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J.M. Aldrich Diaries

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J.M. Aldrich Diaries

Finding Aid

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections
Briggs Library (SBL) Room 241 Box 2114
1300 North Campus Drive
Brookings, SD 57007
Phone: 605-688-5094
Email: arcrefs@sdstate.edu

Collection Summary

Identifier

UA 53.14

Title

J.M. Aldrich Diaries

Creator

J.M. (John Merton) Aldrich

Dates

1885-1888

Extent

0.21 linear feet -- 1 small document case

Language

English

Repository

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton M. Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

Access note

This collection is open to researchers without restrictions. The materials in the Archives do not circulate and may be used in-house only.

Preferred Citation

Name of item. J.M. Aldrich Diaries. UA 53.14. South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton M. Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

Abstract

J.M. Aldrich was a student at Dakota Agricultural College who was employed as an assistant in entomology at the college after graduation. He went on to become a dipterist for the Smithsonian Institution. This collection consists of three diaries of J. M. Aldrich during his tenure as a student at Dakota Agricultural College from 1885-1888.

Biographical Note

J. M. (John Merton) Aldrich was born on January 28, 1866, in Olmstead County, Minnesota, the son of Levi O. and Mary Moore Aldrich. He was educated in the county and high schools of Rochester, Minnesota. In 1885, he entered Dakota Agricultural College at Brookings, South Dakota. He received his B.S. degree in the first formal commencement exercises of Dakota Agricultural College in 1888 and was the first graduate who specialized in zoological sciences. He later received B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Kansas and a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

Following graduation from Dakota Agricultural College in 1888, Aldrich was employed as an assistant in entomology at the college between 1889-1890 and an Assistant in Zoology from 1890-1892. During this time, he was also Assistant to the Agricultural Experiment Station Entomologist. From 1893 to 1913, he was Professor of Zoology at the University of Idaho. While at the University of Idaho, Aldrich began work on his Catalog of North American Diptera. In 1906, he took sabbatical leave to receive a Ph.D. from Stanford University, where his Catalog was accepted as his thesis.

In 1913, after his association with the University of Idaho was terminated, he was then appointed as Entomological Assistant in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Bureau of Entomology at West Lafayette, Indiana. Five years later, he was transferred to the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. In 1919, he became Custodian of the Diptera (two-winged insects) and Associate Curator of the museum in its division of insects. Aldrich was the first Dipterist employed by the Smithsonian Institution who had been previously employed by the USDA.

Aldrich was known for his unusual success in obtaining rare specimens of insect life in various sections of the western hemisphere, including the western United States, Alaska, and Guatemala. Many of the insects he captured were previously unknown to science. Because of his extensive knowledge of North American Diptera fauna, his eminence made the National Museum the center for studies on New World Diptera. In 1923, Aldrich turned over his specimen collection of more than 45,000 insects, with more than 4,000 classifications.

In addition, he donated to the museum a card catalog file of North American literature on these specimens. This collection is among the most important general Diptera collection in the National Museum. In addition to his work at the National Museum, Aldrich wrote extensively on subjects of insect life. He was also President of the Entomological Society of America (1921) and received many honors and awards.

Aldrich died in 1934 but is still honored today by the existence of the Aldrich Entomology Club, which was formed in 1961 at the University of Idaho. This club provides a forum for student, faculty, and other interested persons to share their enthusiasm for insect biology.

Contents Note

This collection is composed of three diaries of J.M Aldrich during his tenure as a student at Dakota Agricultural College from 1885-1888. The diaries give an invaluable account on life as a student during the early years of the college.

The diaries are separated into three volumes, one for each year Aldrich was a student at the college. Between 1930 and 1932, Aldrich made typewritten transcripts copied from his original diaries and included parenthetical comments for clarification. Each daily entry states the day and date, which are underlined, and relate Aldrich's daily activities. Most of the entries are trivial, recounting the activity of each day, but give an excellent portrayal of the atmosphere of Dakota Territory life in the 1880's. Topics included in the diaries range from accounts of his journeys between his home in Minnesota to Brookings to administrative upsets such as President George Lilley losing his position to Lewis McLouth.

Related Resources

Digital copies are available for viewing on the Digital Library of South Dakota

The John Merton Aldrich Papers are held at the Smithsonian Institution Archives. This collection consists of correspondence between Aldrich and other dipterists and includes considerable correspondence with Leland Ossian Howard and Charles Henry Tyler Townsend.

Bibliography

A catalogue of North American Diptera (or two-winged flies) by J.M. Aldrich

Call Number: SI 1.7:46/1

Publication Date: 1905

The Cut-worm by I.M. Orcutt and J.M. Aldrich

Call Number: 630.7 So87.12 no.18

Publication Date: 1890

Injurious insects by I.M. Orcutt and J.M. Aldrich

Call Number: 630.7 So87.12 no.22

Publication Date: 1889-1891

Report of the Department of Entomology by I.M. Orcutt and J.M. Aldrich

Call Number: 630.7 So87.12 no.30

Publication Date: 1892

Sarcophaga and allies in North America by J.M. Aldrich

Call Number: AL535.1 A4s

Publication Date: 1916

Key Words

Aldrich, J.M. (John Merton), 1886-1934.

Agricultural colleges -- Dakota Territory -- Brookings -- History

Dakota Agricultural College -- History

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Arranged and Described by

Crystal J. Gamradt, Archivist, 2002 July 11.

Container List

Series	Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
Preservation Copy	1	1	Volume 1: First year at Dakota Agriculture College	1885-1886
Preservation Copy	1	2	Volume 2: Second year at Dakota Agricultural College	1886-1887
Preservation Copy	1	3	Volume 3: Third year at Dakota Agricultural College	1887-1888
RESTRICTED copy	1	4	Volume 1: First year at Dakota Agriculture College	1885-1886
RESTRICTED copy	1	5	Volume 2: Second year at Dakota Agricultural College	1886-1887
RESTRICTED copy	1	6	Volume 3: Third year at Dakota Agricultural College	1887-1888