive work with fungi and his impact on the field of mycological



taxonomy, he is also known for being a co-founder of the journal *Mycotaxon* in 1974. It is hard to say what article he may refer to in this postcard, as he was a highly productive writer and published multiple articles in 1961, the year of this correspondence.

Sources

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William Gilson Farlow (1844–1919) to George Leo Peltier (1888–1975)

William Gilson Farlow was a foundational American botanist, who pioneered the study of cryptogamic botany in the United States. Starting in 1870, he worked under Asa Gray, who implored him to begin teaching on cryptogams, a topic on which Farlow was not well-versed. Farlow found great difficulty in learning about the field in America, so he spent two years studying in various European countries before returning to Harvard to teach one of the first lectures on cryptogams in the United States. He was well-regarded not only for his contributions

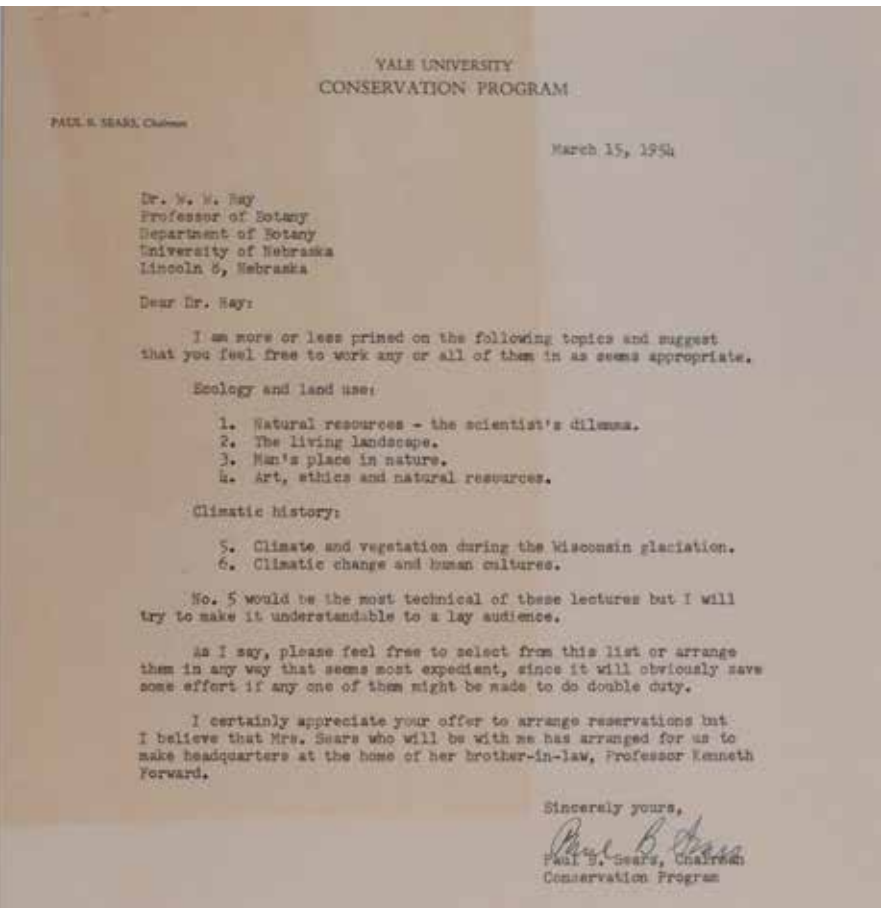
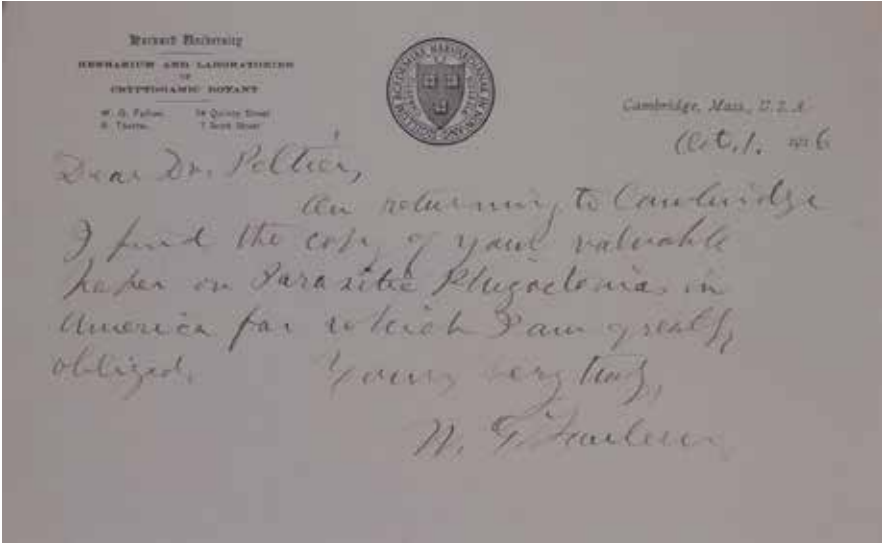
to the scientific community but also for his articles written to be accessible to laypeople, such as 1879’s “Remarks on some algae found in the water-supplies of the city of Boston,” which was one of the first papers on the importance of plant-life to municipal water supplies. Here he writes to George Leo Peltier, a botanist at the University of Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station. The paper mentioned in the letter is “Parasitic Rhizoctonias in America,” Dr. Peltier’s doctoral thesis submitted in 1915.

