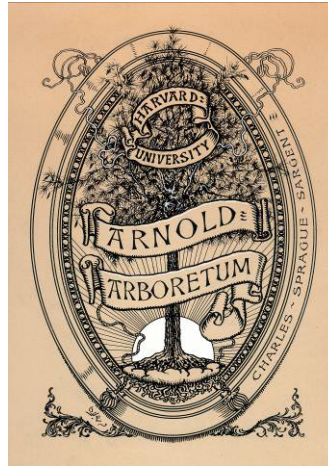


Archives II D CEF

Charles Edward Faxon (1846-1918) papers, 1882-1918: Guide.



The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

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II D CEF

Charles Edward Faxon (1846-1918) papers, 1882-1918: Guide Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University 125 Arborway, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

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Descriptive Summary

Repository: Archives of the Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, MA

Call No.: II D CEF

Location: Archives

Title: Charles Edward Faxon (1846-1918) papers, 1882-1918.

Date(s): 1882-1918

Creator: Charles Edward Faxon (1846-1918)

Quantity: 11 linear feet

Language of material: English

Abstract: Charles Edward Faxon's career included employment at the two Harvard Institution's in Jamaica Plain: first at the Bussey Institution then at the Arnold Arboretum where he not only took charge of the development of the Arboretum's library and herbarium, but began working on the botanical drawings that would illustrate the Arboretum's earliest publications.

Note: Access to Finding Aid record in [HOLLIS](#).

Preferred Citation: Charles Edward Faxon papers. Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.

Additional Material: Charles Edward Faxon correspondence may be also found in the [Arnold Arboretum Correspondence Database](#).

Processing Information

September 1999. Revised 2/25/2000. Revised June 2011, Kayleigh Hinckley, 2012 Sheila Connor, 2016, 2017, and 2023, 2024 Larissa Glasser.

Acquisition Information

Provenance: Created by Charles Edward Faxon and acquired during Faxon's Arboretum career. This collection was transferred from the Arnold Arboretum's departmental holdings to the Arboretum's Archives in 1984 when the Archive was established. Series IIa and VIIa transferred February 2017 from Arnold Arboretum Archives, Botany Libraries.

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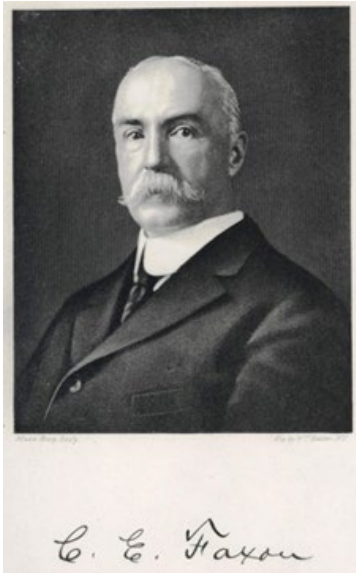
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Biographical Note

"Mr. Faxon joined the staff of the Arnold Arboretum in May, 1882, to take charge of the library and herbarium, which he managed successfully until his death and which he saw grow from insignificance to importance. For these duties he was equipped with a critical knowledge of the New England flora and a facility for acquiring languages which enabled him to read currently those of nearly every country of Europe. It is, however, as a botanical draftsman that Faxon is most distinguished. During his connection with the Arboretum 1,920 of his drawings were published. With few exceptions they illustrate works on trees which have been prepared here. His drawings unite botanical accuracy with graceful composition, and the skill of his pencil has placed him among the few great masters of his art whose names will live as long as plants are studied."

Charles Sprague Sargent
Annual Report of the Arnold Arboretum, 1918



Engraving of C.E. Faxon by W.T. Bather, NY

Charles Edward Faxon was born on January 21, 1846, to Elisha Faxon (1801-1855) and Hannah Whiting Faxon (1805-after 1870), in the family's home on Larmartine Street which was within walking distance of the Arnold Arboretum. The family moved from Abington, Massachusetts, a center of shoe making, to Jamaica Plain before Charles' birth in 1846 and his father and his two brothers, Edwin and Marcus, were in the shoe leather trade on Purchase Street in the Leather District in Boston.

