

Delving Into the Lives of Herbarium Collectors

How learning about the **people** behind the plants can support cataloging georeferencing & public outreach

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NCU curates specimens
collected by these people



Why do I dive into the life of a collector?

- Learning where a collector grew up, where they attended school, and who their colleagues were can give you clues into their collecting activities.
- This information can help you georeferenced specimens.
- You may learn about their co-collectors.
- You will become familiar with their handwriting, quirky labels, and abbreviations.
- Sometimes learning about a collector may lead you to unexpected places and events.
- People are interesting and their stories are great outreach opportunities.

Donald Culross Peattie (1898-1964)

Flora of the Indiana Dunes (1930) – Field Museum
(F) curates many specimens Peattie collected there

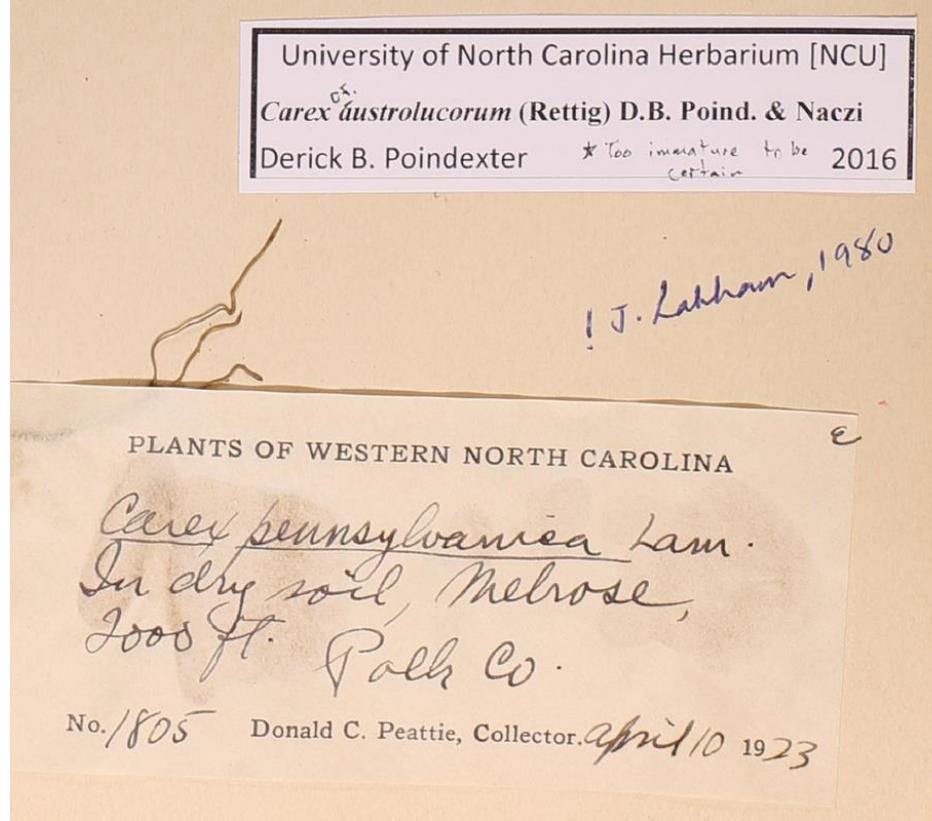
He is best known as lyrical nature writer:

An Almanac for Moderns (1935) – Illinois
A Natural History of Western Trees (1953) –
California

- Photo at right, Trinity University Press



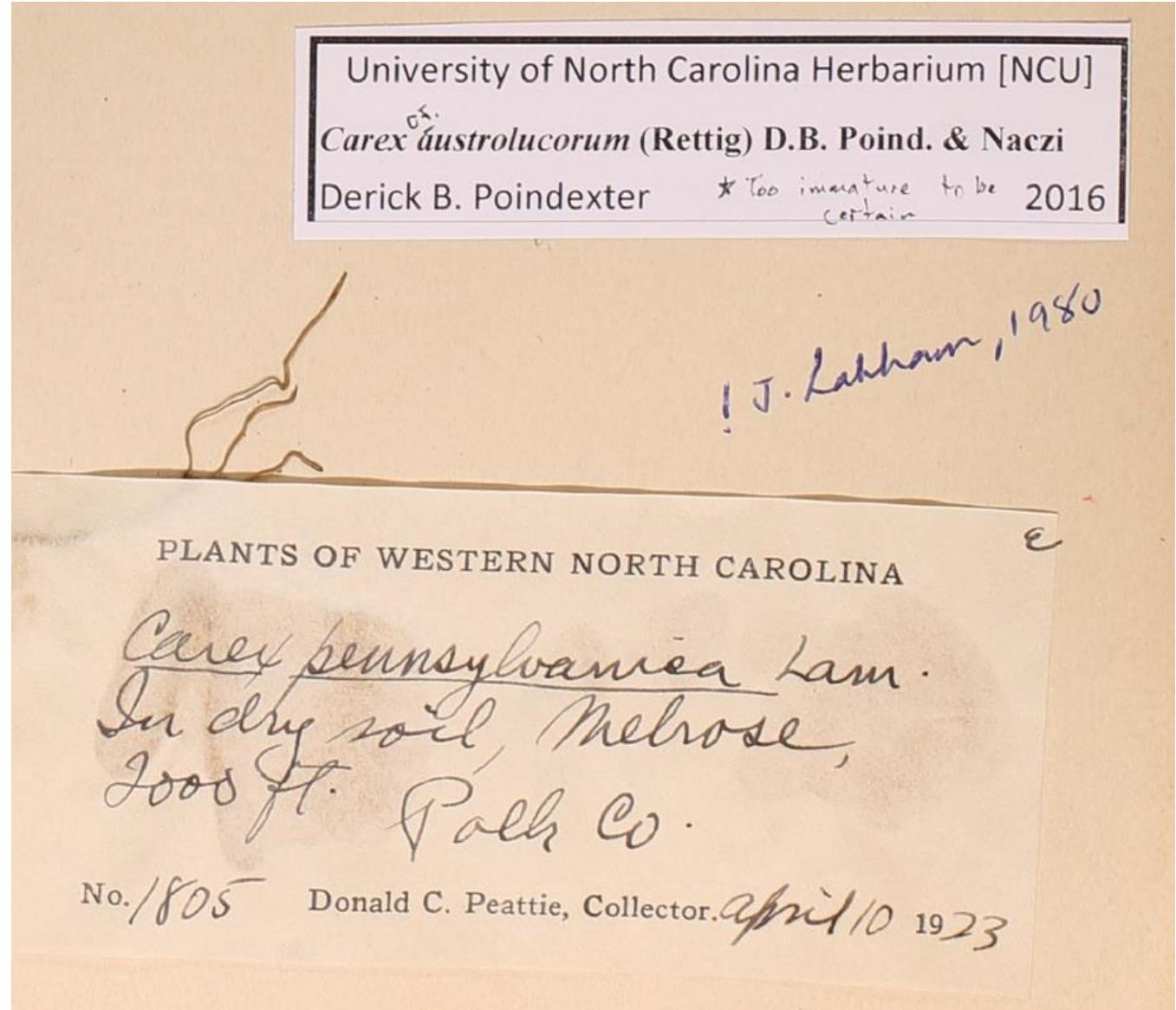
Why was Peattie in NC?



