

## FRANK STEVENS MALTBY (1873-1900): UNKNOWN NEW MEXICO BOTANIST

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On Sunday, July 22, 1900, Frank Maltby quietly departed Albuquerque on the east bound train to Santa Fe, Denver, and parts east, accompanied by his father, mother, and younger sister, en route to far away Indiana. Frank had passed away a week and one day earlier, on Saturday, July 14, from pulmonary tuberculosis. His health, fragile the past five years, had degraded severely the previous fall, when members of his family journeyed from Aurora, Indiana, to help care for him. His father was summoned to his son's bedside the week prior to Frank's passing, arriving in Albuquerque on Friday, July 6. Now, the entourage was returning to the family home in Aurora, where Frank was laid to rest in River View Cemetery, overlooking the Ohio River.

### Life

Frank Stevens Maltby was born 16 February 1873, in Rochester, Monroe County, New York, the first child of George Beecher Maltby (1838-1915) and Ida Stevens (1846-1919). Subsequent siblings were three brothers, Charles Stevens (1874-1947), Earle Murray (1877-1879), and Howard Scott (1881-1960), and then a sister, Grace (1883-1972). The family descended on both sides from military generals in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The family name is sometimes spelled Maltbie, though not by any of Frank's close relatives.

Nothing has been gleaned about Frank's early years. In 1893, at age 20, he graduated from Moores Hill College (moved in 1919 and now Evansville University) with a Bachelor of Arts degree. The city of Moores Hill is about 10 miles northwest of Aurora, and one can assume that the family had settled in Aurora for Frank's growing-up years, and he naturally went to the nearby college at Moores Hill. Following graduation, Frank took a medical course of study at Johns Hopkins University in the fall of 1893, graduating in 1895.

Frank's specific activities from 1895-1897 are unknown, but one learns that sometime during that period (perhaps

earlier?) he was stricken with tuberculosis and sought the healing, dry air of Albuquerque, New Mexico. In New Mexico, he made the acquaintance of Clarence Luther Herrick, the future president (September 1897-1901) of the University of New Mexico, also a tuberculosis patient. However they met, in the spring of 1897 Maltby, Herrick, and his young son Harry set off for western Mexico and the Tres Marias Islands on a biological collecting expedition, Herrick in a desperate attempt to raise money for his subsistence, and Maltby, perhaps, in a desire for adventure, as his family was quite well off. In a memorial biography, Herrick's brother Charles reports:

"...as a last resort he [Herrick] conceived a project of a collecting expedition on a commercial scale to the uninhabited Tres Marias and Revilla Gigedo Islands off the west coast of Mexico. The party of three included the boy Harry and F.S. Maltby, who was another tuberculous patient. ... The expedition set out in the spring of 1897. It was a hazardous adventure foredoomed to failure. Sufficient funds for expenses were not in sight and Clarence assumed all risks with no assurance of returns sufficient to cover expenses. ... After a perilous voyage to the Tres Marias, it was evident that to go further would be a foolhardy risk for two tuberculous invalids, a twelve-year old boy, and an incompetent skipper. The party returned laden with specimens for a capricious market. The sales barely covered the expenses incurred" (Herrick 1955).

Coincidentally, the Herrick-Maltby expedition met a similar team of biologists from the USDA Division of Biological Survey at the coastal Mexican town of San Blas, headed up by ornithologist Edward William Nelson, and the two groups made the crossing to the Tres Marias Islands together, but apparently had no further contact or collaboration while on the islands. Plant specimens from both groups ended up in the hands

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**Botanice est Scientia Naturalis quae Vegetabilium cognitiorem tradit.**

— **Linnaeus**



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of Joseph Nelson Rose of the U.S. National Herbarium (Herrick having sold some of their collection to the Smithsonian), who prepared a report on the plants of the islands, wherein he named a new species of *Ternstroemia* for its collector: *Ternstroemia maltbyi*. Additional botanical collections will be discussed below.

The adventurers returned to New Mexico in July 1897, where, perhaps because of the summer's close association with Herrick, Frank was hired at the fledgling University of New Mexico for the fall semester 1897. His initial assignment was as Director of the Gymnasium, but to this was added by 1898 the office of Registrar and member of the Hadley Climatological Laboratory. His work with the Climatological Laboratory, directed by Herrick, led to the posthumous publication in 1901 of Frank's only scientific paper: "Some observations on the lung capacity of young people living in New Mexico" (Univ. New Mexico Biological Series, vol. 2, no. 2: 1-7).

