



Founded in 1997.  
Logo art of Tall Goldenrod,  
*Solidago altissima*,  
by Nat Cleavitt, 2006.

# Solidago

## Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society

Volume 22, No. 3



October 2021

### POET'S CORNER

## Fringed Gentians

by *Kenneth Hull*



Beauty beyond belief –  
Brilliant cobalt blue  
Fluted vases with frilly fringes  
When fully opened by direct sun  
Four petals form square openings  
Interior walls cream-colored  
With dark blue vertical lines,  
A pale yellow pistil and four  
Tiny orange stamens below  
Perfect form fit for an architect  
Easy targets for bumble bees, but  
Too bitter for honey bees and  
Destructive insects as well  
God created this gem of wet fields  
To signal the end of summer,  
The beginning of fall, and to  
Allay anxiety that accompanies  
Seasonal change



*Photos  
by the  
author.  
See  
another  
on  
page 4.*



## THE FINGER LAKES NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY STEERING COMMITTEE

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**Robert Wesley:** President



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**David Werier:** Newsletter Editor Emeritus



## Please Contribute to *Solidago*

WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS THAT FEATURE WILD PLANTS OF THE FINGER LAKES REGION OF NEW YORK AND NEARBY. We include cryptogams (bryophytes, lichens, fungi, and algae) as "flora," and recognize that green plants provide habitats and substrates for these and many animals, especially insects. We are interested in zoological associations as long as plants are an integral part of the story.

We can use a wide spectrum of material in a variety of writing styles. Our regular columns include **LOCAL FLORA** (plant lists or details of species from specific sites), **OUTINGS** (reports of FLNPS-sponsored excursions), and **PLANT PROFILES** (on specific local plants). We also occasionally publish **APPRECIATIONS** (memorials to local botanists and naturalists), **REVIEWS** (of books, talks, meetings, workshops, and nurseries), **LETTERS** (commentaries and letters to the editor), **ESSAYS** (on botanical themes), **VERSE** (haiku, limericks, sonnets, and poems of less formal structure), **ART** (botanical illustrations, plant designs, pencil sketches, decorations), and **PHOTOGRAPHS** (stand-alone images, photo essays, and full-page composite plates, or originals that can be scanned and returned). We also can always use **FILLERS** (very short notes, small images, cartoons) for the last few inches of a column.

## *Solidago*

Newsletter of the  
Finger Lakes Native Plant Society

Volume 22, No.3

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FLNPS (founded in 1997) is dedicated to the promotion of our native flora.

We sponsor talks, walks, and other activities related to conservation of native plants and their habitats. *Solidago* is published as a colorful online version, and a B&W paper version that is mailed. The online format is posted 3 months after publication. Please see [www.flnps.org](http://www.flnps.org) for details of membership, past *Solidago* issues, and updates about our programs.



A migrating **Monarch** makes a rest stop on the shore of Beebe Lake, on the Cornell University campus, enjoying a nectar meal at **New England Aster**, on 18 Sept. 1996. Photo © by Robert Dirig.

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\*Please send *Solidago*

contributions & correspondence  
to Robert Dirig, Editor, at  
[editorofsolidago@gmail.com](mailto:editorofsolidago@gmail.com)

Deadline for the December 2021  
issue is November 15<sup>th</sup> !

## NAME THAT PLANT CONTEST

The photo from last issue's [Solidago 22(2), June 2021, p. 4] contest was of **MOONSEED (*Menispermum canadense*)**. Moonseed is a vine, generally of floodplains and stream edges, but also occurs on rocky outcrops and talus slopes. The common name comes from the crescent-shaped seed. I particularly enjoy the way the leaf stalk (*petiole*) attaches to the lower surface of the leaf blade, versus on its margin. Check it out! The word *peltate* is used for such a situation. Thanks to all those who entered, and congratulations to the winners: **Betsy Darlington, Bob Dirig, Kenneth Hull, and Susanne Lorbeer.**

THIS ISSUE'S MYSTERY PLANT IS SHOWN BELOW.



Hints and suggestions are often provided to contest participants who try. Common and/or scientific names are acceptable, and more than one guess is allowed. Please submit your answer to **David Werier** at

*All images were taken by David Werier in New York. The background image and closeup of the flower were taken on 19 May 2019 in St. Lawrence Co., the image of the fruits was taken on 1 July 2021 in Essex Co., and the closeup of the leaf was taken on 5 July 2018 in Greene Co.*



## Plant Trivia

by Norm Trigoboff

1. Name the odd man out: Cabbage, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Kale, Brussels sprouts, Collard greens, Savoy cabbage, Gai lan, Jersey cabbage, Wild cabbage, Broccoflower, Hoboken kale, Romanesco broccoli, and Kohlrabi.
2. What do the three largest protected natural areas in the world have in common?
3. Which is the tallest grass in the World?
4. The (plant-related) meaning of the word "posy" is: a cabbage flower. — someone who pretends to know something about flowers. — any flower. — a bunch of flowers. — a brightly colored flower petal.
5. What is the tallest tree (species) in the World?
6. What's the fastest growing plant (in height)?
7. Which kind of cabbage plant is the largest?
8. True or false: **A.** Hawaii, home to many harmful invasives, has kept out hummingbirds because they pollinate pineapples. **B.** All bromeliads are native to the Americas. **C.** All bromeliads need mild temperature. **D.** All bromeliads are inedible. **E.** The tallest cabbage is taller than the tallest bromeliad.
9. Name the odd man out: tomato, potato, green pepper, eggplant, nightshade, tobacco, trumpet creeper, petunia, ground cherry.
10. Who said "Nature has a place for the wild clematis as well as for the cabbage?"

See answers on page 4.

## LETTERS

Hi Bob,

Beautiful newsletter this month, as always! I particularly enjoyed Rosemarie's article on *Thalictrum*, and your tale involving Mayapples. Nice to find out they were still living happily after all those years!

**Audrey Bowe**

email of 4 June 2021



Thank you to all who continue to enrich my life through another beautiful newsletter! Great job!

**Colleen Wolpert**

email of 4 June 2021



Hi Bob —

I loved your Mayapple story in *Solidago*! Thanks!

**Betsy Darlington**

email of 4 June 2021





## Fringed Gentians

*in situ*, the glory of damp autumn meadows!

Photo by Kenneth Hull

## Fall 2021 Calendar

Fall is here, and FLNPS is again sponsoring walks and monthly talks (still via Zoom)! The following programs have been scheduled for October:

**Saturday, October 9, 10:00 a.m.:** A Native Plant Garden Tour at Taughannock Falls State Park's Falls Overlook, led by **Adriana Del Grosso** of the New York Parks Land Restoration Program.

**Wednesday, October 20, 7:00 p.m.:** A Zoom talk on **Propagating Native Plants from Seed**, by **Krissy Boys**, Native Plant Gardener at Cornell Botanic Gardens.

**Saturday, October 23, 1:00 p.m.:** The Annual Seed Collecting Walk, led by **Krissy Boys**, at a location to be announced. The rain date is *October 24* at 1:00.

**Registration is required**, with COVID-related safety protocols in place. Please see our **website** ([flnps.org/activities](http://flnps.org/activities)), **listserv**, and **facebook page** for details, and updates about other and future programs.

## Plant Trivia Answers

by Norm Trigoboff

1. Hoboken kale, which I made up. All the rest belong to the same species: *Brassica oleracea*.

2. All three are marine (so they lack land plants). Marae Moana, a marine preserve in the Cook Islands formed in 2017, is almost two million sq. km. Second place goes to the Ross Sea Region Marine Protected Area. In third place is the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in Hawaii.

3. Dragon bamboo, *Dendrocalamus giganteus*, has hit 137.9 feet.

4. A bunch of flowers (same as nosegay).

5. *Eucalyptus regnans*, from Australia, has hit 435 feet.

6. Some species of bamboo can grow over a yard a day.

7. Jersey cabbage, also known as Jersey kale, cow cabbage, giant cabbage, long jacks, tree cabbage and *Brassica oleracea longata*, may get 20 feet tall. Though rather useless as a vegetable, the leaves may be fed to animals and the stalks used for walking sticks, fencing and rafters.

8. **A.** True. Seed formation would ruin the value of pineapples.

**B.** False. *Pitcairnia* is the only wild bromeliad outside the Americas.

**C.** False. The bromeliad *Fascicularia* can grow in cold areas if it is kept dry in the winter.

**D.** False. The pineapple is a bromeliad. A couple of others are also edible.

**E.** False. The tallest bromeliad, *Puya raimondii* (Queen of the Andes) may hit 45 feet. The tallest cabbage, as you know, may hit 20 feet.

