

OBITUARY NOTICE

JOHN WILLIAM HARSHBERGER

1869-1929

The Ecological Society of America records its sense of loss in the sudden death, on April 28, 1929, of John William Harshberger, former president of the society. The descendant of a long line of Pennsylvania ancestors, Dr. Harshberger was born on January 1, 1869, in Philadelphia, with which city he was identified for the greater part of his long and active career. It was there that he died.

Dr. Harshberger received his early education in the Philadelphia public schools. He entered the University of Pennsylvania in 1888, where he combined his studies toward the bachelor's degree with those toward the doctorate, receiving the B.S. degree in 1892 and the Ph.D. degree the following year. In 1893 he was appointed instructor in botany, biology and zoology at the University of Pennsylvania. He was promoted to be assistant professor in botany in 1907, and four years later was made professor, the position which he held at the time of his death.

In addition to his regular University teaching activities, Dr. Harshberger taught nature study at the Pocono Pines Summer School for five summers; and for ten more he was in charge of the ecology instruction at the Marine Biological Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island. On different occasions during his lifetime he gave more than 80 public lectures. He travelled widely, both in this country and abroad, his last extended trip being to South America in 1927. He was a member of more than 25 scientific or conservation societies and, at one time or another, served as vice-president and president of the Ecological Society of America, as treasurer and president of the Botanical Society of Pennsylvania, as president of the Anthropological Society of Philadelphia, of the Pennsylvania Chapter of Sigma Xi, of the Philadelphia Society of Natural History, and of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the Wild Flower Preservation Society, and as vice-president of the national Wild Flower Preservation Society. In the work of these two latter societies, and in that of other organizations concerned with conservation and the preservation of natural conditions, he was particularly interested and contributed much during the last ten years of his life.

He was married in 1907 to Helen B. Cole, of Trenton, New Jersey, who died in 1923; and is survived by two daughters, Jane Yard and Elyonta Cole. He was a member of the Presbyterian church, in which he served as a deacon for several years.

Dr. Harshberger's activities ranged over a wide field—botanical, educational, and literary. In botany, while primarily an ecologist, he carried on his studies in many other directions. Thus, among the approximately 300 titles listed in his autobiography,¹ there are books or articles relating to plant ecology and geographical distribution (91), mycology and plant pathology (11), plant morphology (17), plant genetics (6), plant physiology (10), botanical nomenclature and terminology (7), botanical teaching (9), biography and botanical history (24), economic botany (5), trees and forestry (20), ethno-botany (11), gardening and landscape work (24), wild flower preservation and conservation (16), toxicology (5), and teratology (7). His library, consisting of 2500 bound volumes and perhaps 10,000 pamphlets, reflects this same diversity of interest; as also, in more restricted degree, do his large collections of photographs, lantern slides, and plants.

Foremost among the contributions by which Dr. Harshberger will be remembered is his monumental *Phytogeographic survey of North America* (1913). Two other outstanding contributions in the field of plant ecology are *The vegetation of south Florida* (1914) and *The vegetation of the New Jersey pine barrens* (1916). His larger publications also included a *Text-book of mycology and plant pathology* (1917) and a *Text-book of pastoral and agricultural botany* (1920).

An enthusiastic and versatile investigator, a prolific writer, an indefatigable collector, and an inspiring teacher, Dr. Harshberger created a lasting impression on all who knew him, not only by his sincerity of purpose and devotion to his work, but by his simple, lovable personality and his ever-present spirit of friendly cooperation.

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¹ The life and work of John W. Harshberger, an autobiography. 40 pp., 3 pls., 2 figs. Philadelphia, 1928.