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Guide to the Henry C. Cowles Collection circa 1860s-1985



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.HCCOWLES
Title	Cowles, Henry C. Collection
Date	circa 1860s-1985
Size	25.75 linear feet (21 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Henry Chandler Cowles, botanist, University of Chicago alumnus and faculty member in the Department of Botany, pioneered the study of ecology. This collection represents Henry C. Cowles's work in research and teaching; his family life, including the activities of his wife and daughter; the work of Cowles's students; and the genealogy of the Cowles family. Materials in this collection include diaries, biographical and genealogical material, lecture and field notes, publications, ecological surveys, correspondence, and photographs of the Cowles family and of botany field trips.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Cowles, Henry C. Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Henry Chandler Cowles, botanist, University of Chicago alumnus and faculty member in the Department of Botany, pioneered the study of ecology. Born in Connecticut in 1869, he attended Oberlin College, where the Cowles family was a prominent part of the community.

Beginning with his graduate studies under John M. Coulter, Cowles explored the interactions between plants and other elements of the natural world. His thesis, "The Ecological Relations of the Vegetation on the Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan" (1898), was based on field work in the Indiana Dunes. This comprehensive study of plant succession established Cowles's reputation as an ecologist, and quickly became one of the most influential works in American botany. His

second major study, *The Physiographic Ecology of Chicago and Vicinity; A Study of the Origin, Development, and Classification of Plant Societies* (1901), extended his theories of succession to show that plant life in any setting developed in relationship to other communities and forces in the environment.

Cowles then focused on teaching and field study, publishing very little. A popular and influential teacher, Cowles led group field trips to the Indiana Dunes, as well as Maine, Alaska, New Mexico, California, Utah and Texas. Drawn to the department by his theories and inspirational teaching, many of Cowles's students went on to positions in universities and research institutions, where they continued to advance the field of ecology.

Instrumental in the foundation of the Ecological Society of America, Cowles also served as editor of the *Botanical Gazette*, and headed the Association of American Geographers, the Botanical Society of America, and the Phytogeography and Ecology section of the International Botanical Congress. His conservation activities led to the formation of national and regional public parks, including Starved Rock State Park, Cook County forest preserves, and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

In 1900, Cowles married Elizabeth Waller. Their daughter Harriet was born in 1912. Cowles died in 1939.

Scope Note

This collection represents Henry C. Cowles's work in research and teaching; his family life, including the activities of his wife and daughter; the work of Cowles's students; and the genealogy of the Cowles family.

Series I: Cowles Family, spans the years 1880-1985 and includes personal papers of Henry C. Cowles, Elizabeth W. Cowles, and their daughter Harriet Cowles Waller. This series is arranged by family member name. Henry C. Cowles's diaries and datebooks, which include field notes as well as personal writings, are found in this series; a small collection of his professional correspondence is also included. Other material in this series includes family correspondence, Elizabeth's and Harriet's diaries, and Harriet's genealogical and biographical research on the Cowles family. Photographs from this series have been transferred to Series IV.

Series II: Students, documents the work of Cowles's students in botany between 1911-1917. Included are lecture and field notes of Homer C. Sampson and Edgar N. Transeau. Some, or perhaps all, of Transeau's work are based on Sampson's own notes. The series is arranged by student name.

Series III: Publications, includes books, reprints and periodicals collected by Henry, Elizabeth and Harriet Cowles. Included are textbooks, field guides, and scientific works. Most of the books are annotated, and some have notes, correspondence, and pressed flowers and leaves laid in.

Series IV: Photographs and Artifacts, includes prints and negatives in four broad subject areas: Photographs of the Cowles family, circa 1860s-1930s, including portraits, informal snapshots, and travel photographs; group portraits of Department of Botany staff and other colleagues, circa 1880s-1920s; photographs of botany field trips, circa 1890s-1930s; and reference photographs showing landscapes in the Indiana Dunes and other locations, circa 1900. Most of the photographs, particularly those representing field trips, are unidentified or identified broadly by location. Also included in this series are artifacts, including souvenirs and memorabilia, and an 1895 version of the Cowles family tree. Additional photographs, documenting Cowles's survey work for the Department of Justice, are found in Series VI.

Series V: Botany 34A Ecological Surveys, circa 1919-1922, documents the work of Cowles's students in conducting intensive surveys of geographical areas in Illinois and other nearby regions. Organized by location, this series represents primarily townships in Cook County, but also includes locations in western Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana. Material in this series includes quadrat surveys, United State Geological Survey maps, student notes and reports.