9. Trumpet creeper. The others are in the potato family, Solanaceae.

10. Henry David Thoreau, in his 1862 essay *Walking*.

## Thank You!

FOR THIS ISSUE, we thank **writers** Audrey Bowe, Betsy Darlington, Robert Dirig, Carl George, Kenneth Hull, Lee B. Kass, Carol L. Kelloff, Dylan Kowalewski, Norm Trigoboff, David Werier, & Colleen Wolpert; and **photographers** Kenneth Hull (pp. 1 & 4), David Werier (p. 3), & Robert Dirig (pp. 2 & 17). **Layout & design** by the Editor; **proofreading** by Rosemarie Parker, Robert Wesley, & David Werier; and **printing** by Gnomon Copy. Rosemarie and Audrey posted our newsletters; Whitney Carleton mailed them; and Audrey, Rosemarie, and Anna Stalter organized calendar items.

**Best Wishes** to FLNPS members (and all others in our reading audience) for safety, and joyous outdoor revels with the glorious autumn flora! — Robert Dirig

# STANLEY JAY SMITH

## An Unsung Hero of New York State Botany

by Robert Dirig, Lee B. Kass, Carol L. Kelloff, & Dylan Kowalewski<sup>1</sup>

*In this first detailed biography of a famous but enigmatic regional botanist, the authors tell how Smith's background, education, and early interest in local flora led to a lifelong career as Curator of Botany at the New York State Museum in Albany.*



**FIG. 1:** STANLEY JAY SMITH, undated boyhood portrait. (FIGS. 1 & 2 courtesy of John H. Haines).



**E** HE BECAME INTERESTED in STANLEY JAY SMITH when Kass and Kelloff found an herbarium of the “Upper Susquehanna Flora” that THOMAS F. LUCY had prepared for the Elmira Academy of Sciences in Elmira, N.Y., in the late 1890s (Kass 1990, Kelloff *et al.* 1990, Kelloff & Kass 1993, Kass *et al.* 1994). Lucy’s herbarium became the core of the Elmira College Herbarium (Kass 1990). Smith had annotated the entire collection, and had even taken some of the plants to ARTHUR CRONQUIST for identification at the New York Botanical Garden. We began learning about Smith by interviewing botanists at Cornell University and the New York State Museum in Albany. We soon learned that Smith was a very private person, and that various mythologies had evolved about him. We then located correspondence between Smith and many of his professional colleagues,<sup>2</sup> which helped us piece together the details of his life, and separate the man from the myth.



**FIG. 2:** STANLEY JAY SMITH, perhaps a high school portrait.

### Youth and Education



**S**TANLEY JAY SMITH was born on 20 September 1915 in Erin, Chemung County, New York (Smith 1939). He attended the Erin Grammar School [FIG. 1], and Horseheads High School, graduating from the latter in 1930 at age 14 [FIG. 2]. A rare early autobiographical glimpse appeared in a document he authored at age 26 (Smith 1940-1941, G, p. 1):

As a small boy, [he] had an absorbing interest in plants, well fostered by his parents and by a patient grade-school teacher. Beginning with the dandelions [*Taraxacum officinale*] of the lawn, the violets (*Viola sororia*) of the grove behind the house, and the abundant delicate little Fairy’s Looking-Glass (*Veronica persica*) of

the Erin gardens..., his knowledge of the local flora gradually grew. Well does he remember the first plants of his “Corn-leaved Dandelion” (*Tragopogon pratensis*) along the Hollow Road near the house, his “Yellow-rose Weed” (*Potentilla recta*) which suddenly appeared from nowhere in the back lot, and the discovery of double trilliums (*Trillium grandiflorum*) in the woods of the nearby hills.

After a year’s postgraduate work at Horseheads High School (to June 1931), Smith matriculated at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, which he attended for one year (to June 1932); then returned home to enroll in the Horseheads Teacher Training Class for another year, graduating in June 1933 (Smith 1939). In autumn 1933, he transferred to Cornell University, majoring in botany, and

<sup>1</sup> R. Dirig (Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, editorofsolidago@gmail.com); L. B. Kass (Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, and West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, lbk7@cornell.edu); C. L. Kelloff (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, KELLOFFC@si.edu); D. Kowalewski (a former Elmira College student, now deceased, who contributed research for this paper). Our article is adapted from the script of a presentation about Smith at the NEW YORK NATURAL HISTORY CONFERENCE III (History of Biology session) in Albany, on 15 April 1994 (Kass *et al.* 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Sources of letters and most website addresses for articles are cited in footnotes. See LITERATURE CITED (pp. 15-16) for published references.



**FIG. 3: KARL M. WIEGAND**, in Cornell's Dept. of Botany, 1931 (Bailey Hortorium).

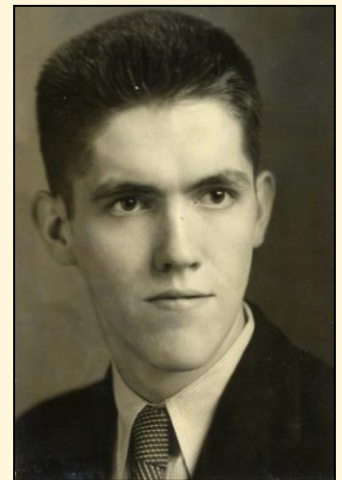
pursuing undergraduate research in “taxonomy of various groups” to June 1934.<sup>3</sup> **KARL M. WIEGAND** [FIG. 3], Professor and Chairman of Botany at Cornell from 1913-1941, and one of the leading taxonomists of the world (Knudson 1942), was Smith's major mentor. Smith took Wiegand's classes in *Taxonomy of Vascular Plants* and *Advanced Taxonomy*, and Professor WALTER CONRAD MUENSCHER's course on *Trees, Shrubs, and Weeds*.<sup>4</sup>

Smith's (1940-1941, **G**, pp. 1-2) narrative of this period continues:

When the elementary course in Botany at Cornell University enabled the identification of [Blue Ground Cedar] *Lycopodium tristachyum* and [Common Bristly Clubmoss] *L. annotinum* var. *acrifolium* (both rare in the Cayuga Basin) and [Arrow-leaved Violet] *Viola sagittata* (unknown in the Cayuga Basin and very rare throughout upstate New York) from a hill within a mile and a half of home [in Erin], the die was cast. A large graph-paper notebook was procured ..., and all species and varieties listed in *Gray's Manual [of Botany]* which might be found in the township ... [were listed]; then attempt was made to mark each off. Soon, the township seemed too small; the Clute [1898, 1901] “*Flora of the Upper Susquehanna*” was called to [his] ... attention; specimens of Dr. T. F. Lucy, local collector at the turn of the century [1872-1899], were located at Elmira College; [and] intensive study of the Chemung County Tracheophytic Flora was begun.”

Smith interrupted his studies again in 1934-1935 to teach “District School” (Smith 1939). He returned to Cornell in autumn 1935, and received his Bachelor of Science degree on 15 June 1936 [FIG. 4]. Immediately after graduating, he matriculated in the Graduate School at Cornell for the degree of Master of Arts. But soon, “on leave of absence, he enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) for eighteen months” (Smith 1939, Anon. 1968) at Company 1279 of the CCC Camp S-125 at 337 Harford Road (County Rt. 117) in Slaterville Springs, Tompkins County, N.Y.<sup>5</sup> “The CCC provided work and vocational training for unemployed, single young men through conserving and developing the country's natural resources” (Anon. 1968). Camp S-125 participants reforested the Caroline hills and built fire roads, according to an historical marker at the site.<sup>6</sup> In August 1937, Smith contributed three items to *The Plow Jockey*, a newsletter of CCC Camp S-125: An essay on “Overlooked Food Plants” listed a large variety of wild plants that could be used as food. Two of his poems were also printed therein. One gives a rare glimpse of his sensitivity (Smith 1937, in box below).

In a more scientific mood at Camp S-125, Smith wrote to State Botanist **HOMER D. HOUSE** [FIG. 5, next page] at the New York State Museum in Albany, enclosing three lists of plants from Chemung County that he had compiled while conducting research for his Master's degree at Cornell. He asked House if there were any specimens of these plants in the State Herbarium, and if he had any records of rare plants or specimens from Chemung County since 1924.<sup>7</sup> He offered



*Stanley Jay Smith*

**FIG. 4: STANLEY JAY SMITH**, ca. 1936 (age 21), from *The 1936 Cornellian*, Vol. 68, p. 98 (Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library). Signature from 1940 (age 24) in Smith (1940-1941, C).

## INFINITIES

Sunlight and moonlight and starlight and lovelight —  
Four great accolades for duty:  
The bounty of the fecund earth  
That calls to work for fellowmen;  
The dreaminess of shadowed moons  
That fills the heart with pearl again;  
The challenge of eternal stars  
That moves the hand in artistry;  
The wonder of your lovely face  
That dims all other fires for me.  
Sunlight and moonlight and starlight and lovelight —  
Four infinities of beauty.

