A Quarter Century of Botany at Butler University

John E. Potzger

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The Butler University Botanical Studies journal was published by the Botany Department of Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, from 1929 to 1964. The scientific journal featured original papers primarily on plant ecology, taxonomy, and microbiology.

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Butler University
Botanical Studies
(1929-1964)

Edited by

Ray C. Friesner
The *Butler University Botanical Studies* journal was published by the Botany Department of Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, from 1929 to 1964. The scientific journal featured original papers primarily on plant ecology, taxonomy, and microbiology. The papers contain valuable historical studies, especially floristic surveys that document Indiana’s vegetation in past decades. Authors were Butler faculty, current and former master’s degree students and undergraduates, and other Indiana botanists. The journal was started by Stanley Cain, noted conservation biologist, and edited through most of its years of production by Ray C. Friesner, Butler’s first botanist and founder of the department in 1919. The journal was distributed to learned societies and libraries through exchange.

During the years of the journal’s publication, the Butler University Botany Department had an active program of research and student training. 201 bachelor’s degrees and 75 master’s degrees in Botany were conferred during this period. Thirty-five of these graduates went on to earn doctorates at other institutions.

The Botany Department attracted many notable faculty members and students. Distinguished faculty, in addition to Cain and Friesner, included John E. Potzger, a forest ecologist and palynologist, Willard Nelson Clute, co-founder of the American Fern Society, Marion T. Hall, former director of the Morton Arboretum, C. Mervin Palmer, Rex Webster, and John Pelton. Some of the former undergraduate and master’s students who made active contributions to the fields of botany and ecology include Dwight. W. Billings, Fay Kenoyer Daily, William A. Daily, Rexford Daudenmire, Francis Hueber, Frank McCormick, Scott McCoy, Robert Petty, Potzger, Helene Starcs, and Theodore Sperry. Cain, Daubenmire, Potzger, and Billings served as Presidents of the Ecological Society of America.

Requests for use of materials, especially figures and tables for use in ecology text books, from the *Butler University Botanical Studies* continue to be granted. For more information, visit www.butler.edu/herbarium.
A QUARTER CENTURY
BUTLER UNIVERSITY

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*A report made to the guests 6, 1944.
A QUARTER CENTURY OF BOTANY AT BUTLER UNIVERSITY*

Kingdoms, inventions, masterpieces in literature, art, music, and architecture are born out of dreams. They may seem flimsy and elusive but they show the things which are closest to the heart far down the lapse of time. For, building along the lines of dreams makes realities.

The Butler Botany Department was once upon a time just such an elusive, tantalizingly uncertain dream of a young Ph. D., a dream which occupied his mind when the ink had barely dried on the signatures to his diploma which the University of Michigan had presented to him as tangible evidence of years of intensive preparation for the teaching profession in the field of botany. Excellently equipped, severe in discipline of self, charged with high voltage of enthusiasm for his science, Ray C. Friesner came to Old Butler at Irvington to teach zoology, and to promote the cause of botany. It seems as if of this young Butler professor Chapman wrote:

"Like clocks, one wheel another one must drive. Affairs by diligent labour only thrive."

The foundation dream became a reality, the Botany Department at Butler was established. As the years marched on, Dr. Friesner had other dreams, dreams of a larger department, with greater efficiency and with wider opportunities for the students. These, too, are no longer plans and dreams. New courses, expanding classes, new instructors. Then, new plans, other new courses, new equipment, multiplying files, expanding visions, a growing herbarium, mounting interest in the state flora, a botanical garden, and finally the Butler University Botanical Studies. This publication proved to be a magic tie to bind alumni to the alma mater, a spark to fire the latent power of individual research by the majors in the department, a refiners fire which welded "The Butler Group."

In September 1944 we pause to pay tribute to a quarter century of Botany at Butler, and to look back a moment at the dreams which became realities. And as we review them, garbed in the prosaic form of a report, passing, so to speak, as a chronological battalion, may they

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*A report made to the guests at the anniversary banquet on September 6, 1944.
Dr. Ray C. Friesner was born in Bremen, Ohio, the son of a railroad section foreman. The limited income of the father necessitated that the son himself provide largely the necessary means to acquire a higher education. This he did by sweeping the halls of Ohio Wesleyan. He was an excellent janitor, and he was an honor student.

After graduation from the Bremen high school he chose Ohio Wesleyan for the initial chapter in higher education. Here he came under the influence of the stimulating teaching of Dr. Claude O'Neal, who fired him with that love for botany which has persisted to the present day. For graduate study he selected the University of Michigan, where he worked under direction of Dr. F. C. Newcombe. In 1919 Michigan conferred upon him the doctor's degree. In the fall of the same year Dr. Friesner came to the Irvington campus of Butler University as assistant professor of botany, in the Department of Biology. A new Department of Botany was organized in the first semester of 1920.

The course in general botany, with an enrollment of 43 students, launched his science at Butler. Expansion, however, was the plan from the very start, and so eleven students could avail themselves already in the second semester of a course in trees. During the period of maximum enrollment in the department of 1940-41, The Botany Department had 304 students, with a total of 2,648 student credit hours.

