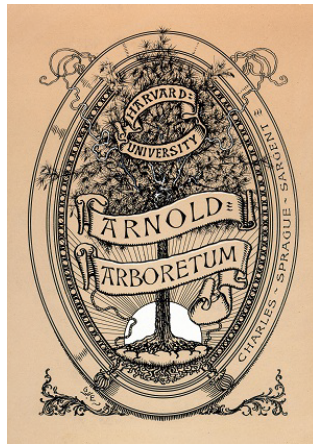


Archives II A-3

John George Jack (1861-1949) papers, 1887-1990: Guide.



The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

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II A-3

John George Jack (1861-1949) papers, 1887-1990: Guide Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University © 2024 President and Fellows of Harvard College

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Call No.: II A-3

Location: Archives

Title: John George Jack (1861-1949) papers, 1887-1990.

Date(s): 1887-1990

Creator: Jack, John George, 1861-1949

Quantity: 10 linear inches

Abstract: The John George Jack papers consist of biographical information and correspondence, as well as publications, images, and research notes. J. G. Jack was the first Arboretum staff member, after Charles S. Sargent, to visit Asia. The collection covers the time period from 1887-1949, with most materials coming from the 1930s.

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

Preferred Citation: John George Jack papers. Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.

Other descriptions of this material:

Additional John G. Jack correspondence may be also found in the [Arnold Arboretum Correspondence Database](#).

Acquisition Information

Provenance: These papers were created by John George Jack during his 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.

Processing Information

Processed: February 2003, revised 2006, 2011, Liz Francis, Sheila Connor. 2023, Larissa Glasser and Lisa Pearson. 2024, Larissa Glasser.

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Biographical Note



John G. Jack. Photograph by Hardy, March, 1898.

Born in Chateauguay, Quebec, Canada on April 15, 1861, John George Jack was one of twelve children of Robert and Annie Jack. Robert Jack (1821-1900) was a farmer and fruit grower who, for over 40 years, introduced and experimented with varieties of fruit new to the Province of Quebec. Annie Linda Jack (1839-1912), a poet, author and a noted horticulturist wrote a series of newspaper articles entitled "Garden Talks" and authored [*The Canadian Garden; a Pocket Help for the Amateur*](#) in 1903.

As a boy J. G. Jack was interested in natural history with a special attraction to insects. Basically self taught with a minimum of private instruction, J. G. Jack's formal education included only approximately 6 months of high school.

Through his natural history observations and collections, he was introduced to a variety of correspondents including Sir John William Dawson (1820-1899), who became Jack's friend and mentor. Dawson was a geologist and the Principal of McGill University from 1855-1893, who helped establish the [Peter Redpath Museum of Natural History](#). Jack became a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1882, where he made contacts that eventually led to employment at the Arnold Arboretum.

Beginning in 1882 and continuing for the next three years, Jack spent the winter months in Boston, Massachusetts attending lectures given by Harvard professors, including Dr. Hermann August Hagen (1817-1893) a Professor of Entomology and author of [*Bibliotheca Entomologia*](#), published in 1862-63. He also studied zoology with Alpheus Hyatt (1838-1902) and attended lectures on botany given by George Goodale, Fisher Professor of Natural History. In 1883, Jack spent the summer working at River Edge, New Jersey, on the 80 acre farm of Elbert Sillick Carman (1836-1900). Carman was the editor of the [*The Rural New Yorker*](#) from 1876 to 1899 and



Pinus Thunbergi. Japan, Shiogama. J. G. Jack 1905.

had been conducting experiments on economic plants as well as woody plants at River Edge since 1877.

In April 1886, Jack visited the director of the Arboretum, Charles Sprague Sargent (1841-1927) at his Brookline, Massachusetts estate, Holm Lea. Promised only manual labor at small compensation, he began working at the Arnold Arboretum, but within a short time his botanical knowledge became apparent, earning Sargent's confidence and an increase in his pay to a dollar



John G. Jack with Harvard forestry students discussing hickory trees.
Unknown photographer. nd.

a day. Jack continued his education by taking the Harvard Summer Course in Botany and attending various lectures. By the terms of the Arboretum's original indenture, the director, as the Arnold Professor of Botany, was to teach the knowledge of trees at the College. Sargent delegated this function, with the approval of the trustees, to Jack who became Lecturer in Arboriculture in 1890 (the title was later changed to Lecturer in Forestry). Jack taught forestry both at Harvard, often with Richard T. Fisher (1876-1934), the first director of the Harvard Forest, and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he also held a lectureship from 1899 to 1908. In 1907, Jack married Cerise Emily Agnes Carman (1873-1935), daughter of his former employer, E. S. Carman, and in 1908 he was made an Assistant Professor of Dendrology at the Arnold Arboretum.