— Stanley Smith

**3)** Letter from Smith to Homer D. House, 30 May 1940 (Homer House and SJS letters before 1950, in Homer House's Stanley Smith file, New York State Botanist House's correspondence, NYSM files, Albany, N.Y.; hereafter **HH/SJS**).

**4)** Smith's entire coursework is detailed on “Registrar's Cards, Smith, Stanley J., Class of 1939” (Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library). Smith's lifelong interest in “*ruderals*” (weeds) likely resulted from Muenscher's teaching of weed ecology in this course.

**5)** Smith's participation in the Horseheads Teacher Training Class (1930-1931), teaching District School (1934-1935), and working at the CCC Camp S-125 (1937-1938) may have been necessary, to earn money for college during the Great Depression. His grounding focus remained on botany during these episodes.

**6)** <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=168755>.

**7)** House's massive “Annotated List of the Ferns and Flowering Plants of New York State” (*New York State Museum Bulletin* 254, 759 pp.), which listed localities, was published in 1924.

**Fig. 5:** HOMER D. HOUSE, second New York State Botanist, photographing wildflowers in 1916 (in public domain, via Wikimedia Commons).



to collect specimens for him the following season. Smith also told House that he was “delaying the preparation of a flora of the county until ... [he had] the opportunity more completely to explore the region.”<sup>8</sup> House replied to Smith<sup>9</sup> that he appreciated seeing his lists of Chemung County plants, congratulated him on the “thoroughness” of his investigation, and encouraged him to carry his work to a “successful completion.”

House also informed Smith that they probably had fewer Chemung County plants in the State Herbarium than from any other county. He told Smith that what they did have were “mainly duplicates of the Lucy Herbarium ..., and a few sent to Peck by Lucy himself.”<sup>10</sup> He apprised Smith that the original Lucy Herbarium seemed to be at the Buffalo Museum,<sup>11</sup> and invited Smith to send “as much material as possible.”

### Cornell Master's Degree



**FIG. 6:** ARTHUR J. EAMES, Cornell's Dept. of Botany, 1931 (Bailey Hortorium).



**BACK AT CORNELL IN 1938** from CCC Camp S-125, Smith completed work for his A.M. degree under the guidance of Professor K. M. WIEGAND in Plant Taxonomy and Instructor ERNEST DORSEY, Ph.D., in Plant Genetics. The degree was awarded on 27 September 1939.<sup>12</sup> His coursework included classes on *Poisonous Plants* and an *Aquatic Plants Seminar* with MUENSCHER; *Morphology of Vascular Plants* offered by ARTHUR J. EAMES [FIG. 6]; and WIEGAND's course in *Advanced Taxonomy*. His thesis topic was “Preliminary Investigations in the Genus *Astragalus*” (Smith 1939).<sup>13</sup>

That same year, Robert T. Clausen & Smith (1939) published an article “On Some Pteridophytes of South-Central New York” in the *American Fern Journal*, which incorporated many of Smith's recent discoveries in Chemung County, N.Y., and vicinity, with new records from Clausen's ongoing regional field research on ferns and fern relatives.

On 30 May 1940, from his home in Erin, Smith wrote to House,<sup>14</sup> inquiring about a position as Assistant State Botanist. He told House that he hoped to have a job that would allow him to write “a flora of the Finger Lakes Region” or to revise Clute's (1898, 1901) *Flora of the Upper Susquehanna*. He went on to say that House might obtain references from his professors at the Botany Department and the L. H. Bailey Hortorium at Cornell.

He then outlined his plans for examining many local herbaria at small colleges, and for doing field studies in the Chemung Valley. He believed that not enough herbaria had been checked, and suggested that if the “small and localized Elmira College Herbarium yield[ed] interesting records, what might ... be at other small college herbaria?” He also lamented that not enough collecting had been done, and told House that he could find “no one who knows the Upper Chemung Valley or the Lower Genesee Valley very well.” He also mentioned hearing vague reports of great bogs with “all manner of interesting plants,” an “impene-

8) Letter, Smith to House, 28 Oct. 1937, HH/SJS.

9) Letter, House to Smith, 3 Nov. 1937, HH/SJS.

10) CHARLES HORTON PECK was the first State Botanist of New York, preceding House (C. Peck and T. F. Lucy letters, in New York State Botanist Peck's correspondence, NYSM files, Albany, N.Y.; henceforth CP/TFL).

11) See Kelloff & Kass 2018, p. 325.

12) *Announcement of the Graduate School* for 1941-1942, issued 15 March 1941, Vol. 32, No. 15, p. 201. Smith's thesis defense was on 8 Aug. 1939 (Cornell University Graduate School Student Records, #12-5-636, Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library).

13) Letter, Smith to House, 30 May 1940, HH/SJS. Also see footnote 4.

14) *Ibid*.

trable swamp in southern Schuyler County,”<sup>15</sup> and his own discovery of an “eight-mile knob-and-kettle area, the Red Jacket Swamp,” in Chemung County. He ended by informing House that he would be sending him duplicates of his “most important collections.”

House promptly replied to Smith’s letter,<sup>16</sup> informing him that the position of Assistant State Botanist was empty, but the “legislative budget authorities decreed that no vacant positions [could] be filled for reasons of economy.” House told Smith that he would like to have someone of his apparent ability in the position.

House then commented on small local herbaria, telling Smith that he had checked many, that the Lucy Herbarium was at Buffalo (see Tilden *et al.* 2008; Kelloff & Kass 2018), and that he had not examined much of it, only scattered groups. The records from these herbaria, he said, “are entered on our distribution map record cards.” He reported that he had not completely examined larger herbaria, including those at the New York Botanical Garden, Cornell, and Vassar, but suggested that if data from all specimens from New York could be examined and assembled on one set of distribution cards, “a complete map of distribution in the state for each species would result.”

After completing his A.M. degree, Smith stayed at Cornell in 1939-1940 to begin a Ph.D. program in Plant Taxonomy, with Professors WIEGAND as Chair, and ALBERT HAZEN WRIGHT (General Zoology) and ARTHUR J. EAMES (Plant Morphology) as minor-subject advisors.<sup>17</sup> In December 1940, Wiegand consulted with Robert T. Clausen regarding hiring S. J. Smith to replace his Scientific Assistant, who was leaving their Department.<sup>18</sup> Dr. Clausen’s assessment of Smith’s abilities and manner is revealing: He praised Smith for his “great aptitude in taxonomy of vascular plants,” and included him among the top five “outstanding young taxonomists in this country.... Smith stands high in mental brilliance,” he wrote, comparing him with all of the “rising generation of fern students.” Further, he warned that the Faculty would not want to be considered as “so short-[sight]ed that it turned away one of the most promising scholars who was a candidate for an assistantship. I have confidence in Smith,” Clausen continued, “and believe that he deserves aid, either through the position now under consideration, or a teaching assistantship.... In supporting Smith’s cause, I realize that I am championing an unpopular candidate. Yet I feel justified in doing so because I am convinced of the man’s fundamental worth. To me, native intellect counts for more than attendance at teas, polished shoes, combed hair, and suave manners — details which seem to be emphasized too much in our academic society. As I look about and see the men who are chosen and refused for various positions, I wonder whether today, personalities like Asa Gray, Rafinesque, or Pursh would be considered eligible for assistantships in our Department.” As it happened, Stanley Smith did not get the appointment: MRS. SALLIE R. SMITH was hired as Wiegand’s Scientific Assistant in Botany, effective October 16, 1941.<sup>19</sup>

## Military Service



SMITH WITHDREW FROM HIS PH. D. PROGRAM to serve in the U. S. Army from 1941-1944 (including some time in Iceland), attaining the rank of Captain during World War II [FIG. 7].

The U.S. Army’s primary post in upstate New York was *Madison Barracks* in Jefferson County, until Pine Camp (later renamed *Fort Drum*) was opened in 1908. Madison Barracks was a training post with a capacity of 45 officers and 1,040 enlisted personnel, remaining an active military installation through the end of World War II.<sup>20</sup>

During his time there, Smith drafted an update on the “Flora of Central New York,” dated 17 March 1941. A paragraph that is buried in the body of this report, written after several years of intense field work, seems to define his philosophy and approach to the wild flora for the rest of his life (Smith 1940-1941, **G**, p. 66):

The writer’s particular delight is the discovery of rare wildings. He may talk at length (as he probably will, at the slightest provocation) on the establishment and spontaneous reproduction of some of the garden favorites and the success or otherwise of the many ruderal invasions, but far more of his interest centers on the discovery and study of native plants and the mapping of these in relation to the various factors of soil, climate, and geological history of the region.



FIG. 7: SMITH’s grave at Scotchtown Cemetery, Erin, N.Y. (Find A Grave Memorial #87781377).

