

Albion Reed Hodgdon: New Hampshire Botanist, Collector, Teacher; a Short Life

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He walks at ease in any company  
With quiet born of years of listening.

— Helen Field Watson, Hodgdon of Durham,

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## PREFACE

*I was a member of the University of New Hampshire Library staff in the early sixties. Albion Hodgdon was a frequent user of the Library. I grew to like and admire him. Many years after I left the University, I learned of his tragic accident. Except for Bogle's short announcement in Rhodora (1978), there was nothing in the literature about his life. That is what led me to undertake this biographical sketch. It is an expanded version of my article in Rhodora 2012:163-201, copyright by the New England Botanical Club. W.E.M. August 14, 2012*

## PART ONE

Albion Reed Hodgdon (1909-1976), past editor of *Rhodora*, Professor in the Department of Botany, and Plant Taxonomist of the New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station, was a deeply admired teacher and collector, and a man of robust health throughout his life. He thoroughly enjoyed working with colleagues and students. His tireless collecting and positive disposition were indefatigable. What follows is a sketch of the life of Albion R. Hodgdon, viewed through numerous colorful excerpts from his diaries and recollections of his family, friends, and former students. This essay provides glimpses of a remarkable botanist, the history of early to mid-20th century botany, and the landscapes – now much altered – in which he collected and described plants.

### FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

The Hodgdon family roots were in Boothbay, Maine. He was descended on his father's side from George Franklin Hodgdon and Angelia Lewis, both from Boothbay. They gave birth to Lewis Percival Hodgdon, who married Laura Jerusha, daughter of Melville P. Hodgdon and Laura Reed, both of Boothbay. The two branches stemmed from Thomas Hodgdon living in Berwick, Maine in the eighteenth century. Thomas had two sons, half brothers who were the beginning of the Hodgdon branches (Hodgdon, Anthony, Email to author October 13, 2011).

Lewis and Laura had two sons. They were Albion Reed Hodgdon who was born on Sawyer's Island, Boothbay, on November 1, 1909 and his older brother, Melville Stuart Hodgdon, who had been born in Boothbay, July 26, 1907. The family moved to a small farm on 32 acres in Dover, New Hampshire when the boys were in their early youth (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Melville (left) and Albion (right) ca. early twenties (Courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).

The first documentation of Albion's interest in plant life is in excerpts from a note dated May 21, 1924, provided by Madge Hersey, his niece (daughter of Melville). The 17-year old Melville describes the "Forestry Club" that he, Albion, and boyhood friends had established with the goal of cutting and clearing the timber on a section of their father's lot. The idea was not to make money, but to increase the value of the stand. Soon after, they changed the name to "Twin Rivers Agricultural Club." Albion later expressed interest in pursuing a career in horticulture.

Neither Lewis nor Laura were college graduates, but the boys were encouraged to pursue higher education as a way to escape the low income of the farm. According to Madge Hersey, "Their greatest influences were two successful uncles — Fred Bardwell, a professor of chemistry

at MIT and George Atwood, a medical doctor. Dad [Melville] spoke very highly of these men and probably they helped pay for educating Dad and Albion. They were obviously exceptional children of high intellect and curiosity. They were of very different personalities. Dad was quiet in public and never one for conversation. Albion was very personable. Some of my fondest memories were of Albion's visits to our house" (Hersey, Pers. Comm. Feb. 12 2011).

Of the two boys, Melville was not given to idle conversation . Albion was more open and engaging. Whereas Albion was to make plants his vocation, Melville, later an engineer, made them his avocation, maintaining an interest throughout his lifetime. Melville was a weekend gardener who had extensive knowledge of flowers and kept "beautiful" fruit trees (Hersey, Pers. Comm., Feb 12. 2011). He traveled while he was in the army in World War II and collected specimens for Albion wherever he was sent, especially in California and Oregon.

Albion graduated from high school with perfect attendance. His first two university degrees were in botany from the University of New Hampshire: a Bachelor of Science in 1930 and a Master's degree with his thesis, *The Flora of Strafford County* (Hodgdon 1932), the geographical area with which he was most familiar. He then earned a doctorate at Harvard University in 1936 with his dissertation, *A Monographic Study of the Genus Lechea* (Hodgdon 1936).

In 1941 Albion married Audrey McKown (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Audrey and Albion wedding, 1941 (courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).



Figure 3. Audrey and Albion , 1941 (courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).

Distant cousins, they were both from seafaring stock, she the daughter of a sea captain who spent a good part of her childhood with her family on board ship, sailing to all parts of the world (Bogle, p. 599-600) and he the descendant of ship builders (Greene, 1906: 540-546).

In 1937 Albion drafted a reply to an announcement from the Department of Botany at Washington State University stating that “I would like eventually to become an authority on the flora of one considerable part of our country and at the same time know enough about the related areas to make that knowledge more than mere pedantry.” This is the earliest and most direct statement of his professional life goal. He notes in his diary from 15 July 1937, “I had a much relayed letter from F. L. Pickett Head, Department of Botany, Pullman, Washington. Sounds like a good job for a person of my training. I immediately sent a night letter bespeaking my interest and then made arrangements about credentials from Harvard.” Although Washington may have offered him a job, he did not go. The State of New Hampshire became that “considerable part of our country” where he was to become the eventual authority, when he accepted a position at the University of New Hampshire, the logical choice. It was near his roots.

It became Albion Hodgdon's life work to record the flora of New Hampshire. By the time he was ready to retire, he was to leave a large body of publications in botany and was actively contributing plants to the University of New Hampshire Herbarium (largely his creation and now renamed in his honor). Thus, except for obligations to Harvard University, he spent his entire career at the University of New Hampshire. "Completing the flora was his passion," said David Conant, Hodgdon's former student, later an editor of *Rhodora*, now a retired professor at Lyndon State College. "He really wanted to do that, and he was actively working on it in every moment he could scrape away from the duties of being a faculty member in the Botany Department."

In early training for his life work, he traveled extensively: to Tennessee and Michigan while pursuing his doctoral dissertation; to Cuba in 1936, prodigiously collecting for the Gray Herbarium in a post-doctoral assignment at Harvard; to Kentucky in 1937; to Mexico and California in 1938; and to Alaska in 1952. He traveled to the Caribbean on vacations in the 1960s with his wife, Audrey, to Great Britain in 1964, Scotland and Ireland in 1966 with family, to Europe in 1968, to Puerto Rico where he visited his student, David Conant, in 1973, and later to the Galápagos Islands (Bogle 1978). Madge Hersey said, "My mother and I would listen intently to Albion's stories of his travels all over the world. I was enthralled."

Hodgdon was an inveterate diarist.<sup>1</sup> Like many classical collectors, he kept a written record of his daily activities, especially early in his career (Cuba, Kentucky, México, and Alaska), usually during summers when school was not in session. He botanized during the daytime and was also a keen observer of birds, being familiar with most New England species and surprisingly knowledgeable about birds of other locales. He wrote up his thoughts after the evening meal, sometimes writing into the wee hours.

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<sup>1</sup> **Audrey kept a lively diary of her own on her south seas voyage prior to her marriage in 1939.**

He wrote not only about his plant collecting but sometimes about subjects far afield. He criticized or praised individual scientists. He wrote about personalities, food, meals, favorite fruits, geography, climate, scenery, culture, the people he met or traveled with, recreation, psychology, philosophy, and literature. He often made critical observations about the society he lived in.

His diaries were all written in pencil or in ink, with occasional blots on the paper. His handwriting was excruciatingly minute in places, almost microscopic, requiring a magnifying glass to read. He wrote in the margins, perpendicular to the horizontal text, using every square inch of white space on the sheet, as if he could not afford new paper. Sometimes he would insert little sketches of plants, birds and other organisms. He wrote rapidly, not bothering to correct his spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors (which are largely left intact in this text). He crossed out words, then inserted his corrections between his already tight lines, not expecting that anyone else would ever read what he had written. In his published papers, of course, he was more careful. He was his own editor. His son Tony said that Hodgdon and Radcliffe Pike, his collaborator and friend on later projects, would sometimes labor for hours for days about the right word to use (Hodgdon, Anthony and Ariel Parent, Pers. Interv., Dec. 17, 2010).

## PART TWO

### THE CUBAN EXPEDITION, 1936

The Cuban expedition of 1936 provided essential experience and helped to hone Hodgdon's observational skills. Fresh with his new doctorate in botany at the age of twenty-seven, he set out for Cuba by way of Virginia and southern states in an early 1930s Ford Model A car. Dr. Lyman B. Smith, also a young Harvard Ph.D. and a curator of the Gray Herbarium at

Harvard, accompanied him. The purpose of the trip was to collect plants for the Gray Herbarium, although Hodgdon's diary sometimes reads more like a travelogue than a log of collecting activity.

They spent two weeks collecting 24 sets of plants east and southeast of Norfolk, Virginia, then traveled directly to Florida through the Carolinas and Georgia. They tarried in the Florida Keys and made a "haul of plants." In a little "stern kicker" [dinghy or skiff] they disembarked into a foot of water on the coral beach on Little Pine Key. They quickly lost their way in the tangle of bushes swarming with mosquitoes, but by "burning trees and breaking branches" they found their "way back to where they were going" after covering a mile of country and nearly crossing the island and finding snails on plants (Hodgdon 1936 July 4).

The two men then loaded their car onto the ferry for Cuba. During the short voyage through Key West, Hodgdon describes the shallow waters, at times treacherous with reefs.

The patchwork of yellowish blue to grayish blue and varying to greenish tints was quite new to me and I thought of the interesting bodies of water I had seen, from the grayish blue to green of the North Atlantic, the intense sapphire blue of the Gulf Stream, the gorgeous purple, rich as velvet of the deep Pacific at Pt Lobos and Monterey, the more placid purple of Lake Tahoe or the bright green of Montana's stream .... The water was intensely blue particularly in the wake of the boat. A heavy roll ... did not make me sick as it did many others on the boat. It was largely a sideways lurch. All too soon we were in Havana directly past Morro Castle (Hodgdon 1936 July 6).

Arriving in Cuba, Hodgdon and Smith stayed at the Harvard House (Casa Harvard), where they were to have time for recreation and tennis with other residents of the House, including two other botanists, Vernon Cheadle (the man to beat on the court, who later became Chancellor of the University of California, Santa Barbara) and "Taylor," whom he did not further identify.

Our collecting was very pleasant. Where we first stopped was a brush pasture from which Smith, Cheadle and Taylor brought me beautiful and curious plants in such quantities that I was kept busy until one press was filled .... It was very hot, well over ninety degrees Fahrenheit with an astonishing humidity and a

punishing sun which beats directly down and forces one to wear a protective hat. By evening at seven thirty it was cool and quite dark. Some bird is calling, perhaps one of these dark Anis here which look like black parrots .... The doves coo'd all morning. There are short-tailed ones here as in Key West and these somewhat resemble a kingbird for size but they flutter about. I saw a curious dainty swift yesterday and a hummingbird (very dark) on the telephone wire half way down to Soledad. Also yesterday we saw a beautiful owl being chased by a kingbird ... with light brown markings. The kingbirds here are ten inches long with a long neck and long slightly curved bill. Sparrow hawks too are common here. None are as common as the Anis with their medley of calls and their beautiful organ-like notes. Mockingbirds are strangely silent here (Hodgdon 1936 July 14).

Hodgdon and Smith began exploring the countryside by auto. The party of four outfitted their car with “plant presses, diggers, a large axe, two pillows, three knapsacks, two cans, car tools and a box” for odds and ends (Hodgdon 1936 July 15). They rode over bad roads into the countryside, botanizing wherever they could, encountering large numbers of dogs, cats, horses, pigs, cows, and other livestock, none of which seemed to have any fear of automobiles. Hodgdon wrote:

Lately I have been feeling more energetic than when first here. I took emigrains, sodas, cathartics etc, but lately because of Sturrock's notions of auto intoxication in the tropics, I have taken to dried fruits (apricots, dried apples, prunes) in the evening. Today I had a ripe Muntingia of the Elaeocarpaceae, very sweet, a little pucky (Hodgdon 1936 July 16).

They spent the day inside working over their collections, stealing a few minutes to watch the driers and presses.

On July 17, they made another collecting excursion to the Palm Barrens at Santa Clara, this time “primarily to get a set of *Centrosema virginianum*” which Smith was determined to collect. It was hardest on him, however, for he had to select and dig the plants from the hard rocky soil in the intense sun.

I collected some pistillate and staminate material of a *Euphorbia* while Smith wandered to the locality of *Portulaca* for some to give to the garden. Two days earlier we had obtained some *Epidendrums*, some *Aristolochia* and some *Passiflora* (Hodgdon 1936 July 17).

They spent a couple of days getting the presses clear for a trip to “Gabelan” [*sic*: probably Gavilán].

Smith removed dry about one hundred fifty sheets and I spent most of the morning and part of the afternoon filling these again (Hodgdon 1936 July 18).

The bending and stooping required in pressing plants to the monotonous and eye straining work of straightening specimens when in press is all bad for the stomach (Hodgdon 1936 July 19).

This morning to my considerable relief, when we found the “pickings good” at the coast, Lyman suggested that we make a second trip there tomorrow. We put up perhaps ten species this morning, many Euphorboaceous [*sic*: Euphorbaceous] things, a queer Amarantaceous [*sic*: Amaranthaceous] plant growing directly in the crevices (numerous crevices) in the coral rock making up this part of the Cuban coast. Chitons at or above water level were observed and hundreds of conch shells as fine as Uncle Ward ever gave us (Hodgdon 1936 July 21).

We also collected a very beautiful Bignoniaceous plant (catalpa and trumpet vine family) the flower is a rose color about two inches across and shaped like a snapdragon completely open. It was a profusely flowering vine clambering over trees and shrubs. We also collected a Myrtaceous shrub sweet to the smell and a *Cordia*, one of the Heliotrope family which looks as different to me from the other of the Boraginaceae as does a rose. A *Hybanthus* and an unknown tree complete the plants that we specially collected (Hodgdon 1936 July 22).

They next headed to the southwestern sector of Cuba. If they could not go by car, they were able to obtain horses—after the roundup of cattle, when the horses became available. They were novices at horseback riding and they learned the hard way. To alter the speed of the horse, they were told to run the reins up toward the horse’s ears. They learned the trick of moving about in the saddle. “I find that I get used to things more readily than Lyman does,” Hodgdon said, almost like a veteran horseman.

Because Hodgdon's stirrups were higher, he found that he could rest his seat. Lyman, however, constantly complained of the comparative discomfort of riding and "speaks of walking and automobiling over hellish roads" as welcome relief (Hodgdon 1936 July 23). Hodgdon and Smith debated the comparative comfort of horses versus the automobile.

Even the worst of the road to Cienfuegos is preferable to [Smith] over horses whereas I say even the worst of horseback riding is preferable to the best of the road to Cienfuegos. We don't argue at all however and each of us I believe understands the other" (Hodgdon 1936 July 24).

Smith freely states, 'What would I have done had I taken this trip alone and I don't know for we have worked together nicely and the car has been or will have been invaluable in collecting the superior portion of our finds.' I am very stuffy and get grudges on short notice though I try not to show them. Smith must perceive that I am touchy (Hodgdon 1936 July 24).

Besides changing blotters, removing dry specimens from ventilators and drying out blotters in the sun, we did very little except to keep busy reading and catching up on our diaries and on our correspondence (Hodgdon 1936, July 24).

Other scientists on the Cuban expedition kept diaries as well and were teased by the non-diarists mocking them with "more fiction" and "at it again, eh?"