Faxon was educated at the local public schools and lived and worked in Jamaica Plain his entire life, eventually settling at 15 Park Lane. He graduated from the Lawrence Scientific School in Cambridge as a civil Engineer in 1867 and was an Instructor in Botany at the Bussey Institution from 1879-1884. In the spring of 1882, he was asked by Charles Sprague Sargent (1841-1927), the first Director of the Arboretum, to join his staff. Faxon spent the remainder of his career at

the Arboretum as Assistant Director in charge of the library and herbarium until his death from a fall at home in Jamaica Plain on February 6, 1918.

In 1882 Sargent had just undertaken the monumental task of preparing a treatise on the trees of North America. Faxon not only took charge of the development of the library and herbarium, but was to spend the next twenty-one years engaged in creating the illustrations for Sargent's *Silva of North America*, eventually drawing all of its 744 plates. In his review of *The Silva* published in *Atlantic Monthly* in July 1903, John Muir wrote of Faxon's work, "At the first glance through the book, everyone must admire the fullness and beauty of the plates. They were made in Paris, from drawings from life, by Faxon, the foremost botanical artist in America.... these are so tellingly drawn and arranged, [that] any one with the slightest smattering of botany is enabled to identify each tree, even without referring to the text."



Charles Sargent and Charles Faxon, Dwight House Office, 1880. From C.S. Sargent Archives

Prior to the Hunnewell building being built in 1892, Sargent's office as well as the Arboretum's library and herbarium were located at Dwight House at Holm Lea the Sargent estate in Brookline, Massachusetts. This image of Charles Sprague Sargent, on left, and Charles Edward Faxon surrounded by books, herbarium cases, plant specimens and botanical illustrations was taken at Dwight House in 1880.

In addition to illustrating the *Silva*, Faxon prepared drawings for Sargent's other publications: 644 for the [*Manual of the Trees of North America \(exclusive of Mexico\)*](#) (1905); 200 for the two volumes of *Trees and Shrubs* (1902-1913); 17 for the [*Forest Flora of Japan*](#) and 285 for the journal [*Garden and Forest*](#) (1888-1898). He provided many of the illustrations for Daniel Cady Eaton's [*Ferns of North America*](#) (1879-1880). Thirteen of Faxon's drawings were published in *Rhodora*, and three in the *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club*. Other publications include *Gray's Manual of Botany*, *Gardeners' Chronicle*, and *The Botanical Gazette*. Between 1879 and 1913, 1,825 of Faxon's drawings were published.



Ferns of North America
Acrostichum aureum pl. 58

Scope and Content

The Edward Faxon papers span the years of his Arboretum career and include photographs, correspondence and original drawings, sketches, and published plates, which make up the majority of the collection. His archive also includes biographical material and obituaries,

several black and white photographic portraits, and a small amount of correspondence directed primarily to Arboretum colleagues or in reply to individuals seeking plant material identification. Included in the correspondence is an undated, handwritten list of publications in which his drawings appeared. A Faxon archival collection, [*Faxon, Charles Edward, 1846-1918. Translations of Julius Milde's Botrychiorum monographia: A Guide*](#) is held in the Archives of the Botany Libraries, Harvard University Herbaria, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Arrangement

The Charles Edward Faxon collection is arranged in 12 series.

- Series I:** Biographical material and photographs
- Series II:** Correspondence
- Series IIa:** Account ledger
- Series III:** Plates: *Silva of North America*
- Series IV:** Original Artwork: *Silva of North America*
- Series V:** Drawings: *Silva of North America*
- Series VI:** Drawings: *Manual of the trees of North America* 1905
- Series VII:** Drawings: *Manual of the trees of North America* 1922
- Series VIII:** Sketches and drawings of trees, shrubs, vines and herbaceous plants
- Series VIIIa:** Drawings by Faxon, annotated
- Series IX:** Press proofs: *Manual of the Trees of North America* 1922
- Series X:** Copper etching plates: *Silva of North America*.