15) Perhaps the 882-acre cattail marsh between Watkins Glen and Montour Falls, bordered by Rock Cabin Road on the east, known on historical maps as “Bad Indian Swamp” — and today as “Catharine Creek Marsh,” a Wildlife Management Area maintained by the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation.

16) Letter, House to Smith, 10 June 1940, HH/SJS.

17) *Announcement of the Graduate School* for 1941-42, issued March 15, 1941, vol. 32, No. 15, pp. 200-201, <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/37397>. Stanley Jay Smith, Grad, 304 College Ave, listed on page 158, *Directory of the University 1939-1940*, *Cornell University Announcements* Vol. 31, 1939-40 [issued 1940], <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/42327>. Cornell University Graduate School Student Records, #12-5-636 (Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library).

18) Clausen to Wiegand, 8 December 1940, copy of letter courtesy of Tom Clausen to Kass, 16 April 1997.

19) *Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of Cornell University, July 1, 1941-June 30, 1942*. p. 3917 (<https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/23401>).

20) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madison\\_Barracks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madison_Barracks); also [http://www.fortwiki.com/Madison\\_Barracks](http://www.fortwiki.com/Madison_Barracks).

After critical reviews by Wiegand, Clausen, and Muenscher (Smith 1940-1941, **G**, p. 12), Smith incorporated changes and additions, then sent the completed document, dated 31 January 1942, to House.<sup>21</sup> In addition to reporting his own floristic discoveries, he included relevant specimens found at large herbaria of the Northeast — including those at the New York State Museum, Cornell's Bailey Hortorium, the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, and Harvard's Gray Herbarium — as well as the personal herbaria of G. D. CORNELL (Campbell, N.Y.), and of Cornell graduate students C. A. TAYLOR, JR. (Ithaca, N.Y.) and J. COHN (New York, N.Y.); and smaller institutional holdings at the Clinton Herbarium in the Buffalo Museum of Science, the Syracuse University Herbarium, and the Elmira College Herbarium. This ultimately resulted in his 74-page “Contributions to the Flora of Central New York — I” that was published as *New York State Museum Bulletin* 338 (Smith 1945).

While in the Army, Smith continued to correspond with House concerning the plant collecting he was doing. In September 1944, he wrote to House<sup>22</sup> from the USVAF [United States Veterans Administration Facility],<sup>23</sup> (now called the Canandaigua VA Medical Center hospital, in Canandaigua, N.Y.) that he had left Madison General Hospital on September 12<sup>th</sup> and “became a civilian on the next day.” The reason for his medical discharge was not explained. Upon returning to Erin, Smith wrote to House<sup>24</sup> that he had taken a job with the Bendix Aviation Corporation in Elmira, N.Y., working nights, as a contribution to the war effort; he would thus have time during the day for study and field work. He reported that he was completing his study of the Elmira College Herbarium before sending him a checklist that he had prepared for “all the plants [he] knew for the county.”<sup>25</sup> Smith completely examined and annotated T. F. Lucy's “Upper Susquehanna Flora Herbarium,” which had been part of the Elmira Academy of Sciences' natural history collection, and served as vouchers for Clute's (1898) publication on that flora (Kelloff *et al.* 1990). The Lucy Herbarium was donated to Elmira College in 1900.<sup>26</sup> Lucy's *unmounted specimens*, housed at Buffalo (of House's earlier reference), were originally thought to be duplicates of his collection (Tilden *et al.* 2008), but we later discovered that Lucy continued to collect plants long after he gave his herbarium to the Academy (Kelloff & Kass 2018, p. 325).<sup>27</sup>

## Doctoral Work at Cornell



**SMITH RETURNED TO CORNELL IN AUTUMN 1945**, and continued his studies for the Ph.D., with a reconstituted committee of Professors **ROBERT T. CLAUSEN** [**FIG. 8**], as Chair,<sup>28</sup> and O. D. VON ENGELN (Geology) and ROBERT L. CUSHING followed by HAROLD H. SMITH (Genetics) as minor-subject mentors.<sup>29</sup> Smith's correspondence with Clausen and LAVERNE L. PECHUMAN,<sup>30</sup> letters between Clausen and House,<sup>31</sup> and a comment by Richard Mitchell<sup>32</sup> indicated that he was investigating *Trillium*.

Smith's (1945) “Contributions to the Flora of Central New York” reported “new, rare or otherwise interesting elements of the flora of Central New York, ... [comprising] the combined drainages of the Upper Susquehanna and Chemung Rivers, including all parts of Lewis, Oneida, Oswego, Madison, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, Wayne, Herkimer, Schoharie, Otsego, Chenango, Delaware, Broome, Cortland, Tompkins, Tioga, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Allegany, Yates, and Ontario Counties.” It was the first comprehensive update on the flora of this region since Clute's (1898, 1901) book and supplement on the *Flora of the Upper Susquehanna*, and Wiegand & Eames' (1926) *Flora of the Cayuga Lake Basin*.



**FIG. 8: ROBERT T. CLAUSEN**, another mentor, and chair of Smith's doctoral committee (Bailey Hortorium).

**21)** The 17 March 1941 draft and a photocopy of the finished manuscript of 31 January 1942 are in the Bailey Hortorium Library at Cornell (Smith 1940-1941, **G & H**). Comparison of the latter with Smith (1945) showed minimal editorial changes.

**22)** Letter, Smith to House, 20 September 1944, **HH/SJS**.

**23)** <https://www.canandaigua.va.gov/about/history.asp>. See also <https://www.canandaigua.va.gov/>

**24)** Letter, Smith to House, 2 November 1944, **HH/SJS**.

**25)** An undated typescript (ca. 1940) of Smith's “Preliminary List of Tracheophytes of Chemung County, New York,” which includes 1411 taxa, is in Smith (1940-1941, **A** (28 pp.)).

**26)** Letter, T. F. Lucy to C. H. Peck, 1900, CP/TFL, cited in Kelloff & Kass (1993, p. 147).

**27)** Letter, R. Zander to C. K. Long & L. Kass, 1985, T. F. Lucy research files (Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library).

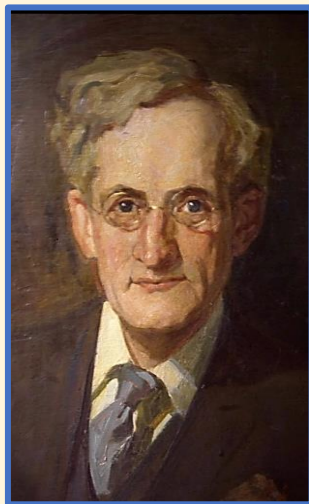
**28)** Wiegand had retired in 1941, and died in 1942. See Cornell University Graduate School Student Records, #12-5-636 (Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library).

**29)** S. J. Smith, R. L. Cushing, and H. H. Smith appear in a photograph of the Synopsis Club dated 24 March 1947 (Murphy & Kass 2011, p. 158). Cobb (2013) also presented photos of Cornell's Botany professors and descriptions of their contributions.

**30)** S. J. Smith and Laverne L. Pechuman letters, 1950s and 1960s, in S. J. Smith's correspondence, NYSM files, Albany, NY; henceforth **SJS/LLP**. PECHUMAN was an entomologist from Lockport, N.Y., who specialized in tabanid flies. He became Curator of the Cornell University Insect Collection in 1962, and had a strong interest in wild flora, especially *Trillium*. See Klass *et al.* (1992) for further details.

**31)** Letters: R. Clausen to H. House, 9 May 1947, H. House to R. Clausen 12 May 1947, House correspondence files, NYSM, Albany, N.Y.; copies courtesy of John H. Haines. See also the Clausen/Smith correspondence of 1960s regarding the *Trillium* manuscript, **RC/SJS**.

**32)** Email from Lorinda Leonardi (herbarium manager at the NYSM) to Dirig, 27 Oct. 2017.



**FIG. 9: LIBERTY HYDE BAILEY**, when Dean of Cornell's College of Agriculture, 1913), from an oil portrait (Bailey Hortorium, photo by Robert Dirig).

Further recognition was bestowed on Smith by **LIBERTY HYDE BAILEY** [FIG. 9], world-famous botanist and horticulturist, and Director of the Bailey Hortorium, in his publications on "The Genus *Rubus* in North America" (Bailey 1943). Bailey acknowledged Smith as a "special collector" who supplied local specimens of *Rubus* while he was an undergraduate and graduate student at Cornell. In fact, Smith collected more than 300 specimens for Bailey.<sup>33</sup> Bailey named two dewberry taxa for Smith: *Rubus jaysmithii*, and *Rubus jaysmithii*, var. *angustior* [FIGS. 10-11]; see Bailey (1943, pp. 278-281).<sup>34</sup> Many more *Rubus* specimens collected by Smith are cited in Bailey's monograph, published in other issues of *Gentes Herbarum*.

