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Records, 1899-1947

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Records
Date:	1899-1947
Identifier:	Record Unit 223
Creator::	United States National Museum. Division of Plants
Extent:	15.12 cu. ft. (14 document boxes) (14 tall document boxes)
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 223, United States National Museum. Division of Plants, Records

Historical Note

William Ralph Maxon, botanist, was born in Oneida, New York, on February 27, 1877, where he received an early interest in the natural sciences from his father, a newspaper editor, who would take him on long walks through the countryside on Sundays when he was a small boy. Maxon entered Syracuse University in 1894 and received a Ph.B. in 1898. While at Syracuse he developed an interest in ferns, and in the summer of 1898 Maxon left for Columbia University to do postgraduate study on ferns under Lucien Marcus Underwood.

In November 1899, Maxon received an appointment as an aid in the United States National Museum, Division of Plants. Working his way up the professional ladder, Maxon became assistant curator in 1905, associate curator in 1914, and the second curator of that Division (Frederick Vernon Coville held the title of honorary curator, without remuneration, 1894-1937) from February 1, 1937, until May 31, 1946. Retiring in 1946, Maxon became an associate in botany, a position he held until his death on February 25, 1948.

Maxon specialized in the taxonomic study of Pteridophyta, especially those of tropical America, and was considered to be one of the leading systematic pteridologists of his time. He built up the fern collection in the United States National Herbarium from one of relative insignificance to one of the finest in quantity and quality in the western hemisphere. Between 1903 and 1926 he undertook nine major expeditions to tropical America. A heart attack in 1931 put a stop to any further explorations. In 1928, and again in 1930, Maxon worked overseas in European herbaria, including those in London, Copenhagen, and Berlin. Among his scientific papers, one of his most important series of writings was his "Studies of Tropical American Ferns," which was published in *Contributions from the United States National Herbarium*.

Maxon belonged to numerous scientific societies and was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was an original member and president of the Biologists' Field Club of Washington, and he was president of the American Fern Society, 1898-1899, 1919-1933, and editor and editor-in-chief of its Journal from 1933 until his death. Maxon was awarded an honorary doctor of science degree from Syracuse University in 1922.

Descriptive Entry

These records, for the most part, document the history of the collection of the United States National Herbarium (USNH), United States National Museum, Division of Plants, while William Ralph Maxon was aid, assistant curator, associate curator, and curator of the USNH, Division of Plants (1899-1946). This material includes loose incoming and outgoing correspondence between Maxon and U.S. and foreign botanists; colleagues; directors of museums and herbaria; Smithsonian administrative staff officers; botanical collectors and friends. It covers identification, examination, and reports concerning botanical specimens; botanical gifts, loans, or exchanges with other herbaria and collectors; information concerning ferns; carbon copies of Frederick Vernon Coville correspondence regarding recommendations made by Maxon and Joseph Nelson Rose to have leading botanists receive honorary research positions with the USNH; activities of staff members; salaries and annual leave; explorations and collecting expeditions; Maxon's expedition to Cuba (1907) as well as other parts of the West Indies, Mexico, Central America, South America, and Asia; professional potentiality of colleagues and information concerning the affairs of other botanical institutions; manuscripts; requests for publications and reprints; editing and review of scientific articles; scientific society meetings; outgoing letterpress correspondence concerning the above; and material concerning the American Fern Society and its publication, the *American Fern Journal* (1924-1931).

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Botanists
- Botany
- Scientific expeditions

Types of Materials:

- Letterpress copybooks
- Manuscripts

Names:

- American Fern Society
- Coville, Frederick V. (Frederick Vernon), 1867-1937
- Maxon, William R. (William Ralph), 1877-1948
- Rose, J. N. (Joseph Nelson), 1862-1928
- United States National Herbarium

Places:

- Asia
- Central America
- Cuba
- Mexico
- South America
- West Indies

Preferred Titles:

- American Fern Journal*

Container Listing

Series 1: INCOMING AND OCCASIONAL OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE, 1899-1947. LOOSE. ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY AND IN MOST INSTANCES CHRONOLOGICALLY THEREUNDER.

Note: Incoming correspondence, 1899-1947. For description of general contents, see descriptive entry at the beginning of the finding aid.

Box 1

Box 1 of 28	A
Box 1 of 28	Abrams, LeRoy (1916-1939)
Box 1 of 28	Allen, Paul H.
Box 1 of 28	Alston, A. H. G. (1928-1945)
Box 1 of 28	Ames, Oakes (1917-1939)
Box 1 of 28	Arsene, G. Brother (1937-1940)
Box 1 of 28	Babcock, Ernest B.
Box 1 of 28	Badiarus Manuscript
Box 1 of 28	Bai-Bar
Box 1 of 28	Bailey, Liberty Hyde
Box 1 of 28	Barnhart, John Hendley (1904-1943)
Box 1 of 28	Bartlett, Harley Harris (1926-1947)
Box 1 of 28	Bartram, Edwin Bunting (1924-1945)
Box 1 of 28	Bea-Bow
Box 1 of 28	Benedict, Ralph C. (1908-1937)

Box 2

Box 2 of 28	Blomquist, H. L.
Box 2 of 28	Box, Harold E.