They rode from Soledad to Gavilán in the morning, a distance of perhaps nine or ten miles, and in the afternoon rode four hours into the little village of San José.

This last was over a hilly rough and rocky road. In the a.m. we had to ford two swirling streams one of which the horses went deep in and wetting thoroughly the blotters so that we had a two hour job to dry these out when we finally arrived at the ranch (Hodgdon 1936 July 20).

In the course of two hours we had picked up seventy-five or more sheets of specimens: a *Gesneria*, a beautiful *Chrysophyllum* with leaves shiny green above and golden brown beneath, several Composites, one handsome with fern like leaves and beautiful pink heads, a *Croton* with tubular white to pink flowers six–eight inches long. I as usual got something of a headache from the nerve wracking drive from Cienfuegos to Soledad and on reaching home in time for tea at three was very tired. Perhaps that could be expected after

making a trip of one hundred twenty or more miles with considerable collecting in addition (Hodgdon 1936 July 25).

After organizing their orchids, ferns, and Gesneriads collected the afternoon before, they started off at seven a.m. “on a botanical excursion to Mount Naranjal, the sharpest of the peaks that loom over Gavilán and may be easily seen from as far away as Santo Domingo [Cuba]” (Hodgdon 1936 July 28).

As we ascended, we noticed stalactites which indicated limestone. The underslung cliffs of a pinkish gray to brown also suggested their limy character. We found a few interesting plants and then Smith made a find. Reddish rosettes against a cliff turned out to be a *Tillandsia* not heretofore found in Santa Clara and brown only from a few specimens from Oriente and Pinar Del Río. In his excitement he sat on some moist cow dung while they were being sorted. We only succeeded in getting the specimens by pushing them off and separating them from *Agaves* (Hodgdon 1936 July 28).

While waiting for a press and driers, they botanized a gulch in the mountains on a journey from San Blas to San José.

By following up the bases of the nearly sheer and treacherous (because slippery, crumbly and wet) cliffs we obtained a few interesting plants. Large simple leaved Polypodiums and a small *Asplenium* were collected as well as *Pharis* (grass) and as many lichens as I could spot. Pertusarias and other minute lichens mainly on tree bark predominate but nearby I got a few *Cladonias* (Hodgdon 1936 July 29).

This morning we started off at seven thirty a.m. after a cup of coffee, straightening our plants and fixing my shoes by drawing out the nails which were coming thru into my feet. Juan had a last and (shoe/cobbler's) hammer which quite sufficed to fix me up though I thought for a time before we found how sufficient these people were that I would have to stick pretty close to the horse today. We came back at two and just before our house we came by some fruiting mangoes. Felipe climbed up to get some (just for me) altho I thought they were for him as well and I ate several one of which was just ripe and delicious (suggestive of a peach). I thus defied Smith's warnings and Felipe's as well about poison and danger of eating with milk. The minute Felipe started shaking the tree the pigs started coming and I had to dismount and grab the fruit away from the

swine. ... We changed saddles this morning and did a little mending on saddles. Riding these trails is sure hard on horses' equipment and such (Hodgdon 1936 July 30).

They made a five-day trip into the mountains with guides Felipe and his brother Manolo “a cheerful man”, whom they grew to like. Felipe warned them to hold the horse's manes on the steep climb, but their first attempt to scale the mountain failed and they were forced to retrace their way down exceedingly steep and grassy slopes back to the muddy road. They had to change saddles at one point because the steep roads were hard on the horses' equipment. They tried again to climb a very bad trail, getting an early start to take advantage of the cool morning and to avoid the afternoon rain. The trail zig-zagged up the steep, semi-wooded mountain. There, Felipe's horse cast a shoe, which he had repaired in La Sierra while they all waited during a shower. Their ride back was “unpleasant” partly on horseback, when Hodgdon felt hunger pangs aggravated by the thump of the horse as he clumped down the difficult and rocky trail and partly on foot dragging their horses behind down the very slippery slope to Loma Ventana [Cuba].

After stopping for lunch, two caballeros—army police in khaki with broad brimmed hats—came up carrying a rifle and wearing pistols and pistol belts. The police made the rounds of outlying towns to keep troubles in check. Not observing anything to be concerned about, the police went on their way and the botanists led the horses down while the heat of noonday became intense.

The trip upward from La Vega through the tiresome and somewhat disturbing *Aroma* [a spiny legume] was uneventful except for views of large numbers of cuckoos, anis and the large roadrunner-like brown birds of the cuckoo family which run along branches rather than on the ground. Where we stopped and ate reminds me of a small emerald green bird about five or six inches long which I saw there. A large and brown leaved *Philodendron* made a conspicuous appearance on the chimney like cliffs of the mountains near the road along with *Agaves*, cacti and other succulents; just west of San Blas is a mango forest every tree of which

seems to have scores even hundreds of orchids, and Bromeliads growing upon them, a marvelous show (Hodgdon 1936 August 3).

We collected a terrestrial orchid an *Habenaria* with spurs on the flowers three or four inches long. Smith says this is a common type of flower in the terrestrial *Habenarias* in the tropics, also that only ten percent of tropical orchids are terrestrial. Soon we came to a swift stream flowing across the trail. As the horses stopped to drink we saw numerous interesting plants, [including] a *Samolus*, a *Cardamine* (Hodgdon 1936 August 4).

At noon the horses' shadows were exactly beneath the horses. From here down we led the horses while the heat at noonday became too intense. At our destination in San Blas we dismounted gladly and immediately began work on our plants to get driers out in the coffee drying plot for them to heat and dry out. These we placed back with plants in press and soon we were one by one able to take a shower and shave" (Hodgdon 1936 August 6).

On the return trip they found the trail to be superior in every way, though probably as long. "Antonio Noonez," another guide, "had a strong fresh steed and he led us a merry ride, most of it either at a jog-trot or in my case in a gallop catching up." MacKenzie, Hodgdon's horse, preferred to idle along and when the other horses got out of sight ahead around a bend he would demonstrate his capacity by [galloping ahead] until he had them in sight again. My sit down is accommodating itself quite nicely now that I've learned to stand in the stirrups and lean forward when the horse runs. Yes, sir, Mackenzie is a noble horse, somewhat larger and more powerfully built than most of the saddle horses hereabout (Hodgdon 1936 August 7).

One person told Hodgdon that Mackenzie could run all the way to Soledad certainly ten or eleven miles and at the end, he had "the courage" to run to the stable. "Now he is getting lazy," Hodgdon continues, "and a bit old; he stumbles very often seemingly because he gets dreamy" (Hodgdon 1936 August 7).

Meanwhile, they went on with their collecting and observing the wildlife.

This morning we collected an introduced milkweed (*Asclepias*) shrub-like, but resembling ours except for handsome violet flowers an inch or more across. It is getting to be a bad plant in these parts. Another

serious plant at the ranch is *Aroma* a legume with a beautiful spike or cylindrical raceme of pink pistillate flowers continued into yellow staminate ones (like a bottle brush). It is spiny and the horses I notice take care not to step on it. They have a crew working to get rid of it but to us that seems nearly hopeless.

More remarkable than the endurance of the horses perhaps was our own endurance on this trip; fifteen miles of being slapped around and me with a blistered bottom (or nearly so, from almost the first of the trip. To favor this part of my anatomy I had to stand in the stirrups or ride inclined to one side (Hodgdon 1936 August 7).

They then spent an uncomfortable night at a local general store on short, narrow, sagging cots. And when they got back to Harvard House at nine thirty the next day Hodgdon still had energy to spare at bed-time.

Sleeping arrangement was one of the “hardships” Hodgdon had to face. Hodgdon grumbled about getting on the edge of a narrow, sagging bed and trying to balance there. He thought Smith was hogging the bed while Smith thought that Hodgdon was taking up two-thirds of the bed, behaving like Laurel and Hardy in an old movie. They made up and “we were on as good terms as ever.” Smith was “certainly an easy person to deal with” (Hodgdon 1936, August 6).

Despite warnings from colleagues and natives alike, Hodgdon took great pleasure in trying different tropical fruits, including Mammee apple, Anonas or custard apple, Bael fruit, papaya (“if one takes no notice of the odor”) and *Phyllanthus*, a tree bearing fruit that resembled a large gooseberry. “I now have the reputation of eating most everything,” Hodgdon said in his diary, betraying an adventurous if not reckless spirit. He especially liked muntingia (*Arbutus uneda*), comparing it to a blueberry, to which Smith said, “That’s no endorsement.” Hodgdon never suffered from his adventurous eating (Hodgdon 1936 August 1).

My moustache, which had been growing for a month and, to my chagrin, not making a decent show more because of its thinness than length and which had tickled my lip, nose and eyes, caused me yesterday to set

an advance date, over Sunday the prescribed date, for its removal. This came off without ceremony at Acosta's [probably a local establishment], "Viva Acosta" at two P.M" (Hodgdon 1936 August 6).

At Harvard House they spent "most of the day changing all their plants into the new ventilators and drying out blotters besides removing dried plants and preparing them for shipment" (Hodgdon 1936 August 8).

Their travels were rapidly coming to a close, but they still had much to see. They saw tree ferns with solid straight fibrous trunks as tall as telephone poles, with fleshy rootstocks and the largest fronds of any fern. Hodgdon spotted a tarantula as big as a crab resting beneath a cliff in deep grass and another dragging a small tarantula. He identified many birds, including the northern mockingbird "which apparently is the author of that rich organ like note that I attributed to the Ani several weeks back" (Hodgdon 1936 August 10).

The expedition over, they loaded their car with exsiccatae and headed for Havana and the Estación Experimental Agronómica, where Hodgdon was impressed with a researcher who was collecting varieties of *Zea mays*.

They spent the entire day in Havana after which Hodgdon said his impressions could fill a book. After an overnight, they spent the morning in Havana, noon on the ferry and by afternoon they were in Key West, Florida.

It was not the first botanical expedition to Cuba under the auspices of Harvard, nor was it the last. For example, Charles Wright made a series of botanical trips during 1856 to 1867 (President and Fellows of Harvard College 1993), and in 1953, E. O. Wilson made a trip with three botanists to Cuba, to hunt for ants (recounted in Wilson 1994: 147-148). Parts of Wilson's description of the trip reads very much like Hodgdon's diary.

## KENTUCKY EXPEDITION, 1937

After the trip to Cuba and his appointment to the University of New Hampshire, Hodgdon embarked on a summer expedition in 1937 to the State of Kentucky, again accompanied by Lyman B. Smith. Meeting them in Huntington, West Virginia were Frank Gilbert, Professor of Botany at Marshall College, and a “Mr.” McCoy, whom Hodgdon did not further identify but was probably Thomas N. McCoy, a well-known collector of Kentucky ferns. The purpose of the trip was to make additions to the known flora of Kentucky and round out the representation of plants in the Gray Herbarium under the guidance of Professor Merritt Fernald. “Unlike our expedition of 1936 to Virginia we expect (and Prof. Fernald expects us) to get only one or 2 sheets of common plants and only 6 or 7 of the rarest ones we find” (Hodgdon 1937 July 2).

Lyman and Gilbert invented some playful terms such as *Colywoptus polyglot*, *gosh awfulus*, which a *ma gorri ignobilis*, and *Brother Rotifer*. “All good terms, but not yet in the King’s English.” For recreation Hodgdon and Smith went to the movies often, sometimes several times a week, but apparently did little reading unlike in Cuba, where Harvard House had many magazines and Hodgdon read *As the Earth Turns* [by Gladys Hasty Carroll] with “great joy.”

Fifty miles west of Huntington, West Virginia, began a limestone region of Kentucky characterized by sink holes, caves and vertical cliffs.

The vegetation of course is in greater aspect calcicolous [with] *Rhododendron maximum* in unrivalled profusion exactly at the base of a vertical limestone cliff. Also *Kalmia latifolia* and *Epigaea repens*. There are several natural bridges in this locality also famous caves such as the Cascade Caves near which we operated. The collecting was about the richest I have ever seen save on the summits of some of the Rockies. There were paw-paws, persimmons, *Chionanthus*, *Magnolia tripetala*, Tulip tree, *Ostrya*, *Carpinus*, *Rhododendron catawbiense* and *maximum*, *Kalmia latifolia*, several oaks, *Ptelea trifolia* [*sic: trifoliata*], a *Viburnum* or two, *Fraxinus quadrangulata*, *Cercis canadensis* and so on. The herbaceous plants were

numerous, *Cypripedium*, *Liparis*, a beautiful *Silene rotundifolia*, a *Pentstemon pallidus* but more nearly *P. hirsutus* growing on limestone cliffs, *Dodecatheon*, a *Linum*, *Lechea racemulosa*, and *Aristolochia serpentaria*. In the limestone I found a crinoid (fossil Echinoderm) of which I have a fragment (Hodgdon 1937 July 3).

McCoy told them of a “Big Woods” tract that he had visited on a previous collecting foray to the limestone region of Carter County, not far from the attractive city of Ashland, with an unusual flora and human history:

It seems that a double murder had been committed at that spot. He got one of the police to take him there.

This afternoon after finishing the necessary straightening of our plants, we found time to make the trip. We picked up McCoy in Kenovia [*sic*: probably Kenova, WV].

We found the flora to be quite distinct from the calciphiles and Rhododendrons of the previous day.

Legumes were in abundance. Of *Osmorhiza* or Sweet Cicelys, four species were common, scattered in the oak woods. *Morus* and *Platanus* were abundant. Oaks, hickories and Black Gums were abundant in the forest. A gigantic composite, *Cacalia* grew along with *Hystrix*, *Hydrophyllum*, Goldie's Fern, Silvery spleenwort, a few scattered *Onoclea* and some sterile plants of *Equisetum arvense* are the first of each from Kentucky to go into the Gray Herbarium. We collected several huge *Bromus* species, a *Ranunculus recurvatus*, the fruit dropping badly, *Polemonium reptans* in fruit, May apple in fruit, Blue Cohosh in fruit. *Laportea canadensis* made digging unpleasant for a large mint which grew along an intermittent stream flowing down the valley. We also got a large *Phryma*. The country was more of the nature of an oak-barren above the stream. That evening we worked until past eleven getting the plants in press (Hodgdon 1937 July 3-4).

With two cars we went a few miles away in the hills to what is known locally as “Cow Bell Hollow”. We left one car at the foot of the “run” and then drove the other around four miles or so to the head of the “hollow” at the top of the mountain. At the foot where we left the first car is Pine country, predominantly *Pinus virginiana*. Farther up is limestone in horizontal strata and on top again is sandstone. Some of the mountains resemble western mesas. After walking up through another section called Dog Foot Spring, we finally started from the top, down through Cow Bell Hollow. At the top was an Oak Barren, where we collected Blackberries to eat, as well as 30 or more interesting plants, some of them apparently rare in or new

to Kentucky. As we started down the vegetation, now in the limestone section, changed radically. We entered the finest deciduous forest I've ever walked in. Tulip trees called locally "Poplar," huge aspens, and beeches, Black Walnuts, sugar maples, all up to one hundred feet tall made a beautiful forest. A cave fifty feet deep and two hundred feet wide opened out on this forest. We walked up a trail to the limestone cliffs a bit farther down and collected a large *Heuchera*, *Silene rotundifolia*, *Thalictrum* and several other plants. All of the way down the three or four mile trail we got new and to us, at least, interesting plants. We worked until eleven fifteen putting them into press (Hodgdon 1937 July 7).