- NCU: 900+ specimens collected by Peattie from Polk County, NC

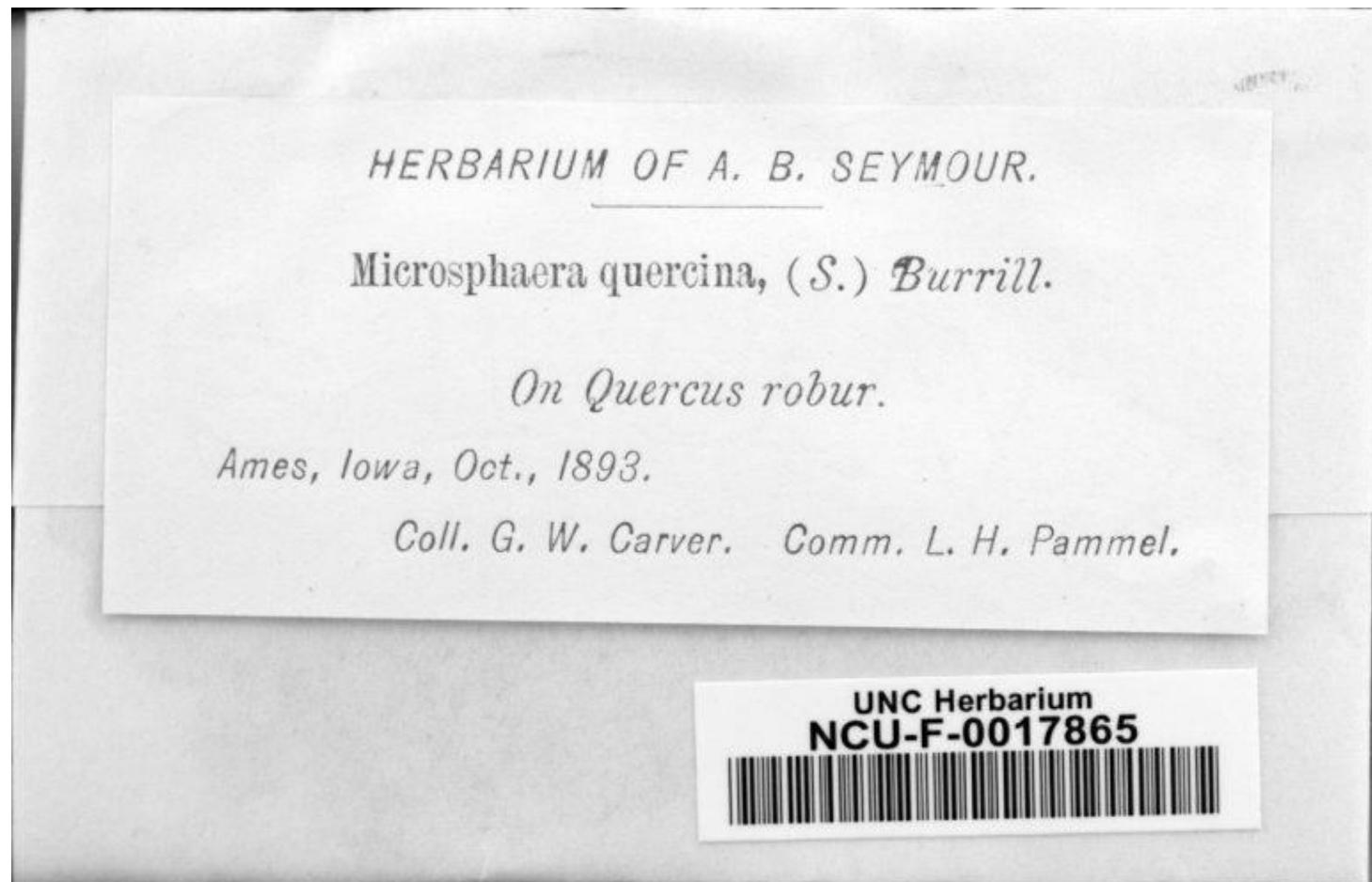
Why was Peattie in NC?

- NCU: 900+ specimens collected by Peattie from Polk County, NC
- His parents, Robert & Elia, retired to Tryon in Polk County!
- Both Robert & Elia Peattie were well-known journalists in Chicago, IL and Omaha, NE



Familiarity with a collector's life can connect specimens to that collector

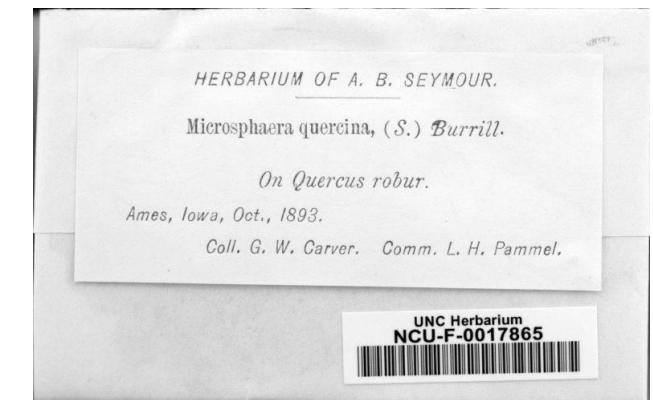
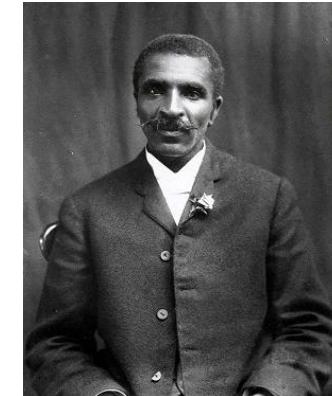
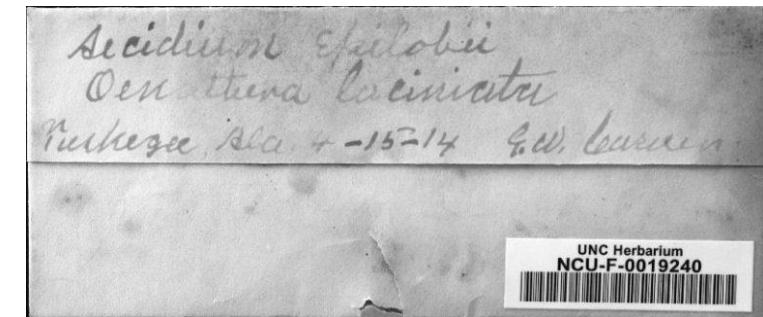
- Microfungal specimen
Microsphaera quercina
- Locality: Ames, Iowa
- Date: October, 1893
- Collector: G.W. Carver



George Washington Carver (1860's-1943)

NCU curates 18 fungal specimens collected by George Washington Carver. About half of the specimens were collected in Story County, Iowa while he was a graduate student at Iowa State Agricultural College (now Iowa State University) in Ames; the others were collected in Macon County, Alabama while Carver was on the faculty of the Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in the city of Tuskegee.