An amusing anecdote survives<sup>35</sup> about Smith collecting a *Rubus* specimen for Bailey:

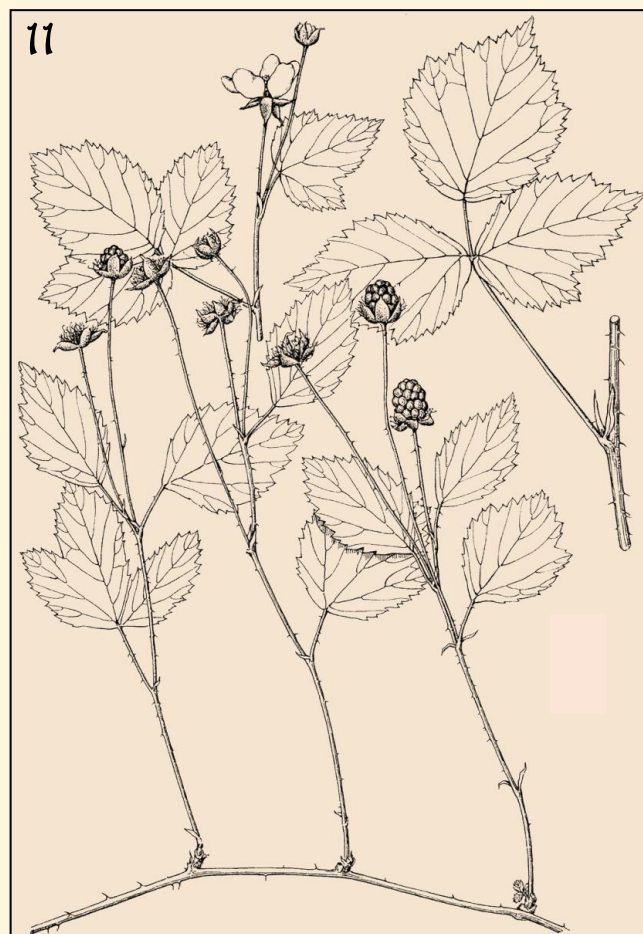
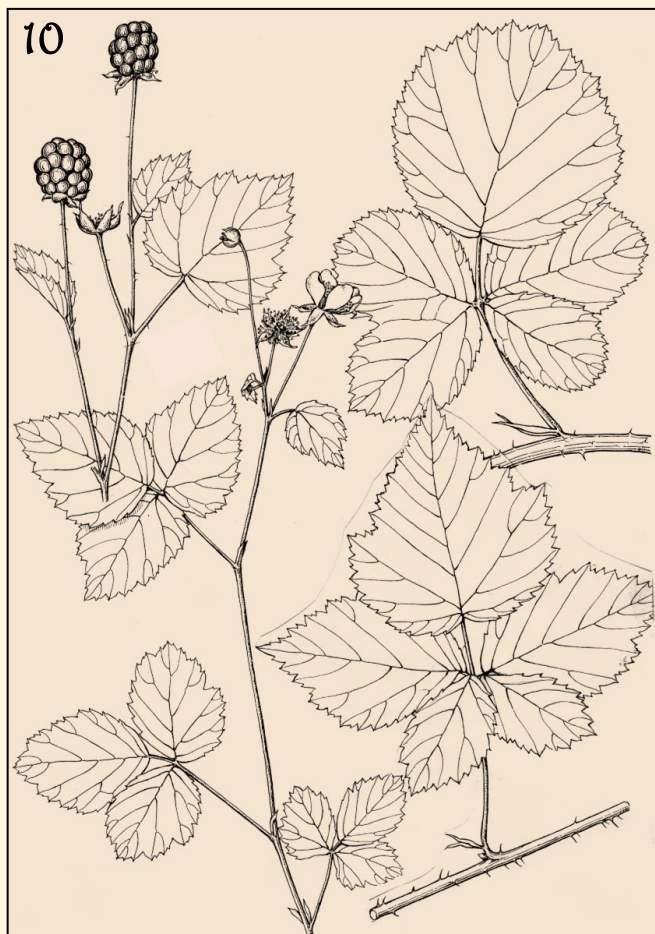
Stanley Smith apparently never learned to drive; therefore, he usually travelled by bus or was driven places by friends. He often employed students to chauffeur him on his botanical excursions. One story that has been told about Stanley was his preoccupation with collecting *Rubus* for Dr. Bailey. Once upon a time, Stanley J. Smith was returning to Cornell by bus when he spotted a *Rubus* on the side of the road that he absolutely had to examine. He asked the bus driver to stop ... so that he could look at the plant. Stanley got off the bus with his suitcase and dumped the contents on the ground. He then proceeded to stuff it full of blackberries, and got back on the bus leaving his possessions behind him. It wasn't until the next day that he arranged for a colleague to drive him back to get his things. This story gives us just one example of Stanley Smith's idiosyncratic personality.

**33)** Letter from Smith to House, 30 May 1940, HH/SJS: "In recent summers, I have spent much of my spare time collecting specimens of blackberries for Prof. L. H. Bailey in connection with his revising work. These collections now number well over three hundred sheets either submitted or pending. Among them are included some tentative new species and several possible range-extensions."

**34)** *Rubus jaysmithii* L. H. Bailey and *R. jaysmithii*, var. *angustior* L. H. Bailey, are now synonymized under *Rubus flagellaris* Willd., the Northern Dewberry (Werier 2017, p. 161; and in the New York Flora Atlas: <http://newyork.plantatlas.usf.edu/browse/scientific-name/>).

**35)** Reported by Richard S. Mitchell in an interview with Kass on 23 Aug. 1993.

**FIGS. 10-11: RUBUS JAYSMITHII** L. H. BAILEY (left) and its VAR. *ANGUSTIOR* L. H. BAILEY (right), art from the original description (courtesy of the Bailey Hortorium Herbarium, Cornell University).



While pursuing his Ph.D., Smith minored in genetics. Students who majored and minored in genetics were encouraged to be active members of the Cornell Plant Breeding Department's **Synopsis Club**, and Smith was no exception [FIG. 12]. The club had been founded in 1907 as a student/faculty organization, which met weekly for dinners, seminars, and social events, and Smith's attendance is recorded in the Club's notebooks.<sup>36</sup>

## Finally Employed at the New York State Museum!



**E**ARLY IN 1945, House wrote to Smith<sup>37</sup> concerning employment at the New York State Museum, saying that they could not "make any appointments until the close of the war." House lamented that he would not have an assistant before he retired "three years from next August [August 1948]." In March 1946, Smith wrote to House<sup>38</sup> that he was in his last term of regular coursework at Cornell, and was expecting to spend "a great deal of time in the field" that summer. He also enclosed a list of specimens that he had donated, some of which he believed to be additional stations of interest.

Encouraged by House, *Smith finally joined the New York State Museum staff as Curator of Botany in 1947*. They were housed in the magnificent New York State Education Building and Museum at 89 Washington Avenue in Albany. He had left Cornell without completing the writing of his thesis, and was planning to finish that work while employed at the State Herbarium. House was fully supportive of this plan.<sup>39</sup> But Smith was apparently unable to fulfill his own or Professor Clausen's demands for perfection, and unfortunately never completed his Ph.D. thesis. He was thus not eligible to apply for the position of State Botanist when House retired.

Years later, in 1960, Smith informed Clausen that he was planning to continue working on his *Trillium* monograph.<sup>40</sup> Clausen was pleased, and took him seriously,<sup>41</sup> even hesitating to loan specimens having unpublished annotations by Smith, when another botanist had chosen to study *Trillium*.<sup>42</sup> Later Bailey Hortorium curators did send Cornell's *Trillium* specimens to TOM PATRICK, who commented, in a letter of 23 January 1984<sup>43</sup> to PETER HYPPIO, the Curator at that time, that "Your trilliums have been particularly useful to me, since both Dr. Clausen and Mr. Stan Smith looked them over pretty carefully." Although Smith never completed his monograph, Kass saw all of the data and drafts for his *Trillium* opus in the office of the State Botanist at the NYSM in April 1994.<sup>44</sup>

During his time at the State Herbarium, Smith continued adding to House's files of New York plant distributions [FIG. 13]. In fact, RICHARD S. MITCHELL, New York State Botanist from 1975-2002 (Young *et al.* 2019), reported that "over two-thirds of the entries in the Museum's plant distribution files are attributable to him" (Mitchell 1986). DAVID WERIER, who has widely used Smith's notes, suggested that "much could be gleaned from these cards regarding Smith's life and patterns." He added that Smith also kept plant lists for every New York county, preserve, etc., which archive valuable historical records.<sup>45</sup> See David's recent *Catalogue of the Vascular Plants of New York State* (Werier 2017, p. 6) for more details about the great importance of House's and Smith's plant cards at the New York State Museum. An additional small cache of Smith's early botanical lists for important localities in Chemung County, N.Y., are at the Bailey Hortorium Library at Cornell (Smith 1940-1941, E, 7 pp.).