Arose at six forty five after seven hours of very solid slumber. Had breakfast in the tea-room next door. I had among other things three doughnuts. Lyman had ham and eggs the fewer of which I eat the better I feel. Worked all the morning adjusting presses and cleaning them. After [breakfast] we took a short spin for about fifteen miles in the direction of Mt. Vernon. We picked up Cattail, *Sagittaria*, *Carex typhina*, *Juncus diffusissimus*, *Polygala sanguinea*, a *Cuphea* and a lot of *Cercis*, *Junci*, etc. (Hodgdon 1937 July 8).

They were always making plans to get to the next town or to start for the Tennessee line, never quite getting there; they made so many stops for botanizing that they only got as far as the Rock Castle River.

We explored a dry slope which yielded a few plants, an *Acalypha* and a *Clitoria*. In Livingston, we botanized a creek where the picking was much richer. Later in the afternoon we walked along the Rock Castle River where we got *Phlox maculata*, startlingly showy on the river bank, a *Trautvettaria* growing nearby. This has leaves like an *Anemone* but flowers like a *Thalictrum* or Meadow Rue. On the way back to Berea over the very excellent, mostly concrete roads, we collected the beautiful swamp lily appropriately called *Lilium superbum*. It has flowers four or five inches across, deep orange red beneath and paler grading to yellow above and with brown spots. It was about seven feet tall and had six to eight flowers on it. We put up twenty sheets of plants in the evening and got to bed at eleven twenty. Lyman fell asleep at work and snored (Hodgdon 1937 July 9).

They finally made it to the Tennessee line but did no botanizing. They started back after a "horrid" lunch in Jellico, then took a "right" road which led to a pine forest and then on some

“abominably slick” red clay roads across a swale. There, Smith spotted a *Rhexias* “which didn’t fit anything in the manual.”

From here we drove on across “Cuban roads” into a valley where there seemed to be good forest on the slopes. We walked up an oak and pine slope until we got beneath some sheer ledges. On or just beneath we collected *Philadelphus*, *Ptelea*, *Viburnum rufidulum*, *Tecoma*, a little *Polygala*, *Frasera*, *Asplenium parvulum*, *Phlox pilosa* and several other interesting plants including *Physocarpus*. We left for home one hundred miles away.

We made a short stop in a rich *Rhododendron* glade and picked up an *Azalea*, *Zanthorhiza* [*sic*: *Xanthorhiza*] or yellow-root, more *Trautvetteria*, a *Vaccinium* and one or two other plants. The *Rhododendron maximum* is just in full flower a beautiful sight along the stream.

Along the route near Livingston are numerous coal mines and along the road where it cuts the rock very much the seams of coal stand out. The miners thus have an easy time of it. Several trucks in Livingston were chuck full of huge humps of bituminous coal (Hodgdon 1937 July 11).

This morning got up at six a.m. as usual and went to start the car, this time to find the switch gone awry. This necessitated a three dollars and a quarter garage bill and one and a half hours of loafing around. We finished picking over presses and putting yesterday's extensive collection into ventilators. [Then] we left for the hottest botanizing since Cuba. As we went farther down Beaver Creek we came to beautiful patches of *Physostegia*, *Phlox maculata* (one of the parents of cultivated phlox and as pretty as some) and a delicate spray of (Meadow Rue-like) *Trautvetteria* making as pretty a garden, almost right in the water, as one could wish to see. Along the deeply shaded bank were often dense patches of the Walking Fern here almost as common but not so conspicuous as the Bulblet Bladder fern. Up through the dense growth of Red Bud, Benzoin, Magnolia, Dogwood, Beech, Hickory, Tulip tree, Fringe tree, Cedar and Hemlock we made our way clawing along through tangles of Poison Ivy, Trumpet Vine and *Aristolochia*. Near the car I managed to get a few blackberries which aided materially to cut the grease of conventional Kentucky cooking (they do the work of a dozen alkaline drinks). Back at five fifty to get cleaned up (a full bath) and a census on Chigger bites of which I have dozens now. Poison Ivy bothers me particularly on my ankles. I had more blackberries after helping Lyman put into press our afternoon collections. We have seen easily more blackberries here than anywhere in New England (Hodgdon 1937 July 14).

Before all this activity however Lyman and I made a twelve to fourteen mile jaunt over Cuban roads to Beaver Creek where we found not much except a lot of blackberries and heat. Thank God for the former (Hodgdon 1937 July 15).

Today, after several intensely hot and dazzling days, is semi-cloudy and comfortable. I have been weak all day (too many blackberries). Otherwise I feel fine but very sleepy. We botanized on the way back and at two places, one along Spring Creek and again in a stretch of woodland. We got seventy-five sheets of specimens. Got into one woods with gigantic oaks, tulip trees, *Nyssa bifloras* (Gum) and large Persimmon and flowering dogwood trees. The forest all through this part of Kentucky is much better deciduous forest, than I have ever seen, even in the Great Smokies. Today we saw one tract of *Sassafras* several feet high covering nearly fifty acres of red clay soil to the exclusion of practically everything else (Hodgdon 1937 July 16).

After nearly a week in Monticello, where they had advanced, they were beginning to feel quite at home. They were friendly with the local people and became familiar with the waitresses at the Blue Bird Cafe, though one waitress balked at the friendliness.

She was hard to get acquainted with. Lyman kids her along in a subtle way and she recognizes some of his kidding as such. Lyman said something about back to civilization this a.m. and she replied, "Did you expect to see us moving from limb to limb?" (Hodgdon 1937 July 17).

After bidding good-bye to Monticello and the Blue Bird Café, they left for Murray. They botanized in the afternoon toward Aurora, about eight miles along the highway, and picked up numerous coastal plain species such as:

*Hibiscus oculiroseus*, *Spartina cynosuroides*, *Rhexias* of two species, numerous *Eragrostis* and *Panicum* species, *Crotalaria sagittalis*, *Cyperus rotundus*. It was a fairly successful afternoon with over 70 sheets, despite the rain most all day, a "veritable dog day" (Hodgdon 1937 July 16).

This has been on the whole the pleasantest and most satisfying of the whole trip. We no sooner got out of town before we began to find plants of coastal plain affinity, *Liatris*, *Euthamias*, *Solidago*, *Sclerias*, *Cyperus* and *Scirpus* species, *Mimulus*, a gorgeous *Scutellaria* (better than any *Salvia*, and abundant, numerous *Helianthus* and other composites. We had our hands full until three thirty p.m.. When we found ourselves

still collecting “in Kentucky” four miles over the Tennessee line .... It was perfect for coolness and I peeled down to my undershirt hoping at last to get a good tan and not *boiled in the bargain* [italics his]. Found many plum thickets; one had numerous delicious fruit, a shrubby thorny plum near more than ten feet high, massed in growth with beautiful (very honey-sweet when ripe) small fruits of an orange red color. I ate quite a few plus some blackberries hoping that my digestion will profit, although the eats at our Blue Bird Cafe are swell. Even Lyman liked the plums. It must be a native fruit worth investigating of course the native plums have entered into practically all of our cultivated plums. They are small, but I believe infinitely superior to the Japanese types. Our old plum tree at home must have been of this native type with very sweet deep red nearly round, hardly acid (when ripe) fruit. We collected nearly one hundred and twenty sheets (Hodgdon 1937 July 20).

They travelled on to Fulton, Union City, and Hickman. From the bluff they looked down on the vast wooded valley of the Mississippi.

The pink *Hibiscus* was everywhere in the roadside drainage ditches. The flora was decidedly of the lowlands. The birds were numerous; blue warblers, cardinals, a beautiful white egret with a bright yellow bill and black legs. We picked up a pretty *Asclepias* and some Cypress which at least in the Gray was not represented from Kentucky. A hard and not too successful day (Hodgdon 1937 July 21).

At the Blue Bird Café, where they had spent the last week or two, Hodgdon and Lyman Smith were settling in and enjoying both the meals and the banter with the waitresses. One waitress, pretty and statuesque was named Outland and Hodgdon commented that it was an outlandish name. Another waitress was Willie Jackson. After their successful day of collecting, they got a *Potamogeton*, an *Eryngium* and a *Ludvigia* and an *Aristida*. They picked over their presses in the shade of the trees in the backyard. Some girls came along and sat down to watch them, one of whom had a chicken to kill.

She asked for volunteers and I responded; not knowing that there was an axe handy and ... I decided to hold it by the neck and swing it around and around. It slipped out of my grasp and hit the wall of the house (luckily missed the windows). That killed the chicken but by the time I got to an axe all of the blood must

have been in the feet. Willie said “It was the blackest looking fowl “ah have ever seen”. We all had several good laughs over this act. Lyman said that he thought it might be regular New Hampshire way of killing chickens and when I suggested that had I known there was an axe, I would have used it. He added “With an axe there would have been no act” (Hodgdon 1937 July 22).

Lyman has just finished packing up a shipment of about seven or eight hundred specimens to be sent back to the Gray in the morning. This morning ... we went to Almo. As they pronounced it I thought it was Alamo and I shall always remember the place, a conglomerate cliff – outcropping along or above a railroad where we found a new (to us) fern in abundance *Asplenium pinnatifidum* a pretty tiny *Camptosorus*-like or walking fern-like plant growing directly in the softer parts of the face of conglomerate. It has been collected for the east in Mammoth Cave Region but is not from Gray's in this area. We picked up *Clitoria* again and a few other plants. Then pressed them by the river in the shade and came home like the plants wilted, to lunch. I felt much revived after eating that seems to be my cure for the heat. Plenty to eat and drink to keep up strength. We went directly east to the rather attractive Tennessee at Pine Bluff's Ferry directly opposite some pretentious cliffs on the Tenn. Shore. While we pressed *Eryngium yuccifolium*, *Liatris spicata*, *Crataegus* sp., Persimmons, *Celtis*, *Sclerias* etc. we were surrounded by as many as 30 persons to see the show. We answered their questions but kept at work (Hodgdon 1937 July 23).

Written at Murray on Sunday about the preceding day Saturday. We are now in my words just killing time until the date July 26 rolls around. In the morning with the companionship of Billy Joe and his dog Sissy (pronounced see-see) we cleared up our presses, got a box and shipped our specimens off had an early lunch and at twelve thirty took a trip along the Tennessee River presumably from Aurora to Newburg but we missed out after that and ended up near Murray. Then to kill more time and incidentally money we drove again to Aurora where we got a *Crataegus*, a *Borriera* [*sic Borreria?* or probably *Borrichia?*] along the river. Another Dragon Root at supper Lyman's flair for familiarity began again to assert itself as he addressed Willie the waitress as “half pint”. I don't believe she liked it even though she retaliated in good style (Hodgdon 1937 July 24).

Our last full day at Murray . With Smith's general feeling infectious to me I shall be glad to leave this place. It's really not much fun having nothing important to do in a place where there are no amusements, where it is uncomfortably hot. Yes it will be comforting to say “Good bye Murray” but it is one place I would like to

come back to (Hodgdon 1937 July 25). Some time I should like to return and see Billy Joe and Sissy see the Blue Bird Cafe and the waitresses and even Mr. Claude who, it is stated, many years ago killed a man in a drunken fit and was sent up for two years on that account. At some other season than mid summer it might be well to revisit most of the places I have seen and thereby get a favorable reaction (Hodgdon 1937 July 25).

### MEXICO AND CALIFORNIA EXPEDITION, 1938

In the summer of 1938, Hodgdon decided that he wanted to go to Mexico and California on another collecting expedition. With him were his brother Melville and two friends, Dick Merrill and Frank Healey, all young men about to embark on what turned out to be an arduous, whirlwind journey. Melville, who shared a fascination with plants and birds, was best suited of the three to assist with the collecting. The car was again an early 1930s Ford. The men seemed unaware of the risks and hazards.

After finishing haying and cleaning out pens on his father's farm and receiving some pessimistic warnings from friends, Hodgdon was optimistic about the trip, even though he knew his car would need repairs on a regular basis incurred by hard driving over pre-interstate roads. None of the men were mechanically inclined and were capable of only the most rudimentary repairs. Except for tinkering, the only fixes they had to make were to fill the gas tank and to change a tire about every fifteen hundred miles. The car was jam-packed with bed rolls, bundles of blankets, extra clothing, bulky plant presses, spare tires, and camping equipment leaving little room for four men in the small car. They saved money sleeping by the roadside or in the stubble of wheat fields throughout the trip.

The Mexico/California trip was the first of Albion Hodgdon's expeditions that was not under the auspices of Harvard University or the New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station.

Hodgdon's Mexican/California diary, one of his lengthier ones, was short on botanical description, short on collecting details, and long on everything else. Although Hodgdon commented on everything they saw including the landscape, the forests, the geography, the volcanoes, the weather, and the people they met, he was sparse on what he collected and how or what he pressed for shipment. He lists some of the plants he observed but rarely mentions that he collected or shipped any of them.

The flora and fauna near Baltimore are transitional and lack the distinct flowers which we shall encounter later. Wild grapes *Vitis cordifolia* and *V. labrusca* are in evidence this morning at five a.m. (Hodgdon 1938 July 9).

As in his other diaries, he comments frequently on the blackberry, one of his favorites.

Taking a stroll through poison ivy I had an opportunity to sample the blackberry [and the] somewhat characterless fruit of the mulberry (Hodgdon 1938 July 8).

Woke up to a hot morning after first night's sleep on ground a fair one with small hot insects [he does not explain "hot"] which forced me during the night to withdraw my head under the blanket. We washed in a nearby stream ate a few raw blackberries .... Interesting plants here were *Cimicifuga*, *Pentstemon*, *Rubus odoratus*, Vipers Bugloss, butterfly weed, persimmon trees, spice bush. Tulip trees were present but nothing at all rare and no interesting birds except the ubiquitous Buzzard (Hodgdon, 1938 July 10).

From Bristol, Virginia or Tennessee, we climbed up into the Unaka Mountains where four years ago Rossbach [George Bowyer Rossbach, 1909?-2002, Professor of Botany at West Virginia Wesleyan University] and I collected *Buckleya*, Rhododendrons and Carolina hemlocks. *Kalmia* and blackberries were in evidence .... In a beautiful little nook covered over with Rhododendrons, Aristolochias etc. and through which a clear stream ran we cleaned up and got ready for Ashville. Though all ready first as usual I walked along ahead and got blackberries and studied the flora. *Calopogon* in some profusion was the only plant of beauty in flower (Hodgdon 1938 July 11).

Travelling into South Carolina, they did not find much of interest beyond sampling the blackberries. But in South Carolina and Georgia near the Atlantic coast, they saw interesting coastal plain flora:

...dozens of species of oak, numerous *Nyssas*, *Magnolias*, *Arabis*, tulip and *Liquidambar*. *Yuccas* were abundant in woods and open boggy places, *Chamaeliriums* of the lily family and almost smooth and perfectly green and small leaved *Rhexia*, *Sarracenia* (pitcher plants) with long yellow trumpets and others with purple mottled trumpets and an extremely large pipewort were among the most noticeable elements (Hodgdon 1938 July 12).

Having passed Mobile, Alabama and Biloxi, Mississippi, they went for a warm swim in the Gulf, and then after Pass Christian (Mississippi) they traveled inland to find coastal plants. Among the ones they found were “many interesting and beautiful plants .... *Stokesia* and the yellow fringed orchid, several *Polygalas*, *Sarracenias* and *Rhexias*.”

After passing through swampy cypress and long leaf pine areas have come to the long bridge of [New] Orleans. Outside of being a beautiful clean large city with much business confined chiefly to itself.... We had lunch and then feeling (all of us) for some reason in a depressed mood we left...and motored through the highly cultivated (except for bayous, cypress swamps and water hyacinth) countryside toward Orange Texas. Sugar cane on all sides interspersed with corn and cotton made this extremely flat country interesting for a while. Then after darkness and hordes of mosquitoes assailed us we covered one hundred miles or more looking for a sleeping place. Finally in the rice country after seeing peculiar red fire all about us we succumbed to Morpheus and slept in a mosquistoey road side.... I seem and Melville nearly as much to have considerable hardiness in traveling. It is surprising how little need I feel for luxuries. After perhaps five hours of miserable sleep particularly for Frank and Dick we awoke to find Frank tinkering with the horn and starter which once more would [not] work. The fires of last night turned out to be natural gas vents ignited (Hodgdon 1938 July 13).