Photo of GW Carver, ca. 1910: Tuskegee University Archives/Museum



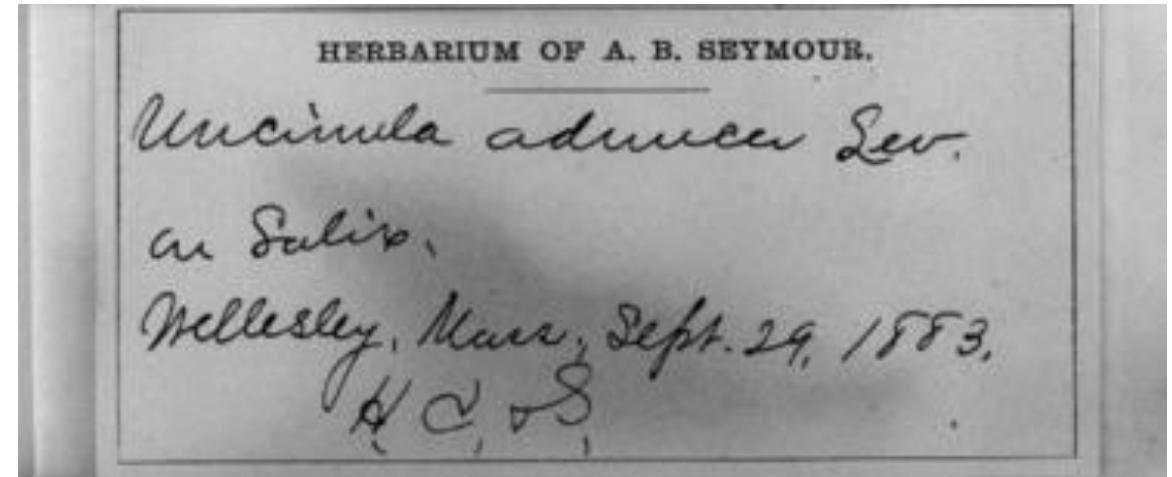
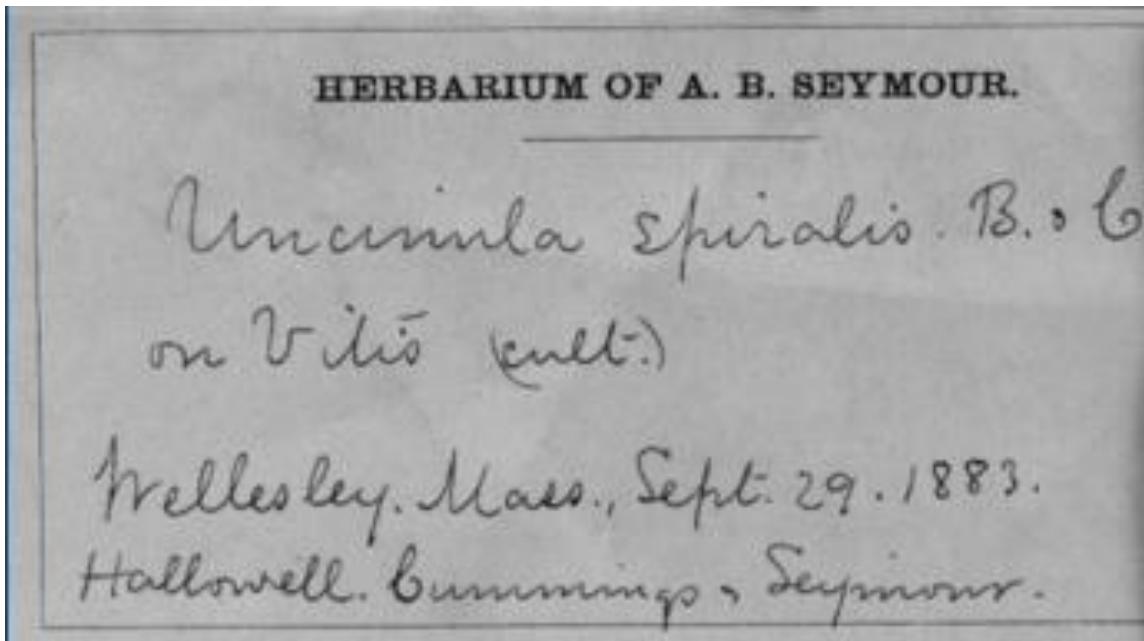
Finding specimens
collected by
George
Washington Carver
was an Outreach
Opportunity!

The screenshot shows a SoundCloud page for the user 'Well Said'. The main track is titled 'Well Said: George Washington Carver's fungal specimens'. It was posted 6 years ago and has the category '# News & Politics'. The waveform for the track is visible. Below the track, there is a 'Write a comment' input field and social sharing buttons for Like, Repost, Share, Copy Link, and More. A SoundCloud logo with the text 'Well Said' is present. To the right, there is a sidebar with 'Related tracks' and a list of three other tracks:

- Koorosh Allstar 2
- Poori SHOOTIA
- Eslabon Armado Eslabon Armado, Peso Pluma - Ella ...

