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# Ray Ethan Torrey Papers

1832-1883 (*Bulk:* 1912-1955)

13 boxes (5.5 linear ft.)

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A plant morphologist and member of the Botany Department at Massachusetts Agricultural College, Ray Ethan Torrey was among the college's most charismatic faculty members during the early twentieth century. Born in Leverett, Mass., and educated in the local public schools, Torrey graduated from MAC with the class of 1912, earning his PhD at Harvard six years later. After serving on the faculty of Grove City College and Wesleyan, he returned to his alma mater in 1919, where he remained for more than 36 years. A specialist in plant morphology and author of two widely used textbooks and numerous articles, Torrey's introductory course in botany was among the most popular in the college. He was best known, however, for taking a broader, philosophical approach to science that encouraged students to explore the connections between philosophy, science, religion, and the humanities. Torrey died of leukemia in Boston on Jan. 16, 1956.

Correspondence, chiefly with former students and colleagues at other institutions; lecture notes and outlines; 27 pen and ink drawings; published writings and drawings; biographical material; class and laboratory notes taken by students; family and educational records (1832-1956); photographs, and other papers.

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Botany and horticulture

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## Background on Ray Ethan Torrey

Ray Ethan Torrey (1887-1956), an author and Professor of Botany at Massachusetts State College, was born in North Leverett, Massachusetts, in 1887. After earning a BS from Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1912, Torrey taught for several years at Grove City College and Wesleyan College while earning his masters (1916) and doctorate (1918) in Botany from Harvard. In 1919 he returned to the Massachusetts Agricultural College and remained there for the rest of his career, rising to full professor in 1937.

On campus, Torrey was known as a dynamic speaker and excellent teacher. Year after year, he was selected by the senior class as the college's best teacher and his famous Friday evening seminars, where Torrey employed philosophy, religion, literature, art, and music to stimulate thinking, inspired generations of students. Former students of Torrey's became leading figures in botany, filling the faculty ranks at Brown, Harvard, Iowa State, John Hopkins, Michigan State, Notre Dame, and Yale, Antioch and Bennington Colleges, and the Universities of California, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, Texas, and Washington. One former student, Oswald Tippo, became a Provost and first Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Torrey's published writings included *The Anatomy and Physiology of the Seed Plants* (1922), *General Botany with an Instructors Manual* (1923) and *A Set of Botanical Drawings for Laboratory Use* (1923), *Introductory Botany* (Vol. 1, 1925; Vol. 2, 1926), *Science and Its Function in Education* (1933), *The Evolution of Green Plants* (1936), and several papers in the field of plant morphology and phylogeny.

In addition to his far-reaching activities as a teacher and writer, Dr. Torrey was an influential member of the Theosophical Society and contributed to the *Theosophical Quarterly*.

## Scope of collection

The papers of Ray Ethan Torrey document a distinguished career as a professor of botany and as an author. The contents of the collection range from correspondence to drafts of publications and scientific illustrations, however the the bulk of the collection



Ray Ethan Torrey. Photo by Frank A. Waugh

consists of materials used in teaching, including his class lectures, lecture outlines, and notes by students. Torrey's correspondence is only fragmentary, representing only a fraction of the large number of letters he wrote to former students and friends, but include letters with Otto Degener, M. L. Fernald, Burton N. Gates, B. L. Robinson, Bernice G. Schubert, and Robert Woodworth.

Torrey's writings are well represented and complement the course materials. Included are published volumes of *The Anatomy and Physiology of the Seed Plants* (1922), *General Botany* (1923), *Introductory Botany* (Vol. 1, 1925; Vol. 2, 1926), *Science and Its Function in Education* (1923), and a typescript of his book *Angiosperms*, left uncompleted at his death.

The papers also contain twenty-seven pen-and-ink drawings by Torrey, probably executed to illustrate a book by his Harvard dissertation director, E. C. Jeffrey, and possibly reused in Torrey's own books. There is a set of published laboratory drawings (1941) and three sketches by others of Torrey's residences.

## Series descriptions

### Series 1. Biographical materials

1832-1956

0.25 linear feet

Contains short biographies, family and genealogical records, educational records, certificates of birth, awards, photographs, a will, an inventory of Torrey's belongings made upon his death, newspaper clippings, and an annotated list of reference readings for regarding knowledge and the spiritual life.