**FIG. 12: STANLEY JAY SMITH** (circled) at a Synopsis Club meeting, Cornell University, 24 March 1947 (courtesy of Murphy & Kass 2011).

*Lupinus perennis*, ssp. *perennis* Record Card, Botany Office, NYSM, Albany, N.Y. [courtesy of C. J. Sheviak]

LOCALITY	COUNTY	COLLECTOR	DATE	IN COLLECTION OF	REMARKS AND REFERENCES
Kamer	Albany	House 26389	6/1/39	NY State	Fl. of upper half each spike white, lower ones blue.
Croton	Westchester	C.B. Girard	1868	Raven Inst.	
2 mi. N. of Bess Falls	Warren	House 27316	6/5/40	N. Y. State	
Sagehen Creek Mt. Fr. Am.	Washington	" (OB)	8/12/42		
Trasher's Corners	Ulster	C. J. Elting 585	6/9/1893	"	
Glenville	Schenectady	J. S. Cotton	6/5/1901	"	
Killbuck; e. side Elmira	Chemung	S. J. Smith, obs.	1924-1947	"	Mt. Zoro; Bowman Hill, Horseheads, obs., 1924-1947
Shadyside, Chemung	Albany	"	May 3, 1938	"	
e. of Seneca Junction	Cattaraugus	Smith & Cotton, obs.	May 27, 1938	"	1 large clump only! 26388 (N.Y.S.)

**FIG. 13: DISTRIBUTION MAP RECORD CARD OF LUPINUS PERENNIS L., ssp. *perennis*** [detail], at the Botany Office, NYSM, showing entries in House's (top) and Smith's handwriting (courtesy of Charles J. Sheviak).

<sup>36</sup> Synopsis Club notebooks were deposited with Department of Plant Breeding files, in the Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

<sup>37</sup> Letter, House to Smith, 4 January 1945, HH/SJS.

<sup>38</sup> Letter, Smith to House, 2 March 1946, HH/SJS.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from House to R. T. Clausen, 12 May 1947 (in copies of Homer House correspondence sent to Kass by J. H. Haines, NYSM, 1994).

<sup>40</sup> Letter, Smith to Clausen, 29 Nov. 1960 (R. T. Clausen's correspondence file "Stanley J. Smith," originally in a file of Clausen's "Letters"

at the L.H. Bailey Hortorium, Cornell University, now deposited at Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library); henceforth **RC/SJS**.

<sup>41</sup> Letter, Clausen to Smith, Dec 28, 1960, RC/SJS.

<sup>42</sup> Letter, Clausen to Smith, Jan. 13, 1967, RC/SJS.

<sup>43</sup> In Bailey Hortorium Herbarium loan files.

<sup>44</sup> Present whereabouts unknown; perhaps in Norton Miller's archived files at NYSM.

<sup>45</sup> Archived at the New York State Museum's Botany Office; L. Leonardi email to Dirig, 28 February 2012.

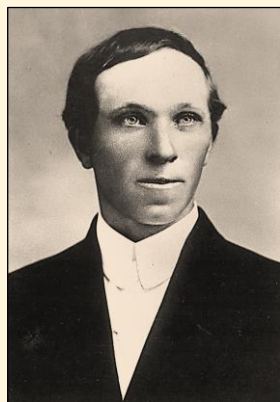
Apparently, Smith went to great efforts to explore parts of the State that he believed were under-investigated, following his focused collecting in central N.Y. in 1945. During the mid-1950s, he organized a “loosely knit group [of amateur and professional botanists] to explore the western end of the state botanically.” The objectives of the group’s investigations were first, “to revisit the stations for rare plants, which [had] not been seen in recent years,” and second, “to accumulate information on the poorly botanized corners of that section of the state.” His invitation was extended to any person interested in such explorations, “as long as they were willing to work.”<sup>46</sup>

Smith also continued his interest in Chemung County, depositing an additional 375 specimens in the Elmira College Herbarium<sup>47</sup> in 1949-1950. He travelled all over the state, collecting specimens and extending known ranges for many plant species. In 1960, Smith organized a *Symposium on Botanical Exploration in New York State*, and invited prominent researchers to speak on the problems of exploring for algae, fungi, bryophytes, and vascular plants. He invited Clausen, who answered that he would be “delighted to participate and honored to have the invitation.”<sup>48</sup>

In March 1956, Smith published an essay oriented toward New York State school teachers on “Our Sanctuaries, Biological Preserves Maintain Life for Future Use” (Smith 1956).

A long list of “Seed Plants of the Allegany Indian Reservation and Vicinity” was published in the *New York State Museum Bulletin* 383 (Smith 1961). It was organized like his earlier “Contributions to the Flora of Central New York” (Smith 1945), with sections on escaped cultivated plants, weeds, and native plants, totaling 387 taxa, with an introduction, map of the area, and references.

Smith corresponded from 1949-1962 with AGNES CHASE and JASON SWALLEN<sup>49</sup> at the U. S. National Herbarium, Smithsonian Institution, which culminated in the publication of Smith’s (1965) “Checklist of the Grasses of New York State.” He also donated specimens of many species of grasses and other plant families to the U. S. National Herbarium.



**FIG. 14: ROY LATHAM of Orient, L.I., N.Y. (from a portrait belonging to Stewart H. Burnham).**

ROY LATHAM [FIG. 14], a legendary field naturalist (and superb botanist) from Orient, Long Island, N.Y. (Dirig 1994), corresponded with Stanley Smith about unusual plants he found there. Excerpts from eight of these letters from 1950, 1951, 1957, and 1966 were published in the *Long Island Botanical Society Newsletter* (Lamont 1995). Latham’s original letters are archived at the New York State Museum.

### Helping Other Botanists



**ALTHOUGH SMITH DID NOT DIRECTLY PUBLISH MOST OF HIS FINDINGS**, the results of his studies were used and acknowledged by many other authors. He gave freely of his time to help professionals and amateurs interested in botany, and was very knowledgeable about cryptogams (non-vascular flora), as well as vascular plants.

Rogerson *et al.* (1994) wrote: “Stanley took many visiting biologists from neighboring institutions into the field with him. Among those ... were HAROLD HOWARD from Skidmore College, TED BAIM ..., GIL RAYNOR from Brookhaven National Laboratories, PHIL WALKER from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, WILLIAM COUNTRYMAN from Norwich University, GERTRUDE DOUGLAS, WERNER BAUM, KATHERINE HEINIG and MARGARET STEWART from the State University of New York at Albany, MILDRED FAUST from Syracuse University, and CURRIE MARR from the State University of New York at Oneonta. RICHARD ANDRUS and JIM HERRICK were lucky enough to share Stanley’s field trips when they were graduate students.”

Rogerson *et al.* (1994) continued: “Upstate New York had a number of very talented amateur botanists and Stanley was their champion. KARL BROOKS, ORRA PHELPS, ROBERT PENNOYER, CLAIRE SCHMITT, and CLARA SCHULTZ fall into this group.” This is just a sampling, but it indicates Smith’s wide influence.

In 1957, EDWIN H. KETCHLEDGE, then a temporary employee of the New York State Museum, published a “Checklist of the Mosses of New York State” (Ketchledge 1957). In his publication, Ketchledge acknowledged that without Smith’s unfailing support, assistance on field trips, and help in preparation of the “Checklist,” it would not have been completed for publication. Richard Mitchell later suggested that Smith taught Ketchledge all he knew about mosses.<sup>50</sup> A. LEROY ANDREWS of Cornell, an early *Sphagnum* expert, also corresponded with Smith.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Smith to R. E. Stauffer, copied to L. L. Pechuman, 25 January 1957, *SJS/LLP*. Also see *Proceedings of the Rochester Academy of Sciences* (<http://www.rasny.org/publications/proceedings/Vol%2012%20No%201Oct%201969.pdf>).

<sup>47</sup> Now housed at the Bailey Hortorium Herbarium at Cornell University.

<sup>48</sup> Letter, Clausen to Smith, 5 May 1960, *RC/SJS*.

<sup>49</sup> JASON RICHARD SWALLEN served as a botanical assistant with the USDA’s chief agrostologist, A. S. HITCHCOCK, and after Hitchcock’s sudden death in

1935, with AGNES CHASE, Hitchcock’s successor. [Letters from Stanley Smith to Agnes Chase and Jason Swallen, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 227, Department of Botany, 1936-1965 Records, Box 11; Record Unit 229, Division of Grasses, 1884, 1899-1963, Box 8; located by Kelloff in 1993.]