One collector can connect to other collectors

- "S" Arthur Bliss **Seymour** (1859-1933) mycologist, Illinois, Wisconsin, Massachusetts
- "C" Clara Eaton **Cummings** (1885-1906) graduate of & Professor at Wellesley College
- "H" Susan Maria **Hallowell** (1835-1911) 1875-1902 Professor of Natural History, Wellesley College



Susan Maria Hallowell (1835-1911)

Margaret C. Ferguson
Botanical Gazette, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Apr.,
1912), pp. 345-347
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2467847>

SUSAN MARIA HALLOWELL (WITH PORTRAIT)

SUSAN M. HALLOWELL was born in Bangor, Maine, on August 25, 1835, and died December 15, 1911, at Wellesley, Massachusetts. From childhood Miss HALLOWELL loved study and was a lover of nature. She began her profession of teaching as soon as she was graduated from the high school. At that time institutions for the higher education of women were unknown. For more than twenty years she taught in the Bangor high school, continuing, as best she could, her self-education. But her thirst for knowledge could not be thus slaked. She longed to come into touch with the great masters of thought, and so, while still a teacher in the high school, she found her way into the laboratories of AGASSIZ and of ASA GRAY. These educators recognized the rare genius and power of this young woman, and



Clara Eaton Cummings (1885-1906)

Wikipedia page:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/
wiki/Clara_Eaton_Cummings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clara_Eaton_Cummings)

(September 1906) was an American [cryptogamic botanist](#) and [graduated from Wellesley College](#) in [Massachusetts](#).

She was born on July 13, 1855 to Noah Conner and Elmira George Conner. She graduated from Wellesley College, only one year after the college was founded.

Her research focused on non-reproducing plants such as [mosses](#) and [lichens](#). She was known for being "very conservative" on declaring new species.^[2] Much of her work involved studying the collections of other botanists,^[2] although she did publish a catalog of [liverworts](#) and [mosses](#).

She taught at Wellesley from 1878–79 and was hired at Wellesley as an assistant professor in 1886.^{[1][4]} In 1886 and 1887 she studied under Dr. Arnold Arboretum and prepared charts for a Cryptogamic Botany class. She also worked in botanical gardens to study some of the great botanists.^[5] She became an associate professor of cryptogamic botany at Wellesley.^[1] She collected [Alaskan](#) lichens collected during the [Harriman Expedition](#) and described two species new to science.^[6] She traveled to [Jamaica](#) where she collected lichens. After her death, her collection was added to the [Harvard University Herbaria](#) Garden.^[7]

Clara Eaton Cummings

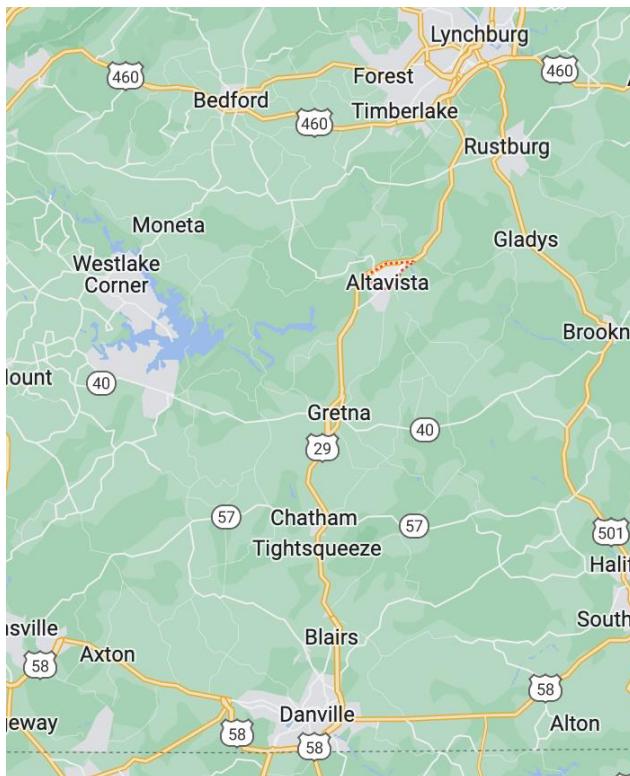


PLATE VI—PROF. CLARA EATON CUMMINGS

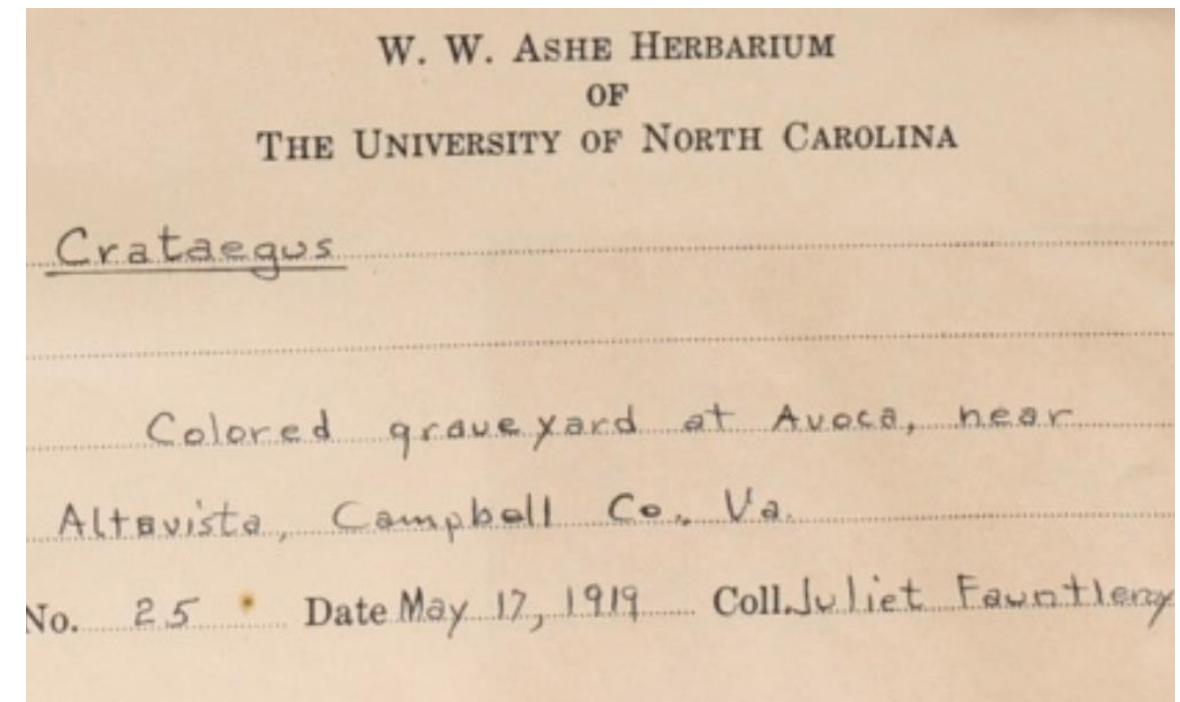
Born	13 July 1855 Plymouth, New Hampshire, USA
Died	28 December 1906 (aged 51) Concord, New Hampshire, USA
Nationality	American
Scientific career	
Fields	Botany
Institutions	Wellesley College

