



William James Beal Papers UA.17.4

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on November 28, 2023.

Finding aid written in English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

University Archives and Historical Collections

Conrad Hall

943 Conrad Road, Room 101

East Lansing , MI 48824

Business Number: 517-355-2330

archives@msu.edu

URL: <http://archives.msu.edu/>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical Note	3
Scope and Contents	4
Administrative Information	4
Controlled Access Headings	5
Collection Inventory	6
Notes and Correspondence	6
Botany Classes	6
Writings by William J. Beal	7
Other Publications	8
Scrapbook	8
Oversized	8
Photographs	8
Photographs- People Collection	8
Copies of photographs belonging to Jessie Beal Baker and Ray Stannard Baker	9

Summary Information

Repository:	University Archives and Historical Collections
Creator:	Beal, W. J. (William James), 1833-1924
Source - dnr:	Kuhn, Madison, 1910-1985
Source:	Michigan State University. Department of Botany
Title:	William James Beal papers
ID:	UA.17.4
Date [inclusive]:	1859-1940
Physical Description:	1 Cubic Feet
Language of the Material:	English .

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: "Item title, Collection title, Collection Identifier, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, Michigan."

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical Note

William J. Beal was born on March 11, 1833 in Adrian, Michigan. In 1859, he graduated from the University of Michigan with a B.A. degree in classical studies. After two years of teaching material science at The Friend's Academy in Union Springs, New York, Beal enrolled at Harvard. While there, he studied under famous botanists, Asa Gray, Louis Agassiz, and Jeffries Wyman, and eventually graduated with his B.S. degree.

In 1871, Beal began his long association with Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University) as a professor of botany and horticulture. A pioneer in teaching "The New Botany" as outlined in his 1880 address, Beal placed great emphasis on independent learning through observation. Several of his students went on to become prominent scientists including C. S. Crandall, professor of pomology at Illinois; C. C. Georgeson who developed wheat and

strawberries capable of withstanding Alaska's climate; and Liberty Hyde Bailey who became a world authority on palm species. Perhaps Beal's greatest achievement was his experiments in cross-fertilization of corn which led directly to the development of hybrid corn. His most enduring act was the establishment of the oldest continuously operated garden in the nation in 1873: Beal Botanical Garden at Michigan Agricultural College. This garden is recognized as one of the best in the country serving as both an outdoor teaching lab and a focal point for naturalists. In 1910, Beal retired after forty years of service to write a history of M.A.C. He spent his remaining years in Amherst, Massachusetts until his death in 1924.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

The William J. Beal papers consist of correspondence, publications, and materials relating to his work as a student at Harvard University. The material from Beal's years at Harvard includes course notes on anatomy, geology and ornithology as well as a detailed journal which Beal wrote in 1862. This journal includes comments on individuals as well as events of the period.

The correspondence is not extensive but contains several letters from Asa Gray as well as a typescript copy of a letter that Beal wrote in 1862 on the teachings of Louis Agassiz. The correspondence also contains a photocopy of an 1878 letter from Charles Darwin discussing hybrid corn. The volume listing Beal's publications is particularly useful since it gives a complete listing of all his writings from 1861 to 1921.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

University Archives and Historical Collections

Conrad Hall
943 Conrad Road, Room 101
East Lansing , MI 48824
Business Number: 517-355-2330
archives@msu.edu
URL: <http://archives.msu.edu/>

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to publish material from this collection must be obtained from University Archives & Historical Collections, Michigan State University.

Conditions Governing Access

Legal Status: Donor(s) have transferred any applicable copyright to Michigan State University but the collection may contain third-party materials for which copyright was not transferred. Copyright restrictions may apply. Property Rights: Michigan State University.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Botany
- Horticulture
- Course materials
- Guidebooks
- Letters (correspondence)
- Photographs
- Postcards
- Publications
- Scrapbooks
- Beal, Fannie E.
- Beal, W. J. (William James), 1833-1924
- Darwin, Charles, 1809-1882
- Gray, Asa, 1810-1888
- Randall, W. E.
- Michigan Agricultural College. Faculty
- University of Michigan
- University of Michigan. Class of 1859
- Harvard University
- Baker, Jessie Beal
- Kuhn, Madison, 1910-1985
- Michigan State University. Department of Botany