At the beginning of the Texas coast near Sabine County, the ocean is too warm for comfort and apparently Portuguese-men-of-war abound. Both Frank and Dick were stung about the ankles in the surf (Hodgdon

1938 July 14). Half way from Houston to San Antonio. Always at this time in the morning if I am awake I ask why in heck we left home.

He was having mood swings and doubts about the wisdom of the trip but he recovered soon enough.

The mosquitoes woke me at sun up and I got up to look principally at the vegetation since the bird life in midsummer is apparently a bit low. After Dick in a convivial mood and I in a somewhat lethargic state had hammered out one hundred miles last evening we finally came into rolling country from the exceedingly flat country about Houston .... Melville and I have been studying the vegetation this morning. *Verbenas*, *Argemones* or prickly poppies, *Puellias* [*sic: Puelias*] and in particular spring members of the grass *Cenchrus*, Legume and potato family abound. One of the latter with creamy white nicely scented flowers had stinging spines. Bob whites and mockingbirds are calling now (Hodgdon 1938 July 15).

They entered Mexico at Laredo after getting tourist cards, car bonds, and insurance protection intended to cover eleven days. After buying “eighteen large cans of beans, bread and other provisions and four rolls of Verichrome film, four plates, a dry pan and a frying pan and a ninety-eight cent five-quart water jug” they headed off over the glaring desert for Monterrey (Hodgdon 1938 July 16).

Always on the lookout for fruit, Hodgdon found the bittersweet fruit of Anacahuita (*Cordia boissiere*), banana patches, orange groves, figs and papayas. He saw a hawk with white tail feathers alighting in an *Acacia*, a “cautious” oriole, buzzards, numerous eagles or hawks with white heads, parrots flying in pairs, and turkey-like slender birds, as well as kingbirds, mockingbirds, and bright cardinals. He remarks that the “bird life near Tamazunchale was more fascinating than the plants” (Hodgdon 1938 July 17-18), although

At one point between Jacala and Zimapan ... was the most luxuriant semi-tropical vegetation that I have ever seen: Bromeliads, *Dahlia*s, *Pentstemons*, and *Sedums* (Hodgdon 1938 July 18).

On the way to Los Remedios they were stopped twice, once by a policeman ... and again by three men just beyond Naucalpan and near where they found their sleeping place. Everywhere on the way to Mexico City they encountered armed soldiers “who were present to subdue minor insurrection” (Hodgdon 1938 July 19).

Our difficulties of the night before were no doubt occasioned by our presence at a late hour in a little traveled area with a lot of plant presses, bed rolls and bundles of blankets camouflaging the car (Hodgdon 1938 July 21).

There was little reason for the Mexicans’ suspicions. But where did they stow the bulky plant presses, dryers and other equipment? If they were collecting, they could not have stowed them in the car for the eleven days they were to be in Mexico. They had only to show their permits to allay suspicions.

The road to Orizaba led up over a 10,500 foot pass in the mountains where there were beautiful forests principally of pine but with a few firs underlain with a carpet of *Lupines*, *Castillejas*, *Geraniums*, *Dahlias*, *Ranunculus fascicularis* and numerous other showy flowers. I decided upon our return to get a representation of this flora (Hodgdon 1938 July 22).

They left about five-thirty for Toluca via the road to the “Desierto de los Leones,” a cathedral in a “dense and beautiful pine forest.” They had planned to climb the 15,000 foot (4690 m) high Nevado de Toluca volcano, Mexico’s fourth-tallest peak. They climbed into pine country after dark and intense cold at ten thousand feet.

We camped to spend a miserable night in what to the eye was a beautiful setting .... We slept in a *Pentstemon* patch and their gorgeous deep purplish red spikes were all about us. Very early we started for the summit ... over a fairly decent gravel road. Near the timber line (better than twelve thousand feet) great pale blue meadows covered the slopes beneath the open pine forest .... We aimed for the ridge and collected on the route, *Castilleja*, *Erysimum* and a few other Rosaceous and caryophyllaceous genera. At the first ridge Dick turned back but Frank, the intrepid Melville the resolute and I kept on. We got nearly to the full summit after entirely losing the trail and scrambling dangerously up on the loose talus which kept sliding and

falling beneath us or carrying us along with it. At the rim we could look toward the Pacific over country thousands of feet below much of it covered with pine forests ... Here on Toluca the elements became merciless and there resulted a hailstorm. Here we descended from our eminence (a crag on the volcano rim.). On our return to the car by the crater-lake we all experienced headaches which were only relieved by the loss of thousands of feet altitude. Mountain sickness is a bit like sea sickness. Some headaches accompanied it in our cases and pressure within our bodies. A climb of a few feet necessitated relaxation for a moment. After driving the car in snow on the eastern slope we slowly crept down below tree line to comparative warmth of Toluca (Hodgdon 1938 July 24).

There ensued a day of slow progress on the Mexican Plateau. I was in search of plants and after adjusting the presses, drying out blotters in the sun and changing the specimens from Rio Frio and Toluca, Frank and I climbed a dry slope for several hundred feet without much success. [For] several miles farther on at the most spectacular bit of highway to Mexico city ... I collected again [and] Frank took pictures, with my new camera, of the precipitous bluish walls and of the spectacular flora here about [Hodgdon 1938 July 24].

In Hodgdon's Mexican/Californian diary, as well as others, botanizing occasionally becomes lax and seems almost incidental to everything else: Hodgdon is more concerned with description of the geography, passing through the individual states, the mountains, the Salt Lake flats, the forests or lack thereof, the landscape, relationships with comrades, the people, the letters from home, the local color and local customs, and the meals on the road or in camp.

Relatively uneventful a day of comparative rest. Collected a bit on Llano Mesa and left about nine a.m. planning to reach Linares by mid-afternoon. We had no food until Villagrán Courts were reached (a Mexican meal of soup, onion and potato salad, pepper onion etc. a frijoles in a paste, a lemon – pie (tasteless) (Hodgdon 1938 July 25).

The past week has been comparatively hectic from the breaking of camp at Linares on July 26th until the cool winds of the Pacific above San Diego refreshed our spirits we could hardly say that there were many square feet of the U.S.A. or Mexico worth its salt. The desert for me, however has its fascination; roadrunners and desert eagles, lizards, and the numerous small birds which find a welcome haven in the

mesquite and chaparral all interest me. The plant life also is so utterly strange that it excites me. Cactus in many weird forms from the columnar *Seguaro* [sic: *Saguaro*] or *Carnegiea gigantea* which we saw in the hot desert mountains in western Arizona to the spherical or hemispherical squat *Echinocactus* all have their distinctive allure. The much branched cholla looking like a fir tree against the desert sky at night near Phoenix caught our fancies (Hodgdon 1938 July 25).

After a good night's rest in Linares with minimal collecting—or, at least minimal pressing—they left Mexico by way of Monterey, Laredo, and the Rio Grande. Crossing back into Texas, they reached Fort Davis (Hodgdon 1938 July 26).

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At San Carlos Reservoir the giant columns *Carnegiea gigantea* [sic: *Carnegiea*] or *Saguaro* cactus first appeared. On the slopes of the hills about the Reservoir it is abundant and apparently is the only vegetation worth mentioning. Except for some excellent live oaks along the stream in the jagged mountains fifty miles east of Phoenix the century plants and junipers and a few herbs such as water cress, yellow *Mimulus* and scarlet *Pentstemon* which also grew in this canyon, the vegetation all the way to California, except where man has irrigated is chiefly of this striking cactus (Hodgdon 1938 July 28-29).

Entrance into California—amid bickering, lack of oil, tire-trouble and as a minor consideration a temperature of one hundred three degrees Fahrenheit at two a.m. A blinding white desert awaited us for a few miles after the Colorado river and then, with the descent in altitude to a minimum at El Centro of fifty feet, came that heat. We saw the thermometer in the car rise to one hundred ten and one hundred twelve or more and remain there until we had climbed for one to two thousand feet on the .... When in the attractive and verdant mountain above San Diego the effect of the Pacific was finally felt the temperature fell to ninety-five degrees then to ninety degrees and eighty-five degrees and eighty degrees. ... LaMesa, El Cajon and Alpine [and

other towns] are beautifully landscaped places with small low stucco villas. Their brightness contrasting with the vivid green of palms, watered grass, *Eucalyptus* make an unforgettable impression on our desert-fatigued senses (Hodgdon 1938 July 30).

The travelers were now enjoying the ocean so much they all got sunburned. They would like to have spent the entire day doing nothing else but riding the rollers, bucking the breakers, watching the pretty women and the surfboards and then lolling on the beach. But they had had enough and had to move on. They broke camp and toured along the “drab but picturesque coastal country.”

Eventually the travelers came to Monterey (California), where they encountered the beginnings of forests. “In the deeper canyons was forest of redwood. Otherwise the vegetation was chiefly of blue and yellow *Lupines*, yellow and orange *Mimulus*, a number of species of *Eriogonums* and numerous composites.”

Presumably Hodgdon was collecting when he observed this forest vegetation, but he was so preoccupied—meeting minor Hollywood actors and distant relatives—that he never mentions the plants he collected.

North of Monterey, the companions entered “truly beautiful” country “heavily forested with *Sequoia sempervirens* intermingled with huge *Alders*, a few deeply cut-leaved maples and an occasional fir. Many of the redwoods are one to two hundred feet tall, but there are no tremendous trees such as one sees north of here” (Hodgdon 1938 August 6).

They arrived in San Francisco at dusk and slept in a thistle patch along a damp irrigation ditch. Early the next morning they had car repairs done that were necessitated after hard travelling: generator, brakes, ignition, starter and lights at a cost of two dollars and a quarter for labor.

They began the climb into the Sierras and “over the hump,” as the summit of the pass into Nevada is known, at seven to eight thousand feet. They slept at 4000 feet in a pine fir and cedar forest, the “aroma of some Rosaceous plant filling the air, and the green leaves of madrone (*Arbutus*) all about them with its flaky golden brown bark” (Hodgdon 1938 August 6).

Lake Tahoe. Elegant timber trees one hundred feet or more are all about. Oaks of eastern appearance with deeply cut leaves are found at lower altitude with pines and with the live oaks. *Pentstemons*, *Castillejas*, *Mimulus*, *Silphium* and abundant *Epilobium* or fire weed [were all about]. Trembling aspen and the *Epilobium* along with a western white pine and the red oak made me feel quite at home. Frankie agrees that there is nothing in New Hampshire to compare with Lake Tahoe (Hodgdon 1938 August 7).

After leaving Crystal Bay Nevada we turned left at Incline and climbed to the Pass which lies at almost eighty seven hundred or so feet. From it we could look back and down at Lake Tahoe. Beautiful Fir and Pine woods cover the mountain slopes. Or we could look up at still higher bits of land, slopes with grass and snow-banks and scattered trees. A tiny *Lupine* carpeted a mountain pasture nearby in drier spots and a beautiful nearby acaulescent golden *Mimulus* brightened the damper areas where presumably the snow had barely left. A False Hellebore and a *Saxifrage* much like our *S. pensylvanica* made lush patches in the damp meadows a few species of *Eriogonum* in browns and purples completed the pallet of alpine color. The descent to the Reno Valley was very precipitous for forty five hundred feet or equivalent to the Mt. Washington descent in New Hampshire. Almost to the Valley floor were fair sized pines which failed on the lower slope giving way to gray sagebrush and low and scattered desert vegetation. Green fertile irrigated alfalfa and other herbage fields continued on into Reno which to our jaded appetites seemed just another dull small town (Hodgdon 1938 August 8).

They resumed their course at four a.m. and traveled through Nevada. The hills became “cedar-covered, making the country greener” though “monotonous”. At the Utah line they descended into the “forty mile wide glistening white and pure Salt Lake Desert” area. They swam in Salt Lake, but decided it was too dangerous, the water getting into their eyes and noses. They

left for Salt Lake City and Hodgdon complained that his nerves had gone bad, twice having arguments with Frank.

When [the arguments] came to no satisfactory conclusion I walked on for two and half miles and worked the [conniptions] out of my system. Our spirits were high after sunset when we ate beside the road in the cool of the desert evening. It became cooler and again I walked ahead rather than wait for the recalcitrant people. A full moon made the desert hills soft and alluring (Hodgdon 1938 August 9).

Written on the morning of August 11 at the most beautiful spot I have ever camped. We are in yellow Pine forest at an elevation of perhaps seven thousand feet. The temperature at fifty-five to sixty degrees is right for sleeping and the sun is warm on my blanket wrapped around me as an Indian would have it. A rushing stream in the not too distant valley provides the material that completes the scene. It comes from the visible snows on mountains which raise their pinkish gray and naked summits high above the timber-line. Last evening after our pleasant evening meal by a lazy fire, a beautiful full moon brightened the scattered clouds which remained after yesterday's mountain showers. An open pine forest in the bright soft light of a mountain full moon is enchantment on earth .... There is plenty to see here but today we must leave this haven of wild-life for the Great Plains east of Denver (Hodgdon 1938 August 11).

We continued on to [the] timber line past pine and Colorado spruce forest and open alpine meadows of *Lupines*, larkspur, *Polygonum viviparium* [*sic: viviparum*], *Aconitum*, *Cardamine*, *Potentillas* and brilliant yellow composites with numerous grasses and sedges. We made our way almost to Estes Park and then back into Bear Lake. (Hodgdon 1938 August 11)... We were sorry to leave the Park after so short a stay but nights at such an altitude are too arduous for our equipment (Hodgdon 1938 August 11).

Not until they were crossing the Rockies on the return trip does Hodgdon even mention collecting, one of the few instances that he mentions pressing.

After that particularly restful night I decided to collect a few more botanical specimens. Then I removed the specimens from the presses, spreading plenty of naphthalene on them.

Dick and Frank ... brought in each of a handful of specimens. Then Dick took over my job and Melville and I went searching.

He never mentions shipping the presses, although he does mention receiving mail, so he must have stopped at a post office.

After exhausting these yellow pine woods we packed up and started off for Dinner. At the stream in the canyon, we washed and luxuriated in the spicily cold clear mountain water. Farther on the yellow pine became more scarce as the more precipitous walls of the canyon became more arid. The road following the stream wound along until we finally came out on the flat plain upon which Denver is located (Hodgdon 1938 August 11).

He collected and must have shipped some of the specimens although he does not say. They had carried a bundle of fire-wood from Colorado further impacting space in their small four-door Ford. It might have been a Ford Tudor which would have made it all the more cramped. The four men must have sat in each other's laps at times. Hodgdon could not have continued to collect without having emptied the car periodically.

They travelled on for days through Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, and Ohio, almost racing to get home, without pausing to sample the flora. In Pennsylvania, they had a minor mishap. Some sparks presumably from Dick Merrill's cigarette set the presses afire, but they quickly extinguished the blaze. The continuous driving and lack of sleep, surplus of mosquitoes, excessive heat and bad roads, shattered his nerves and Albion blew up at Melville, berating him for his "ultra moderate" driving. He was "ashamed" afterward. The worry of "driving on three tires almost worn out" and having "only a few dollars left and quite a way to go when I had a definite schedule to keep is disconcerting to say the least" (Hodgdon 1938 August 14).