The short biographies include biographical sketches by Dr. Oswald Tippe, a former student of Torrey and the first Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts, and Robert Francis, an Amherst poet; as well as several clippings and obituaries. Family and genealogical records include certificates of marriage, lists of family members, and photographs of Torrey (1907), Torrey's father, Theodore, and grandfather, Jacob. Educational records include the 1912 Massachusetts Agricultural College Commencement Program, his high school and college grade records, and his Ph.D. diploma from Harvard. Also included here is a certificate of Torrey's membership in the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1917), and a certificate appointing him as the Sheldon Fellow in Botany at Harvard for the academic year 1917-1918.

### Series 2. Correspondence

1912-1983

0.25 linear feet

Incoming and outgoing letters of Ray Ethan Torrey for the years 1912-1955. Correspondents include: Otto Degener, M.L. Fernald, B.L. Robinson, Robert Woodsworth, Bernice G. Schubert, Burton N. Gates. There are also several letters to and from Isaac C. Kether, then President of Grove City College, Grove City, Pennsylvania, referring to a teaching position that Torrey eventually accepted, and a group of letters from Torrey to Carrolle Anderson Markle.

This series includes letters from Don Smith, Class of 1934, dating from 1981-1983, concerning Torrey and the acquisition of some of his papers for this collection.

### Series 3. Writings

1918-1933

1 linear feet

Contains addresses, published volumes, offprints of articles, and a typescript of an unpublished book. Addresses include a speech delivered before the Division of Science, Massachusetts Agricultural College on January 25, 1918, and the opening address at a meeting of the New York Branch of the Theosophical Society on March 29, 1930. Offprints are in the fields of plant morphology and phylogeny. This series also contains a typescript of his unpublished book *Angiosperms* and published volumes of: *The Anatomy and Physiology of the Seed Plants* (1922), *Introductory Botany* (1922), *General Botany* (1923) with an *Instructors Manual* (1923) and *A Set of Botanical Drawings for Laboratory Use* (1923), *Introductory Botany* (vol. 1, 1925; vol. 2, 1926), *Science and Its Function in Education* (1933), and *Evolution of Green Plants* (1936). Also in published form is the third part of his Ph.D. dissertation, *Comparative Anatomy and Phylogeny of Coniferales* (1923).

Torrey was a contributor to the *Theosophical Quarterly*; an index for the journal is included to indicate where these writings can be located.

### Series 4. Course materials

1925-1950

2.25 linear feet

Contains typescripts of class lectures, lecture outlines, bound volumes of class lectures, photographs that accompany the lectures, and class notes by students. It was Dr. Torrey's practice to prepare formal typescripts of his lectures and to make them available for students to produce typed copies outside of class (this was before the advent of electrostatic copying machines) and to share with each other. Some such materials were also mimeographed, including drawings of plants and sections of

plants, for use in botany courses.

Courses represented in this collection: Introductory Botany (1925, 1934-1936, 1946, 1950), The Evolution of Green Plants (1935/36, 1949/50), Angiosperms (1948/49), Systematic Botany of the Higher Plants (1926/27, 1934/35) and a General Philosophy Honors Course (1934/35). The materials for the Evolution of Green Plants (1935-1936) and both versions of Systematic Botany of the Higher Plants are bound volumes. The photographs accompany the course on Angiosperms (1948-1949).

#### Series 5. Drawings

ca.1920-1950

2 linear feet

Consists of twenty-seven original pen and ink drawings by Torrey, probably executed to illustrate a book by his Harvard dissertation director, Professor E. C. Jeffrey, and possibly used in one or more of Torrey's own books; and three sketches of Torrey's residences, not by Torrey. *A Set of Botanical Drawings for Laboratory Use* accompanies *General Botany for Colleges* and is located with it in Series 3: Writings.

## Inventory

Series 1. Biographical materials

1832-1956

0.25 linear feet

Biographical information

1887-1956

Box 1: 1

Letters from RET

1919

Box 1: 1

Letters regarding R.E.T.

1978-1981

Box 1: 1

"Ouija," Grove City College yearbook (1 p.)

1915

Box 1: 1

Inventory of RET's belongings created upon his death

undated

Box 1: 2

Family and educational records, photographs, and correspondence

1907-1955

Box 1: 3

Records from T.W. Torrey

1981

Box 1: 3

Certificate of Marriage: Isaac Snell to Alfreda Hatch

1832

Box 1: 3

Certificate of Marriage: Dr. Orin Andrews to Victoria M. Snell

1869

Box 1: 3

Report Cards: Montague High School

1902-1906

Box 1: 3

Photograph: RET

1907

Box 1: 3

Grade report: Massachusetts Agricultural College

1912

Box 1: 3

Commencement program: Massachusetts Agricultural College

1912

Box 1: 3

Letter to Dr. Isaac C. Kittler, with reply

1912

Box 1: 3

Certificate of Election to American Association for the Advancement of Science

1917

Box 1: 3

Certificate: Harvard Sheldon Fellowship

1917-1918

Box 1: 3

Diploma: Harvard

1918

Box 1: 3

Letters: RET to T.W. Torrey

1953-1954

Box 1: 3

Photograph: Theodore O. Torrey

undated

Box 1: 3

Photograph: Jacob Torrey

undated

Box 1: 3

Newspaper clipping, obituary of Theodore O. Torrey

undated

Box 1: 3

List of deaths, births, marriages (2 p.)