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Paul Bigelow Sears (1891–1990) to William Winfield Ray (1909–1995)

Paul Bigelow Sears was a botanist particularly concerned with plant ecology and conservation efforts. His most well-known work is in conservation, especially his 1935 publication *Deserts on the March*, which championed human conservation efforts in combating soil erosion during the height of the Dust Bowl. He was also a noted botany professor teaching at the University of Nebraska,



University of Oklahoma, Oberlin College and finally Yale, where he was professor of conservation and chairman of its Conservation Department and nature preserve.

Here he writes to William Winfield Ray, a mycologist and botanist most notable for his extensive research

on plant pathology. He served as professor of botany at Oklahoma State University and the University of Nebraska, becoming the chair of the Botany Department at Nebraska in 1948. He is also notable for donating this collection.



Above, William Gibson Farlow (1844–1919), unknown location, unknown date, photomechanical reproduction of a photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 3, gift of Han E. Gruen.

Below, Paul Bigelow Sears (1891–1990), unknown location, June 1963, photograph by W. H. Hodge, HI Archives portrait no. 1.



Sources

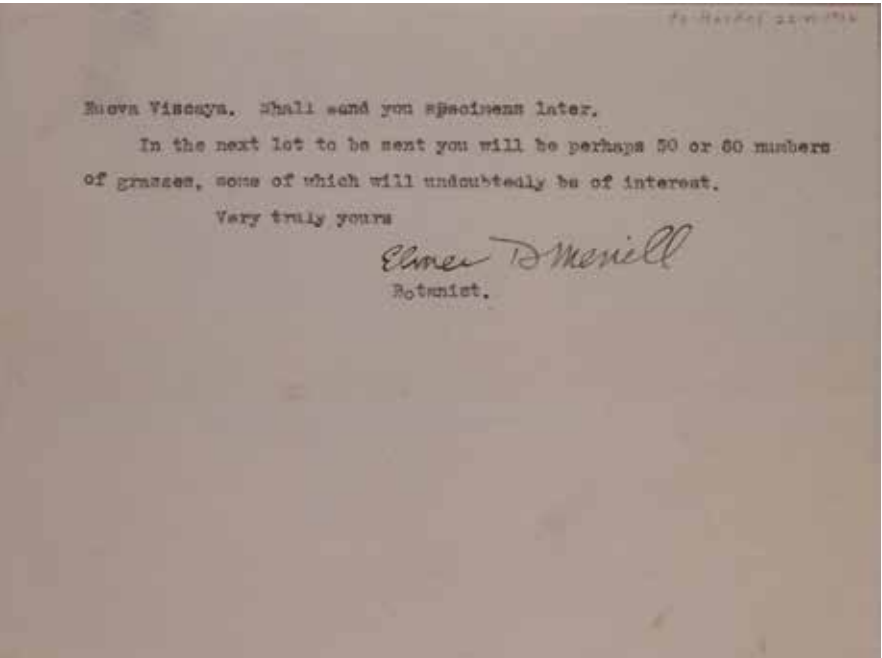
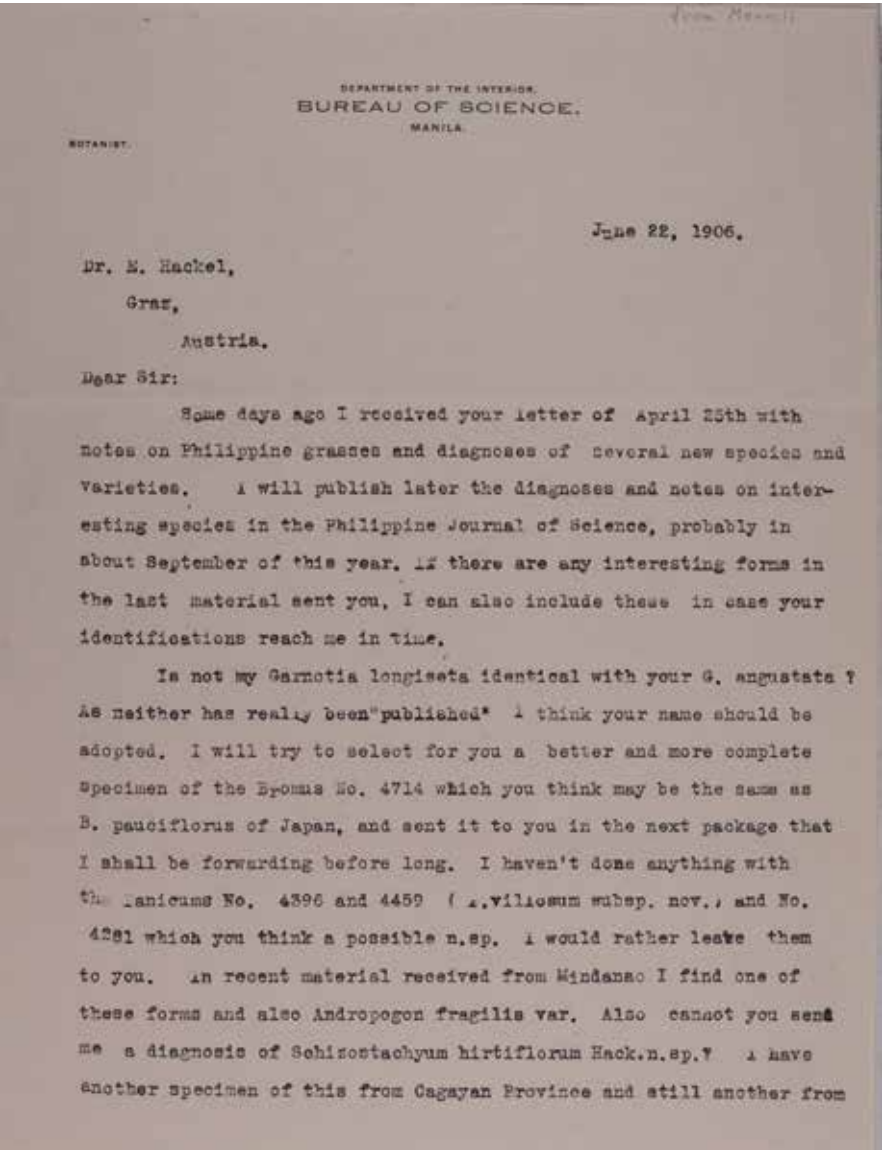
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Elmer Drew Merrill (1876–1956), unknown location, 1918, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 8.