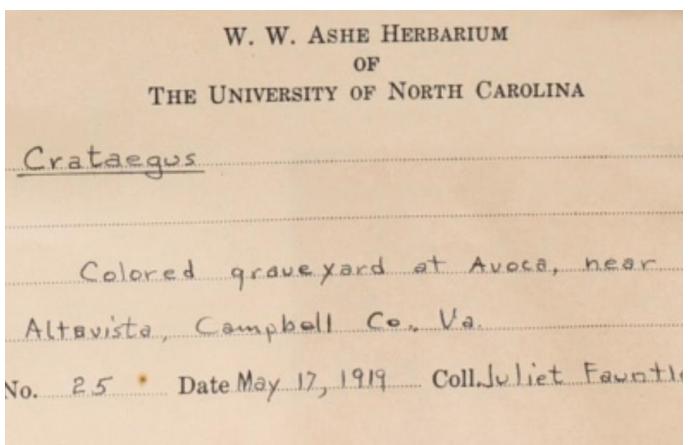
Serendipity

If a collector or place is on your radar, you may learn interesting details in unexpected places



- NCU curates about two dozen vascular plant specimens collected by Ms. Fauntleroy "at Avoca near Altavista", Campbell County, VA





Serendipity

- “Avoca” was the home of Juliet Fauntleroy (1871-1955)
- NCU curates about two dozen vascular plant specimens collected by Ms. Fauntleroy from Altavista, Campbell County, VA, many collected near “Avoca”
- Now we can more accurately georeferenced Fauntleroy’s specimens

Portrait courtesy of Nancy McAndrew, Avoca Museum

Avoca Museum Wikipedia Entry

Avoca (Altavista, Virginia)

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Coordinates:  37°7'48"N 79°16'12"W

Avoca

[U.S. National Register of Historic Places](#)

[Virginia Landmarks Register](#)



Show map of Virginia

Show map of the United States

Show all

Location N of Altavista on US 29,
near Altavista, Virginia

Coordinates  37°7'48"N
79°16'12"W

Area 2 acres (1.2 ha)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Avoca, also known as **Avoca Museum**, is a historic home located near Altavista, Campbell County, Virginia. It was designed by Lynchburg Architect, [John Minor Botts Lewis](#) and built in 1901, after the original and second dwellings were destroyed by fire in 1879 and 1900. It is a large 2½-story, asymmetrical, wood-frame residence in the [Queen Anne](#) style. It has a hipped roof and features a tower and [verandah](#). Also on the property are a contributing 1½-story brick kitchen, a wood-frame [smokehouse](#), tenants house and office, and family [cemetery](#).^[3]

Property and family history [\[edit\]](#)

Avoca was originally the private residence of Colonel [Charles Lynch](#) (1736–1796). He established his home here in 1755 as part of a land grant from King [George II of Great Britain](#) to his father, in 1740, and called it Green Level. Colonel Charles Lynch was a planter and distinguished himself as a lawmaker and soldier during the turbulent times of the [American Revolution](#) era. The term "Lynch's Law" (which became "[lynching](#)") may derive from his name, although he did not practice lynching in the later, murderous sense of the word.^[3]

The property was passed down through the Lynch family and upon the death of Charles Henry Lynch (1800–1875), the property went to his niece, Mary Anna Dearing Fauntleroy. Her grandson, Dr. Lindley Murray Winston, deeded the property to the Town of Altavista in 1981 as a memorial to his family.^[3]

It was listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) in 1982.^[1]

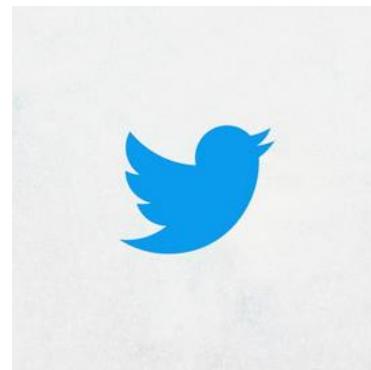
Avoca Museum [\[edit\]](#)

The Avoca property is maintained as a historical museum. The collection, displays, programs and interpretations are planned to take account of the cultural and natural history of the region. The property is used for education and recreational purposes and serves the people of the greater Altavista area.

Because the house was unoccupied since the mid-1970s, there was need for interior repair before it could be

Get a reputation for being interested in collectors.

"The Queens Botanical Garden invites guests to learn about Black botanist Percy H. Gentle and participate in a fun plant-pressing activity inspired by his work. " February, 2021



NCU undergrads
Maya Stroud &
Nathan Ross comb
cases for specimens
collected by Percy
Gentle in Belize



Percy H. Gentle (1890-1958)

- Lundell, Cyrus
Longworth. 1961. Percy H.
Gentle. *Wrightea* 3 (1): ii-iii.
- Lundell named the genus *Gentlea*
(Myrsinaceae/ Primulaceae) in honor
of Percy H. Gentle. *Gentlea* are shrubs
or small trees found primarily in upper
cloud and elfin forest formations from
western Mexico (Jalisco) south to Peru.
- NCU curates about two dozen
specimens collected by Percy H. Gentle



Get a reputation for being interested in collectors>>

"The Queens Botanical Garden invites guests to learn about Black botanist Percy H. Gentle and participate in a fun plant-pressing activity inspired by his work. " February, 2021 >>

ANOTHER OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY



Explore

⚙️ Settings

← Thread



Mark Peifer
@peiferlabunc

Hidden Figures in Ecology/Botany: Percy Gentle
#Blackhistorymonth2022

[see the link below for references and thanks to @NCBotGarden's Carol Ann McCormick for the research and writing] 1/10
ncbg.unc.edu/2022/02/01/perc...

<https://ncbg.unc.edu/2022/02/01/perc-h-gentle/>



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Relevant people



Mark Peifer
@peiferlabunc

Cell adhesion, cytoskeletal regulation, Wnt signaling & wherever science leads us+my own idiosyncratic views. He/him now <https://@peiferlabunc@mstdn.science>