At last, Hodgdon had completed the Mexican/Californian journey, his friendships intact and only mildly strained, but with another body of plants to deposit in the UNH Herbarium.



Figure 4. Hodgdon, probably Boothbay, 1948 (courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).



Figure 5. Albion, Tony, Alan, Anthony Audrey, Ariel , Cadillac Mountain 1950 (courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).



Figure 6. Alaskan expedition; eleven of twenty participants. Hodgdon front row left (courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).

#### ALASKAN EXPEDITION; THE KEYS PROJECT 1952

In the summer of 1952, Hodgdon was one of twenty scientists to join a major expedition to the Brooks Range in Northern Alaska . The expedition, known as the Keys Project, was funded

by the Wright Air Development Center, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio and the Arctic Research Laboratory, Boston University. Its objective was to document various conditions of the terrain on the north slope of Alaska and to correlate these features with multi-spectral, aerial photographic mosaics near Umiat (Tedrow<sup>2</sup> 2005).



Figure 7. Hodgdon in Alaska, 1952 (courtesy of Anthony Hondgdon).



Figure 8. Hodgdon demonstrating bad form with pickaxe, Alaska 1952 (courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).

Hodgdon's own objective, apart from that of the team, was to compare the Alaskan flora to that of New Hampshire. Though the expedition was secret and classified, he would bring or send back plants, if possible, to the New Hampshire Herbarium. He took with him boxes of ecological equipment and some favorite reference books: *Flora of Alaska and the Yukon* (Hultén 1950); *Flora of Alaska and Adjacent Parts of Canada* (Anderson 1945); and, of course, *Gray's Manual of Botany* (Fernald 1950).

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<sup>2</sup> Tedrow listed Hodgdon as a member of the expedition, but misspelled his name as Hodgden. Tedrow, writing in 2005, said that he could find no other record of the Keys Project nor, of course, did he find Hodgdon's Alaskan diary.

En route to Alaska, Hodgdon describes the “thrilling experience” of flying in a B-17 and sitting in the radio room.

With my heavy parachute on I sat back of an altimeter dial on the left ... and the speedometer on the other. I could get a marvelous view between the two propellers on my side of mountains ... and ... the stupendous view of the barrens around Umiat, the “civilization” nearest to where the party would be doing its work (Hodgdon 1952 June 17).

Hodgdon began his Arctic exploration by studying vegetation in communities. Assisting him for much of the expedition was Robert Riedeman, another botanist.

After settling into a routine at the expedition’s camp-site, he wrote, “We started out for Umiat Mountain. This turned out to be an exciting experience for almost immediately we encountered an obstacle so frightening, second in danger to our entire expedition thus far only to that memorable ride nearly two weeks ago from Boston to Westover.” He does not mention what happened on this ride and why it was so dangerous. “Bob Riedeman found a four by six and I pushed it across a ten-foot wide roaring stream. I thus easily made my way out on it holding on to some boards until I could throw my weight forward and reach the other shore” (Hodgdon 1952 June 22). The reader might quibble as to why the danger of fording a stream was comparable to that of a fifty-mile B-17 flight, but Hodgdon is typically modest.

“This trip convinces me,” he boasts to his diary without false modesty “that my judgment is above average if not my technical capacity. My health is excellent, my endurance prodigious, my nerves in fine fether [*sic*, fettle] most of which I attribute to the past ten years of regular living ...” (Hodgdon 1952 July 7). He could say this because he walked miles every day while collecting and even playing football on the tundra at one point “after a hard day’s work shoveling gravel into the weasel [a primary vehicle for travel between camps] to fill in the holes of the airstrip” (Hodgdon 1952 July 4).

Today we studied plants and soils along the ridge northwest of our camp. First along the swampy shores of pools near our petroleum area we found *Cardamine* species and *Chrysanthemum*, *Caltha palustris*, *Potentilla palustris*, *Marchantia* species in front. Near this place last evening Bob [Riedeman] and Bill Glazier [an ecologist and business man, not further identified] saw a yellow gray red fox going up slope from the *Dryas integrifolia*, *Carex angustifolia* peaty swamp land with high pH. We encountered a sik-sik (a large ground squirrel) which lives in burrows in the lithosoils underneath the exposed outcrop of cretaceous and calcareous sandstone. Well up in these south facing slopes the sun shone hot and bright in the early afternoon while R. Feuer [another member of the expedition] dug a soil pit, studied the profile, pH of various layers noted color, structure, depth of roots and permafrost. About half way up slope we began to find calcareous indicator species, several *Potentillas* besides *P. fruticosa* several *Saxifrages* incl. *S. hieracifolia*, one *Draba*, an *Erysimum*, *Lupinus*, *Achillea*, *Artemesia*, *Epilobium*, *Agropyron*, *Trisetum*, *S.* [genus not named] *glauca*, *Zygadenus* and *Senecio resedifolius* (Hodgdon 1952 June 20).

After eating lunch and photographing a longspur (chestnut colored head) we ate a dry lunch and I moved up onto the crest of the hill or ridge and was soon followed by Riedeman where he and I dissected a *Dryas* flower and I first recognized *Silene acaulis*. Soon all four of us studied a frost bulldozer excavation in the Ridge. This was on a Heath-*Carex*, *Empetrum* lichen area underlain by a brown podzolic soil. Also we found plants of *Salix phlebophylla* and its relatives with small leaves some with more rounded leaves. We excavated some of these plants, find them but an inch or so in height but with roots a foot or more long. As we left this area and came upon a more moist and luxuriant area slightly south facing we encountered a great deal of the very dwarf small leaved willow and Feuer saw some beautiful plants of *Pedicularis sudetica* which I photographed, also *Petasites* in flower. Earlier in the day I had photographed a *Saxifraga* with tiny flowers. Then at five p.m. the Glazier-Riedeman contingent left to get supper and Feuer and I went along for another hour to study polygons. Nothing more definite of consequence except nine caribou passed within a mile of camp (Hodgdon 1952 June 21-23).

This a.m. at ten after a rainy night with the rain dripping down along the rafter of our camp and the chilly breezes blowing down my neck into the sleeping bag which I never yet have learned to get into comfortably. Flowers out here in the river tundra include a beautiful yellow flowered *Geum glaciale* and *Pedicularis parviflora*, also *Saxifraga oppositifolia* (Hodgdon 1952 June 24).

Yesterday we had an exciting field trip to the hills west of here a mile or two. On a slope of slate or shale mixed with chert southwest facing myriads of flowers were out. *Myosotis alpestris*, *Dryas octopetala*, *Anemone*, *Dryas drummondii*, an *Oxytropis*, *Diapensia* in more acid places, *Saxifraga tricuspidata*, *S. punctata* not in flower. *Drabas*, *Potentilla uniflora* and *P. emarginata* (on chert), *Cassiope* (ubiquitous in flower) etc. a beautiful aggregation reminding me of the Colorado high rockies with their wealth of bloom. *Polemonium* were coming up but not yet in bloom (Hodgdon 1952 June 25).

Much to my surprise the other members of the party not botanists were partial to the *Pedicularis sudetica* which we had seen so much of as to consider it a weed. Along a stream near these higher lands were some lovely buttercups *Ranunculus nivalis* or *R. sulphureus* probably. It seemed incredible that flowers could bloom in this inhospitably cold and windy waste (Hodgdon 1952 June 25).

We have already collected some eighty numbers now in three presses. We can pick up probably thirty more today particularly if we get up south west of camp in the blackish domed foothills which undoubtedly are warmer than this breezy valley cooled by all the inversion air movements and by the Kurupa River (Hodgdon 1952 June 26).

Yesterday working, not too synchronously and somewhat to the eventual disgust of Feuer, with the geologists we further botanized the chert outcrop along the west side of our valley a mile or two from camp. I soon got to know that we would find few new things or very interesting items on north or northern slopes but on southern exposures the situation was quite different. A different set of things turned up on each major slope. *Anemone narcissiflora* proved to be everywhere. Another *Anemone* perhaps *Anemone multiceps* certainly or probably different from the Umiat *A. Drummondii* although it may be that species with its very early flowers all shed even at this early date bright pink patches of *Silene acaulis* occurred generally and on warmer protected slopes the beautiful *Phlox sibirica* whose center of origin must be Alaska. We saw no Forget-me-nots today but *Drabas* in great profusion three or four species certainly, a *Smelowskia* I think with smooth obovate leaves and tiny white flowers. According to Dr. Reed Rollins it is futile to collect *Drabas* before fruiting, but if we can collect two or three weeks from now from these same areas we can undoubtedly treble the value of our work by getting in fruit undoubted facsimiles of our flowering material. A magenta or purplish crucifer probably *Parga* was very evident in moist sedge-moss habitats. Along a stream near the Ridge was a Papaver probably *P. macounii* while nearby on river silts and gravels probably high pH was a

yellow crucifer perhaps a *Draba*. The *Dryas-Cassiope* heath so characteristic of much of the upland better drained areas was most beautiful at this season with the “Christmas bells” of Curt Livingstone and the large mostly eight petaled flowers of the *Dryas octopetala* with its handsome dull greenish crenulated oblong leaves. Considerable *Selaginella* turned up in niches of the chert outcrop while in both upland well drained slopes and in low situations species of *Ranunculus* appeared *R. affinis* or *R. pedontifolia* [*sic: pedatifidus*] on well drained [*sic: lithosoils*] on steep slopes and *R. nivalis* or *R. sulphureus* along streams or in springy sedge meadows with dark calyx pubescence. As usual a few new *Potentillas* appeared, the rather common silvery white leaved *P. uniflora* (same as on Umiat Mountain) was most conspicuous with its large yellow flowers orange yellow toward the center and somewhat obcordate or obveniform [?] petals. Also the much less common pubescent *P. vahliana*, *Vaccinium uliginosum* in flower in a more moist strip on the cherty solifluction slopes was flowering in bright pink bells. Several grasses barely begun flowering were present while the abundant *Cercis* hardly worth collecting yet appeared here and there. An odd umbellifer, *Bupleurum* strangely like something liliaceous abounded in moist strips on certain cherty areas. Several *Saxifrages*, *S. bronchialis*, *S. tricuspidata* and *S. reflexa* were widespread and adventive or thoroughly hardy and persistent often where few other plants would grow. Toward the base of the highest chert slope to the east was a moist strip where *Polemonium acutiflorum*, *Pedicularis capitata*, *Taraxacum lacerum*, *Papaver macounii*, *Bupleurum*, *Drabas*, *Castilleja pallida*, *Oxytropis maydelliana* and several *Arenaria* species and *Dianthus* species were found (Hodgdon 1952 June 26).

The most exciting experience – the best plant exploration – the sunniest warmest day and I feel at my worst. We collected some new plants – see my accession book. Perhaps the most exciting was *Saxifraga nivalis* near the exquisite *Myosotis alpestris* taken from amongst *Papaver macounii*, numerous *Drabas*, *Arenarias*, *Silene acaulis*, *Phlox sibirica* growing well up toward the summit of the highest point we have yet reached—perhaps in the Paleozoic area which Larry Warner and Dan Paterson are trying to locate—for what possible connection with this project several of us can not readily imagine, since the occurrence of vegetational types is related more obviously to drainage factors and other causes certainly than basic rock complexes.

After supper about nine p.m., Don Duncan and I walked a half mile or so out in a southwesterly direction from camp found oil seepings on the shallow pools indicating the presence of oil in the area. We found also, and much more interesting to me, a series of “good” varied center polygons and depressed center polygons

also some very typical named ridge (*Betula*, willow, *Ledum* etc.) topography cutting across areas of probably low terrain with *Eriophorum angustifolium* and *Carices* mostly occupying the depressions. There is a complex story here involving vegetational dynamics and water-soil mechanics and insulation of the organic cover. Studies involving the depth to permafrost in these different situations late in July will probably reveal part of the truth, at least now it seems that the raised center polygons are successional, involving the progressive development of woody vegetation in favorable sites building hummocks up above the lower wet areas on each side. At length as the areas spread in size the insulation logically improves toward the center resulting in shallower permafrost and consequent failure of vegetation to develop at the well insulated center. Then the vegetative subsides. Moss is not cohesive enough to prevent winter frost action (shade I doubt to be a factor) and the center splits apart breaking the insulation thus bringing about a sinking of permafrost to lower levels. This proceeds peripherally around the area disrupting the vegetation causing a depressed center. This could result in a depressed center polygon under certain moisture and vegetational conditions or in ridge topography (Hodgdon 1952 June 28).

Apparently the most important single factor is the insulation of plant material particularly mosses. The narrow ridges will tend to persist so long as a sufficiently cohesive vegetation birches and willows are present. And so long as there is no opportunity for the ridges to thicken by spreading—in other words if sharp and distinct barriers to migration persist. This condition seems to occur in the fact that the ridges are of a considerable and mostly uniform height above the surrounding swales. And invasion would tend to be very difficult. Inasmuch as the climax vegetation is that vegetation in an area which tends to reproduce itself essentially without change under the most moist mesophytic of conditions this may not be climax but it must be a relatively stable element so long as the post climax condition of abundant moisture is present (Hodgdon 1952 June 28).

The raised center polygons would then be perhaps long persisting subclimaxes or merely successional stages in tundra formation. Under conditions of good drainage, and adequate moisture the reduced glei soils will be formed – niggerheads will tend to develop with comparatively little insulation between in some cases with sphagnum in moister situations (Hodgdon 1952 June 28).

This a.m., for a change, I helped press the collections of yesterday made on the two somewhat isolated

asymmetrical cores rising from the somewhat elevated “morainic” area to our north and west. Bob Riedeman helped me or should I say I helped him since he likes to do the actual pressing while I kept track of the numbers of the specimens from my black pocket notebook (Hodgdon 1952 June 23-28).

Hodgdon goes on in this vein for many pages in his diary. Throughout the summer, he collected daily and helped Bob Riedeman with organizing the presses for proper drying of the plants the following day. He was still pressing plants at the end of the summer. These he entered diligently in his Accessions Book copying and numbering his collections over neatly in ink (Hodgdon 1952 July 28). By the end of the summer he had listed, collected, accessioned, or photographed by rough count one hundred twenty eight or more genera and more than four hundred species (Hodgdon 1952 August 24). Hodgdon also compiled a list of fifty plant communities and their characteristics, containing an average of about twenty plant species. These were presumably in his Final Report to Boston University; an inquiry sent to Boston University Archives, however, failed to turn up any trace of the Report.

The expedition of some 20 botanists, ecologists, pedologists, geologists, engineers and cooks resulted in few scientific papers. Because the Air Force project was classified, the expedition participants were possibly not allowed to publish. Hodgdon published one popular piece in which he described the Alaskan climate, the scenery, geography, the living conditions, the animals, the fishing and, especially, the mosquitoes (Hodgdon 1954). “Perhaps the mosquitoes that got away would make a bigger story than the fish that got caught.” He made some general statements about the vegetation (dense and rich) and the similarity between New Hampshire’s mountains and the Arctic slope of Alaska. “Those who have climbed above the limits of trees on our New Hampshire mountains will appreciate the rocky type of tundra for there are many striking similarities of our bleak mountain summits and the true Arctic,” he wrote (Hodgdon 1954).

Despite the lack of statements in Hodgdon's diary that he sent any specimens to the University, Janet Sullivan, Collections Manager of the Hodgdon Herbarium, said that the Herbarium contains many specimens from the Alaskan trip (pers. comm.). However, plants in the Herbarium have not been indexed and Hodgdon's Accessions Book has not been found.

