

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
LAWRENCE, KANSAS

January 25, 1953 (addenda)

Dr. Bertrand F. Harrison  
Department of Botany  
Brigham Young University  
Provo, Utah

Dear Bertrand:

Thank you for the identification of the Alaskan material and may I pay tribute to your extraordinary knowledge of grasses and your ability to get the job done. I know only too well the long hours and effort you must have spent in working up this list and I only hope that I can someday repay you for this kindness and service.

As you know, my first impressions of the ecology of Arctic Alaska were as chaotic as a rag bag with all the bewildering tangles and overlapping of plant communities. The problems just seemed too astronomical for me to phathom, however, with your help on the identification of these plants I am finding more and more order in the plant-animal relationships. It is really surprising how each species of mammals and plant actually occupy rather restricted ecological niches in what would superficially be considered a heterogeneous assemblage.

This Alaska information will tie in with the data which I have been gathering on the microtine-grass-sedge relationships from 18 midland states and already some light is beginning to shine upon the partial solution of the evolution and dispersal of both the microtines and the grasses and sedges. Incidentally, the grasses from Wyoming and vicinity which you question about are all taken from an abrupt ecological contact in an critical geographical area between a mountain and a great plains form of Microtus, and to that extent I thought that the grasses and sedges would be of particular significance as possible range extensions.

As to the disposition of the plants, it is my desired that you:

1. Keep all Alaskan material.
2. If convenient, return to me from the Wyoming and vicinity areas only those duplicate specimens which do not add to the geographic additions to your herbarium.

This leaves the problem of the mosses and lichens. I already have some identifications of the dominant ones of the Arctic communities and as they appear to be only secondary to community preference by most mammals are not considered as important as the grasses and Carexes. Could we leave it this way? Keep all mosses and lichens and send me the names of only those which can be conveniently identified, say, at ten feet thru a pair of smoked glasses. In other words I do not want you to go to any further trouble and time to identify them at this time, but if by chance some student comes along in the future in your department and is interested in, and can gain some experience in working with these plants, I would be interested in a listing. I hate to say 'throw them away' as some of them are firsts and come from areas that have been visited by whiteman for the first time. I have another large box of these mosses and lichens from the eastern segment of the Brooks Range and which I am taking the liberty in sending to you without your formal acceptance. As you well know, they can also be used for insulation or chinking cracks