Container List

Box 1

Series I: Biographical material and photographs

Folder

1: Biographical material

- Sargent, C. S. "[Charles Edward Faxon](#)." *Rhodora* 20, No. 253, 1918. (photocopy)
- [Schofield, Edmund A.] "[Charles Edward Faxon, delineavit](#)." *Arnoldia* 46 (3) 1986.
- Several pages from Ancestry.com, Ancestry Library edition used document Chreles Edward Faxon's vital statistics. Includes pages from: United States Federal Cencuses, Boston City Directories from 1878, 1882, and 1888, United States Passport Applications, and Harvard Alumni Directory 1913.



Miss [Julia A.] Carter, [Arboretum stenographer] and C.E. Faxon, Arboretum Library, 1899

2: Photographs

- Four photographs of Faxon by Prof. Jack, Jan. 1899. (1 of the 4 mounted on board)
 - Faxon in herbarium.
 - Faxon in library.
 - Faxon and Prof. Jack in library.
 - Faxon and Miss Carter in library.
- Faxon in the library by Alfred Rehder. 1903
- Two Photographs of Faxon taken in Arboretum by Miss Carter. May, 1914. (Mounted on one board)
- Faxon "Assistant – director, Arnold Arboretum Jan. 21, 1846 - Feb. 6, 1918" by W. T. Bather, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Henry Havelock Pierce, Boston and New York)
- Engraving, "Charles Edward Faxon, Jan. 21, 1846 - Feb. 6, 1918 from plate loaned by the Massachusetts Biographical Society; published in *Rhodora*, 1918 (mounted on board) also 1 neg., 2 8x10" prints



C.E. Faxon, Arnold Arboretum Library, 1899

Series II: Correspondence

Folder

1: Correspondence from Faxon to:

- Dear Sir, Discusses and requests *Populus* species flower parts for *Silva of North America* work. May 14, 1887
- Alfred Rehder. Discussion of Vienna Congress, plant nomenclature and news from the Arboretum. August 15, 1905
- Mr. Wilson, News from the Arboretum. May 28, 1914
- Dear Sir, Plant Identification note. March 24, 1915
- Dear Sir, *Viburnum* Identification. March 30, 1915
- H.P. Kelsey, Plant Identification. July 30, 1915
- Mr. Kelsey, Plant Identification. August 6, 1915
- Mr. Wilson, News from the Arboretum. June 7, 1917
- Dear Sir, Plant Identification note. Undated
- Also includes one handwritten note "C. E. Faxon has contributed drawings to the following publications." Undated

2: Correspondence from Faxon to:

- Dr. Robert G. Leavitt, assistant to Oakes Ames, 6 letters. May 1, 1896- [March 1890?]
- Mr. Rose 1 letter, May 1, 1896

Series IIa: Account ledger:

Folder 1

"Drawings for *Silva of North America* delivered to C.S. Sargent." Cover title. Account ledger. Includes dates, numbers of plates sent to Mons. A. Riocreux, Paris. Includes financial data, itemized production costs (1887-1893). 7.5" x 4.5" booklet, leather cover. Accessioned February 2017 [[digital copy](#)].

Series III: Plates:

The Silva of North America: a description of the trees which grow naturally in North America exclusive of Mexico by Charles Sprague Sargent ... illustrated with figures and analyses drawn from nature by Charles Edward Faxon. Boston, New York : Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891-1902. 14 v, 740 plates , 37 x 29 cm.