Jack taught throughout his career. In the fall and spring he conducted courses in dendrology, using the Arboretum's living collections as his classroom. Jack's courses were geared toward the layperson and his amicable disposition made his classes popular. According to Sargent's annual report for 1890/91, Jack, "gave twice a week during the months of May and June, instruction ... which treated of the plants, in their botanical, economic, and ornamental aspects, were practical and interesting." A Boston Globe headline on June 28, 1903 describes the 40 to 50 men and women in "Jack's Spring Field Class on the Tramp, Carrying Opera Glasses, Microscopes, Knives, Parasols, Camp-chairs, and Lunch," With well over 100 citations in Sargent's [Garden and Forest](#), he was also regular contributor to the Arboretum's *Bulletin of Popular Information*. Jack also published [Trees and other Woody Plants Found in Harvard Forest](#) in 1911, and [Topsfield Arboretum Catalog of Trees and Shrubs](#) (n.d.), an index of Thomas E. Proctor's plant collection.

Soon after Jack joined the Arboretum he began collecting and documenting plants in the United States and abroad. During the summers of 1898 and 1900, Jack was an agent for the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He explored the forests of central Colorado and the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming and produced detailed documentation and photographs of the forest and soil conditions of the Pikes Peak, Plum Creek and South Platte Forest Reserves. In 1891, he visited botanic gardens in France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, and England and in 1904, he and Arboretum taxonomist Alfred Rehder (1863-1949) collected plant specimens and took photographs in the western United States and in Canada.



Castanea japonica. Japan. Photograph by J.G. Jack. September 2, 1902.

Already experienced in plant exploration when he embarked on a year-long trip to the Far East in 1905, Jack became the first staff member after Sargent to visit Asia. He focused his travels on Japan and Korea as political unrest at the time made travel in mainland China dangerous. Although Sargent's Annual Report for the Year Ending July 31, 1905, states that "Mr. J. G. Jack has started on a

journey to the East to obtain material for the Arboretum in Japan, Korea, and northern China," his year long Asian journey was self-financed. Jack may have planned his trip to spend time with his younger brother, the Reverend Milton Jack of the Presbyterian Foreign Ministry, who had long been stationed in Taiwan. Jack's introduction to an undated, unpublished manuscript entitled *Notes on Some Recently Introduced Trees and Shrubs* outlined his goals and itinerary for the Asian trip:

On the first of July, 1905, I left Boston for Japan . . . The object of my trip was primarily rest and recreation for three or four months, combined with a desire to observe some of the interesting arborescent flora of central and northeastern Japan . . . A short visit was also made to Korea and to Peking in China.

In addition to collecting seeds and herbarium specimens representing 258 plants, Jack took photographs of individual specimens, forestry practices, and of landscape views and returned with 172 images, many of them as lantern slides, a format especially useful for his teaching. Covering some of the ground that Arboretum plant explorer Ernest Henry Wilson (1876-1930) would later visit, Jack photographed the forest preserves and activities of the lumbering industry around Mt. Fuji and elsewhere in Japan, as well as the forests of Taiwan and Korea. The scenes he captured in Beijing include formal portraits of people in traditional costumes.



Phyllostachys bamausoides. Japan. J.G. Jack 1905.

Jack retired from full time employment at the Arboretum in September 1935 at age 74. His wife Cerise died later that same year. Jack spent his retirement at his home "Folly Farm," in East Walpole, Massachusetts with his daughter, Betty Jack Wirth and her husband. In 1948, while tending his orchard Jack fell and broke his hip and was confined to bed. The following year on May 20, John George Jack, Arnold Arboretum Assistant Professor of Dendrology, Emeritus, died at age 88.



John G. Jack. Photograph by Tupper. 1903-04?

Scope and Content

This collection contains biographical information, correspondence, research notes, images, and publication, of John George.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in 5 series:

- Series I: Biographical
- Series II: Publications
- Series III: Correspondence
- Series IV: Research
- Series V: Images



J.G. Jack with visiting Chinese students. Photograph by A.A. Greenlaw. 1917



J.G. Jack (left) with Alfred Rehder at Jack's 70th birthday celebration. Photograph by Hugh M. Raup. September 1, 1933.