He described his *Alumnus* article as "a report on a scientific expedition without touching on its scientific aspects because of security reasons." He did not explain "scientific aspects" or "security reasons." Because the Air Force project was classified, the expedition participants were probably not allowed to publish. On the other hand, he had obtained an "essential" occupational deferment in World War II and may have been reluctant to betray the spirit of that agreement.

As the summer wore on, members of the party were getting on each other's nerves and patience was wearing thin. It was inevitable that personality differences aggravated by the bleak conditions of the Arctic, all-male atmosphere, and lack of recreational facilities would cause conflicts. Earlier he had written in his diary that though "we will have minor difficulties, ailments and discomforts, we can get along." Later on, he had more to say about these "difficulties." And by summer's end he had a much different point of view. He and Bob Riedemann, whom Hodgdon liked, had been arguing about an impending personnel conference (he dreaded these conferences in general), the nature of their botanical work, its final completion, integration of their work with that of the other botanists on the expedition and their differences.

"After the shooting [rifle practice] we were all right again but after another 40 minutes I recall saying that we'd better all go in [to our tents] before we get into a fight" (Hodgdon 1952 August 25) .

Uncharacteristically he laments, “In some respects this entire expedition is one of the most extraordinary series of mishaps, miscalculations, misinformations, poor judgments and upset plans one could imagine. It has been almost two weeks at the “K.K.K.” or as [one man] termed it the “Kurupa Konstruction Kamp” implying a military atmosphere with an autocratic leadership.

Very little actual work has been accomplished because of the extraordinary amount of detail, care and actual work involved in pitching tents, digging latrines and garbage (ditches) disposals banking tents and keeping warm while the north east wind blew restlessly for three days and so forth and so on with the final blow, the ‘immobilating’ of the helicopter which resulted in two severe days of work constructing an air strip. We now have a serviceable strip about six hundred feet long, five hundred being the inside limit. This extra task was rewarded with the utmost inefficiency in planning and with the maximum amount of griping and resentment (Hodgdon 1952 July 6).

He detested the housekeeping and preparatory work because he could do no botanizing while it was going on.

At the end of the summer as he was getting ready to return to Durham, he remarked that he would “never do this again, except for a short term.”

Back in his office after the Alaskan Expedition, Hodgdon absent-mindedly placed some specimens on top of a wastebasket intending to work on them later. The janitor, ever dutiful on his daily rounds, unaware that the specimens represented months of work, properly disposed of them to the detriment of New Hampshire botany and, to say the least, Hodgdon’s chagrin. Good research with bad consequences was frustrating and regretful, he could say, although he was able to laugh it off.



Figure 9. Audrey and Albion pointing to Brooks Range in Alaska, 1952 (Courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).

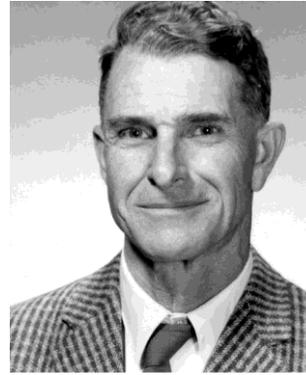


Figure 10. Hodgdon in the fifties (Courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).

#### THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS, 1971

In June of 1971, Hodgdon went to the Galápagos Islands where he was greeted by the owner of the cruise ship “Golden Cachalot” who happened to have a copy of the “splendid” *Flora of the Galápagos Islands* (Wiggins and Porter 1971), giving Hodgdon the happy opportunity for botanizing—a wholly unanticipated activity while on vacation (Hodgdon 1973). He was able to dry plants, brought back by enthusiastic fellow tourists, in a compartment above the engine room. The *Flora* became the “focus of attention during many relaxed moments” laying claim to Hodgdon “being the first tourist to have made extended use of the *Flora* in understanding the plants of the Galápagos.” He could think of “no book in recent years that has given [me] more pleasure in the using” (Hodgdon 1973: 143). Some of his pleasure may have ensued from his collecting some of the same plants on the very islands where Darwin had collected that proved to be so important in developing the theory of natural selection.

## PART THREE

### HODGDON THE PLANT-HUNTER: A MODEL FOR STUDENTS

Hodgdon was not satisfied until he had found every new location for a species. The individual plants he collected were intended first for the University of New Hampshire Herbarium, then for description in botanical journals, usually *Rhodora*, and ultimately for inclusion in a flora of New Hampshire. Typical phrases appearing in the titles of his *Rhodora* papers are “not previously reported in New Hampshire” or “a new station for” or “a new location for” and “additions to the flora”, and usually referring to Gray’s Manual of Botany (Fernald 1950) and, less frequently, to Seymour’s Flora of New England (Seymour 1969) or some other standard work. Additions to sites, geographic coverage, notable plants, taxa recorded, and reviews of New England botanists were themes or topics of his papers.

Conant describes him as a humble man, down to earth. “Right off the bat I liked him. He was a little scruffy in his dress. He wore a jacket and tie but he was a little “disrumped.” His hair was always a little bit askew (Conant, pers. interv. Oct. 26 2010).

“He loved to tell stories about famous botanists he'd met and trips he'd taken and he would always have slides to show about places he visited--in the Caribbean and Mediterranean and the Galápagos. He just had an infectious way about him, his way of talking about plants and the people who studied plants, all kinds of botanists. He just sort of drew you into his life, his life of science and botany. It was just pleasurable to be in the same room with the guy. He didn't put on any airs. He always had some sort of hand-written notes and I thought there was never a day that he wasn't prepared for class. He was just a little more disorganized than other people. But it never affected the quality of education we received from Albion” (Conant, pers. interv. Oct. 26 2010). Hodgdon talked about classical botanists in his classes and their contributions. He was

an admirer of the British botanist, Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817-1911). Hooker, a staunch supporter of Charles Darwin (1809-1882), with whom he would go on long walks, was a tall, lanky man and nimble, with a long stride. Younger botanists when invited to go plant hunting, Hodgdon told his students, couldn't keep up with Hooker even when he was in his nineties (Conant, pers. interv. Oct. 26 2010).

In his pursuit of new finds, Hodgdon braved challenging topography and even physical danger. Hodgdon himself, though not especially tall and lanky was unquestionably nimble; he had tireless energy and could scramble up mountains without effort. Linn Bogle, who succeeded Hodgdon as editor of *Rhodora*, recalled that “few of his many students could match his stamina or stride on a White Mountains trail” (Bogle 1978). His brother, Melville, also “had the stamina of a 30 year old” (Hersey, Pers. Comm. Feb. 12, 2011).

Dave Conant said “I never remember him pausing to get his wind.” He could scramble down a mountain as well. Conant tells of the time when he and another student, Billy Yeo, accompanied Hodgdon hunting for ferns.

We went up to the north end of Newfound Lake. We drove up the back roads [of Hebron, New Hampshire] to Bear Mountain. There was a south-facing cliff so we hiked up the west side and when we got to the top of the cliff we sat there and had lunch. It was a beautiful day and there were red-tailed hawks in the thermals, soaring up and swooshing down .... We could actually hear the wind whistling as it went through their feathers as they came down over that cliff. After lunch we continued on and we went down the east side of the cliff, just kind of making a big circuit. Our goal was to make it to the talus slope at the base. As I was going first and then Billy Yeo with Albion coming up in the rear, I went through a yellow jacket's nest. I got stung a little bit and Billy Yeo came through and he got stung badly but they were all over Albion and he lost his balance and he went head over teakettle down a steep slope for seventy-five feet or so, and he went clunk right into the yoke of a tree and the bees were still after him. Billy and I ran down and we slapped all the bees off of him and we finally got him stood up. He stretched a little bit and said ‘I'm going to have a stiff

neck. Let's go find those ferns.' We got down to the bottom of the slope and found those ferns<sup>3</sup>. It was a great afternoon. We went back down to the south of Newfound Lake, bought some cold beer, and I thought 'this is the life for me.' (Conant, pers. interv. Oct. 26 2010).

Hodgdon told a decidedly less dramatic version of this story in *Rhodora*, calling it merely a "near catastrophe" and a "bad fall" occasioned by yellow jackets without saying who had the bad fall or who was attacked by the yellow jackets (Hodgdon 1971). His son Anthony and daughter Ariel remember their father describing the mishap as "falling off the mountain" (Hodgdon, Anthony and Ariel Parent, pers. interv. Dec. 17, 2010).

Edward J. Hehre, another student, first met "Doc" Hodgdon in 1962 while a senior at New England College. His mentor there, Carl French, had also been a student of Hodgdon's. Hehre remarked (personal communication, Aug 9, 2010):

Hodgdon admitted that he was a dull lecturer. I never thought so, but he was he was certainly more at ease outside. He often took impromptu trips on warm sunny days. He would stick his head into Dr. Nast's Anatomy or Morphology class and 'borrow' me and any other interested students. We never said 'No' and spent many hours at night making up the work .... The field trips with Doc were incredible .... I spent a summer working on Strafford County aquatics with him. He had begun work on the Flora of Strafford County as a Masters Student at UNH in the 1930s. Later, he copied out all the plants known to occur in New England from Gray's Manual. These pages were kept in a loose-leaf binder. Vertical columns denoted towns and checkmarks were entered beside each plant in the appropriate box ....

The field trips with Doc were incredible. To be in the presence of such a person was truly remarkable. I spent a summer working on Strafford County aquatics with him. He had begun work on the Flora of Strafford County as a Masters Student at UNH in the 1930's. Later, he copied out all the plants known to occur in New England from *Gray's Manual*. These pages were kept in a

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<sup>3</sup> The ferns found were *Polystichum* (Christmas fern and holly fern), *Dryopteris goldiana* (goldies fern), *Cystopteris bulbifera* (bulblet bladder fern), and "waist high" in *Athyrium pycnocarpon* (the narrow-leaved spleenwort, or glade fern).

loose-leaf binder. Vertical columns denoted towns and checkmarks were entered beside each plant in the appropriate box. I don't ever remember seeing him mad or lose his temper, except maybe at Harry Keener. Albion didn't think much of deans!! Doc was an inspiration when it came to doing field work .... There were many field trips. One perhaps stands out. Someone ... had reported a stand of swamp azaleas (*Rhododendron viscosum*) in a tract of swampy woods along Rte 125 in Brentwood-Fremont. So we set out on a hot muggy day in July or August 1965 or 1966 to find [such a] colony. We walked along railroad tracks for half a mile before entering the woods. We wandered for most of the day. The amazing thing was that despite the fact that Doc had no idea of [our] direction, we managed to find a large colony of *R. viscosum* and we also found our way out of the swamp on the same railroad tracks. A remarkable experience.

“There's a story in *Rhodora*,” Conant recalled, “about [an] excursion to find *Saxifraga cernua* (nodding *saxifrage*, a small white flowered Arctic plant till that time known only in northern Minnesota and the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec) in Huntington's Ravine. Albion and Fred Steele were each very interested in being first to find this plant. Albion had a friend at Norwich University, Bill Countryman, a former student of his. Bill came with rock-climbing gear and several rock climbers and they [climbed into] Huntington's Ravine.” Hodgdon found the species unexpectedly after an “extremely treacherous descent” from a shelf on the most difficult trail in the White Mountains (Churchill and Hodgdon 1967). “I do believe that Albion beat Fred Steele out and Fred was very put out” (Conant, personal interview, Oct .26, 2010).

After Hodgdon's Huntington's Ravine experience, it was time to get back to some serious teaching, and he continued his support of promising students. His student, David Conant, had an opportunity to study in Puerto Rico. Hodgdon gave Conant, still an undergraduate, an “old-fashioned letter” of introduction addressed “To Whom It May Concern” in case he met any botanists there. “The first person I met was George Drewry,” recalled Conant. “I introduced myself and I gave him this letter and I remember he had glasses and he had a goatee .... He started

reading this letter and as he read through it I saw this little grin begin to develop on his chin and he just loved it. He thought this was a wonderful thing, this very old-fashioned type of introduction .... Drewry said ‘You might be interested in this program we have for students to write research grants and work here for the summer.’ I thought ‘Wow, that really would interest me.’ So I went back to UNH and I told Albion about this, and Albion was sort of thinking I was going to work on the flora of Sullivan County but he could tell that I was really excited about this and he said "you should do this, you should try this.” Conant won the grant and went back to Puerto Rico to work on tree ferns, spending the summers of 1972 and 1973 in Puerto Rico and beginning his graduate study there on ferns under the supervision of Rolla Tryon of Harvard.

Hodgdon subsequently visited his student in Puerto Rico in 1973.

It was in the second summer in Puerto Rico that Albion came to visit me .... I took him up to the field station .... There is a species of *Alsophila* (a tree fern) there which I wanted to find and I thought this would be a great thing to take Albion on a hunt for a plant since he had done it for me so many times .... We finally got there and we scrambled up into the forest and it was kind of a dry, scrubby type of forest, not very wet, except in the ravines. In the protective places there was enough moisture for tree ferns, so we scrambled up into this ravine and we found the fern I was looking for and I have pictures of him holding it there on the roadside for me and then, after about two hours in the field, we drove four hours back. So I put him through eight hours of misery for two hours of fun....”

Another student of Hodgdon’s, Aminta Kitfield, found what she thought was an aberrant form of sensitive fern, but closer study determined that it was *Woodwardia areolata* (chain fern). Kitfield then told her husband-to-be, David Conant, that Hodgdon appeared to be visibly annoyed that she had found a fern he had not found in Durham and that he felt he should have spotted during an earlier study of he had made of fern toxicity (Waller et al. 1944). However, he soon got over his chagrin, and helped her write up her find for publication (Kitfield 1974; Conant, personal interview, Oct. 26, 2010).

Hodgdon's ecology classes got to be pretty large, Conant remembers (Conant, personal interview, Oct. 26, 2010). "It was the big ecology movement in the late sixties and early seventies and all of a sudden Albion became very popular and he had to have multiple sections of his systematics class and I don't know that he wanted all that many students because it got to some kind of a nuisance for him but I remember botany became very popular and you had to sign up early to get into his class. By the time I came along, he was teaching systematics and plant geography" (Conant pers. interview October 10, 2010).

Ecology had been always part of his thinking. As an early ecologist and environmentalist, he was often called upon to speak to groups which he accepted willingly and gracefully. One such group was the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Durham, members of which had been reading Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and *The Sea Around Us*. Hodgdon and another member of the UNH faculty, an extension agronomist who often advised farmers on the use of insecticides, were invited to speak as counterpoints. The host composed a two-minute introduction about the insecticides that Carson had assailed in her books, making various wordplays on the "cides" of insecticides. He called his introduction, "The Sides Around Us" with Hodgdon on one "side" and the extension on the other "side." Hodgdon's argument was clearly persuasive with the agronomist on the defensive.

On the Alaskan expedition, Hodgdon occasionally grumbled about the camp's behavior, then generalizing his observations. He might have been referring to leaders of the expedition, to colleagues, or to members of the public at large and might be accused of casuistry but clearly he was setting an ideal for students, if not everyone, to follow.