Elmer Drew Merrill (1876–1956) to Eduard Hackel (1850–1926)
Elmer Drew Merrill, despite being American born, is most famous for his 20 years of work on the flora of the Philippines, of which he is cited as the leading authority. During his time in Manila he and his team recorded well over 10,000 plants. Additionally, he worked his way up through the University of the Philippines, starting as an associate professor and ending up as the director of the Bureau of Science in 1923. That year, he returned to the United States to become the dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of California. Just a year later he was appointed the director of the Agriculture Experiment Station, and his dual roles allowed him to make wide-scale changes to the organization of the university’s research programs and educational resources.

This letter is written to Eduard Hackel, an Austrian botanist known for his expertise in grasses. Hackel’s life work was his efforts to write a monograph encompassing all known grasses, but he only published one work, which would become his best known: *Monograph of Andropogoneae*. Merrill discusses in



Eduard Hackel (1850–1926), Salzburg, Germany, unknown date, photograph by Atelier Ellinger, signed by Eduard Hackel, HI Archives portrait no. 3, gift of Rogers McVaugh.

the letter both a paper that would be published later that year (most likely “New or noteworthy Philippine plants, V.” published in *The Philippine Journal of Science Supplement III*, 1906) and a species of grass that would be officially published by Hackel in 1909 in *Allgemeine Botanische Zeitschrift für Systematik* as *Garnotia stricta* var. *longiseta*.

Sources
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—Christi Thomas,
Computational/Archival Assistant

250 Years of Botany in America

For our informal lobby displays this year we depart from exploring our Institute history to celebrate the history of botany in America for the 250th anniversary of our country. While we do not have a John Hancock autograph (his not being a botanist or naturalist), many others of note have left their John Hancocks scattered throughout our collections. We even have a letter from George III, who was the reason for the bold declaration of that famed signature. History is so fascinating and circular, complex and messy and, sometimes, tragic. As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of America, we will grapple with our past while we seek to shape our future. In changing displays throughout the year, the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation will examine the history of botany in America from the great exploring expeditions to the pioneering individuals with an idea or simply a need to see and collect the next plant on the trail. While we will embrace the lighter moments, we will illuminate the darker ones so that we may not repeat them. Join us as we celebrate the botanical explorations and discoveries that have made America a great land of diverse plant species and