<sup>50</sup> Kass interview with R. S. Mitchell, 23 August 1993.

<sup>51</sup> Rare & Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Collection #3849, Box 7, folder 31, has Albert [A. LeRoy] Andrews’ correspondence with Smith.

In the August-September 1960 issue of *The Conservationist*, Smith (1960) published an article on “Mushrooms — To Eat or Not to Eat,” illustrated by two pages of colored paintings by WAYNE TRIMM. This is a good example of Smith’s outreach to the public about a popular topic.

Smith exchanged lichen specimens with IRWIN M. BRODO, and aided Brodo in his 1960s investigation of Long Island lichens.<sup>52</sup> Smith’s name appears on a list of Long Island lichen collectors that is appended to Brodo’s (1968, p. 283) New York State Museum publication on “The Lichens of Long Island, New York: A Vegetational and Floristic Analysis.”

DON RITTNER (1976a) incorporated the research of Stanley J. Smith in his chapter on the “Flora of the Pine Bush.” In his award-winning book, *Pine Bush: Albany’s Last Frontier*, Rittner (1976b) referred to Smith’s work as “the most recent and comprehensive” on the Albany Pine Bush flora. In an email to Kass,<sup>53</sup> Rittner praised Smith, saying that he “was a great man” and that “there is no doubt that the man was a genius.” Rittner said that he would go out in the Pine Bush with Smith, and even though Stanley needed a cane to move around, Rittner could not keep up with him. When he fell, he would bounce right back up.<sup>54</sup> “The man could see a plant a mile away and give you its biology and history before you got to it.” Rittner also wrote, “My *Pine Bush* book[s] plant list [Rittner 1976a, pp. 103-166] is based on ... [Smith’s] observations and knowledge of the Pine Bush flora; but I’m afraid Stanley’s brilliant knowledge is in the pages of many a scholar without his name on it. He always took time when a student of anyone came to him for help.” He ended his message with “I shall miss him.”

Although Smith’s name appeared in Barnhart’s (1965) *Biographical Notes upon Botanists*, it is unfortunate that no additional details were provided on this remarkable man and the work he did in the botanical community.

## Stanley Smith’s Legacy



**STANLEY SMITH DIED IN SCHENECTADY, N.Y., ON 20 JULY 1978<sup>55</sup>**

(Anon. 1978a) [FIG. 15]. In that year, a brief death notice also appeared in the *Plant Science Bulletin* (Anon. 1978b), and one year later, a short obituary, prepared by RICHARD S. MITCHELL, was published in both *Taxon* and *Skenectada* (Mitchell 1979a & b).

A week following Smith’s death, an undated letter, which Commissioner PETER A. A. BERLE of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in Albany, N.Y., had written commending Smith’s “yeoman labors as chairman of our Advisory Committee on New York’s Protected Native Flora,” was distributed to his colleagues by J. W. ALDRICH.<sup>56</sup> Aldrich’s cover-note explained that the Commissioner’s letter, which was addressed c/o his

hospital in Schenectady, did not reach Smith before he died from “liver cancer,” but Aldrich thought colleagues would like to have a reminder of “Stanley’s inestimable contributions to conservation.” Berle lauded Smith’s contributions to his “Department’s ability to protect the State’s natural environment — and particularly its critical habitats.... Your national reputation for encyclopedic field knowledge of the botanical resources of New York and your decades of work as Curator of the Herbarium of the State Museum have to a unique degree caused State agencies such as DEC and private organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State to view your services as indispensable. The task of developing a key role for New York’s flora within the State’s environmental programs is well begun, but your expertise and dedication are sorely needed to complete the job.” [Mitchell (1979a & b) also quoted a section of this letter.]

KN\*\* Friday, July 21, 1978
4A \*\*The Knickerbocker News

\*Smith attended Taylor Univ. for one year. His B.S. was from Cornell in 1936.

## Area Deaths

### Stanley Smith; botany curator for state Education Department

**WATERVLIET** — Stanley J. Smith, 62, a curator of botany for the state Department of Education, died Thursday in Ellis Hospital, Schenectady, after a long illness.

Mr. Smith, born in Erin, Chemung County, had lived in Watervliet for 35 years, most recently at 33 Eastern Ave.

He had worked for the Department of Education for 35 years. He was an Army veteran of World War II, and was a member of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Co-

lonie.

He was a graduate of Taylor University in Indiana, and had received his master’s degree from Cornell University.

Survivors include three brothers, Raymond Smith of Erin, Ralph Smith of Millertown, Pa., and Sidney Smith of Missoula, Mont.

Funeral services will be conducted at 2 p.m. Saturday in Robert F. Dufresne Funeral Home, Latham.

**FIG. 15: STANLEY JAY SMITH’s obituary at the time of his death on 20 July 1978 (newspaper clipping).**

**52)** Letters between Smith and I. Brodo, 1960s, in Smith’s correspondence, folder B, NYSM files, Albany, N.Y.

**53)** E-mail, Rittner to Kass, 7 January 1994.

**54)** ERIK KIVIAT (1981) wrote, “During the years that I knew Stanley, he was partially paralyzed below the waist, the result of neglecting an infection.” ROGERSON *et al.* (1994) added: “He was left partially crippled as the result of an infection in the 1950’s and was unable to drive.” [See another version in the *Epilogue* by Carl George.]

**55)** Of liver cancer (Kiviati 1981). [See also Aldrich’s comment below, and Carl George’s *Epilogue*. This and the previous footnote are examples of the “mythology” that developed about Smith.]

**56)** Letter, Berle to Smith, never received by Smith before his death, but distributed by Aldrich to the botanical community, 26 July 1978 (RC/SJS).

Two years later, EDWIN H. KETCHLEDGE, then Distinguished Teaching Professor at the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse, N.Y., published his "Revised Checklist of the Mosses of New York State" (Ketchledge 1980). Ketchledge dedicated this "publication of our joint bryological efforts to ... Stanley Jay Smith, in recognition of his dedicated assistance to many professional and individual associates during his 30 years of public service to the people of the State of New York," and included a portrait.

Mitchell (1986), in his updated "Checklist of New York State Plants," acknowledged Smith as a major contributor, including a later photograph. In the same year, Smith was listed in *Index Herbariorum, Part II (6), Collectors*, as having original collections of bryophytes, vascular plants, and fungi from New York and Iceland, deposited at the herbaria of Cornell, the New York State Museum, and the New York Botanical Garden (Vegter 1986). An additional publication, posthumously authored by Smith in collaboration with M. E. Barr, C. T. Rogerson, and J. H. Haines, appeared in 1986, titled "An Annotated Catalog of the Pyrenomycetes Described by Charles H. Peck" (Barr *et al.* 1986).

An enduring legacy of such a thorough botanist is his *specimens*. During his lifetime, Smith collected nearly 54,000 specimens of plants and fungi<sup>57</sup> that were deposited at the New York State Museum, Elmira College Herbarium, Cornell University Herbarium, New York Botanical Garden Herbarium, and other institutions. After Smith's death, New York State Museum staff processed and organized large accumulations of his specimens, and distributed sets of duplicates. The first was a collection of fungi, titled *Fungi Boreali-Americani*, issued in 1994 by CLARK T. ROGERSON, STANLEY J. SMITH [posthumously], & JOHN H. HAINES. The twenty-five sets of 337 specimens were distributed by the New York State Museum and the New York Botanical Garden. These specimens were collected mostly between 1962 and 1974 by Smith and Rogerson (Rogerson *et al.* 1994). A similar accumulation of Smith's *bryophytes* that were collected between the late 1950s and 1970s was distributed in 2000, as 29 sets of 380 specimens (228 species) of New York mosses and liverworts, without a list. LORINDA LEONARDI played a large part in organizing both sets.

Although Stanley Smith did not personally achieve his goal of writing a comprehensive state flora, his specimens and written distributional records are an invaluable resource for others who continue to study New York's wild plants.<sup>58</sup> We hope that this article will help future scholars who work with the information that Smith compiled to appreciate the man behind the myth, and encourage them to acknowledge that their work was built on his shoulders.



## Notes & Acknowledgements

In planning this article for *Solidago*, we considered omitting the footnotes, or putting them at the end; but an article of this type is really *two* stories — one the organized, gleaned chronology of facts about a person, the other the parallel saga of four people searching for information about the person over thirty years. We decided to include all the documentation, to illustrate how we approached a study of this sort. Although time-consuming and seemingly endless, its results have been extremely satisfying. Also, in an electronic publication, it is inconvenient to flip pages to read footnotes, so we decided to include them on the pages where they occur in the text. We hope you have enjoyed learning about STANLEY JAY SMITH, an authentic "born botanist" with local roots, who found a way to build his career and life around collecting specimens, doing field work, organizing an herbarium, and teaching multitudes of people about the wild flora of New York State.

