



ADA HAYDEN

1884-1950

Unswerving devotion to the ideals of conservation and sustained effort in research have made for Ada Hayden a well-earned place among the grass-land ecologists of her generation.

Born in Ames, Iowa, on August 14, 1884, Miss Hayden took her undergraduate work at Iowa State College. Graduate study in the Shaw School of Botany at Washington University in St. Louis led to the M.S. degree which she received in 1910, and was followed by further study at the Universities of Colorado and Chicago. Returning to Iowa State College she received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1918.

The fact that her years of study, instruction, and research were largely at Iowa State College is an indication of her profound concern for the loyalty to her native state. She served as Assistant Professor of Botany from 1918 to 1934 and Research Assistant Professor of Botany from 1934 until the time of her death on August 12, 1950. During these years of exceptional productivity, she made important contributions to the fields of taxonomy, wildlife, ecology, and botanical art. Although a specialist in several plant groups, Miss Hayden's interest in systematic botany was sufficiently broad

to include the identification of any plant brought or sent to her. She served as Curator of the college herbarium which, under her direction, greatly improved in content, condition and usefulness. Botanical art absorbed much of her interest for she excelled in this field. Her thousands of photographs and drawings of plants were painstakingly made, scientifically correct, and pleasing to the eye.

It is in the field of Grassland Ecology that Miss Hayden will be especially remembered. Serving for many years as Secretary of the Grassland Research Foundation and on conservation committees of state and national organizations, her influence was widespread and effective. Her name will always be associated with the exceptionally progressive conservation actions, policies and ideas that place Iowa in a position of conservation leadership among the states.

In 1945 she published "The Selection of Prairie Areas in Iowa Which Should be Preserved," a report prepared for the Iowa State Conservation Commission and also adopted by the Conservation Committee of the Iowa State Academy of Science. A section depicting the appearance of prairie landscape reads: "Compared with the somberness of the woodland, the prairie landscape throughout the growing season exhibits constant change. On a breezy July day in early afternoon, rapidly rising miniature cloud forms assembling like flocks of butterflies on the horizon will expand in a few minutes into swiftly advancing cohorts of giant white clouds floating briskly through the vault of blue. Their flying forms momentarily darken with fast moving shadows the waving grasses, which rhythmically rise and fall with the touch of the wind."

It seemed particularly fitting, late in 1950, that the Iowa State Conservation Commission named a 200-acre plot of undisturbed prairie, the Ada Hayden Prairie. A monument to the devotion of one student to conservation, this prairie preserves a living memory of the past for all generations to come. In her quiet and modest way, Miss Hayden worked unceasingly to preserve a heritage of land, trees, flowers and grasses in their natural setting as a permanent asset in the economic and spiritual life of her state and nation.

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