Despite the debilitating consequences of tuberculosis, Frank did not squander his opportunities in New Mexico or at the university. He spent the summer of 1898 in the high county of the Pecos River headwaters, collecting plants with a UNM colleague, George Ellett Coghill, and his brother, William Haws Coghill. Frank was in the company of a prestigious pair, George becoming an eminent neuromuscular anatomist, and William a prominent mining engineer. 186 separate specimens are known from this foray. As far as one knows, this was Frank's last collecting excursion.

Continuing his education, Maltby received his Master of Science degree from UNM in spring of 1899. Local newspapers announced the passing of his exams, the resultant graduation and revelry, and that he would spend his summer vacation of 1899 in Aurora, Indiana, with family. Fall 1899 found him in Canyon Largo hunting quail with a Professor Childs, and the newspapers also reported Frank's participation in evening missionary firesides and an Episcopal Convention.

Maltby's health steadily worsened, though, and an Indianapolis newspaper announced in February 1900 that Frank was "dangerously ill," so much so that his mother and his brother, Howard, "hastened to his side." The June 1900 federal census records Frank and his mother Ida at 120 South High Street in Albuquerque, though Frank may have actually been living at a nearby sanatorium "on the Highlands." A motel, Imperial Inn, now occupies their lodging site on South High Street. Less than a month later, July 2, Ida Maltby received a telegram that her father, Frank's grandfather, had passed away. Because of Frank's precarious health, she was unable to attend the funeral in Indiana. On July 6, Frank's father, George Maltby, arrived in Albuquerque, and brought his son back to the apartment

on South High Street. He and his wife were with their son for another eight days, before Frank Stevens Maltby died on Saturday, July 14, 1900, at 1 pm in the afternoon.

No record is found of memorial or funeral services in Albuquerque or Aurora, but one supposes they must have occurred. The grave of Frank Stevens Maltby can be found at River View Cemetery, Aurora, Indiana, plot #2944. His father, mother, and sister lie nearby.

### Chronology

- 1873, 16 Feb – birth, Rochester, Monroe County, New York
- 1893 – Bachelor of Arts, Moores Hill College, Moores Hill, Indiana
- 1893-1895 – medical course of study, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland
- 1897, March-June – collecting in Mexico with C.L. Herrick
- 1897, 12 May – collects *Ternstroemia maltbyi* on Maria Madre Island
- 1897-1899 – Director of the Gymnasium, University of New Mexico
- 1898, June-August – collecting in Upper Pecos River area with Coghill brothers
- 1898-1899 – Registrar University of New Mexico
- 1899 – Master of Science degree, University of New Mexico
- 1899, June – spends the summer in Aurora, Indiana
- 1900 census – 120 S. High Street, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1900, 14 July – death, from tuberculosis, 1 pm, at residence on S. High St.
- 1900 – interment, River View Cemetery, Aurora, Indiana
- 1901 – paper on lung capacity published posthumously

### Specimens

A search of available online databases gives the following disposition of Frank Maltby specimens:

Herbarium	# of specimens
New Mexico State University (NMC)	372
Smithsonian Institution (US)	174
New York Botanical Garden (NY)	7
Missouri Botanical Garden (MO)	1
Total	554

Why NMC and not UNM (since both Maltby and Herrick were associated with that university) has the bulk of the specimens is unknown. The holdings at US, NY, and MO are mostly duplicates of those at NMC. An examination of

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the provenance of the collections from just NMC gives the following:

Mexico	Nayarit	113
	Sinaloa	4
	Sonora	50
United States	New Mexico	170
	Total	337

From this, it appears that the 554 total specimens in various herbaria represent about 337 individual collections by Maltby, 167 from Mexico, and 170 from New Mexico.

It is interesting that one finds no specimens attributed to Herrick from Mexico. All 378 known specimens credited to Clarence L. Herrick are from Arizona and New Mexico. (One does find 10 specimens of Charles Judson Herrick, Clarence's younger brother, from Water Canyon in the Magdalena Mountains, where Clarence had a home.) Maltby and Herrick clearly collected together on the expedition to the Tres Marias Islands, but perhaps the handling of the collections was left to Maltby and they somehow went out under his name?

As noted above, Maltby's #105, taken 12 May 1897, from Maria Madre Island, Nayarit, Mexico, is one of the original collections of *Ternstroemia maltbyi* J.N. Rose (original spelling *maltbya*, but corrected by Rose), published in North American Fauna 14: 78. 1899. (Kobuski 1968; see photos below)

All Maltby specimens from New Mexico are from the Maltby-Coghill expedition of 1898 to the Upper Pecos River region.

