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Butler University
Botanical Studies
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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.

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PHYCOLOGISTS OF INDIA

By C. MERVIN PALMER

In July 1947, the writer obtained a leave of absence from Butler University and went to India for a period of approximately two years. The trip was made under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee in order to help in the work of relief and rehabilitation. It had been expected that most of the work would be in villages near Calcutta, but the rioting which occurred on a very large scale in the Punjab Province, in the autumn of 1947, made it necessary for the Quaker service unit to set up relief centers in several places in northwestern India and Pakistan. During this period there were occasional opportunities for the writer to meet with botanists in Lahore, Delhi and Calcutta.

Late in 1948, the writer was loaned by the Friends’ unit to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Science Co-operation Office for South Asia which had just recently established its headquarters at Delhi, India. The duties as a Field Scientific Officer for UNESCO involved travelling throughout much of India to confer with scientists in the universities, colleges and government research laboratories. This afforded additional opportunities to meet the botanists, including algologists. It is a privilege to be able to report, at this time, on our co-workers in the field of phycology who are residents of India and Pakistan.

Calcutta is one of the centers of algological research. Dr. K. Biswas, who is Director of the Botanical Garden at Sibpur, near Calcutta, also teaches a course in algae at Science College of Calcutta University. He is the author of a number of papers on the algae of India and is at present preparing a check list of Indian algae. During 1947-49, he was president of the Botanical Society of Bengal.

Dr. M. T. Philipose, formerly a student of Dr. Iyengar at Madras, is now at the Inland Fisheries Research Station at Pulta, near Calcutta, where he expects to spend much of his time in studying the

*Paper given at the Annual Meeting of the Phycological Society of the Americas held in New York City, December 27, 1949.
phytoplankton of streams and ponds. Mr. K. S. Srinivasan, who is also a former student of Dr. Iyengar, is Curator of the Industrial Section of the Indian Museum at Calcutta. Recently he has been much interested in the marine algae of the Bay of Bengal. The writer first met him at the Biological Station on Krusadi Island in south India where Mr. Srinivasan was collecting seaweeds. This marine station has been the best in the country and has excellent shores from which to collect. A new Central Government research station is being developed nearby.

Mr. J. C. Banerji is a member of the botany department of Science College, Calcutta, who is interested in a study of the freshwater algae. Dr. B. C. Kundu, who has published on the Charophytes of Bengal Province, is now Director of Jute Agricultural Research Institute at Hooghly, near Calcutta.

Another group of algologists has been centered at Banaras in United Provinces. Dr. H. Bharadwaja has been Head of the Botany Department of Banaras Hindu University. Not only has he published his own work on Indian Myxophyceae, but he has stimulated a number of students to study in the same field, including Dr. S. C. Dixit, who is now at Wilson College, Bombay. Dr. Bharadwaja recently has moved from Banaras to Jodhpur in Rajputana where he is Principal and Professor of Botany at Jaswant College.

At Banaras Hindu University, Dr. Ram Nagina Singh is a Lecturer in Botany and is permitted to spend most of his time on research. He is interested in the greens and blue-greens and has been particularly concerned with those which are of significance in rice fields. Graduate students specializing on algae at Banaras University include Mr. J. N. Misra, Mr. G. S. P. Rao, Mr. Y. S. R. K. Sarma and Mr. V. P. Singh.

While at Gauhati, Assam, the writer met another former student of algae from Banaras, Mrs. Baruah. She is now a teacher of botany in Cotton College. Her husband is Head of the Graduate Department of Botany in Gauhati University. They have both been instrumental in helping to form the Biological Society of Assam which held its first meetings in 1949.

Due particularly to Dr. M. O. F. Iyengar, Madras has been an important center of phycological research for some time. He has now retired as Head of the Botanical Laboratory of Madras University and continues his very active interest in algae. Papers of a num-
ber of his students have been published, including those of Dr. R. Subrahmanyan who is specializing on the diatoms. He is now plankton specialist for the Central Government Marine Fisheries Research Institute with headquarters at Madras. At the same institute is another algologist, Dr. Frances Thivy, who received training at the University of Michigan under Dr. W. R. Taylor.

Mr. T. V. Desikachari, Mr. K. G. Viraraghavan and Mr. S. Doraiswami are three more phycologists who received their training at Madras under Dr. Iyengar. The first is now teaching at Madras University and is specializing on fresh-water plankton. The second is algologist for the King Institute for Biological Research at Guindy near Madras, while the third is teaching at Alagappa Chettiar College, Karaikudi, Madras Province.

Turning again to north and central India, one finds a number of algologists located in several of the larger cities. Dr. B. P. Pal who published on the Charophytes of Burma, is now Head of the Division of Botany at the Institute of Agricultural Research in Delhi. Dr. K. K. Nanda is the algologist at the University of Delhi. At Allahabad, Dr. A. K. Mitra has returned recently from England where he studied phycology under Dr. Fritsch, and is teaching in Allahabad University. At Lucknow, two botanists with the same last name are interested in algae. Mr. A. R. Rao is teaching in the Botany Department of Lucknow University and Dr. S. R. Naryan Rao has been associated with the late Dr. Birbul Sahni at the Institute of Paleobotany. At Nagpur in central India, Dr. R. L. Nirula has been a teacher of botany at the Science College of the University of Nagpur and has continued his interest in the algae with occasional collecting trips to the shores of the Arabian Sea.

Two additional well known phycologists are now in other fields of work. Dr. Pyare Lal Anand, who published on the marine algae of Karachi, has moved from Lahore in the Punjab and is Food Administrator at Bombay. Mr. A. K. Randhawa, also formerly of Lahore, and who published a number of papers on the green algae, is now Deputy Commissioner at Ambala, East Punjab.

In Pakistan, Mr. Sher Ahmed Lodhi, who is a member of the Phycological Society of the Americas is teaching at the Government College of the University of Punjab at Lahore. At his invitation, the writer gave a talk on algae before the students of botany at the university.
In the recent past, India has had at least four important centers for the study of algae, Calcutta, Banaras, Madras and Lahore. Several of the leaders at these centers received their early training in England under Dr. Fritsch. Most of their research on algae has been in the fields of taxonomy and morphology. With workers retiring and moving away from the four centers, and with the new governments of India and Pakistan emphasizing practical research, the younger algologists are taking up their work with fisheries and agricultural institutes or else leaving the field of phycology entirely. Most of the new research on algae, therefore, is likely to be in ecology and limnology. The excellent training and the enthusiasm of these younger workers are making it possible for their contributions to be of high calibre.

It has been a pleasure and an inspiration to be able to meet and to talk with so many of the phycologists of India and Pakistan. With but three exceptions, the writer was able to see personally all of the algologists referred to in this article.
Top row (left to right): Dr. M. O. P. Iyengar, Dr. K. Biswas.
Bottom row: Dr. B. P. Pal, Dr. R. N. Singh, Dr. Y. Bharatwaja, Mr. J. R. Misra.