NC Botanical Garden
@NCBotGarden

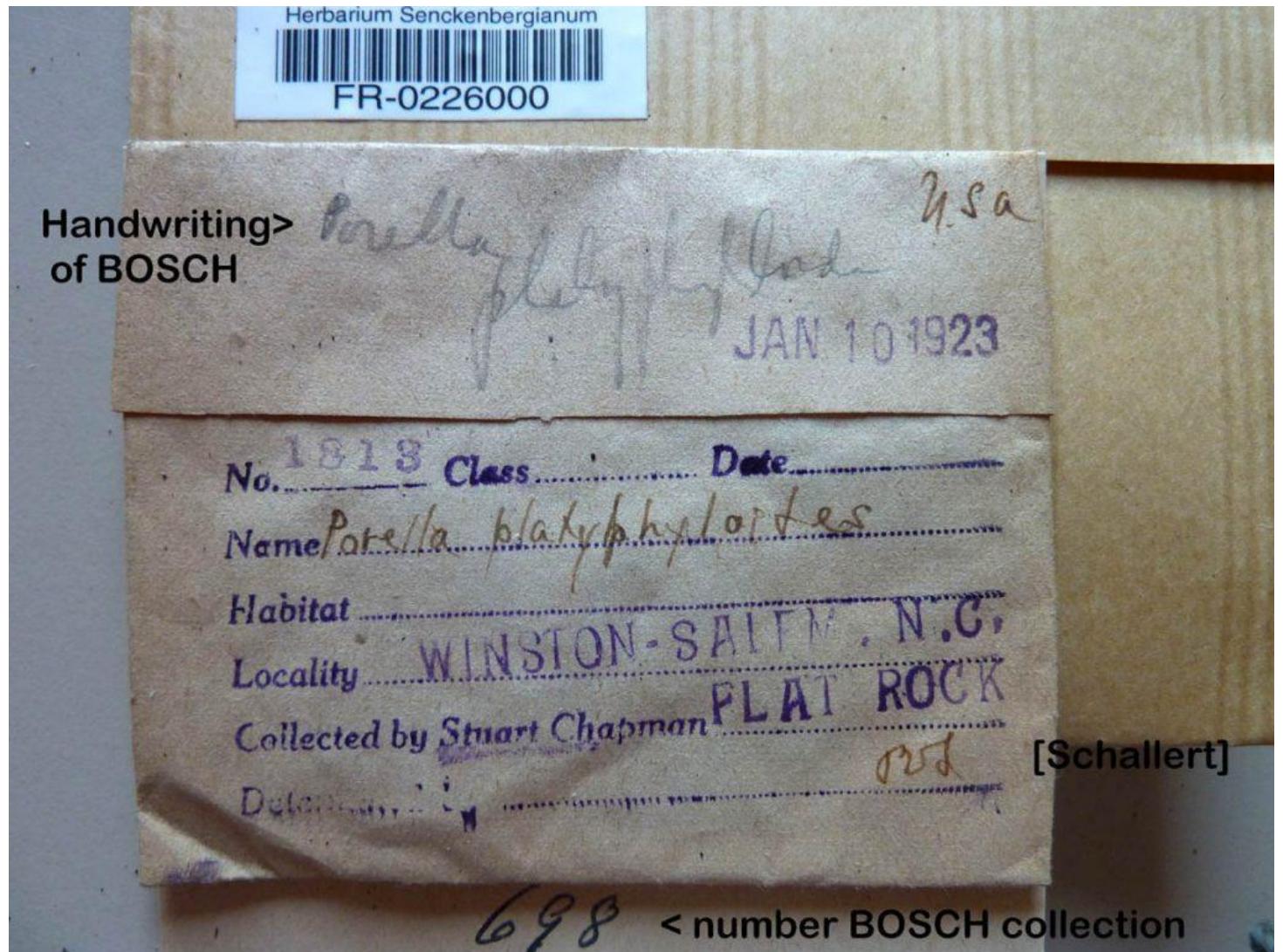
A public garden celebrating, researching, and conserving southeastern native plants. Part of [@UNC](#).

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Get a reputation for being interested in collectors

- Dr.Gerhard Winter
Herbarium Senckenbergia
num (FR) asked
bryologists at DUKE if
they knew anything
about "Stuart
Chapman"... and they
contacted me.



Francis Stuart Chapman (1883-1956)

- Over the course of his life he worked as a purveyor of newspapers & magazines, a cotton weaver in textile mills, and a gardener. Despite the fact that his specimens are cited in many papers and are found in many herbaria, no articles authored by him have been found nor was he associated with an academic institution.
- Jean Stuart Chapman Snow says of her uncle, “Our Chapman line is related to Johnny Appleseed (John Chapman), so I’ve wondered if Stuart ended up with some of Appleseed’s wandering genes.” Ms. Snow provided this portrait of her uncle.



From Collector Bio to Rooftop Lounge

Artist Taylor White was searching for inspiration for mural commission and found my collector bio for W. W. Ashe on the NCBG/Herbarium website.

Portrait courtesy of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Herbarium

William Willard Ashe

Posted on [August 31, 2020 \(October 13, 2022\)](#)



(1872-1932)

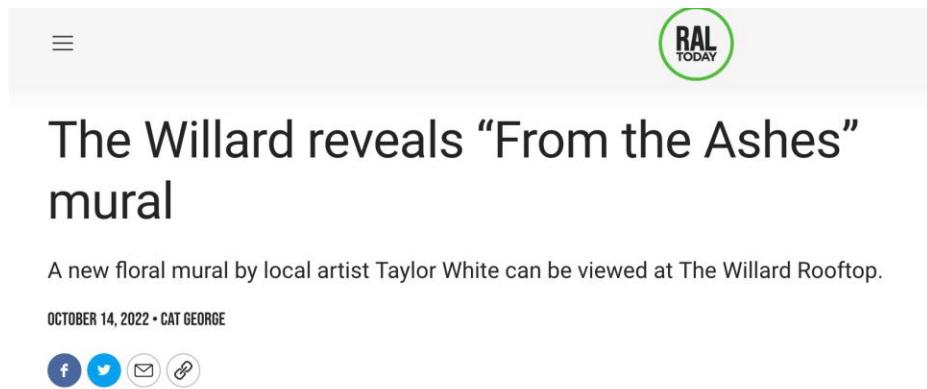
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Herbarium (NCU) curates at least 4,000 specimens collected by William Willard Ashe. As we continue to catalog our holdings more will be found.

William Willard Ashe was born in Raleigh, North Carolina on June 4, 1872. His family inhabited a rambling antebellum estate named [Elmwood](#)* which provided Ashe, described by one biographer as a "congenital naturalist," with abundant woods and fields to explore for curiosities.

It is reported that Willard and his brother Samuel together published a small tract called "The West End Sun" with woodcuts carved by Willard. A

William Willard Ashe & The Willard Rooftop Lounge

- Mural features plants named by Ashe & his herbarium specimens



The Willard reveals “From the Ashes” mural

A new floral mural by local artist Taylor White can be viewed at The Willard Rooftop.

