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E. Lucy Braun

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Introduction

Emma Lucy Braun (b. 1889–d. 1971) was one of the more influential plant ecologists of the 20th century. She is known primarily for her seminal book, *Deciduous Forests of Eastern North America*, first published in 1950 with later facsimile reprintings. Although this book tends to overshadow her other accomplishments, those contributions to the fields of plant ecology and taxonomy are quite notable and considerable in themselves; she was a pioneer in conservation biology, she published numerous papers in prominent ecological journals (including *Ecology*, *Ecological Monographs*, and *Botanical Review*), and she was a distinguished plant taxonomist (author of *The Woody Plants of Ohio*). She actively contributed to and was a member of several notable scientific and ecological societies, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Ecological Society of America, the Botanical Society of America, the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, and the British Ecological Society. The broad biogeographic range of her interests contrasts with the provinciality of her academic pedigree; she was educated, and then a long-standing faculty member, at the University of Cincinnati, her city of birth. Beginning with the degrees of B.A. (1910?), M.A. (1912), and Ph.D. (1914). She was appointed assistant and instructor of botany in 1914 and rose through the ranks to full professor of botany. She retired as professor emerita in 1948, although her retirement years were remarkably productive with the publication of three books and several noteworthy papers. In 1950, she became the first woman president of the Ecological Society of America and the only woman to hold that office until 1986. With graduate research experience in both geology (M.A.) and botany (Ph.D.), she was one of the earlier in the field to not only embrace the multidisciplinary nature of ecology, but also use it to advance the field. In addition to her earned degrees, she was awarded an honorary D.Sc. from the University of Cincinnati in 1964.

Biographies

Several biographical accounts offer keen insights into E. Lucy Braun's personal and academic life. The earliest of such is Stuckey 1973, published shortly after her death in 1971. It begins largely as an obituary, but develops into a well-detailed chronology of her early life, education, and contributions to the varied fields of plant ecology, floristics and taxonomy, phytogeography, and conservation. Langenheim 1988 places Braun's career within a genealogy of women ecologists from the 1950s to the 1980s. Acknowledging Braun's University of Cincinnati roots, Langenheim appropriately places Braun within Henry Chandler Cowles's Chicago School of Physiographic Ecology. Grinstein, et al. 1997 included Braun among sixty-five women from numerous eras (deceased or born before 1931) who have contributed notably to the field of biology. Ogilvie and Harvey 2000, a brief biographical entry on Braun, is given in a biographical dictionary covering contributions of women to science from ancient times to the mid-20th century. The most extensive biography of Braun is clearly Stuckey 2001. Published on the thirtieth anniversary of her passing, this work is organized into three parts. Part 1 is largely a reprinting of Stuckey 1973, along with a personal account from a student. Part 2 reprints five of Braun's most important papers, with a particular focus on the flora of parts of Ohio and the ecology of prairies of unglaciated regions of the state. Part 3 is a reprinting of four guide books on prairie preserves in Adams County, Ohio. As part of its 2015 centennial, the Ecological Society of America (ESA) commissioned a centennial history of the society, Egerton 2015, which included a detailed entry on Braun describing her long association with ESA and highlighting her service as its first woman president.

Egerton, Frank N. 2015. A centennial history of the Ecological Society of America. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

An excellent summary of the first one hundred years of the ESA, the largest ecological organization in the world, with an entry for Braun among the past presidents, emphasizing her distinction as the Society's first woman president.

Grinstein, Louise S., Carol A. Biermann, and Rose K. Rose, eds. 1997. *Women in the biological sciences: A biobibliographic sourcebook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

A compendium of short biographies of sixty-five women from several countries through many eras who have gained recognition in biology, with an informative entry on Braun.

Langenheim, Jean H. 1988. Address of the past president: Davis, California, August 1988: The path and progress of American women ecologists. *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America* 69:184–197.

A clear, succinct account of the prominence of women in the field of ecology, with a genealogy of these women with respect to their academic lineage that places Braun in Henry Chandler Cowles's Chicago School of Physiographic Ecology.

Ogilvie, Marilyn, and Joy Harvey, eds. 2000. *The biographical dictionary of women in science: Pioneering lives from ancient times to the mid-20th century*. Vol. 1. London: Routledge.

An expansive, two-volume biographical dictionary of more than 3,000 women across the millennia; includes an entry on Braun.

Stuckey, Ronald L. 1973. E. Lucy Braun (1889–1971), outstanding botanist and conservationist: A biographical sketch with bibliography. *The Michigan Botanist* 12:83–106.

The first biographical account of Braun's life and career, highlighting her significant contributions to a variety of areas (plant ecology, and well beyond) and including a complete bibliography of her publications.

Stuckey, Ronald L. 2001. *E. Lucy Braun (1889–1971): Ohio's foremost woman botanist; her studies of prairies and their physiographic relationships*. Columbus, OH: RLS Creations.

The definitive biography of the personal and academic life of Braun, including the author's earlier entry in *The Michigan Botanist* (Stuckey 1973), with a strong emphasis on her work with prairies.

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