Container List

Box 1

Series I: Biographical Folder

1: Biographical information 1861-1949.

2: Photographs:

- 3 portraits of Jack (1898, 1903/04, 1933)
- 1 with Dr. Miyabe and Dr. Fujioka in the Arnold Arboretum August 9, 1921
- 1 image of Jack at C.S. Sargent's memorial service, June 8, 1927
- 1 at the Atkins Garden, Cuba, March, 1930
- 4 with other staff members on his 77 birthday, April 15, 1931
- 1 in the Arnold Arboretum, 1935
- "Professor John G. Tack and three of his Chinese students examining a black maple (*Acer saccharum* var. *nigrum*). The student on the right has been identified as Chen Huanyong. Taken in the Arnold Arboretum during the summer of 1917." [caption from Haas, William J. "[Transplanting Botany to China: The Cross-Cultural Experience of Chen Huanyong](#)." *Arnoldia* 48(2), 1988.]
- 4 with his forestry students, undated

3. Chiasson, Paulette. "Putting Chateaugay on the Map: The Writings of Annie L. Jack." *Chateaugay Valley Historical Society Annual Journal- Revue annuelle de la Société historique de la vallée de la Châteaugay*. 2006.

Series II: Publications

Folder

- 1: Jack, John George, [Pikes Peak, Plum Creek, and South Platte Forest Reserves](#). 1900.
- 2: *Notes on Recently Introduced Trees and Shrubs*. 1906? Manuscript.
- 3: Jack, John George. Botanical bibliography. 1888 – 1931. Manuscript.
 - Photocopy of pamphlet held at Botany Libraries. Hollis Number: 006219585
- 4: Jack, John George. "Winter Injuries among Trees and Shrubs." [Scientific Monthly](#) [1935]
- 5: Jack, John George. "Arboreta, Old and New." *Scientific Monthly*. December 1936.
- 6: Jack, John George. "[The Arnold Arboretum; Some Personal Notes](#)." *Chronica Botanica*. 1948/49.
- 7: [Rediscovering the Big Horns; a Pictorial Study of 75 years of Ecological Change](#). 1976. [Includes Jack's photographs in *Pikes Peak, Plum Creek, and South Platte Forest Reserves* compared with photographs of the same scene shot in 1975].

Series III: Correspondence

NOTE: Additional J. G. Jack correspondence can be found by searching the [Arnold Arboretum Correspondence Index](#).

- Ames, Oakes: 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1 undated.
- Anderson, Miss: 1933.

- Bangham, Walter (and Catherine): 1923, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1937, 1938. Includes four undated photographs:
 - "His Royal Highness, Jumbo and me." [Catherine Bangham [?] and her dog]
 - "Plant in foreground #671 (?). Second growth jungle the roadside near the foot of the mountains from [Bierenun?] to Takengon."
 - "Rhododendron, wintergreen, and orchids near the top of the Redelong Volcano near Takengon. This was taken above the belt of more or less permanent fog."
 - "Farmland – Arabica coffee and potatoes were the chief crops near Takengon – three crops of potatoes and then coffee as long as the land is useful when abandoned new jungle is cut for another start. The volcano from which we obtained several specimens is half hidden in the mists in the background."
- Britton, Dr. and Emma J. Cole
- Chen, Y.: 1935.
- Cheng, Mrs.: 1891.
- Conent, J.B.: 1935.
- Douglas, T.H.
- Fairchild, David
- Farrington, Annie.
- Farrington, E. I.: 1937, 1939.
- Faxon, Walter: 1906.
- Felt, E. P. 1933, 1 undated.
- Fors, Alberto J.: 1933.
- Graves, Henry.
- Greene, Jerome D.: 1935.
- Grossman, G.: 1932.
- Hu, H.H.: 1931, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1938, 1939.
- Keeper of Corporation Records: 1891-1892, 1894, 1899, 1900, 1902-1904, 1906-1908, 1913, 1923, 1926, 1932-1935.
- Leon, Brother: 1931, 1932, 1933.
- Lowell, A. Lawrence: 1932.
- Lowell, Guy.
- Manning, Robert: 1893.
- McKelvey, Susan Delano: 1930, 1931.
- Merrill, Elmer Drew: 1946.
- Miyabe, Kingo: 1905.
- Newall, F.H.: 1898.
- Nicholson, George.
- Ptitsin, L: 1934.
- Putnam, F.W.: 1890.
- Rollins, Frank.
- Ross, Leonard W.
- Rowe, G. C.: 1932.
- Salvoza, Felipe, M.: 1933.
- Sargent, Charles: 1890, 1923.
- Shaw, George Russell: 1932.
- Treasurer of Harvard College: 1907-1908, 1930-1931, 1933-1934.
- Trelease, William: 1928.
- Trowbridge, John: 1898.
- Tryon, H.H.: 1933.
- Ueki, H.: 1934.