Surely a good balance between sensual pleasures, animal activity and mental exercise provide a good basis for the development of the normal mind. I have wasted very little time this summer and most of that in calling vocal attention to the mismanagements of this enterprise. Most persons in my opinion waste much of

their time in idle and unrewarding gossip nursing grudges holding jealousies, defending ideal gods and particularly in competitive pursuits for ambitious ends all of which are destructive to good living and getting true pleasure out of this brief life. If life were endless all of these pursuits might be justified both those which conserve time and those which consume energy. But life is patently brief and to lengthen it requires careful planning and the most patient habit formation. Bad or unnecessary habits like bad institutions or strangling laws come to haunt the hallways of time and narrow the horizon of enjoyment to a perspective the size of the opening at the small end of a telescope. To the devil with such useless devitalizing habits as smoking, coffee drinking to wake one up in the morning, afternoon napping, joining fraternities, daydreaming being sorry for oneself, being very ambitious or jealous or unduly critical or harsh or vengeful or doing anything at all which consumes time and energy and leaves one with a feeling of having not enjoyed himself with due respect for the enjoyment of others. I have always felt though perhaps unwisely, being a direct and probably not overly profound and devious thinker that if man espoused a philosophy of the "Golden Rule" and then made a fetish of true enjoyment "How to get the most enjoyment out of life" with due regard for the relative nature of all abstractions, there would shortly be an improvement in human relations transcending all the powers of all theistic religions, all coercive wars and tortures and all feverish "do good" enterprises (Hodgdon 1952 July 7).

### SOME INFLUENCES ON HODGDON

Hodgdon represented the University of New Hampshire in a special course on preserving plants in plastics at Massachusetts State College, now the University of Massachusetts, in July of 1945. There he met "the great" Ray Ethan Torrey. Torrey was a Professor of Botany who held informal evening seminars for students on esoteric subjects that some students thought were mystical and occult. Torrey was an ascetic "vitalist," who held that life involved some special force that could not be explained by ordinary principles of science.

Torrey [was] at odds with Harvard where he now prefers not to send students. I don't know when I've [met a] more remarkable figure. He struck me as a genius comparable perhaps to Fernald [Merritt Lyndon Fernald

of Harvard] better rounded but more at odds with the trends of the world yet more in line with current intellectual thought.

Torrey was belittled by his department head for being “obsessed” with fossils. He had hundreds of photographs collected over twenty years. The fossils illustrated his belief in the Theory of Evolution.

This has been a very interesting day particularly my chat with Prof. Torrey. [He talked about] the incompleteness and lack of satisfaction in science purely as such. He spoke of the oriental religions. I was quite converted by the almost hypnotic appeal of the man. He said that he felt that there will be a trend after dictatorship and democracy toward quack religions etc. He wished to get his students to feel the beauty of knowledge of evolution and truth ... (Hodgdon 1945).

Despite his “conversion” there is no evidence that Hodgdon was converted to vitalism.

Tony Hodgdon said that “Dad was not deeply religious in the conventional sense, but he was deeply spiritual particularly about the natural world. He just never confused science with his spiritual beliefs” (Hodgdon, Anthony, Email message to author, July 10, 2011).

Hodgdon presided over a department consisting of Avery Rich, plant pathology, Charlotte Nast, plant anatomy and morphology, Stuart Dunn, physiology, and Richard Schreiber, cytology and genetics, with whom he had occasional differences and M.C. Richards, mycology. In 1969 he stepped down from the chairmanship devoting his time to teaching and research. In the early seventies before he died he had a good working relationship with Linn Bogle.

Other individuals who affected Hodgdon, one way or another, were Nicholas Polunin (1909-1997), noted expert on Arctic ecology, and Edith Scamman (1882-1967), a research associate of the Gray Herbarium. While Hodgdon prepared for Alaska, Polunin provided “sound advice as to the layout for ecology and taxonomy.” Hodgdon liked Polunin but criticized his

work. Hodgdon dined with the Polunins in their Cambridge apartment and was impressed with their old-world elegance.

Nick is a most attractive and friendly extrovert and ... perennially optimistic. He is obviously ambitious and plans undoubtedly to be *the* Arctic student and ... spokesman. I believe, for example, that he has fallen into the egregious error of accepting as a reasonable conjecture, and working hypothesis the very fantastic notion that hybrids may result from “refrigerated pollen” of very distant places or “remote times” .... We call these ‘absent treatment hybrids.’ To me these fantasies as related to plant distribution are as unreasonable and uncritical as to appear ... circumspect particularly if they are examined in the light of patterns of distribution ... in existing or fossil floras. It shouldn’t be necessary to [belabor] this criticism ... were it not for a host of ‘spoiled,’ liberated and somewhat ‘cocky scientist children who want to shock their elders and who at least in these area are quite insufficiently fortified with sound facts.... [All the evidence Polunin] has is pollen, spore and bacteria sampling from airplanes at high altitudes. I feel confident that, as a critic of others, he would feel quite free to criticize another for extrapolating or blowing up of such evidence even into an admittedly (implied) hypothesis (Hodgdon 1952 June 8). **The danger here is this.** The public will hear of this sort of wild suggestion and likely accept it for its obvious simplicity and logic whereas as sounder and more credible suggestion involving an understanding of several disciplines, explaining in part at least the distribution of plants and animals, will fail to become accepted. Is it any wonder that the human race continues to be motivated in the main by emotions and superstitions. There is an evident reluctance to accept the most reasonable but rather to accept the most fantastic in its place. It is apparent that in the absence of absolute truth a man is likely to attribute as much validity to a story which partakes of one shred of truth as to a well-thought through discourse which may admittedly lack some truth (Hodgdon 1952 June 8).

This criticism is as negative and harsh as Hodgdon gets in his diary. Polunin had no opportunity to reply—indeed, could not—because Hodgdon’s words were never published. Later on, he is more generous about Polunin but is more effusive about Edith Scamman (1882-1967), a research associate of the Gray Herbarium, who also explored Cuba, Costa Rica and Alaska.

[Scamman<sup>4</sup>] is most honest, humble, sincere, kind in a self effacing way, modest and a person of terrific drive – a well rounded woman - not in the physical sense however. Actually she is scrawny – ageless but not strong looking – with streaky unkempt hair – a raucous jerky voice – words issue forth with the pleasant report of an electric drill. Her hands and arms too are in constant motion. Her method of work is to surround herself with many books, select a too small table, get out her handbag and hand lens ... a lot of loose specimens cover everything with the specimens, start talking, dash for a folder in the herbarium, listen a moment to a comment – *which she promptly understands* [italics Hodgdon's] .... After an hour with her one is impressed but exhausted. Edith was most extravagantly generous as usual. She gave us material to supplement Churchill's<sup>5</sup> "Microherbaria" prepared last year. Bob Riedeman worked with her and came to like her in a way similar to my own great fondness for her. Much more could be said of this great woman ... After spending two or three hours in this strenuous fashion she showed Bob her Costa Rican fern collection in 1951 some two hundred and fifty species in one trip. I doubt if anyone has done better (Hodgdon 1952 June 8).

## BOTANICAL HYPOTHESES

Hodgdon practiced classical botany as a descriptive science. He was a dogged scientist, not a theorist, who understood that description was necessary before forming hypotheses. The description—and there was plenty of that in his papers—tended to be about plant locations. Although "hypothesis," "experiment," and "explanation" rarely occurred in Hodgdon's writing, they were always on his mind. One appearance of the concept of hypothesis was, with co-authors: "Continued failure to disclose stations in ecologically suitable situations might lead one to the tempting hypothesis that the species [of *Potamogeton* (pondweeds)] achieved its present disjunct distribution at two quite different times" (Hodgdon et al. 1952: 243-244), recalling an early

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<sup>4</sup> Scamman was the author of *Ferns and Fern Allies of New Hampshire*, (Durham, N.H., 1947, New Hampshire Academy of Science) an important reference in Hodgdon's work. David Conant has preserved the bookplates from Scamman's book, mounting them in an attractive wall display.

<sup>5</sup> Churchill was probably J.R. Churchill (1845-1933). Microherbaria were small portable sets of specimens not acquired by libraries.

musings by Joseph Hooker (1817-1911) about the disjunction between plant species of south-west Australia and New South Wales, Darwin's wondering how plant species common to Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica could be explained (McCalman 2009), and Hodgdon's own attempts to explain how *Carex capitata* (a sedge) or other more common alpine plants came to exist on Mt. Cardigan, New Hampshire (Steele and Hodgdon 1973). "It is very difficult to account for the presence of these plants, especially *Carex capitata* which is rare on these mountains and [we] cannot even agree between [our] selves as to the most likely explanation" (Steele and Hodgdon 1973: 155).

Hodgdon and his collaborator Radcliffe Pike (with whom he co-authored 21 papers, 18 in *Rhodora*) wondered about changes in the predominance of asteraceous vegetation. Asters were found in "spectacular profusion," dominating the flora on Gull Island of the Machias Seal Islands.



Figure 11. Rad Pike and Hodgdon  
In the sixties (courtesy of Linn Bogle).

They noted that, after destruction by sheep of much of the vegetation of the Machias Seal Islands and the subsequent recovery of Asters, "one can only speculate as to what led to the appearance

and rapid dominance of these asters. Even on a limited and isolated island, the composition of the flora under some conditions can apparently change to a considerable degree in a matter of only a few years” (Pike and Hodgdon 1962: 344).

In his all his diaries, discussion of hypotheses occurred infrequently, but sometimes led to discoveries. In Alaska

I began to think of explanations (and possible hypotheses), for *Delphiniums* growing to a height of two and a half feet under alders. This I did, discovering a vast supply of nodules which are known to be occupied by bacteria. The fact that the vegetation is so luxuriant of both alders and associated plants is certainly indicative of this beneficial symbiosis (Hodgdon 1952 August 13).

Without hypothesizing he describes the plants in the community, paying particular attention to the fruits including blackberry, bog bilberry, cowberry or foxberry and currant, giving the Latin names for each. He was partial to the blackberries, on which he was to do a series of studies on their confusing taxonomy. In the course of his description, he noted willows, sphagnum mosses, rushes, butterworts, sedges and *Ledums* or Labrador tea (Hodgdon 1952). And always, in other communities, he would include birds. But under the pressure of describing plant communities and plant locations, theorizing rarely appeared in his published papers.



Figure 12. Audrey and Albion 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary 1966 (courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).



Figure 13. Hodgdon reading to Nancy Hehre, Hehre's daughter, sixties (courtesy of Ed Hehre).

### HODGDON'S RECREATIONAL READING

Among Hodgdon's favorite authors were Thoreau, Mark Twain, Dickens, Emerson and Darwin from whom he read passages to his children as soon as they were old enough to understand and value the nightly readings (Anthony Hodgdon, pers. interview Dec. 17 2010).

Ed Hehre remembers him for the same reason. Hodgdon became a friend of Ed's, often visiting him at his house, where he read to Ed's daughter, Nancy, age two (Hehre, pers. comm., Aug. 9, 2010). "Just another side to his warm personality," Hehre said.

Tony and Ariel Hodgdon thought their father had a wonderful reading voice. "He would read to the three of us kids when we were growing up during the fall, winter and spring, during the school year, three or four times a week. He loved reading Mark Twain." In his classes, he probably quoted one of Twain's well-known aphorisms, "To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail," and "to a botanist," someone said, "everything looks like a plant."

He read *David Copperfield*, *Pickwick Papers*, Robert Louis Stevenson, Kenneth Roberts, *Arundel*, *Northwest Passage* and Jack London. He loved poetry, Yeats and Robert Frost. He liked reading mystery stories to himself; especially Agatha Christie (Anthony Hodgdon, pers. interview, December 17, 2010). During idle moments in Alaska he read O'Neill's *The Long*

*Voyage Home*, Somerset Maugham's *Cakes and Ale* and Forester's *The African Queen*. He debated with his Alaskan expedition colleagues about naturalism, Frost, T.S. Eliot, Thoreau and Rousseau (Hodgdon 1952 July 3).

### HODGDON'S FOIBLES

Hodgdon had no hesitation about telling stories on himself. One time he drove his car from Durham into Boston and later took the train back to Durham, called his home for someone to pick him up, only to be dismayed when Audrey told him "But Honey, you've got the car." He told the story many times. It is a measure of the man that he could laugh at himself.

It wasn't the first time he had forgotten his car. Tony and Ariel were home for lunch from school and their father was having lunch with them. He was timing his departure to get back to class. When he finished his lunch and stepped outside his car wasn't there. He had driven the car to work, then walked home and forgotten that he had taken it to campus.

Another time, he was at a meeting of the New England Botanical Club with Rad Pike. Tony tells the story, "Dad put on his coat but couldn't find his car keys. Both Rad and he spent fifteen or twenty minutes looking for his keys until Dad figured out that he had the wrong coat (Hodgdon, Anthony and Ariel Parent, Personal Interview, December 17, 2010)."

Tony and Ariel agreed that "Rad and Dad" were inseparable. They travelled well together and did some botanizing out on the Wolf Islands in Pasamaquoddy Bay on the Canadian side. One time, they were on a charter boat with fishermen or lobstermen. They wanted to take back a live specimen, but thought they would have trouble at customs until the boat owner said 'Don't worry; it will be on your back porch tomorrow morning' (Hodgdon, Anthony Personal Interview, Dec. 17, 2010). One might suppose that "it" would be a live lobster, but Tony Hodgdon is pretty

sure it was a plant specimen.

Sometime in the fifties, the Hodgsons moved from a “perfectly sound house” in Durham to an old house with a certain charm in Nottingham. The house didn’t have a bathroom until they put one in; the house had been kind of abandoned. “The shed had an outhouse. Whenever we wanted to use the facilities or lack thereof,” Ariel said, “we would sort of accompany each other into the shed” (Hodgdon, Anthony and Ariel Parent, Personal Interview, December 17, 2010).

”I was never attached to that house [in Nottingham],” Tony said.

Ariel disagreed, “Well, I lived there longer than you did and I was attached to it but I wasn't crazy about that kitchen floor.”

“He was completely useless around the house,” Tony said. “If Mother asked him to do something, she would hound him until he did it and then he would just do a lousy job of it. I think he just didn't have the ability to do hard jobs around the house,” said Tony (Hodgdon, Anthony and Ariel Parent, Personal Interview, December 17, 2010).

“Or the desire or the patience,” Ariel kicked in. “My father and I were moving a couch out of the living room in Nottingham after my mother had bought a new one. My father got so rattled about the whole thing that we ended up splitting the frame and breaking the old couch.”

The floors were in poor condition. They had bought a new linoleum for the kitchen. Audrey kept at him to install it.

Tony, “It was a typical situation in which Dad didn't want anything to do with it as far as a home project. He wasn't good at these things.”

“She kept nagging him,” Tony said, “Until he just said ‘I'll do it’ probably with a few choice damn-its. So he got going on it and Trudy [Tony’s wife] and I were coming down from

Auburn that day and we walked in to see the results and he had this linoleum down on the floor and hadn't even moved the kitchen table. He had cut holes in the linoleum around the legs. It was just awful and Trudy and I just sat there and practically roared.”

Trudy, “I think we spent the whole weekend trying to straighten it out and make it look halfway decent. He had ruined it. He'd rather be outdoors and bushwhacking and do anything but I don't think he really wanted to do household projects.”

Tony, “I think he was a little embarrassed when he got to looking at it.” His dereliction of household duties could be traced, of course, to overwhelming devotion to his life cause, the desire to complete the flora of New Hampshire (Hodgdon, Anthony and Ariel Parent, Personal Interview, December 17, 2010).

Sometimes, “If he didn't have evening meetings or if he wasn't busy doing other things he would usually play a couple of hands of solitaire,” Tony said. “He would play himself and he would cheat. He'd buy the pack and then he'd start looking and he'd peek at the cards and then he'd get disgusted and he'd throw the whole pack in the waste basket.” Tony laughed saying “I don't know why he did that” (Anthony Hodgdon, pers. interview. December 17, 2010).

In Alaska, he played “Hearts” against card sharks in the party. He and his partner got beaten “royally.”

Albion did not think much of deans, but Tony Hodgdon thought that his father had the temperament to be a dean—in Stuart Dunn's phraseology, “The Happiness Boys,” referring to the Deans' efforts to keep the faculty happy. Despite his easy-going way of resolving conflicts, he had no interest in becoming a dean. He had a low tolerance for administrative work, though he had been a department head for many years. He liked teaching and the independence of doing research.