All Maltby specimens with printed labels record his name as "T.S. Maltby." It is unknown how this error came about; perhaps it occurred when transcribing handwritten notes and labels, where F and T are easily confused. In the Introduction to the final report of the USDA expedition (which met the Herrick-Maltby team at San Blas), E.W. Nelson records: "While preparations for the trip were in progress a party from Socorro, N. Mex., consisting of Prof. C. L. Herrick, his son Harry, and Dr. T.S. Maltby arrived at San Blas, also bound for the Tres Marias, and we made the trip together." Likewise, Rose's original description of *Ternstroemia maltbyi* credits "T.S. Maltby" with one of the original collections.

In contrast, many Maltby specimens with handwritten labels record his name as "F.S. Maltby (see photos below).

Despite the confusion about his initials, it is absolutely certain, as detailed above, that it was Frank Stevens (F.S.) Maltby who was on the Tres Marias expedition, and who collected in the Upper Pecos with George Ellett Coghill (without exception rendered as E.G. Coghill in the online databases!), and who is the collector of every known Maltby specimen from western United States and northern Mexico, and not some other Maltby with the initials "T.S." (One does find a few specimens by O.J. Maltby from Quebec, Canada, and by H.E. Maltby from the Chatham Islands in the South Pacific.) No census, vital statistic, or other genealogical record can be found of a T.S. Maltby during this time. It is also telling that there are no reports or specimens of a Maltby after 1900, the year of Frank's death. In the words of the immortal Sherlock Holmes, "when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth" (Doyle 1890). F.S. Maltby and T.S. Maltby are one and the same man: Frank Stevens Maltby of this account.

#### Photos

Frank Stevens Maltby, 1898, age 25 (The Mirage, 1898).



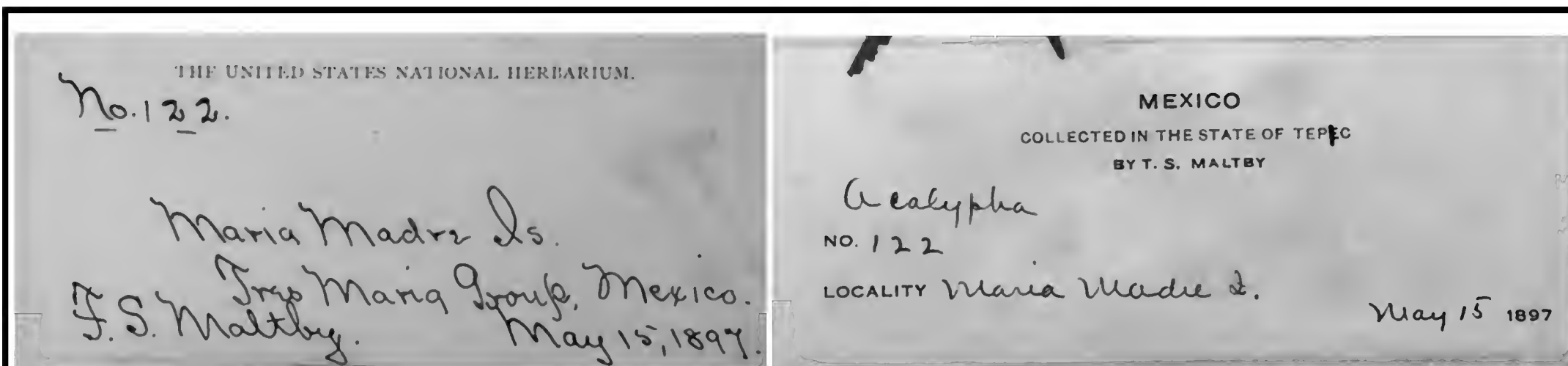
Seated: George Beecher Maltby (Frank's father), Mary Maltby Higby (Frank's aunt), John Whitehouse Maltby (Frank's uncle and George's twin). Standing: Mrs. George Beecher Maltby, Albert T. Higby (husband of Mary). Summer 1910. (Verrill 1916)



Gravestone, River View Cemetery, Aurora, Indiana.  
Inscription: Frank S. Maltby, Feb 16, 1873; July 14, 1900.  
(findagrave.com)



Specimen sheet and close-up of label of type collection of *Ternstroemia maltbyi* (NMC), incorrectly attributing the collection to "T.S." Maltby.



Duplicate labels from the same Maltby collection.

Left: Maltby #122 at US, showing “F.S.” Maltby.

Right: Maltby #122 at NMC, showing “T.S.” Maltby

### Acknowledgments

Many thanks and commendation to the curators and staff of NMC, MO, NY, UNM, and US, and all other herbaria that have taken the time, effort, and money to place their collections online, making their holdings available worldwide. Any inquiry into Maltby’s life would have taken months without these resources. This little excursion was prompted by Richard Felger’s query: “Do you know anything about T.S. Maltby?” Thank you, Richard. Lots more to learn, but we now know more than when we started.

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**Botany is the natural science that transmits the knowledge of plants.**

— *Linnaeus*