undated

Box 1: 3

Torrey genealogy

undated

Box 1: 3

Torrey family record

undated

Box 1: 3

Series 2. Correspondence

1912-1983

0.25 linear feet

Correspondence: general

1912-1955

Box 1: 4

Correspondence: general

1978-1981

Box 1: 5

Correspondence: Don Smith

1981-1987

Box 1: 6

Correspondence: O. Degener

1922-1954

Box 1: 7

Correspondence: Gray Herbarium, B. Schubert, M. Fernald, B. Robinson

1922-1948

Box 1: 8

Correspondence: Gates, Potter, Webster

1944-1950

Box 1: 9

Correspondence: Robert Woodworth

1924-1926

Box 1: 10

Outgoing Letters: Carolle Anderson Markle

1933-1955

Box 1: 11

Series 3. Writings

1918-1933

1 linear feet

Address: Massachusetts Agricultural College Alumni Day

1918-1931

Box 1: 12

The Anatomy and Physiology of the Seed Plants (2 copies)

1922

Box 1: 13

Angiosperms

ca.1938

Box

Typescript: preface-p. 25

ca.1938

Box 1: 14

Typescript: introduction-p. 49

ca.1938

Box 1: 15

Typescript: p. 26-47

ca.1938

Box 1: 16

Typescript: p. 48-70

ca.1938

Box 1: 17

Typescript: p. 50-99

ca.1938

Box 1: 18

Draft: chapter 3, p. 1-71

ca.1938

Box 1: 19

Draft: chapter 3, p. 72-132

ca.1938

Box 1: 20

Draft: p. 100-149

ca.1938

Box 1: 21

Drawings

ca. 1938

Box 1: 22

Typescript: p. 151-199

ca.1938

Box 2: 1

Typescript: p. 200-249

ca.1938

Box 2: 2

Typescript: p. 250-299

ca.1938

Box 2: 3

Typescript: p. 300-349

ca.1938

Box 2: 4

Typescript: p. 350-399

ca.1938

Box 2: 5

Typescript: p. 400-449

ca.1938  
Box 2: 6  
Typescript: p. 450-499  
ca.1938  
Box 2 : 7  
Typescript: p. 500-549  
ca.1938  
Box 2: 8  
Typescript: p. 550-599  
ca.1938  
Box 2: 9  
Typescript: p. 600-649  
ca.1938  
Box 2: 10  
Typescript: p. 650-704  
ca.1938  
Box 2: 11  
The Comparative Anatomy and Phylogeny of the Coniferales: Part 3, Mesozoic and Tertiary Coniferous Woods  
1923  
Box 2: 12  
General Botany for Colleges (2 copies)  
1932  
Box 2: 13  
A set of botanical drawings for laboratory use ( 2 copies)  
ca. 1932  
Box 3: 1  
Theosophical Quarterly Index  
1903-1938  
Box 3: 2  
Science and Its Function In Education by R.E. Torrey (2 copies)  
1933  
Box 3: 3  
Offprints  
Box  
"The Old Massachusetts Herbarium" published in Rhodora by R.E. Torrey and E.L. Davis  
1953  
Box 3: 4  
"Physiological and Morphological Correlations in Herbaceous Angiosperms" published in The Botanical Gazette by C.E. Jeffrey  
and R.E. Torrey  
1921 Jan.  
Box 3: 4  
"Transitional Herbacious Dicotyledons" published in Annals of Botany by C.E. Jeffrey and R.E. Torrey  
1921 Apr.  
Box 3: 4  
"Telephragmoxylon and the origin of wood parenchyma" published in Annals of Botany  
1921 Jan.  
Box 3: 4  
Series 4. Course materials  
1925-1950  
2.25 linear feet  
Angiosperms (Botany 59-60)  
Box  
Lecture outline  
1948-1949  
Box 3: 5  
Typed notes, with photos added by Theodore Delevoryas (Part 1, p. 1-178)  
1948-1949  
Box 3: 6  
Typed notes (Part II, p. 179-371)

1948-1949

Box 3: 7

Typed notes (Part III, p. 372-546)