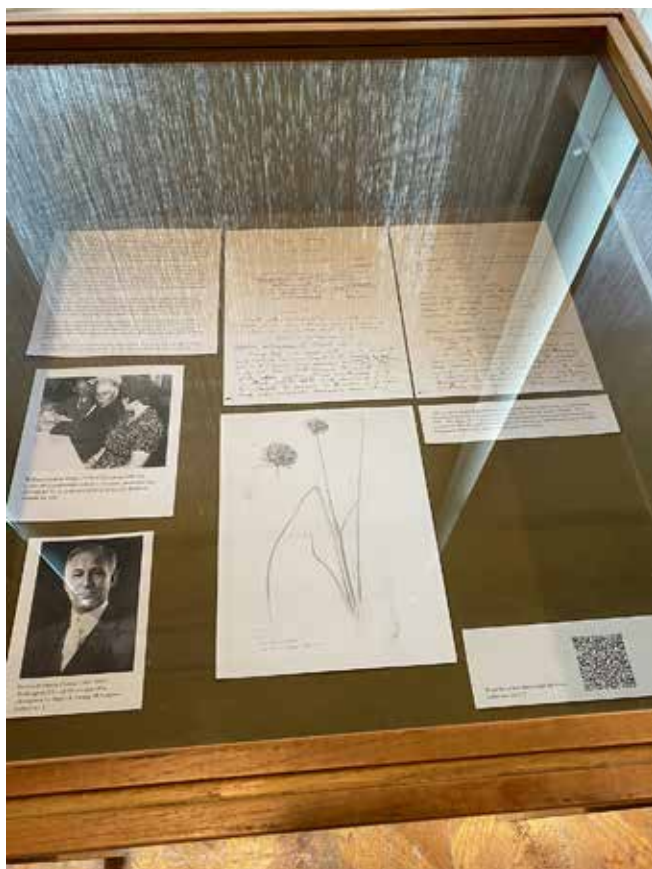
the men and women, indigenous and enslaved, Holocaust survivors escaping fascism and others seeking freedom, citizens and foreigners, who have sunk roots, literal or metaphorical, into the fertile soil of our country and contributed to the history of botany.

I did March’s inaugural display about the connections among the expeditions, the explorers and us. It featured the Spanish Royal Botanical Expedition to New Spain and Rogers McVaugh; the Harriman Expedition to Alaska and Frederick Vernon Coville; Frederick Andrews Walpole; William Franklin Wight’s manuscript *Flora of Alaska*; William Andrew Archer’s *Nevada Indian Medicine Project*; and the *Flora of North America* project. In the process Director T. D. Jacobsen and I discovered that Wight’s manuscript is likely the unfinished *Flora of Alaska* that he and Coville were preparing with illustrations by Walpole. Reuniting these three colleagues and the work they did so long ago made the research extra rewarding.

Jacobsen and I also realized that we had the first two volumes published by Doubleday of the *Harriman Alaska*



Complete set of Clinton Hart Merriam (1855–1942), ed., *Harriman Alaska Expedition* (New York and Washington, D.C., Doubleday and Smithsonian Institution, 1901–1914, 13 vols.), purchased by the T. D. Jacobsen Endowed Acquisition Fund, 2026.



Coville, Wight and Walpole reunited.



Computational/Archival Assistant Christi Thomas, who joined us in December from Carnegie Mellon's Temporary Employment Services, hard at work on research for July's display (hint: our foundress may figure prominently).

Expedition (1901–1914) but not the other eleven published by the Smithsonian Institution. Using the T. D. Jacobsen Endowed Acquisition Fund, Jacobsen purchased for our Library a complete set of these books about an important scientific expedition that included the work of William H. Brewer (1828–1910, botanist, explorer), John Burroughs (1837–1921, naturalist, expedition historian), Frederick Vernon Coville (1867–1937, botanist), Bernhard E. Fernow (1851–1923, forester), Thomas Henry Kearney (1874–1956, botanist), De Alton Saunders (1870–?, botanist), William Trelease (1857–1945, botanist) and Frederick Andrews Walpole (1861–1904, botanical artist), all of whom have items scattered throughout our collections.

For April's display we visited Hawai'i with Archibald Menzies and David Douglas, who have dual naming rights to a "fir" of the Pacific Northwest, and settled on the islands with Marie Catherine Neal and Otto Degener, who made careers there. Computational/Archival Assistant Christi Thomas added a selection from our William Winfield Ray collection of 20th-century botanists' correspondence and other materials.

In July we will explore new topics in botanical history. Be sure to stop by throughout the year.

—Scarlett T. Townsend, Publication and Marketing Manager and Institute Historiographer

New hours for a new year

To allow our staff more focused time for research, we are changing the hours we are open to the public. For 2026 our business hours are Tuesday–Friday, 9 a.m.–noon and 1–5 p.m.; Monday by appointment. Drop by during our regular hours or [contact us](#) to schedule an appointment.

Bulletin

of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation

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