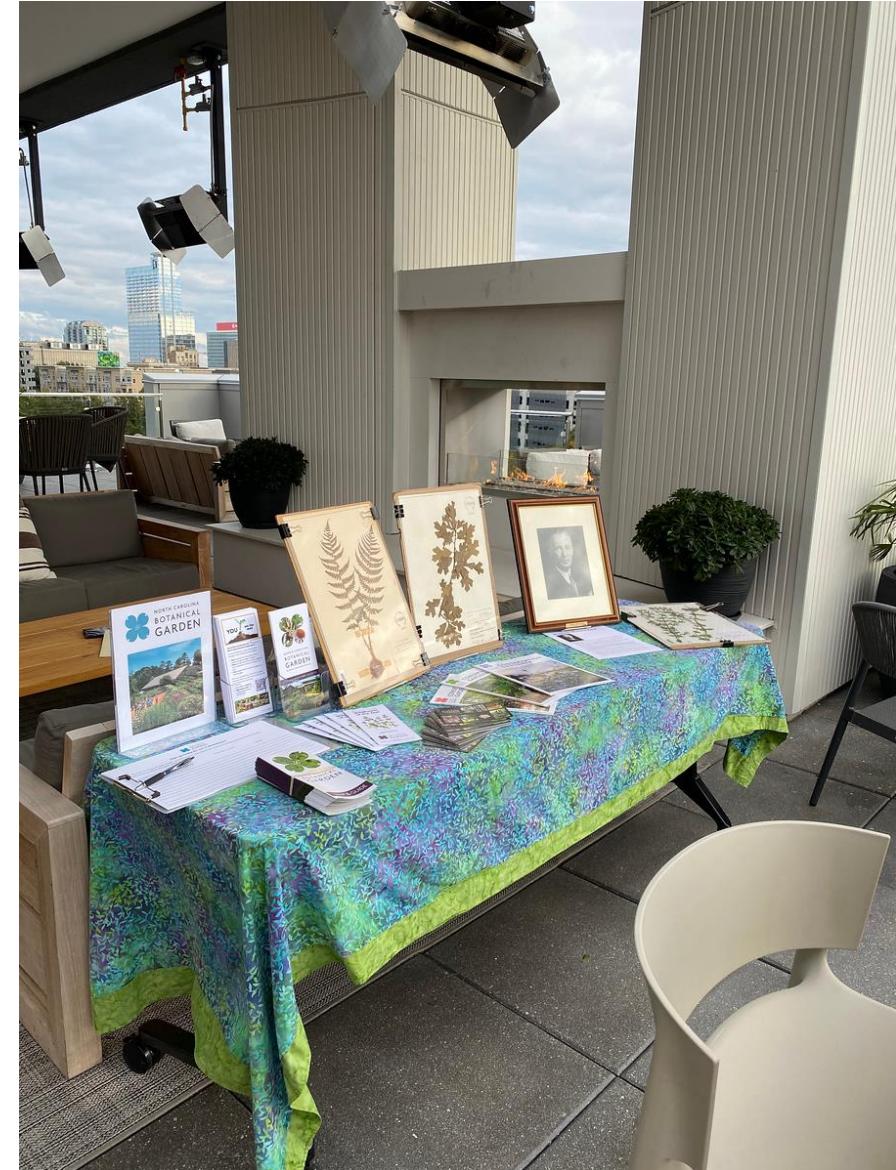
OCTOBER 14, 2022 • CAT GEORGE

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) [Link](#)



Art, Botany, and Cocktails: The Ultimate Outreach

- "Last week, we celebrated a bright new mural at The Willard Rooftop. "From the Ashes" is a colorful piece created by local artist Taylor White. The 664-sqft mural, which wraps around the rooftop bar, was inspired by the botanical collection of the late William Willard Ashe. William was born in Raleigh in 1872 and was a forester, botanist, and UNC graduate who made thousands of plant discoveries. William grew up in the historic Elmwood estate, which can still be viewed behind the AC Hotel on Willard Place. More than 2,300 of his specimens were donated to the UNC Herbarium. Today, his work can be viewed at the North Carolina Botanical Garden. Check out the mural for yourself and see if you can spot some of his botanical discoveries (and a hidden hummingbird). Pro tip: try the "From the Ashes" cocktail – it's only available thru November 13."
- – Cat George, RAL Today, 14 October 2022



<https://ncbg.unc.edu/research/unc-herbarium/collectors/>



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[LOAN & ACCESSION POLICIES](#)

[FLORAS, APPS & FIELD GUIDES](#)

[SEARCH HERBARIUM SPECIMENS](#)

[THE COLLECTORS](#)

The Collectors

These posts provide basic biographical information about a few of the many collectors who have contributed specimens to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Herbarium.

A-C

Jump to [A-C](#), [D-G](#), [H-M](#), [N-Z](#).

[Adams, Joseph Edison](#)

[Ahles, Harry E.](#)

[Alexander, Annie Montague](#)

[Anderson, Frederick William](#)

[Arnold, Lillian Eleanore](#)

[Ashe, William Willard](#)

Monthly NC Botanical Garden e-newsletter

Dreck Spurlock Wilson, a landscape architect and Associate Professor of Architectural History at Howard University, is researching the life and career of David Augustus Williston, recognized as the first professionally trained African American landscape architect.

Portrait source: *Cultural Landscape Inventory: The Oaks, Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, 95% DRAFT*. National Park Service, 2018.

Spreading the Herbarium Gospel

Posted on [September 3, 2020 \(December 3, 2020\)](#)



By Carol Ann McCormick, Curator, UNC-Chapel Hill Herbarium

When I meet someone for the first time and we are exchanging information about where we live and friends we have in common, another topic to come up is what we each do for a living. I typically say that I work for the North Carolina Botanical Garden. If they start to pepper me with horticultural questions, I have to admit that I am clueless about why their kalanchoe is wilting or what cultivar of crepe myrtle they should plant. I go on to tell them that I am the Curator of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Herbarium, a collection of about one million pressed, dried, dead plants from around the globe. (And I will admit that I try to steer them away from crepe myrtle for their yard and suggest a fine native such as *Chionanthus virginicus*, "Old Man's Beard," instead. It's in the olive family! You can buy one at the Botanical Garden! I hope to have inspired at least a few acquaintances to Go Native.)

Tools I use to explore collectors' lives:

- College Archivists are incredibly helpful people.
- Cultivate a mole in your University/College Alumni Records.
- Convince your library to get an institutional subscription to Ancestry.com .
- If You Post It, They Will Come. Families will find your information and give you more information. (And we can always hope for money.)
- Use all the portals -- Lichenportal, Macroalgaeporatal, Bryophyteportala, MyCoPortal, sernecportala, Pteridoportala – as your collector may have actually been more prolific as a lichen collector than a vascular plant collector.
- Use JSTOR and Google Scholar to search for their published works.
- Be ready for Serendipity.