Contents: I. Magnoliceæ-Ilicineæ.--II. Cyrillaceæ-Sapindaceæ.--III. Anacardiaceæ-Leguminosæ.--IV. Rosaceæ-Saxifragaceæ.--V. Hamamelideæ-Sapotaceæ.--VI. Ebenaceæ-Polygonaceæ.--VII. Lauraceæ-Juglandaceæ.--VIII. Cupuliferæ (*Quercus*)--IX. Cupuliferæ-Salicaceæ.--X. Liliaceæ-Coniferæ.--XI. Coniferæ (*Pinus*)--XII. Coniferæ (*Abietineæ* after *Pinus*)--XIII. Supplement: Rhamnaceæ-Rosaceæ.--XIV. Supplement: Caricaceæ-Coniferæ. General index.

[The Silva of North America](#)

Box

- 1:** Plates 1-160 [Lacks plates 1-4, 53, 65, 82, 83, 86, 91, 93]
- 2:** Plates 161-350 [Lacks plates 316-318, 321, 324, 346, 349]
- 3:** Plates 351-500
- 4:** Plates 501-740
- 5:** Plates with text



Silva of North America, Quercus alba pls. 358, 359

Series IV: Original Artwork: *Silva of North America*

Box

- | | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| 1: | Aceraceae
Amaryllidaceae
Anacardiaceae
Aquifoliaceae
Acanthaceae
Annonaceae
Araliaceae
Aristolochiaceae
Asclepiadaceae | Berberidaceae
Betulaceae
Bignoniaceae
Bixaceae
Boraginaceae
Bromeliaceae
Cactaceae
Caprifoliaceae
Celastraceae |
| 2: | Compositae
Cornaceae
Capparidaceae
Caricaceae
Ceridophyllaceae
Clethraceae
Combretaceae
Commelinaceae
Convolvulaceae
Coriariaceae
Crassulaceae | Cruciferae
Diapensiaceae
Ericaceae
Euphorbiaceae
Fagaceae
Guttiferae
Gesneriaceae
Gramineae
Hamamelidaceae
Heliconiaceae
Hippocastanaceae |
| 3: | Iridaceae
Juglandaceae
Lauraceae
Leguminosae
Lilaceae
Labiatae
Lardizabalaceae | Leitneraceae
Loranthaceae
Magnoliaceae
Malvaceae
Moraceae
Myricaceae
Myrtaceae |
| 4: | Malpighiaceae
Melastomataceae
Menispermaceae
Myrsinaceae
Nymphaeaceae
Nyssaceae
Oleaceae
Ochnaceae
Olacaceae | Onagraceae
Orchidaceae
Palmae
Pinaceae
Polemoniaceae
Passifloraceae
Platanaceae
Polygonaceae
Ranunculaceae |
| 5: | Rhamnaceae
Rhizopharaceae | Rosaceae
Rosaceae (Crataegus) |
| 6: | Rubiaceae
Rutaceae
Salicaceae
Sapindaceae
Saxifragaceae
Scrophularaceae | Theaceae
Tilicaceae
Ulmaceae
Umbelliferae
Verbenaceae
Violaceae |

Santalaceae
Simaroubaceae
Solanaceae
Staphleaceae
Styracaceae
Symplocaceae

Vitaceae
Vochysiaceae
Zamiaceae
Zygophyllaceae
Ferns, Insects
Miscellaneous

**Series V: Drawings: *Silva of North America*
Box**

- 1: Vol. 1-3: Fig. 1-197 [Click here for online access.](#)
(a bound volume)
- 2: Vol. 4-7: Fig. 198-355 [Click here for online access.](#)
- 3: Vol. 8-10: Fig. 356-496 [Click here for online access.](#)
[Lacking fig. 459, 460, 466, 479]
- 4: Vol. 11-12: Fig. 497-620 [Click here for online access.](#)
- 5: Vol. 13-14: Fig. 621-740 [Click here for online access.](#)

Series VI: Drawings for:

[*Manual of the trees of North America \(exclusive of Mexico\)* by Charles Sprague Sargent ; with six hundred and forty-four illustrations from drawings by Charles Edward Faxon. Boston; New York: Houghton, Mifflin; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1905.](#)

[*Manual of the Trees of North America \(exclusive of Mexico\)* \(1905\)](#)

Eight bound volumes with spine title: [Drawings for Manual of Trees](#). Transferred from Botany Libraries, Harvard University Herbaria, September 10, 1999.