1948-1949

Box 3: 8

Typed notes (Part IV, p. 547-711)

1948-1949

Box 4: 1

Summaries, lists, reviews, lecture outline, and exam (part 6)

Box 4: 2

Question outline

c.1935-1936

Box 4: 3

Photographs, Torrey's typed notes (part 1)

1948-1949

Box 4 : 4

Photographs, Torrey's typed notes (part 2)

1948-1949

Box 4 : 5

Photographs, Torrey's typed notes (parts 3-4)

1948-1949

Box 4: 6

Evolution of Green Plants (Botany 61-62)

Box

Examination and sketches

19435-1936

Box 4 : 7

Typed Notes, lecture outline

1949-1950

Box 4 : 8

Typed Notes, copied by T. Delevoryas (Part 1a, Thallophyta, p. 1-124)

1949-1950

Box 4: 9

Typed notes (Part 1B, Thallophyta, p. 125-247)

1949-1950

Box 4: 10

Typed notes (Part 2A, Bryophyta and Pteridophyta, p. 248-370)

1949-1950

Box 4: 11

Typed notes (Part 2B, Bryophyta and Pteridophyta, p. 371-462)

1949-1950

Box 4: 12

Typed notes (Part 3A, Spermatophyta, p. 463-616)

1949-1950

Box 4: 13

Evolution of Green (Chlorophyllous) Plants: mimeographed lecture outlines with drawings copied by Walter A. Hodge and Lester Peterso (2 vols.)

1935-1936

Box 5: 1-2

Evolution of Green Plants (Botany 61-62): Typed Notes (Spermatophyta Angiospermae and conclusion, Part 3b p. 617-723)

1949-1950

Box 6: 1

Honors Course

1933-1934

Box 6: 2

Introductory Botany

Box

Part 1 (2 copies)

1925

Box 6: 3

Part 2

1926

Box 6 : 4

Torrey's questions on text, lab sheets, exam, Herbarium instructions

1925

Box 6: 5

Class notes by Sarah T. Plantinga, with copies of Torrey drawings

1925

Box 6: 6

Botany 1

1934-1936

Box 6: 7

Instructor's outline for general Botany (donated By Walter H. Hodge, lab assistant and graduate student

1934-1936

Box 6: 8

Lecture outline, exams, class notes by Ruth Beebe

1946 Spring

Box 6a: 1-3

Lecture outline for Botany 1

1946 Fall

Box 6a: 4

Class notes by T. Delevoryas

1946 Fall

Box 6a: 5-6

Materials from George B. Goddard

1950

Box 6a: 7

"A List of Reference Readings" [Guides to Knowledge and the Spiritual Life]

1932

Box 6a: 8

Systematic Botany of The Higher Plants (2 vols.)

1925

Box 7: 1-2

Honors Course in General Philosophy

1934-1935

Box 7: 3

Books

Box

Introductory Botany

1922

Box 9: v. 1

Evolution of Green Plants

1936

Box 9: v. 2-3

Series 5. Drawings

ca.1920-1950

2 linear feet

Drawings

ca.1920-1950

Box 8

Drawings

ca.1920-1950

Box 10: 1-10

Prints (framed): scenes of France, willed by RET to Lillian Politella

undated

Box 12: 1-2

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

## Provenance

Acquired through contributions of former students and other associates between 1973 and 1983, with additional letters and photographs acquired from former student Don Smith from 1986 to 1987.

## Processing Information

Processed by Guy A. McLain, Jr., 1983.

## Related Material

For materials related to this collection, see RG 1/207. Oral history interviews documenting the history of the University from the following individuals: Charles P. Alexander, Ellsworth Barnard, Mary Taylor Barnard, Maxwell Goldberg, Lawrence Jones, Fred McLaughlin, Margarita Hopkins Rand, Alvan S. Ryan, H. Leland Varley, Dennis Crowley, John Lederle, and George Marston.

## Language:

English

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## Search terms

### Subjects

Botany--Study and teaching

Theosophy

### Contributors

Lederle, John William, 1912- **[main entry]**

Francis, Robert, 1901-1987

Tippo, Oswald

Massachusetts Agricultural College--Faculty

Massachusetts State College--Faculty

Massachusetts Agricultural College. Department of Botany

### Genres and formats

Pen and ink drawings

### Link to similar SCUA collections

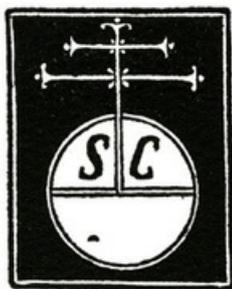
Botany and horticulture

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