Collection Inventory

Notes and Correspondence

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence		
1862-1878	box 891	folder 1
1879-1921	box 891	folder 2
1939-1940	box 891	folder 3
Old Students Fund, 1905	box 891	folder 4
Essay Delivered at Graduation, 1859	box 891	folder 5
Notebook of Plants Observed in New York, 1859	box 891	folder 6
Class Notes, 1892	box 891	folder 7
Comments on Life at Harvard, 1862	box 891	folder 8
Notebook, 1866	box 891	folder 9
Reports to State Board of Agriculture, Undated	box 891	folder 10
Address on Botany, 1879	box 891	folder 11
Weed Seed Burial Experiment (newspaper article), 1953 Digital Object: Weed Seed Burial Experiment: 1953-	box 891	folder 12
Syllabus, Botanical Laboratory, 1882 Digital Object: Syllabus, Botanical Laboratory: 1882-	box 891	folder 13
Grayling Experiment Station Plantings, 1888-1895	box 891	folder 14
Botanical Department Memoranda/Notes, 1890-1891	box 891	folder 15
Reports to the President of M.A.C., 1872, 1910	box 891	folder 16
Notes for Beal's History of M.A.C., 1910	box 891	folder 17
Miscellaneous Notes, Undated	box 891	folder 18

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Botany Classes

Title/Description	Instances	
Student Papers		
1886-1887	box 891	folder 19

1904	box 891	folder 20
1906	box 891	folder 21
1906	box 891	folder 22
Miscellaneous, Undated	box 891	folder 23
Examination, Undated	box 891	folder 24

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Writings by William J. Beal

Title/Description	Instances	
<i>Carnivorous Plants</i> , 1875	box 891	folder 25
<i>An Address Given to the Connecticut Board of Agriculture</i> , 1880	box 891	folder 26
<i>Experiments and Other Work at the Horticulture Department</i> , 1880	box 891	folder 27
<i>A Brief Account of the Botanical Garden</i> , 1882	box 891	folder 28
<i>The New Botany</i> , 1882	box 891	folder 29
<i>Agriculture: Its Needs and Opportunities</i> , 1884		
<i>Manual Labor at Agricultural Colleges</i> , 1894	box 891	folder 31
<i>Beal's Hints for Beginners in Botany</i> , 1896	box 891	folder 32
<i>Catalog of Trees and Shrubs at Michigan Agricultural College</i>	box 891	folder 33
<i>Fern and Seed Plant Growing Without Cultivation</i> , 1904	box 891	folder 34
<i>Hints for Exhibits at Grange or Fair</i> , 1905	box 891	folder 35
<i>The Vitality of Seeds</i> , 1905	box 891	folder 36
"Lightning Strokes at M.A.C. During 43 Years", 1913	box 891	folder 37
"M.A.C. Represented by a Stream", 1875-1913	box 891	folder 38
Michigan Weeds, 1915	box 891	folder 39
<i>History of the University of Michigan's Class of 1859</i> , 1917	box 891	folder 40
<i>An American Pioneer in Science: William J. Beal</i> , 1925	box 891	folder 41
<i>Hints on Growing Grasses</i> , Undated	box 891	folder 42
<i>A Choice List of Ornamental Trees and Shrubs</i> , Undated	box 891	folder 43
"A Study of Plant Leaves," Elementary Science Bulletin No. 9, April 1903	box 891	folder 33

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Other Publications

Title/Description	Instances	
<i>Maple Sugar and the Sugar Bush</i> by A.J. Cook, 1877 Digital Object: <i>Maple Sugar and the Sugar Bush</i> by A.J. Cook: 1877	box 891	folder 44
Bergielunds Botaniska Trädgård, 1891	box 891	folder 45
Newspaper Clippings, 1881-1883	box 891	folder 46
Home Insurance Policy, 1883	box 891	folder 47
Publications of W.J. Beal, 1861-1921	box 891	folder 48
Articles about Beal by Ray Stannard Baker, 1941, 1966 Digital Object: <i>Articles about Beal</i> by Ray Stannard Baker: 1941, 1966	box 891	folder 49

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scrapbook

Title/Description	Instances	
Scrapbook #240 Photos of Harvard buildings and faculty, 1863	box 891	folder 49

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Oversized

Title/Description	Instances	
Map. Sweden. Stockholm. "Botanical Garden", 1891		

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Photographs

Photographs- People Collection

Title/Description	Instances	
Beal, Jessie		

	box People Photo 3
Beal, Mrs. William J.	box People Photo 3
Beal, William J.	box People Photo 3
Copies of photographs belonging to Jessie Beal Baker and Ray Stannard Baker	box UA Photo 63
Title/Description	Instances
Wells Hall (1) and fountain, 1890	
Williams Hall and College Hall, undated	
Museum and Library (Linton Hall), undated	
M.A.C. campus, undated	
People on campus (unidentified), undated	
Soldiers in formation near Abbot Hall, undated	
People in Beal Botanical Garden, 1890	
Class of 1889 as sophomores (one co-ed), circa 1886-1887	
Armory	
Chemical Lab, undated	
Group photo (unidentified), undated	
Music room (possibly belonging to Phi Delta Theta), undated	
Phi Delta Theta fraternity	box OS 11

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Postcards

University Hall, University of Michigan, 1944	drawer Postcard Drawer
---	------------------------------