Box

- 1: Vol. 1: Fig. 1-79 [Lacks fig. 1]
- 2: Vol. 2: Fig. 80-159
- 3: Vol. 3: Fig. 160-239
- 4: Vol. 4: Fig. 240-319
- 5: Vol. 5: Fig. 320-399
- 6: Vol. 6: Fig. 400-479
- 7: Vol. 7: Fig. 480-560
- 8: Vol. 8: Fig. 561-642

Fig. 26 *Pinus resinosa*

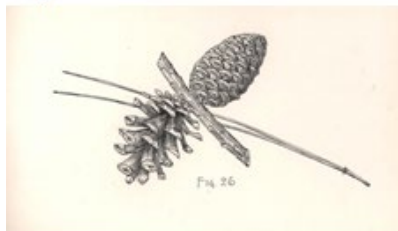


Fig. 27 *Pinus contorta*



Fig. 48 *Tsuga caroliniana*



Fig. 49 *Tsuga heterophylla*

Series VII: Drawings for:

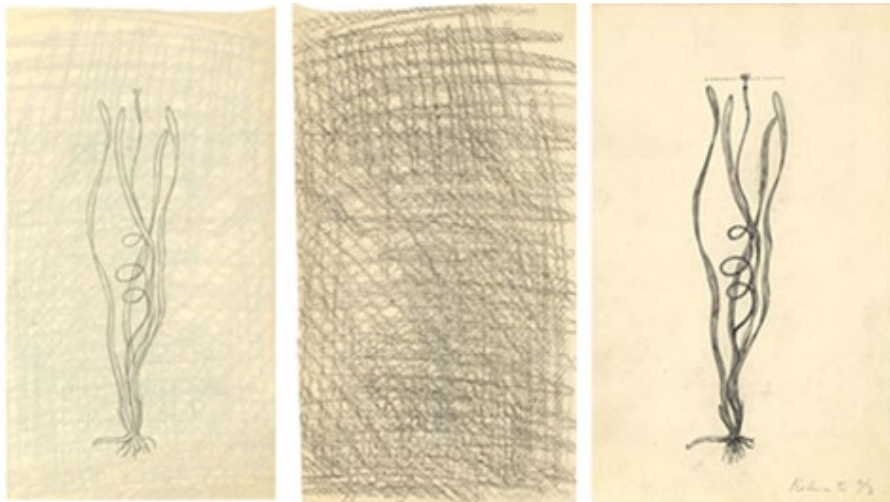
Manual of the trees of North America (exclusive of Mexico) by Charles Sprague Sargent ... with seven hundred and eighty-three illustrations from drawings by Charles Edward Faxon and Mary W. Gill. 2d ed. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922.

Box 1:

Drawings for the second edition of the *Manual of the trees of North America (exclusive of Mexico)* (1922) with spine title: Drawings of Manual of Trees, New & Revised Drawings for the Second Edition. 1 bound volume.

Series VIII: Drawings and sketches of trees, shrubs, vines and herbaceous plants.

This series consists of Faxon's illustrations in their earliest form, as pencil sketches, which he then made into more finished drawings by covering the reverse side of the drawing with pencil lead. This allowed him to transfer the image to a new sheet of paper and further refine, or apply ink, to the subsequent drawing. Faxon appears to have used this method for all of his illustrations. The collection also includes sketches with notes and, in some cases, only the finished illustration. Almost all of the sketches are on Arnold Arboretum stationary, watermarked "AMERICAN LINEN PAPER." The drawings are not labeled. Each drawing has been enclosed in a sleeve to mitigate further transfer of the graphite.