- Van Helden, Caroline W.
- Verdoorn, Franz: 1943-1948.
- Walsingham, Frank G.: 1945.
- Whaley, Frank J.: 1936
- Wilson, James: 1905.

Box 2

Series IV: Research

Folder

- 1:** *Arnold Arboretum Notes* by J. G. Jack 1887-1893. Notes on plants growing at the Arnold Arboretum, includes flowering and fruiting times, along with descriptions of flowers and colors of fruits. (Bound volume, formerly in Library collection with Call Number Cac J12, Accession number 39,420) Bookplate annotated The Gift of "Professor J. G. Jack through Mrs. Susan D. McKelvey, February 3, 1931"
- 2:** Collection Notes of specimens numbers 501-4017, 1918-19
- 3:** Collection Notes [numbers] (6101-8800) 1927-1936.
- 4:** Diary 1896 -1935. Brief entries usually only during the flowering season, list first sightings of bird species as well.
- 5:** Washington Elm 1931-1936. Includes copy of *Bulletin of Popular Information* issue which includes Jack's article "[The Cambridge Washington Elm.](#)" Also folded plan: "City of Boston, Public Grounds Department, Boston Common Location Plan. Olmsted Brothers, January 17, 1912." Stamped "Issued form the Olmsted Brothers, Brookline, Mass. May 31, 1934. Plan indicates location of trees on Boston Common by number.
- 6:** Miscellaneous notes regarding specimens.
- 7:** [List of] Herbarium Specimens Collected by J.G.J[ack], 1905. Japan and Korea. 14 page handwritten manuscript.
- 8:** Map of the Arnold Arboretum [1900] J.G. Jack's copy

Series V: Images

The Arnold Arboretum retains J.G. Jack's images in a variety of formats: black and white photographs mounted on boards, lantern slides, and digital images. His major subject areas include the Arnold Arboretum, Japan, China, Korea, New England, the western United States, and forests and forestry practices. His collection consist of landscape views and images of specific plants which are filed in the Arboretum's genera collection under their Latin binomial.



54-10 Oct 5, 1898
 South Platte Reserve, Colorado
 1. Looking N. to South side of Chief Rock
 near Graham's ranch on Last Park Creek
 (Goose Creek) 4 or 5 miles above entrance
 into S. Platte river.
 Hard granitic rocks near site of proposed
 dam. ^{in series} Trees on rock are Pinus ponderosa scopulorum
 & Douglas Spruce on top
 Photo 7 G. Jack



55-9 Oct 5, 1898 1:45 P.M. Stop 125
 2 1/2 sec
 South Platte Reserve, Colo.
 Looking N. W. Towards junction of
 Last Park Creek (Goose Creek) + S. Platte River
 Green Mt. in distance
 Trees chiefly Yellow Pine (P. ponderosa regularis)
 & some Douglas Spruce
 Photo 1 G. Jack

Two examples of Jack's prints with his detailed annotations on recto of each image

Box 3

A collection of 80 prints taken in Colorado by J.G. Jack between August 20, 1898 and October 29, 1898 of the Pikes Pike's Peak, Plum Creek and South Platte Forest Reserves. Gaps in the numbering system suggest that the series contained more images and either a print was not made or the print has been lost. There is also a collection of Jack's lantern slides with a corresponding set of numbers; however no attempt has been made to correlate the prints with the lantern slides. The publication *Pikes Peak, Plum Creek and South Platte Forest Reserves* includes 94 of Jack's images on 47 plate many of which are represented in this collection.

Folder

1: August 20, 1898 – August 30, 1898. Images are arranged by date, number of images, and then by Jack's numbering system.

