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ISU Herbarium Named For Former Curator Ada Hayden

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AMES, Iowa--The Iowa State University Herbarium has been named the Ada Hayden Herbarium in honor of its former curator.

The herbarium is a collection of nearly 400,000 dried, pressed plants, located on the third floor of Bessey Hall. It is used by the ISU botany department in teaching and research. Other scientists throughout the country also visit the herbarium or borrow specimens.

Hayden was curator of the herbarium from 1932 until her death in 1950. She was also the first woman to earn a Ph.D. from ISU. Hayden earned a bachelor's degree from ISU in 1908; a master's degree from Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., in 1910, and a Ph.D. from ISU in 1918. All her degrees were in botany.

"Hayden's knowledge and appreciation of nature, particularly prairies, began when she was growing up on a rural Ames farm," said Duane Isely, curator of the herbarium.

"Hayden added more than 40,000 plant specimens she collected to the ISU Herbarium," Isely said. "Since she made several duplicates of the many specimens she collected, she was able to participate in exchange programs with other institutions, broadening the diversity of ISU's herbarium."

Hayden was an avid conservationist who campaigned for the state's best prairies to be set aside as preserves, Isely said. She is the founder of the present preserve idea in Iowa.

Shortly after her death, a prairie preserve in Howard County was named the Ada Hayden Prairie Preserve by the Iowa Conservation Commission.

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Sources: Duane Isely, Ada Hayden Herbarium curator, phone (515) 294-3560
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