### During this project, many colleagues helped us compile and organize this information:

Anita L. Karg (Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) shared their information on Smith with Kass in 1991. Thanks to Richard S. Mitchell, Charles J. Sheviak, John H. Haines, and Lorinda Leonardi at the New York State Museum; Peter A. Hyypio, Peter Fraissinet, Anna M. Stalter, and Kevin C. Nixon at the Bailey Hortorium Herbarium, Cornell University; and Carl George, Erik Kiviat, Don Rittner, and David Werier for sharing wisdom and resources that helped us discover information about Stanley and his influence.

Lee Kass acknowledges the Elmira College Division of Math and Natural Sciences for logistical support during her tenure there as Professor and Curator of the Elmira College Herbarium. Robert Dirig thanks Teresa Iturriaga for sharing facilities at the Cornell Plant Pathology Herbarium.

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### Fig. 4.

Special thanks to Teresa Iturriaga, David Werier, F. Robert Wesley, and Steve Young, who reviewed our manuscript and figures, and offered helpful feedback.

Please see the captions of individual FIGURES for their specific credits.

<sup>57</sup>) Letter, Norton G. Miller & Lorinda Leonardi to Kevin C. Nixon, 18 Oct. 2000, in Bailey Hortorium files.

<sup>58</sup>) Filed at the New York State Museum's Botany Office. An additional small cache of Smith's early botanical lists is at the Bailey Hortorium Library at Cornell (Smith 1940-1941, E).

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[Smith, Stanley Jay. 1940-1941, continued]

SEVEN ACRES POND AND SWAMP, SHALE-CLIFFS NORTH OF HORSEHEADS, and OUTLYING FIELDS AND ROADSIDES (7 pp.); **F.** a *Report of Unusual Plants (mostly from South Central New York)*, including acknowledgements and 793 taxa (46 pp.); **G.** an early draft of *The Flora of Central New York*, dated 17 March 1941 (120 pp.); and **H.** the revised manuscript of *The Flora of Central New York*, dated 31 January 1942 (cover-sheet & 122 pp.), as sent to House.]

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## Epilogue

### “Dedication to Stanley Jay Smith”

by **Carl George** (Emeritus Professor of Biology, Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.)\*

**STANLEY JAY SMITH**, Curator of Botany for the New York State Museum (NYSM), was one of New York State's most dedicated botanists with a memory for botanical matters that would make the Titaness Mnemosyne proud. I needed Stanley's help on plant identification during the establishment of the Kenrose Sanctuary near East Berne, [Albany County], NY, by The Nature Conservancy, and I was amazed at his ability to identify the hundreds of herbarium specimens, *sans* textual guidance, [that] we brought to his desk at the New York State Museum, where he was Curator of Botany from 1947 to 1978. I am told by **John Haines** and **Lorinda Leonardi** of the NYSM that this was typical procedure. He had a very warm spot in his heart for the botanically needy and uninitiated, but he was occasionally abrupt with “botanical whippersnappers,” especially those bearing a freshly minted Ph.D.

He was born *September 20, 1915*, in *Erin*, near Elmira, Chemung County, NY. His parents were *James S. Smith* (1885-1973) and *Edith S. Smith* (1885-1949). His siblings were *Roy S.*, *Raymond C.*, *J. Ralph*, and *Sidney C.* [Smith]. He spent his younger years in Erin. He died *July 20, 1978*, at Ellis Hospital, Schenectady, of pancreatic cancer at the age of 62. I visited him a week or so before he died. He is buried in *Scotchtown Cemetery*, Chemung County, NY. His stone bears the inscription “Capt US Army World War II” [Fig. 7, above]. John Haines, also a member of the NYSM community, tells me that Stanley sat for many years at a desk in the botanical ranges in the old museum with a carton of paradichlorobenzene crystals beneath.† The new Museum quarters on Empire [State] Plaza were occupied in 1978, the year of Stanley's death, and new regulations prohibit such casual proximity of museum members to dangerous chemicals

Stanley Smith [finished] an undergraduate degree at Cornell, and then continued studies there, receiving [an A.M.] in 1939. He then enlisted in the United States Army at Binghamton, NY, [on] 28 March 1941, to serve in the Ordnance Corps, attaining the rank of captain by the time of his discharge. He then continued into doctoral studies [with Clausen], ... but never completed his doctoral [thesis], apparently distracted in 1947 by an opening at the NYSM as Scientist: Curator of Botany.

\* **We are grateful** to be able to add a few unique details about Smith from George (2017). In an email to Kass on 25 Oct. 2017, Dr. George wrote: “You have my permission to publish all or any part of my brief note on Stanley Smith, one of the most wondrous botanists I have ever known.” This essay is from “an ongoing ecology project dealing with conservation and agriculture in our region.” It was undated and has not been previously published. A few editorial adjustments are indicated by square brackets, and bold highlights have been added to identify botanical colleagues.

† **John A. Wilcox**, contemporary Curator of Entomology at the NYSM, also developed cancer, after 26 years of being housed in a working atmosphere saturated with pcb fumes (Seeno *et al.* 2004) in the New York State Education Building, before 1978. Stanley Smith had endured a similar atmosphere there for 31 years. —Ed.

**Richard Mitchell**, former New York State Botanist with the NYSM, [wrote] an obituary of some 500 words, as published in the botanical journal *Taxon* (1979, [vol.] 28: 44) .... **Steve Young** of the [New York] Natural Heritage Program tells me that the late **Dr. Norton Miller** of the [NYSM] had also gathered materials for a biography [of Smith]. Dr. Miller's files now occupy 12 file cabinets in the Botanical Library of the Museum .... Stanley never married, and he lived many of his years in the homes of friends in Watervliet, Albany Co., including the Carr family ....

Stanley never learned to drive; thus many others, including those at the Museum, helped him in attending his work at the Museum. **J. Kenneth Dean** was Stanley's "designated driver" for field work .... Dr. Haines offers that Stanley was an active and generous member of the First Methodist Church of Watervliet, and I have followed up this guidance to meet Ms. Milana Pettingill, Chairman of the Board of this church, to learn that Stanley was an active member of the congregation, serving ably as pianist, superintendent of their Sunday School, and in numerous other roles. He became much less active when the two Methodist churches of Watervliet [merged].

He was a meticulous but parsimonious note-taker in the recording of more than 20,000 collections, and his gray, 6x8 inch record books now reside in the metal cabinets of the NYSM Mycology Archives .... The last numbered entry, in highly legible black ink, of the final log-book was dated 24 October 1977.

A watershed event in Stanley's life was an automobile accident in ca. 1956, in which he received a spinal injury that impaired his walking. A four-inch-diameter log fallen across a trail was both hazard and trial for him and his fellow walkers, because he took serious offense at being offered help, and often he would make light of a fall by finding a particular plant of special interest that rested close to his face when he had fallen to the ground. I was sorely reprimanded by Stanley on one of our walks together, and thus conducted myself with more reserve in later tripping.

A favorite correspondent was **Clark T. Rogerson** (1939-1997), the late mycologist of the New York Botanical Garden, and thus the files of the Garden might be another resource for a detailed biography. **Charles Sheviak** and **Gordon Tucker** [formerly of the NYSM] might also serve for further guidance.

Perhaps Stanley's most important and enduring work was his "Checklist of the Grasses of New York State," published by the NYSM in 1965. An earlier and important work was his "Contributions to the Flora of Central New York," published as a *New York State Museum Bulletin* in 1945.

A photo file in the Museum indicates other interests. One shows him in the grand kilted garb of a Scottish Highlander: fine head-dress, tartan kilt, kilt pin, sporran, boldly patterned woolen hose, and ghillie brogues (shoes). Another shows him on the top of Mt. Marcy. He loved children, serving as a leader in the Boy Scouts, and entertained them as best he could. He wrote an *Oratorio* in Latin, [that may] be ... at the Church in Watervliet. His language skills also extended to Icelandic, French, German, and classical Greek! He took great pride in being a special consultant for the NYS Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and was close friends with Mrs. Erastus Corning [wife of the Mayor of Albany] and Ms. Happy Rockefeller [wife of the Governor of New York].

Stanley Jay Smith was a "very private person," but still one of the NYS botanical greats, who needs further attention. Ms. Jo Adams and Ms. Ann Moore, reference librarians at the Schenectady County Public Library, and Robyn Reed, of the Schaffer Library at Union College, were crucial sources of guidance in bringing Stanley back into the light.



*Autumn Splendor* ♦ **New England Aster, Common Sneezeweed, Purple-stemmed Aster** ♦ Photos © by Robert Dirig  
*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae, Helenium autumnale, Symphyotrichum puniceum*