NCU Staff in 2023

Dr. Alan Weakley Director
Dr. Derick Poindexter Taxonomist
Carol Ann McCormick Curatrix
Michael Lee Data Scientist
Bruce Sorrie Taxonomist
Shanna Oberreiter Loans Manager
Scott Ward Taxonomist
Aria Searles All-arounder





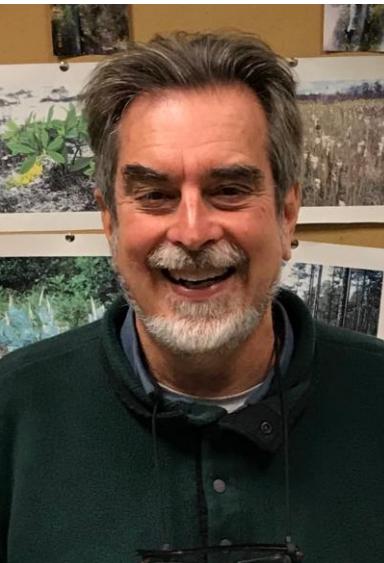
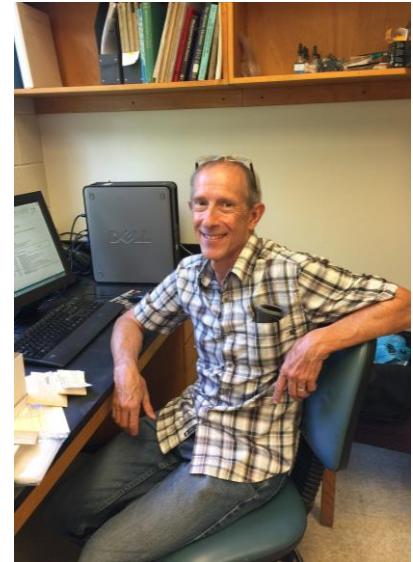
NCU collections curators

Dr. Paul Gabrielson (algae)

Dr. Van Cotter (fungi)

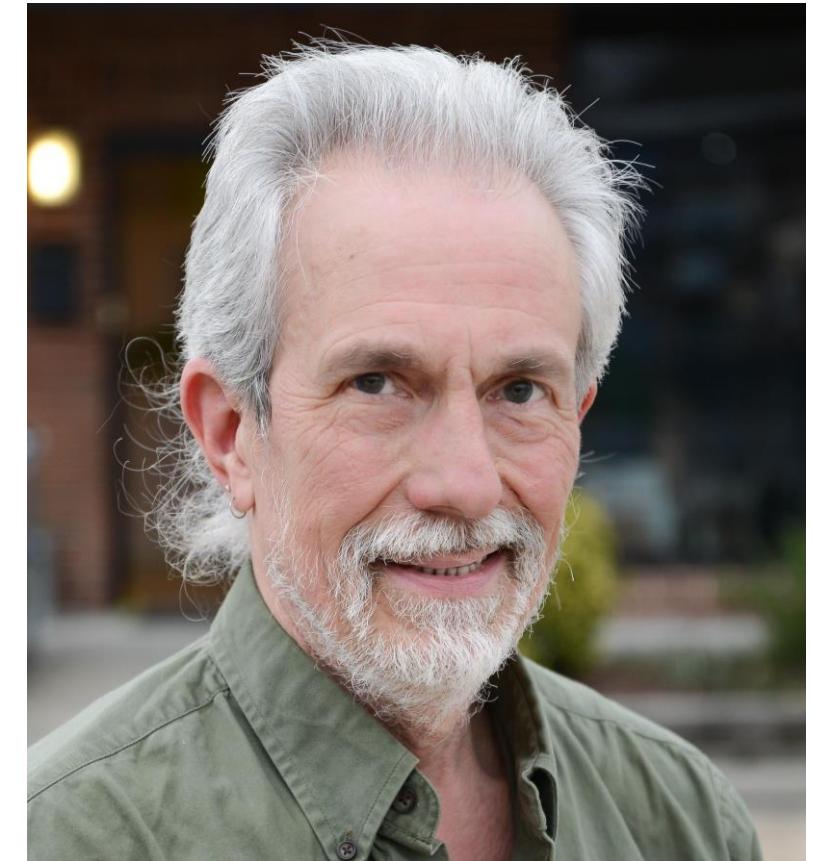
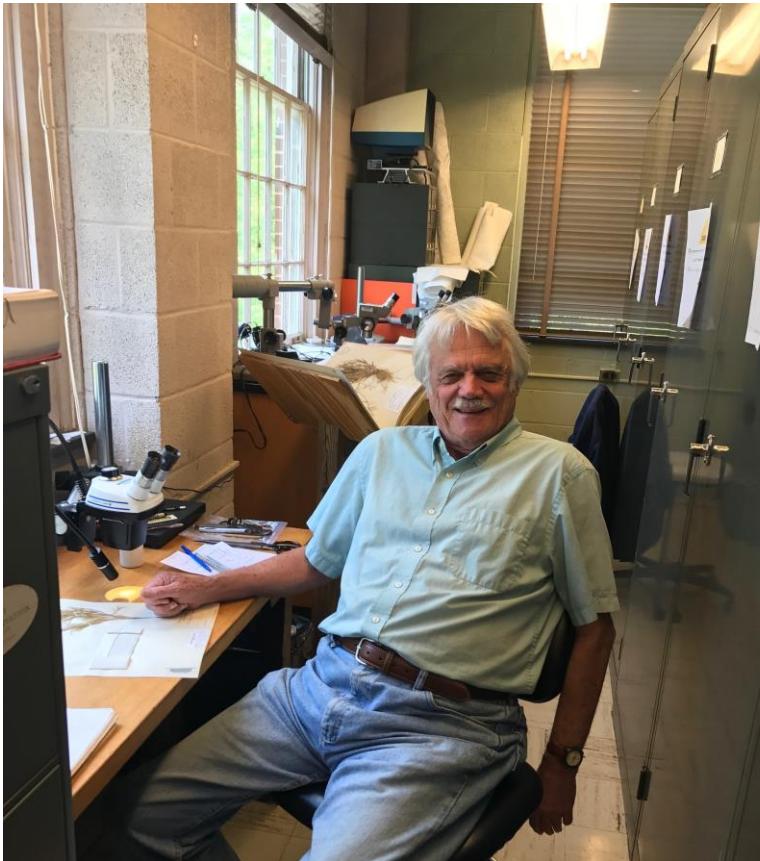
Dr. Patricia Gensel (fossils)

Gary Perlmutter (lichens)



NCU Associates

Dr. Scott Zona, Milo Pyne, Richard LeBlond



NCU Undergrads 2022-2023

Nathan Ross

Maya Hutagalung

Queen Crump

Maya Stroud

Torin O'Brien

Katelyn Godsey

(no photo)