Series VI: Department of Justice Investigations, contains material relating to Cowles's work as an expert witness in land dispute cases of the 1910s-1920s. This series contains survey maps, mainly government-produced plats of northeastern Arkansas and northwestern Indiana, some of which are annotated by Cowles. Two notebooks of Cowles's surveys of northeastern Arkansas are included in this series, as are survey photographs, and reports of his investigations. Correspondence with the Attorney General and others in federal and state governments is filed with reports, and discusses arrangements for Cowles's service and details of proposed investigations. Briefs and other legal documents for two court cases are also included.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

University of Chicago. Department of Botany. Records

Voth, Paul D. Papers

Subject Headings

- Cowles, Henry Chandler, 1869-1939
- University of Chicago. Department of Botany

- Botany
- Ecology
- Arkansas -- Maps
- Cook County (Ill.)
- Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (Ind.)
- Botanists
- Ecologists

INVENTORY

Series I: Cowles Family

Box 1

Folder 1-10

Henry C. Cowles, diaries, 1880-1894

Box 2

Folder 1-4

Henry C. Cowles, diaries and datebooks, 1895-1934

Box 2

Folder 5

Henry C. Cowles, poems, 1884-1892

Box 3

Folder 1-2

Henry C. Cowles, incoming correspondence, 1895-1935

Box 3

Folder 3

Henry C. Cowles, Oberlin College yearbook, 1895

Box 3

Folder 4

Henry C. Cowles, biographical and memorial material, 1940

Box 3

Folder 5-7

Henry C. Cowles to Elizabeth W. Cowles, correspondence, 1900- 1901

Box 3

Folder 8

Elizabeth W. Cowles, letters of condolence on Henry C. Cowles's death, 1940

Box 3

Folder 9

Elizabeth W. Cowles, diaries, 1884-1888

Box 3

Folder 10

Harriet Cowles Waller, school memorabilia, 1919-1929

Box 4

Folder 1

Harriet Cowles Waller, diary and datebook, 1922-1929

Box 4

Folder 2

Harriet Cowles Waller, Indiana Dunes research, circa 1974-1984

Box 4

Folder 3-5

Harriet Cowles Waller, biographical and genealogical research, circa 1930s-1985

Series II: Student Notes

Box 4

Folder 6

Homer C. Sampson, field notes, 1911

Box 4

Folder 7

Homer C. Sampson, Physiographic Ecology, lecture notes, 1913

Box 4

Folder 8

Homer C. Sampson, Ecological Plant Geography, lecture notes, 1913

Box 5

Folder 6

Homer C. Sampson, course notes, circa 1913

Box 5

Folder 6

Homer C. Sampson, Floristic Plant Geography, lecture notes, 1914

Box 5

Folder 3-4

Homer C. Sampson, Ecological Anatomy, lecture notes, 1916

Box 5

Folder 6

Homer C. Sampson, Experimental Ecology, lecture notes, undated

Box 5

Folder 6

Edgar N. Transeau, Physiographic Ecology (after Homer C. Sampson), 1913

Box 5

Folder 7

Edgar N. Transeau, Ecological Anatomy, lecture notes, undated

Box 6

Folder 1

Unidentified student, plant geography lecture notes, 1917

Series III: Publications

Box 6

Folder 2-6

Reprints and periodicals, 1899-1956

Box 7

Allee, W.C., G.W. Bartelmez, J.H. Bretz, et al. The Nature of the World and of Man.
Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1927.

Box 7

Tansley, A.G., *Our Heritage of Wild Nature, A Plea for Organized Nature Conservation*. Cambridge, At the University Press, 1945.

Box 7

Higley, William K., and Charles S. Raddin. *The Flora of Cook County, Illinois, and a Part of Lake County, Indiana*. Bulletin of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, 1891.

Box 7

Gray's *New Manual of Botany, A Handbook of the Flowering Plants and Ferns of the Central and Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada*. Rearranged and extensively revised by Benjamin Lincoln Robinson and Merritt Lyndon Fernald. New York, American Book Company, 1908.

Box 7

Tansley, A.G. *Britain's Green Mantle, Past, Present and Future*. London, George Allen & Unwin, 1949.

Box 7

Eames Arthur J., and Laurence H. MacDaniels. *An Introduction to Plant Anatomy*. New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1925.

Box 7

Weaver, John E., and Frederic E. Clements. *Plant Ecology*. New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1929.

Box 7

Le Conte, Joseph. *Elements of Geology, A Text-Book for Colleges and for the General Reader*. New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1892.