- 8.20 (1) 15
- 8.24 (1) 11-3
- 8.26 (2) 11-11, 12-3
- 8.27 (1) 13-4
- 8.29 (1) 14-10
- 8.30 (5) 14-11, 15-3, 16, 16-2, 16-11?

2: September 4, 1898 - September 27, 1898

9.4	(4)	18-5, 18-6, 19-2, 19-8
9.6	(2)	23, 23-9
9.8	(1)	25-10
9.9	(1)	26-10
9.11	(3)	26-11, 27-4, 27-7
9.12	(1)	27-6
9.17	(3)	29-4, 29-10, 30-1
9.19	(1)	32-10
9.20	(3)	33-8, 34-1, 34-2
9.23	(13)	35-7, 37, 37-8, 37-8 (numbered the same, but different images) 38-1, 38-2, 38-6, 38-8, 39-1, 39-2, 39-2 (numbered the same, but different images) 39-5, 39-10
9.24	(10)	39-3, 39-6, 39-8, 40-1, 40-2 (2 copies) 40-6, 40-9, 40-10
9.25	(4)	41-4, 42-1, 42-2, 42-7
9.26	(2)	42-8, 43-2
9.27	(1)	44-9

3: October 4, 1898 - October 29, 1898

10.4	(3)	52-1, 54-4, 52-7
10.5	(3)	54-10, 55-6, 55-9
10.10	(2)	59-3, 59-6
10.11	(1)	60-3
10.12	(4)	62-1, 62-1 (numbered the same, but different images) 62-5, 62-5 (numbered the same, but different images)
10.17	(2)	63-5, 63-5 (numbered the same, but different images)
10.18	(1)	63-9
10.19	(1)	65-9
10.20	(2)	66-6, 66-12
10.26	(1)	71-11
10.29	(1)	74.3

Box 4

A collection of 40 images (mounted on 20 boards) depicting forestry and lumbering practices in Japan. All 40 images, along with an additional 132 of J.G Jack's images of eastern Asia taken in 1905 have been digitized and are available online. To find and display Jack's photographs of eastern Asia in [HOLLIS](#), search keywords *Jack* and *Eastern Asian Historical Photograph Collections*. To find and display this subset, add search terms "*Jack*" and "*Forestry Japan*" and "*Jack*" and "*Lumbering Japan*."



Populus tomentosa.
China. J.G. Jack, 1905



Kiyomizu at Kyoto,
J. G. Jack 1905.



Japan - Lumbering. J.G Jack.1905.

John G. Jack 1905 Itinerary: based on Jack's photograph annotations.

Japan

- 1905-07-28 Kamakura Hachiman temple
- 1905-08-05 Yokohama
- 1905-08-10 Kisogawa above Mizanokoshi
Lake Chunzenji
- 1905-08-11 Chuzenji-Yumoto, Mt. Nantai
between Lake Chuzenji and Yumoto
Yumoto
- 1905-08-12 Lake Chunzenji
- 1905-08-13 Lake Chunzenji
- 1905-08-17 Isoya station
Makkari station
- 1905-08-18-21 Sapporo
- 1905-08-22 Sapporo
Yumoto (near)
- 1905-08-23 Sapporo
- 1905-08-27 Shiogama
- 1905-08-29 Toyko
- 1905-09-02 Nagano
Niegawa
Niegawa and Narai (between)
Narai to Fukusawa
Sapporo(?)
- 1905-09-03 Narai
Fukushima

- 1905-09-04 Fukushima
Agemetsu-Ogawa
- 1905-09-05 Kiso Ogawa
Ogawa to Adera (Adera river watershed)
Adera River
- 1905-09-06 Kisogawa Nogiri (On the Kisogawa, six miles below
Nogiri)

Korea

- 1905-09-18 Ping Yang (Pyongyang)
- 1905-09-24 Seoul grounds of East Palace

China

- 1905-10-03 Peking
- 1905-10-04 Peking-Kalgan road
Peking-Nankow road
- 1905-10-06 Nankow
Peking-Kalgan road Chung-pin-cho, north of Peking
- 1905-10-07 Peking-Nankow Road near Sha-ho
- 1905-10-09&10 Peking

For more information about and images of John George Jack's explorations, see [Botanical and Cultural Images of Eastern Asia, 1907-1927](#)

For additional information about Jack including a selected bibliography of his writings and species named for him see "[John George Jack, 1861-1949](#)" by Karl Sax. *Journal of the Arnold Arboretum*. 30(4) 1949.