

Brief History of the CSB|SJU Bailey Herbarium



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The Bailey Herbarium serves the joint Biology Department of the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University. The history of the collections has paralleled the nature of the academic relationship between the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University. Just as the academic programs of the two institutions merged into a joint enterprise resulting in a single biology department, so too were their individual herbarium collections. The once separate herbaria from each school were merged into a single entity in approximately 1978 when the collections at the College of St. Benedict were moved to the St. John's campus in a small room on the third floor (**Fig 1**).



Figure 1. View of the herbarium prior to about 2000 before the renovation of Peter Engel Science Center.

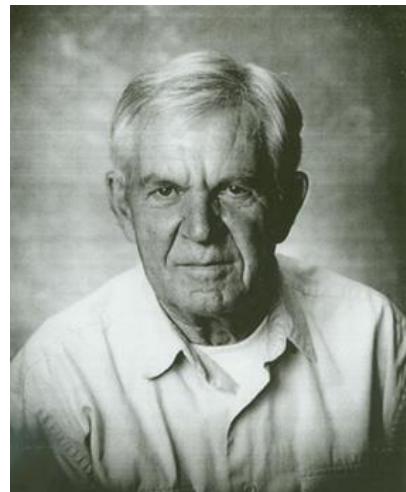


Figure 2. Dr. Nick Zaczkowski

The first curator of the joint herbarium collection was Nick Zaczkowski, Ph.D (**Fig 2**). He and Sister Phyllis Plantenberg, OSB (**Fig. 3**), chair of the biology department at the time and a strong supporter of plant science,

supervised the move. Dr. Zaczkowski remained curator of the joint herbarium until his retirement in May 1994 when the current curator, Stephen G. Saupe, Ph.D. (**Fig 4**), was appointed to replace him.

The original herbarium at the College of St. Benedict began with the work of Sister Remberta Westkaemper, OSB (**Fig 5**). Sister Remberta and her students built a collection of about 12,000 sheets that became a well recognized source of plants from Stearns County. The purchase of about 4000 plants from the estate of Z.L.

Chandonnet significantly added to the national and international scope of the CSB Herbarium. Ms. Mabel Coyne, an oblate to the Order of St. Benedict, served as an assistant. After Sister Remberta retired, the collections languished until the merger and Dr. Zaczkowski took over curatorial responsibilities.

The Herbarium of St. John's University was established by Father Urban Fischer in 1885.



Figure 1. Sister Phyllis Plantenberg



Figure 4. Dr. Stephen Saupe



Figure 2. Sister Remberta Westkaemper



Figure 6. Father James Hansen

He was the first scientist at St. John's to systematically study plants. From 1905 to 1934, Father James Hansen, OSB (Fig 6) conducted extensive botanical (and entomological) fieldwork, in part, as a treatment for his tuberculosis. During his reign as curator he added almost 1500 specimens of mosses, ferns, and flowering plants to the St. John's Herbarium. Under his guidance, the collections became recognized as one of the best in the state and he obtained the *Flora Exsiccata Austro-Hungarica* from the Abbey von Seitstetten. In addition, Hansen published extensively on Minnesota plants. In the mid-to-late 1960's Father Gunther Rolfson, OSB (Fig 7), served as curator.

In 1981, Dr. Saupe received a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation to catalog the fungi and lichen collections in the herbarium and to mount the *Flora Exsiccata Austro-Hungarica* collection. This work was finished in late 1983.

The merger of the CSB/SJU collections into a single herbarium was completed in 1995. Previously, there were four different sets of collections stored in the herbarium: (1) collections



Figure 7. Father Gunther Rolfson

from the original CSB herbarium; (2) collections from the original SJU herbarium; (3) the Chandonnet collection originally owned by CSB; and (4) the *Flora Austro-Hungarica Exsiccata* collection originally owned by SJU. Prior to the merger, in order to locate specimens of a particular plant a user would have to search all four collections. Now, these four collections are merged into a single, permanent, research collection making it much more convenient to find a specimen.

Accompanying the merger of the collections: (1) the collections were re-filed according to Cronquist's (1993) system of phylogenetic classification, updating the previous Engler/Prantl arrangement; (2) folders were color-coded to

represent the geographical origin of the plants (Minnesota, Out-of-State, Chandonnet); (3) family dividers were created; (4) alphabetical and numerical listings of the families were made and posted to make it easier to locate specimens; (5) the drying cabinet was refurbished; (6) unlabeled specimens or those that lacked collection data or were otherwise unsuitable, were separated from the permanent collections and filed alphabetically by family in a separate teaching collection; (7) laminated specimens used for teaching were



Figure 8. View of the current herbarium from the entrance.



Figure 9. View of the Herbarium toward the entrance.

separated from the other collections and filed alphabetically by family; and (8) the collections were accessioned by assigning each specimen a unique number.

The merger of the CSB/SJU collections into a single herbarium was completed in 1995. Previously, there were four different sets of collections stored in the herbarium: (1) collections from the original CSB herbarium; (2) collections from the original SJU herbarium; (3) the

Chandonnet collection originally owned by CSB; and (4) the *Flora Austro-Hungarica Exsiccata* collection originally owned by SJU. Prior to the merger, in order to locate specimens of a particular plant a user would have to search all four collections. Now, these four collections are merged into a single, permanent, research collection making it much more convenient to find specimens.

In May 1998, the entire herbarium was temporarily moved into storage in semi-trailers parked outside of the Science Center while the building underwent an extensive summer renovation. The following September the herbarium moved into its current location, Room 329 of the Peter Engel Science Center on the Saint John's campus (**Fig 8 & 9**). Shortly after, the herbarium was named the CSB|SJU Bailey Herbarium to honor the generous support of Gordon & JoAnne Bailey (see *How the herbarium got its name*). At about the same time, in Fall 2000, the name of the building was changed from "Science Center" to "Peter Engel Science Center," to honor Abbot Peter Engel who was a major proponent of the study of the natural sciences at the end of the 19th century at St. John's.

The herbarium now occupies what is arguably the most attractive room in the building. Visitors to the herbarium enjoy a spacious work area with natural lighting supplied by a wall of windows. Live plants, displays, photographs, music, networked computers, a scanner, printer, and microwave, make this a pleasant environment to visit. A large table provides an area to relax, study or work. There is also an extensive library.

The future of the Herbarium will focus on digitizing the collections. We have been included

as a part of a larger project in a Minnesota LCCMR grant awarded in 2017 to Professor George Weiblen, University of Minnesota. We look forward to the completion of this project to

share our outstanding resource with the rest of the world.