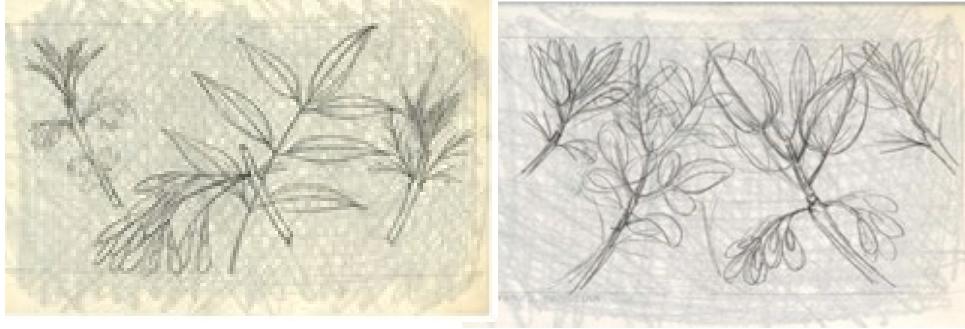


Example of the transition of a Faxon sketch into to an ink drawing.

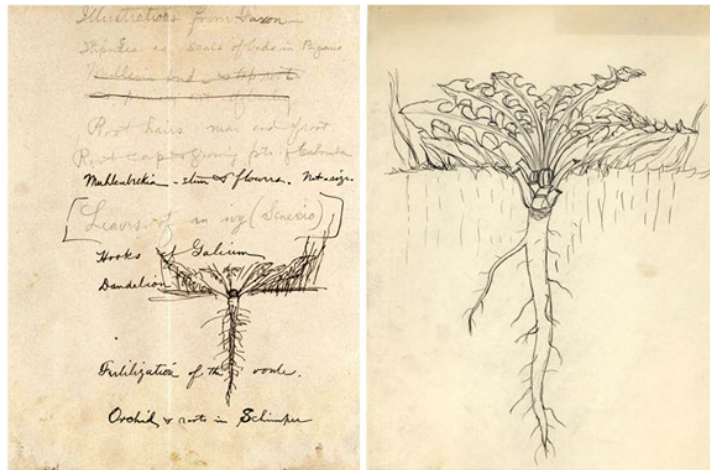
Box 1

Folder

- 1:** Fifty-nine unlabeled sketches for the *Manual of the Trees of North America*.
(On half-sheets of Arboretum stationary)
- 2:** Fifty unlabeled sketches for the *Manual of the Trees of North America*.
(On half-sheets of Arboretum stationary)



3: Thirty-one unlabeled sketches and drawings, some with annotations and notes.



[*Taraxacum officinale*, dandelion, with notes]

Series VIIIa: Drawings by Faxon, annotated

Folder 1

Small folder of Faxon drawings for *Silva of North America* printed on 7.5" x 5.5" card stock, each annotated by hand on verso of print with taxonomic data by John George Jack (1861-1949). 33 cards. Undated. Accessioned February 2017.

Series IX: Press Proofs: *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 1922

Folder 1

Proofs of drawings for 2d ed. of C.S. Sargent's "Manual" with additional drawings by Mary W. Gill (Description taken from inscription on original envelope). [Mary Wright Gill was a painter and illustrator who traveled and sketched extensively in Indian Territory with her husband, De Lancey Walker Gill, who was employed as an artist for the United States Bureau of Ethnology for a number of years.] Twenty-nine sheets of printers proofs.



Printers proof sheet for the Manual

Series X: Copper etching plates: *Silva of North America.*

Box 1. Seven plates.

Folder

- 1:** *Yucca aloifolia*
- 2:** *Yucca arborescens*
- 3:** *Yucca gloriosa*
- 4:** *Yucca constricta*
- 5:** *Yucca macrocarpa*
- 6:** *Yucca mohavensis*
- 7:** *Yucca schottii*