Box 2 of 28	Bra-Bri
Box 2 of 28	Bracelin, Mrs. H. P.
Box 2 of 28	Britton, Elizabeth Gertrude (1902-1911)
Box 2 of 28	Britton, Nathaniel Lord (1901-1932)
Box 2 of 28	Bro-But
Box 2 of 28	Broun, Maurice
Box 2 of 28	Cal-Clu
Box 2 of 28	Chase, Agnus
Box 2 of 28	Ching, R. C. (1927-1940)
Box 2 of 28	Christ, H.
Box 2 of 28	Christensen, Carl (1905-1939)
Box 3	
Box 3 of 28	Chrysler, Mintin Asbury (1924-1946)
Box 3 of 28	Clausen, Robert T.
Box 3 of 28	Clokey, Ira M.
Box 3 of 28	Collum, Rose E.
Box 3 of 28	Copeland, E. B. (2 folders)
Box 3 of 28	Copeland, Herbert F.
Box 3 of 28	Cor-Cut
Box 3 of 28	Coville, Frederick Vernon
Box 3 of 28	Dai-Dix
Box 3 of 28	Davenport, George E.
Box 3 of 28	Deam, Charles Clemon (1929-1941)
Box 3 of 28	Degener, Otto

Box 3 of 28	Demaree, Delzie
Box 3 of 28	Diels, L. (1914-1937)
Box 3 of 28	Dixon, H. N.
Box 3 of 28	Dod-Dut
Box 4	
Box 4 of 28	Eat-Eye
Box 4 of 28	Eames, Arthur J.
Box 4 of 28	Eastwood, Alice (1911-1941)
Box 4 of 28	Eaton, A. A. (1899-1907). Includes a copy of a letter from David Cady Eaton to Hooker, 3/6/1862.
Box 4 of 28	Ekman, E. L.
Box 4 of 28	Epling, Carl (1924-1942)
Box 4 of 28	Evans, Alexander William (1903-1943)
Box 4 of 28	F
Box 4 of 28	Fernald, Merritt Lyndon (1913-1945)
Box 4 of 28	Ga-Go
Box 4 of 28	Gleason, Henry Allen (1918-1946)
Box 4 of 28	Greenman, Jesse M. (1913-1944)
Box 4 of 28	Gr-Gu
Box 5	
Box 5 of 28	Ha-He
Box 5 of 28	Hall, Harvey Monroe (1913-1945). Includes Hall's "Proposal for an International Bureau of Plant Taxonomy," 1930.
Box 5 of 28	Happ, George B.
Box 5 of 28	Hargitt, C. W.

Box 5 of 28	Harper, Roland M.
Box 5 of 28	Harris, William (1903-1920)
Box 5 of 28	Hatch, W. R.
Box 5 of 28	Haught, Oscar
Box 5 of 28	Haynes, Caroline C. (1927-1940)
Box 5 of 28	Hayward, Wyndham
Box 5 of 28	Hendry, Isabel B. Concerning her grandfather, William Dunlop Brackenridge.
Box 5 of 28	Herrera, Fortunato L.
Box 5 of 28	Heuvrard, H.
Box 5 of 28	Hi-Hu
Box 5 of 28	Hill, Arthur Sir (1922-1939)
Box 5 of 28	Hinton, James C.
Box 5 of 28	Hitchcock, C. Leo
Box 5 of 28	Holdridge, Leslie R.
Box 5 of 28	Holttum, R. E.
Box 5 of 28	House, Homer Doliver (1912-1938)
Box 5 of 28	Howe, Marshall Avery (1901-1936)
Box 5 of 28	Hulten, Eric (1933-1945)
Box 6	
Box 6 of 28	Hume, H. Harold (1934-1938)
Box 6 of 28	I-J
Box 6 of 28	Jepson, Willis Linn (1918-1937)
Box 6 of 28	Johnson, Duncan S.
Box 6 of 28	Johnston, Ivan Murry (1921-1927)