He was sympathetic with a lot of the anti-war movement of the sixties but was cautious about revealing his political and religious beliefs into the workplace or the classroom. Away from work he loved to debate almost anything.

When university professors were called communist sympathizers, Hodgdon felt slighted because his friends were being attacked and he wasn't, even though the *Manchester Union Leader* listed him among the sympathizers (Hodgdon, Anthony and Ariel Parent, Personal Interview, December 17, 2010).

#### HODGDON'S FINAL EXCURSION

In all his years of collecting, he never named a new plant species, the very definition of collecting in the time of Darwin, Hooker and Gray. He only found new locations. By the time he came along, all New England and New Hampshire genera and species had already been recorded in *Gray's Manual* or Britton and Brown (1913).

With his many excursions, Hodgdon was extremely busy finding New Hampshire plants in new sites, tending to the Herbarium, and teaching.

He thought of himself as a boring teacher, but his students loved him, especially out of the classroom. He sometimes paid them out of his own pocket to work in the Herbarium. He was rarely sick, except for an occasional headache. Photos of him show an eager man raring to go, enjoying life to the fullest.

Automobiles, used in excursions and expeditions, were a central part of Hodgdon's botanical life. In earlier trips, he had been partial to the Ford Model A, although it needed frequent repairs and he did not have much time for them while in graduate school or on his

excursions. He had owned Fords and a 1948 Austin Healy MG-TC. He was a familiar figure on campus in the sporty MG, although botany was not known as a sporty discipline and Hodgdon was not a sporty man. The MG was his gadabout, but it was a totally impractical vehicle here in New England, according to Anthony Hodgdon, Albion's son. "It did have side curtains but there was absolutely no way you could keep yourself warm and it was not handy for storing plants" (Hodgdon, Anthony and Ariel Parent, Personal Interview, December 17, 2010).



Figure 14. Hodgdon's Austin Healy MG with right-hand drive (Courtesy of Anthony Hodgdon).

His Volkswagen Beetle, on the other hand, was more practical. Although small, it served him better and it was always filled with specimens (Anthony Hodgdon and Ariel Parent, Personal Interview, December 17, 2010).

On August 2, 1974, nearing retirement at the age of sixty-five, "Doc" Hodgdon was returning home about ten p.m. from a plant collecting excursion on Route 4 in Durham. It was a typical excursion, one that he had made many times with his students or colleagues either in his old right-hand drive MG or his VW "Bug." He may have been weary but alert after a long day. He may have been thinking about writing up the day's activities, or planning how he was going to catalog the plants he had collected or about structuring his next publication, or simply ending the day with his wife, Audrey. In any case, he was not prepared for what happened next at that late hour. The wind speed was minimal, the temperature seventy-two degrees, and humidity was 64

percent, conditions not conducive enough to cause drowsiness. The sky was overcast though visibility was eleven miles. He probably glanced at the plants on the seat next to him. Whatever was going through his mind, it was the mind of the other driver that was critical when he crossed over the center lane and crashed head-on into Hodgdon's Volkswagen. The collision happened too fast for Hodgdon to take evasive action.

The driver of the Corvair, Robert J. Whitney, was killed instantly (Manchester Union Leader 1974). After checking Whitney's blood alcohol level, the medical examiner said that he didn't know how Whitney managed to get into a car and get it started (Anthony Hodgdon, and Ariel Parent, Personal Interview, December 17, 2010). According to the *UNH Campus Journal*, Hodgdon "suffered head injuries, collapsed lungs, broken ribs, and fractures of the left hip, right leg, both ankles and both wrists" (UNH Campus Journal, Aug 2, 1974). The head injuries and collapsed lungs were enough to kill any man. But he survived the crash and was under intensive care until August 20. The doctor said that his good physical condition prior to the accident kept him going (UNH Campus Journal 1974).

Trudy and Tony learned of the accident while they were at camp in the town of Weston in Aroostic County, in northern Maine. Trudy's parents were there with them. There was no telephone at camp. Trudy's sister and brother were staying at their parents' house in Mars Hill about fifty miles north of the camp when they received the call about Albion's accident. Trudy's brother got on his motorcycle and raced down to camp in Weston arriving well after midnight. Trudy was surprised to see her brother at such an odd hour until he burst out with the news. Getting over their initial shock, Trudy and Tony immediately decided to go to Portland but found to their consternation that their car did not have enough gas for the trip. While they hurriedly tried to compose themselves, Trudy's mother drove their car to a local gas station, woke up the owner

and had their car gassed up. Trudy's Dad calmed them down and reminded them to take it easy on the roads. Trudy and Tony set out from the camp and drove the two hundred and twenty-five miles to the Maine Medical Center in Portland arriving sometime after six-thirty a.m. The drive had taken four and a half hours, giving them plenty of time to fret about the accident and to console each other. Ariel and her husband Alan were there with their children as well as Audrey and several other relatives.

Ariel recalled, "He was headed East on Route 4 and the accident was in Durham, actually. The bypass had been built at that point and we're not absolutely sure where he was going but it may have been to our apartment in Dover because sometimes he would come down that way and then go up Route 108, and the accident happened when the driver of the other car, a 1965 Chevrolet Corvair, came up the ramp that used to be from Route 4 and he ended up swinging wide and just went into my father's lane full speed."

Newspapers reported that Albion was returning from an excursion where he had collected plants for his research and courses. No record of the plants in the car was made. Tony Hodgdon said that anything loose in the car could easily have been swept aside in the effort to remove his father alive from the wreckage, though he recalled that he did find a plant press after checking the car a few weeks later and returning it to the Botany office, but he had no idea whether the press contained any plants.

Hodgdon survived for two and half years. "He died on New Year's Eve, 1976. He went very peaceful. They were a tough two years, but we figured he had some control over how long he was with us" his daughter, Ariel, said.

Hodgdon had attended the Quaker Fellowship where he had many friends, though he was not a member. It was the practice at Quaker meetings for members to sit in silence, sometimes for

an hour or more, until a member's inner thoughts moved him to stand up and speak. The Sunday after the accident, a member got up and said solemnly that "We're all friends of Albion Hodgdon and I'm glad the person that ran into him has died, and I know that's not very Christian." This elicited a volatile discussion about feelings and what was indeed Christian. Some were inclined to agree, but others were quite angry and upset and "not too charitable" with the person whose thoughts caused such an outburst (anonymously contributed).

He was "never right" after the accident, some people said.

"His injuries included brain damage. He did wake up from his coma, but he could not really communicate well. We got him to write down how he felt. His injuries included breaks in just about every bone in his body," said Ariel.

"Just massive, massive," Tony agreed.

"So, they weren't really ever to get that right" asked Trudy?

"No, and he never walked again and he was a partial quadriplegic after that so it was devastating," Ariel answered.

"Do you think he knew what had happened to him" Trudy asked?

Both Tony and Ariel, "Yes, I think so."

Tony, "In some cognizant areas I think he was really quite sharp. His responses were slow but a lot of it was still there. As far as the part of his brain that controlled motor function, he was really bad off and I think that he just managed to get his dignity back."

Ariel, "I think so. He had a wonderful helper, Arlene Reynolds, who took him into her house and she had some nursing experience but she wasn't an RN. She was extremely good with him." Tony added, "We worked with Arlene when she took care of Dad, and again over ten years later when she cared for Mother. Arlene drove him back to Boothbay" (Hodgdon, Anthony, Email

message to author, July 10, 2011).

Tony, “I had built a ramp so he could get up into the cottage. A lot of time he was prone. He had lung infections. He had a tracheotomy and then he got pneumonia. The doctor, who had a good relationship with my Dad at the time, did another tracheotomy and told him, ‘I will not do that again. I know that is too painful.’”

Ariel, “He was home for Christmas in 1975 in Nottingham but he was hospitalized—what, a day or two later? The next time that Dad got pneumonia, we knew that was it.”

Ironically, it was discovered after an annual checkup that Hodgdon had a little emphysema, according to Tony. Hodgdon had been healthy throughout his life. “He was never sick,” said Tony. Tony guessed that they were very careless with sprays and chemicals, but Hodgdon would not have been around during spraying very much. “And he never smoked.”

Trudy cut in, “Everyone was smoking around him all the time.”

Tony agreed, “There was an awful lot of second hand smoke.”

“And a lot of insecticides,” said Ariel, “and they used to smoke in the office.”

Audrey Hodgdon brought suit for personal injuries against the estate of Robert J. Whitney winning judgments against Allstate Insurance Company and Concord General Insurance Company requiring them to pay up to the limits of their policies (Allstate Insurance Company).

#### LEGACY OF ALBION REED HODGDON

Hodgdon had not finished his life work. “It was a pity that he died,” David Conant said, “because he would have finished the flora of New Hampshire. He seemed to know every species of vascular plant and its distribution in New Hampshire” (personal communication). Hodgdon’s first published paper, a one-page note, was on the large white-flowered *Trillium* that had caught

his eye from an automobile excursion with other students and Professor Fernald of Harvard in the town of Bethlehem, New Hampshire (Hodgdon 1934). His last paper, with co-authors, was on the grasses of New Hampshire, published posthumously (Hodgdon et al 1979). At fifty-three pages, it was one of the longest of his papers.

Of his 137 published papers, mostly short pieces, 62 were in *Rhodora* where, as Editor, he enlarged the coverage to include South America. He had one more manuscript, which he never got around to publishing: “The Flora of Durham, New Hampshire.” It contained 464 genera and 996 species in 105 families. Had it been published, it would have been a fitting tribute for his life work, a floral typology for the State of New Hampshire, representing 234 towns and communities (Hodgdon 1976). It exists in typescript only and is in the Sumner Pike Library in the Hodgdon Herbarium.

Some writers felt that the work of Albion Hodgdon and others could not be overstated in their contribution to the understanding of New Hampshire flora (Sperduto 2000: iv). One major newspaper called him a “champion of environmental causes” (New York Times 1977). His contributions to the systematic classification of the plant life of New Hampshire and the Northeast “defy concise description,” according to one article in an unidentified newspaper (“UNH Professor’s Knowledge of Native Plants Unrivaled”).

“It is endlessly astonishing how much ... early explorers were willing to sacrifice“ in their quest for new species, according to Richard Conniff in *The Species Seekers*. They were “motivated by personal ambition and appetite for adventure. But adventure was often just a nice word for prolonged hardship followed by a painful death” (Conniff 2011:64).

Conniff included in his book a “Necrology” of seventy-one explorers, plant and animal, who had died in their quest for new species. Included in the seventy-one were a dozen from the

Twentieth Century some of whom died by murder, in plane crashes or car accidents (Conniff, 2011:383). Hodgdon's death was not in a quest for new species, but the accident cut short a life devoted to new locations of species and should certainly be added to any future botanical necrology.

During his lifetime in botany, Hodgdon touched many lives—students, colleagues, librarians, friends and casual acquaintances. Some of his students went on to teach and inspired their own students who went on to teach.

Hodgdon did not want a funeral. His memorial service, “A Celebration of The Life of Albion Reed Hodgdon was held at the Dover Quaker Fellowship House. The service was simple and lovely with readings from Robert Frost and William Butler Yeats” (Hodgdon, Anthony, Email message to author, July 10, 2011).

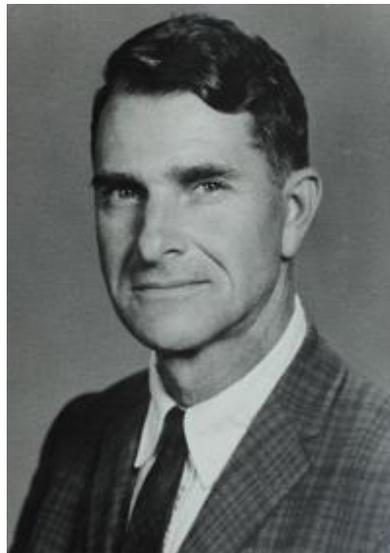


Figure 15. Portrait of Albion Hodgdon displayed in the Hodgdon Herbarium.

## APPENDIX

In the late forties Helen Field Watson, a young high school teacher from South Dakota and Minnesota, attended a writers' workshop at the University of New Hampshire. There she presumably met Hodgdon. Watson was a talented teacher who published articles on science and biology, and who won awards for vocal composition and singing. In 1949 she included one of her compositions "Hodgdon of Durham" in a book of poems (Watson 1949, p.72). The poem was reprinted in *Rhodora* in full (Bogle 1978).

### Hodgdon of Durham

Hodgdon of Durham is a timeless man,  
Mature in judgment, in emotions prime.  
One might imagine that a century's span  
Had left Thoreau of Concord past his time.  
And Hodgdon—like the man who planted beans,  
Translated Plato and the woodchuck's talk—  
Now prowls for mosses where a moist rock leans  
And travels miles to show where lichens walk.  
He treats as kin of his a Pine or Man  
And looks at each with something near surprise.  
His life is clean-cut, built on Nature's plan;  
He seems appraising self with other's eyes,  
And yet is heedless of unruly hair,  
Frayed coat, worn shoes, assuming friends will know  
Tree bark and clothes but give protective care  
To finer inside portions as they grow.  
All that he owns he uses for one end—  
To bring together Nature and a Man

On equal terms—an honor to each friend—  
Though Nature long was here when Man began.  
He walks at ease in any company  
With quiet born of years of listening,  
With eagerness on leash, alert to see  
The other's silent need of anything.  
Well-meaning folks, consumed with misplaced zeals,  
Remind him of his duty to implore  
New grace, not knowing this man often kneels  
In fervid worship on God's forest floor (Watson 1949, p. 72).

She is saying that Hodgdon is much like Thoreau, close to nature. He is careless of his appearance. He wants to reconcile or reunite “on their own terms” man and nature. Though he fits in well with other disciplines, he absorbs their ideas, despite “misplaced zeals.” They do not realize he is so close to nature.

Hodgdon himself tried writing poetry. He apparently participated in a poetry-writing seminar on campus, thinking that it would be a nice leisure-time activity during Christmas season, though he could not have had much leisure time while he was fiercely collecting and editing *Rhodora*. He did have time to relax with his family and to write at least one poem, dedicated to his teaching and students:

## Seminar

Quite apart from all that makes us men  
Measuring, equation-seeking, feeding machines on all our parts  
Ravelling to pregnant helixes and the like  
Killing half of life, the other half to gain

They hear politely with detached concern  
About another way to look at truth and man  
So simple it would evade their grasp  
Outgrown they are to simple things

I listen too and want to heal the breach  
The blue and gray, the black and red  
Who follow colors and let themselves be led  
Snodgrass against Tatum and all the rest

How will it happen when the two are one?  
A way of teaching more in shorter time or perhaps  
To bring the government in to get more done  
A certain sinecure to bridge the missile gap.

Sometime along our road that led into a wood  
The gods we serve beguiled our minds; moods of love  
And pity too we have at proper times  
But not of course to mix with an experiment

The word “missle” is puzzling. Did he mean missel, as in missel thrush (the bird) which seems unlikely, or was it a simple typographical misspelling of missile, where he meant to refer to the weapons gap of the cold war of the sixties or did he mean something else? The poem seems to address the conflict between the old and the new or between science and faith as with Darwin’s

theory of natural selection of the nineteenth century, which is still disputatious in the twenty-first century. Will we ever be able to reconcile the difference, he asks, or have we let ourselves be blinded by the immutable tenets of our disciplines? The lack of punctuation is awkward if not intentional. The poem illustrates a talent for tight writing while introducing a puzzling word.

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