Box 7

Genealogy of the Cowles Families in America. Volumes 1-2. Compiled by Colonel Calvin Duvall Cowles. New Haven, Connecticut, The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1929

Box 8

Standardized Plant Names, A Catalogue of Approved Scientific and Common Names of Plants in American Commerce. Salem, Massachusetts, American Joint Committee on Horticultural Nomenclature, 1923.

Box 8

Stopes, Marie. *Botany; or, the Modern Study of Plants*. London, T.C. & E.C. Jack, c.1900.

Box 8

Cowles, Henry C., and John G. Coulter. *A Spring Flora for High Schools*. New York, American Book Company, 1915. (2 copies)

Box 8

Parker, Bertha Morris, and Henry Chandler Cowles. *The Book of Plants*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925.

Box 8

Curtis, Carlton C. *A Guide to the Trees*. New York, Greenberg Publishers, 1925.

Box 9

Fieldbook of Illinois Wild Flowers. Illinois Natural History Survey Manual 1. Urbana, Department of Registration and Education, Natural History Survey Division, 1936.

Box 9

Gray, Asa. Manual of the Botany of the Northern United States. Sixth Edition. New York, American Book Company, 1889. (2 copies)

Box 9

Memorial publications, 1939

Series IV: Photographs and Artifacts

Box 10

Folder 1-6

Cowles family, photographs, circa 1860s-1930s

Box 11

Cowles family, photographs of travel in the United States and Europe, two albums, ca. 1930

Box 12

Folder 1-3

Henry C. Cowles, portraits, circa 1870s-1930s

Box 12

Folder 4

Department of Botany group photographs, 1917

Box 12

Folder 5

Identified and unidentified group photographs, circa 1880s-1920s

Box 13

Folder 1

Field trip, Indiana Dunes, photographs, 1928

Box 13

Folder 2-3

Field trips, Utah and Texas, photographs, circa 1890s-1930s

Box 13

Folder 4

Field trip, California and Arizona, photograph album, 1903

Box 13

Folder 5

Field trips, photographs, circa 1890s-1930s

Box 14

Folder 1-4

Field trips, photographs, circa 1890s-1930s

Box 15

Folder 1-3

Indiana Dunes and other locations, landscape photographs, circa 1900

Box 16

Cowles family tree, 1895

Box 16

Whittled wood souvenir of Rocky Mountains, undated

Box 16

Forest reserve warden's badge and whistle, undated

Box 16

Printing plate for European calling card, undated

Box 16

Award for organization and conduct of the International Phytogeographic Excursion in America, 1913

Series V: Botany 34A, Ecological Surveys, circa 1919-1922

Box 17

Folder 1

Barrington, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 2

Calumet Quadrangle, Illinois-Indiana

Box 17

Folder 3

Frankfort, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 4

Guilford, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 5

Hartford Quadrangle, Wisconsin

Box 17

Folder 6

Leyden, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 7

Maine, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 8

New Lenox, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 9

New Trier, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 10

Niles, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 11

Palos Park, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 12

Porter County, Indiana

Box 17

Folder 13

Proviso, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 14

Rich, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 15

Wheeling, Illinois

Box 17

Folder 16

Unidentified locations

Box 18

Folder 1

Glenwood, Illinois

Box 18

Folder 2

Makanda, Illinois

Series VI: Department of Justice Investigations

Box 18

Folder 3-5

Northeastern Arkansas, survey maps, circa 1900-1910

Box 18

Folder 6

Northwestern Louisiana, survey maps, circa 1900-1910

Box 19

Folder 1

Northeastern Arkansas, survey notebooks, 1912

Box 19

Folder 2-3

Correspondence, notes and reports, 1913-1917

Box 19

Folder 4

Clippings, circa 1920

Box 19

Folder 5-8

Briefs, motions and petition, 1919-1922

Box 20

Folder 1

Survey photographs, circa 1912-1917

Box 20

Folder 2

Survey photographs, numbers 2, 9, 11, 224 and 321, circa 1912- 1917

Box 20

Folder 3

Survey photographs, Tyronza Lake, numbers 1-36, circa 1912- 1917

Box 20

Folder 4

Survey photographs, Hickory Lake, numbers 1-17, circa 1912-1917

Box 20

Folder 5

Survey photographs, Carson Lake, numbers 1-30, circa 1912-1917

Box 20

Folder 6

Survey photographs, numbers 1-54, circa 1912-1917

Box 20

Folder 7

Survey photographs, numbers 1-66, circa 1912-1917

Box 21

Folder 1-7

Survey photographs, numbers 17-84, circa 1912-1917