Box 6 of 28	Just, Theodor (1936-1945)
Box 6 of 28	K
Box 6 of 28	Kearney, Thomas Henry (1933-1939)
Box 6 of 28	Keissler, Karl
Box 6 of 28	Killip, Ellsworth Paine (1916-1946)
Box 6 of 28	Knobloch, Irving W.
Box 6 of 28	L (2 folders)
Box 6 of 28	Lemee, A.
Box 6 of 28	Leon, Brother (1921-1945)
Box 6 of 28	Lindman, Carl
Box 6 of 28	Lundell, Cyrus Longworth (1931-1943) (2 folders)
Box 6 of 28	Lyonnet, E.
Box 7	
Box 7 of 28	Ma
Box 7 of 28	Macbride, J. Francis
Box 7 of 28	Mackenzie, Kenneth M. (1912-1933)
Box 7 of 28	Macoun, J. M.
Box 7 of 28	Mains, E. B.
Box 7 of 28	Makrinus, Emil
Box 7 of 28	Martinez, Maximino
Box 7 of 28	Maxon, William Ralph (1899-1930). Includes correspondence regarding his salary; report to Richard Rathbun on collecting in eastern Cuba with correspondence relating to this expedition (1907). (2 folders)
Box 7 of 28	Maxon, William Ralph. Mss. on "Ferns" for one of his radio talks (5/1/1926); manuscript on "Cibotium," and "The North American tree-ferns of the genus Dicksonia."

Box 7 of 28	Mc-My
Box 7 of 28	Merrill, Elmer Drew (1905-1946) (3 folders)
Box 7 of 28	Merrill, G. K.
Box 7 of 28	Mertie, J. B., Jr.
Box 8	
Box 8 of 28	Metcalf, Franklin P. (1925-1941)
Box 8 of 28	Mexia, Ynes E. (1925-1931)
Box 8 of 28	Middleton, Margaret. Regarding the biography of John Wolf.
Box 8 of 28	Millspough, Charles Frederick (1901-1923)
Box 8 of 28	Moldenke, Harold Norman (1929-1944)
Box 8 of 28	Morrison, John L.
Box 8 of 28	Morton, Conrad Vernon (1933-1942)
Box 8 of 28	Moxley, George L.
Box 8 of 28	Munz, P. A.
Box 8 of 28	N-O
Box 8 of 28	Nelson, Aven (1913-1941)
Box 8 of 28	O'Neill, Hugh Father
Box 8 of 28	P
Box 8 of 28	Palmer, T. Chalkey
Box 8 of 28	Parish, S. B.
Box 8 of 28	Pennell, Francis Whittier (1913-1942) (2 folders)
Box 8 of 28	Pfeiffer, Norma E.
Box 8 of 28	Phillips, E. Percy
Box 8 of 28	Pilger, R.

Box 8 of 28 Piper, Charles Vancouver (1919-1924)

Box 8 of 28 Pittier, Henri (1914-1940) (2 folders)

Box 9

Box 9 of 28 Porsild, Alf Erling (1937-1945)

Box 9 of 28 Pringle, Cyrus Guernsey

Box 9 of 28 Purpus, C. A.

Box 9 of 28 Quested, Adrien (1938-1946)

Box 9 of 28 Quisumbing, Eduardo

Box 9 of 28 R (3 folders)

Box 9 of 28 Ramsbottom, J.

Box 9 of 28 Record, Samuel J.

Box 9 of 28 Rehder, Alfred (1925-1940)

Box 9 of 28 Robinson, Benjamin Lincoln (1901-1934) (3 folders)

Box 9 of 28 Rock, Joseph Francis (1917-1946)

Box 9 of 28 Rose, Joseph Nelson (1928, 1936). Continuation of Rose's
correspondence by Maxon after Rose's death.

Box 10

Box 10 of 28 S (4 folders)

Box 10 of 28 Samuelsson, Gunnar

Box 10 of 28 Schaffner, John H. (1919-1932)

Box 10 of 28 Schellenberg, Gustav

Box 10 of 28 Schmidt, O. C.

Box 10 of 28 Schneider, Camillo

Box 10 of 28 Schweinfurth, Charles

Box 10 of 28 Seifriz, William (1920-1941)

Box 10 of 28	Setchell, William Albert (1911-1931)
Box 10 of 28	Shannon, Raymond C.
Box 10 of 28	Skutch, Alexander F. (1933-1945) (3 folders)
Box 10 of 28	Sleumer, H.
Box 10 of 28	Small, John Kunkel (1934-1937)
Box 10 of 28	Smith, Albert C. (1931-1946)
Box 11	
Box 11 of 28	Smith, John Donnell
Box 11 of 28	Soxman, G. M.
Box 11 of 28	Sperry, Omer E.
Box 11 of 28	Standley, Paul Carpenter (1916-1946) (2 folders)
Box 11 of 28	Steele, Edward Strieby (1922-1944). Includes biographical note by George W. Dalzell.
Box 11 of 28	Steere, William Campbell
Box 11 of 28	Stehle, Henri (1935-1945)
Box 11 of 28	St. John, Robert P.
Box 11 of 28	Sudworth, G. B.
Box 11 of 28	Swingle, Walter Tennyson (1912-1929)
Box 11 of 28	T
Box 11 of 28	Taylor, William Randolph (1926-1944)
Box 11 of 28	Tharp, B. C.
Box 11 of 28	Thompson, J. William
Box 11 of 28	Thornber, J. J.
Box 11 of 28	Tilden, Josephine E.
Box 11 of 28	Tilton, George H.

