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LAZELLA HARENBERG SCHWARTEN
1900-1973

RICHARD A. HOWARD

A GOOD LIBRARY is an integral part of a major arboretum, and a dedicated librarian is an asset upon which an entire organization may depend. Lazella Swarten was a botanist's librarian whose willingness to help the staff and professional visitors was her contribution to the success of many people. Hers was a major supportive role for twenty-three years in the work of the Arnold Arboretum, and concurrently for thirteen years at the Gray Herbarium at Harvard. Before and throughout this period she made a bibliographic contribution to systematic botany as a whole.

Lazella Swarten was born in New York City on December 8, 1900. Her grade school years were spent in Germany. After her family returned to the United States in 1910, she attended high school at Hunter College (1914-1918). Lazella married early but her husband died suddenly, leaving her to raise their son and daughter, then twelve and eleven years old. Her efforts on their behalf were admired by those who knew her in this period of the Depression years. Their accomplishments in later years were a source of pride to her.

Mrs. Swarten was employed as a typist at the New York Botanical Garden in 1931, but after she took a library course at Columbia University and enrolled in the Science Course for Gardeners at the Botanical Garden, she was appointed a Library Assistant at the Garden in 1936. It was in this period that she began the bibliographic projects for the Torrey Botanical Club and the American Society of Plant Taxonomists which she was to continue loyally and without too much recognition until her retirement.

In 1944, during the administration of Dr. E. D. Merrill as Director of the Arnold Arboretum, Lazella Swarten was invited to accept an appointment as Librarian of the Arboretum. Here an active staff was concerned with bibliographic programs, as exemplified by the research of Merrill, Rehder, A. C. Smith, Kobuski, and Croizat. Lazella learned the library well, and it expanded and improved under her leadership.

In 1954 the library of the Arnold Arboretum was divided; the horticultural

ture section remained in Jamaica Plain, and that of floristic and systematic botany was moved to the Harvard University Herbaria Building in Cambridge to be integrated with the library of the Gray Herbarium into one superb library. Mrs. Schwarten again proved her capabilities in the organization of this material, adapting two different and historic systems into a single working library. The library supporting horticultural activities in Jamaica Plain was reorganized simultaneously, incorporating the Arnold Arboretum books on forestry which had been on deposit at the Harvard Forest, in Petersham, Massachusetts. All of this was accomplished with the least possible disruption of the scientific work of many of the staff members.

Mrs. Schwarten retired reluctantly on July 1, 1967, after twenty-three years of service at Harvard. For this occasion the staff had assembled letters of testimony within the organization, and from botanists of other institutions whom Mrs. Schwarten had helped during their visits. This bound volume was apparently most appreciated for she acknowledged every one of the letters and the tributes she had received. She left Cambridge to live in a small house on the lovely grounds of the home of her daughter and son-in-law in Readington, New Jersey. Here for a few years she enjoyed gardening, her first chance after years of apartment dwelling to put her acquaintance with horticultural books to work in cultivating plants. Ill health eventually limited her activities, and she died on January 2, 1973, in Flemington, New Jersey.

I have indicated that service to others was her commitment. She gave freely of her energies to any who needed her help. Impatient with incompetence or laxity, she always did more than her share of the work of the institution. She relaxed only in her small apartment, enjoying recorded symphonies, attending the Boston Symphony concerts on a regular basis, and adding to her collection of old glass.

While at the New York Botanical Garden, Mrs. Schwarten was given the unpaid role of Bibliographer for the Torrey Botanical Club in 1940. She worked with Dr. Harold Rickett in preparing the *Index to American Botanical Literature* which was published in the quarterly *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club* and reprinted in card-form for distribution to several dozen institutions. Although she was supposed to have some co-workers, I know from experience that Lazella, in her own style, carried the burden of compiling the titles, reading proof, and handling most of the correspondence. She brought much of this responsibility to Massachusetts and continued working on the project until her retirement.

During the formative years of the now flourishing American Society of Plant Taxonomists, Mrs. Schwarten worked closely with the late Dr. Wendell Camp in editing not only the issues of the *Taxonomic Index*, but in doing her best to temper his comments and reviews. From the early mimeographed issues she served as collaborator and Associate Editor through twenty volumes. When this publication included selected items from the *Index to American Botanical Literature*, it was Mrs. Schwarten who prepared the copy.

The annual reports of the directors of the Arnold Arboretum have always included a list of the publications of the staff and students. Mrs. Schwarten supplied this material, and no director needed to ask her for copy. She knew the manuscript deadlines and her material was ready. She prepared the bibliographies of such botanists as Merrill, Bailey, Fernald, Palmer, Faull, Kobuski, and Johnston which accompanied their obituaries in several publications. Her credit lines were all too brief.

With Harold Rickett she began a compilation of a standard list of abbreviations of botanical titles. This was published in 1947 in the *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club*. An appendix to this work was compiled and issued in 1961, and together these lists served as the reference for proper uniform and convenient citation of botanical periodicals for many years.

Without a background of formal college education, Lazella Schwarten became a professional by her own hard work. She was proud of her recognition as a Professional Librarian by a Certificate of Librarianship issued to her by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1950. Hers was a lifetime of unselfish, special contribution to others.

ARNOLD ARBORETUM

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138



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