New instructors were added as enrollment mounted. Dr. Stanley A. Cain became instructor in September 1924, Dr. C. M. Palmer joined the faculty in September 1925. In 1928 Mr. Willard N. Chute came to Butler, and the Botanical Garden was laid out. When Dr. Cain in 1931, joined the faculty of Indiana University, the undersigned became his successor in September 1932. Dr. George Fischer and Mrs. Mabel Esten became members of the teaching staff for temporary service while Dr. Cain was on leave of absence. In 1932 Mrs. Mabel Esten became instructor in the Evening Division. Mr. Scott McCoy was an instructor in the summer session of 1939, 1940, and 1941. He also officiated as assistant curator of the herbarium from 1937 to 1942. In 1941 Dr. Charlotte Grant of Arsenal Technical High School joined the staff of the Evening Division instructors. Temporary positions on the staff were also held by Miss Charlene Coffing, Mrs. Ina Stanley Fitzge Andrews.

Courses offered in 1919 total today the Botany Department of Butler had no herbarium in 1919, of metal cases housing over 70,000 Department sent out 39,220 spec Asian universities and received this collection of higher plants 1,000 packets of mosses.

In 1929 Butler University Dr. Stanley A. Cain as director of 167 universities, scattered over reflected in the 164 books and by graduate students and men brought expansion of the Botan current publications.

During the first quarter of Department 130 men and women now hold an M. A., and 19 th teaching positions in colleges at ship in the research honor societ ner has always heeded the admen "Gentlemen, remember that was not neglected. The Butle in part at least, with this effort yer's research interests have c in recent years stress was pla (Solidago) of North America (dendrology). Major publica the monographs of goldenrod As "watch dog" of Indiana tax Flora of Indiana up-to-date i of Indiana, working which "grand old man of Indiana field collection numbers have Research interests of other verse and varied. Dr. C. Me algae of Indiana, and on Let signed has limited his taxono
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The Botany

Courses offered in 1919 totalled 15 credit hours (three courses),
today the Botany Department offers 107 credit hours (25 courses).

During the first quarter century of Butler University Botany

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The Butler Botanical Studies may be credited,
in part at least, with this effort in the search, after truth. Dr. Fries-

as editor. In normal times it reaches libraries

of 167 universities, scattered over the globe. Activity in research is

of the herbarium

The Departmeut sent out 39,220 specimens to American, European, and

Coffing, Mrs. Ina Stanley Fitzgerald, and Dr. Marjorie McCouha

Andrews.

Butler had no herbarium in 1919, now it possesses an impressive row

of metal cases housing over 70,000 specimens of vascular plants. The

Department sent out 39,220 specimens to American, European, and

As "watch dog" of Indiana taxonomic reports, and of keeping Deam's

field collection numbers have just rounded the 18,669 mark.

Research interests of other members of the Department are di-

verse and varied. Dr. C. Mervin Palmer centers his attention on the

algae of Indiana, and on Lemanea of North America. The under-

signed has limited his taxonomic activities to the grasses of Indiana,
and to the plants involved in larger ecological surveys, and specializes in pollen analysis and plant sociology studies.

The smooth operation of the Butler Botany Department is almost automatically controlled by a regular battery of files and up-to-the-minute records which any assistant can handle with ease. The service offered by the National Youth Administration of the Federal Government was a blessing to the department in the preparation of extensive cross file bibliographies, and mounting of herbarium specimens.

Dr. Friesner holds membership in ten scientific organizations, whose publications are annually added to the Botany Library. He holds the honor position of "fellow" in A.A.A.S. and in both the Indiana and Ohio Science Academies. In 1936 he served Indiana Academy of Science as president. Working his way through school did not eliminate him from the ranks of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, and Sigma Xi. His name appears in the 1941 edition of Who's Who in America, and in 1943 Who's Who in the Western Hemisphere.

The outstanding characteristics of the department are without doubt the harmonious cooperation of members of the staff and the perpetual rejuvenated interest in good teaching and student progress, to which even the research activities must contribute. In normal times the botany majors are regular companions on collecting and bog-boring trips, as well as on excursions when data on ecological and sociological studies are collected. Into the 70,000 plants stored in the Butler Herbarium are woven the student years of our majors. It is not merely a valuable collection of plants; that herbarium made botanists.

And so we stand today on the prospere of a silver anniversary, and pay tribute to labors of by-gone years, but the past holds interest also in that it speeds the work of the future on its way. The plans which lie on Dr. Friesner's desk just now are concerned with the work of the present and the future of Butler University as a whole, and of the Botany Department as an integral part of the university, assigned to him as a special charge.

J. E. POTZGER
Butler 1927

ECHOES

The anniversary activities culminated in a banquet served in the Butler Cafeteria, with Dr. C. M. Palmer as toastmaster. The high-light of the evening was the presentation of the Michigan Dean's challenge cup to Dr. Paul Weatherwax. Among the visitors from other universities were Dr. Paul Weatherwax, Emeritus; Dorothy Parker ('32, Michigan); and Ida L. Delano ('32, Pacific). Approx.
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light of the evening was an address by Professor H. H. Bartlett, head
of the Michigan Department of Botany. He spoke on “The Flora of
the Pacific.” Approximately 100 guests were in attendance. Visitors
from other universities were: Dr. Claude E. O'Neal, Ohio Wesleyan;
Dr. Paul Weatherwax, Indiana University; Dr. Theo. Just and Dr.
Dorothy Parker (’32), Notre Dame University; Professor and Mrs.
Whatever measure of success there has been in the Botany Department during these twenty-five years, it is certain that the chief contributing factor has been the whole-hearted cooperation of the staff. It has been a privilege to have our share of capable students and this, with devoted teaching, never fails to bring a reasonable degree of success. I should like, also, to express my sincere appreciation to the committee who so successfully "perpetrated" the celebration, to all who had any part in it, to all former students, and to my fellow botanists from other institutions who so generously gave of their time to participate in this celebration.—RAY C. FRIESSNER.