Box 11 of 28	Tonduz, Ad.
Box 11 of 28	Train, Percy
Box 11 of 28	Trelease, William (1912-1939)
Box 11 of 28	Trelease, William (1920) (Accession 16-338)
Box 12	
Box 12 of 28	U-V
Box 12 of 28	Underwood, Lucien M. (1902-1906)
Box 12 of 28	Urban, Ignatius (1911-1930)
Box 12 of 28	Verdoorn, Frans (1933-1936)
Box 12 of 28	W
Box 12 of 28	Wagner, Warren Herbert Jr. (1937-1945)
Box 12 of 28	Walker, Egbert Hamilton (1933-1944)
Box 12 of 28	Weatherby, Charles Alfred (1916-1947) (3 folders)
Box 12 of 28	Wetmore, Alexander (1927-1944)
Box 12 of 28	Wherry, Edgar Theodore (1931-1938)
Box 12 of 28	Wiggins, Ira L.
Box 12 of 28	Whitford, A. C.
Box 13	
Box 13 of 28	Williams, Louis Otho (1938-1943)
Box 13 of 28	Williams, R. S.
Box 13 of 28	Woodson, Robert Everard Jr. (1928-1943)
Box 13 of 28	X-Z
Box 13 of 28	Journal - Cuba, 1907

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Series 2: OFFICIAL OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE, WILLIAM RALPH MAXON, 1899-1931. BOUND. INDEXED.

Note: Outgoing letterpress correspondence, February 25, 1899-August 18, 1931. Indexed. 41 volumes. For general contents regarding the material, see the descriptive entry at the beginning of the finding aid. Letterpress correspondence usually corresponds to incoming correspondence when there is a lengthy and continuing correspondence with an individual.

Box 14

Box 14 of 28	February 25, 1899-June 27, 1906 (3 volumes)
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Box 15

Box 15 of 28	July 2, 1906-June 21, 1911 (3 volumes)
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Box 16

Box 16 of 28	July 13, 1911-December 29, 1913 (3 volumes)
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Box 17

Box 17 of 28	January 2, 1914-May 11, 1915 (3 volumes)
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Box 18

Box 18 of 28	May 8, 1915-October 26, 1916 (3 volumes)
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Box 19

Box 19 of 28	October 27, 1916-November 5, 1918 (3 volumes)
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Box 20

Box 20 of 28	November 5, 1918-August 13, 1920 (3 volumes)
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Box 21

Box 21 of 28	August 16, 1920-January 19, 1922 (3 volumes)
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Box 22

Box 22 of 28	January 20, 1922-November 16, 1923 (3 volumes)
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Box 23

Box 23 of 28	November 17, 1923-May 4, 1925 (3 volumes)
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Box 24

Box 24 of 28	May 1, 1925-May 7, 1927 (3 volumes)
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Box 25

Box 25 of 28	May 7, 1927-March 7, 1929 (3 volumes)
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Box 26

Box 26 of 28	March 8, 1929-December 10, 1930 (3 volumes)
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Box 27

Box 27 of 28	December 11, 1930-August 18, 1931 (2 volumes)
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Series 3: OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE, AMERICAN FERN SOCIETY AND AMERICAN FERN JOURNAL (WILLIAM RALPH MAXON), 1924-1931. BOUND. INDEXED.

Note: Personal outgoing letterpress correspondence, 1924-1931. Indexed. 1 volume. Mostly concerns the American Fern Society and the *American Fern Journal* while Maxon was president of the Society. Though this correspondence seems to be with those same persons with whom Maxon carried on official incoming correspondence, see series 1, there appears to be no correlation between the contents of this volume and the incoming correspondence. It appears that Maxon kept aside personal papers which, except for this volume, did not make their way into these records. Besides correspondence regarding the American Fern Society and its Journal, contents include correspondence concerning specimen collections and other scientific societies.

Box 28	
Box 28 of 28	Box, Harold E.
Box 28 of 28	Ferns of Jamaica, Volume 1
Box 28 of 28	North American Ferns, Polypodium
Box 28 of 28	Notes on Cyatheaceae
Box 28 of 28	Photographs: Tropical station and laboratory; Cinchona, Jamaica
Box 28 of 28	Photographs: Kew
Box 28 of 28	Photograph: British Museum Herbarium
Box 28 of 28	Photographs: Botanisk Have, Copenhagen
Box 28 of 28	Photograph: Naturhistoriska Riksmuseum, Stockholm
Box 28 of 28	Photographs: Botanischer Garten, Berlin
Box 28 of 28	Specimen notes

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