

MSU Entomology: The First 50 Years at MAC¹

Entomology was taught in College Hall at the State Agricultural College of Michigan in 1858 by Dr. Henry Goadby (Royal College of Surgeons, London). In 1859, President Joseph R. Williams (State Agricultural College of Michigan) requested the Board of Education for additional faculty positions, including animal-vegetable physiology and entomology. Dr. Manly Miles (1826-1898) was appointed Professor of Zoology and Animal Physiology. Entomology became a separate unit of academic instruction in 1863. It included a comprehensive insect collection and was taught to second-term freshmen. A text devoted entirely to insects was used for the first time in 1864. In 1867, Albert J. Cook (M.S., MAC, 65) was hired as an instructor of mathematics. He taught a second entomology course to second-term sophomores. This unit of instruction included the first formal teaching of beekeeping in the U.S.A. and Dr. C. E. Bessey (1845-1915, MAC, 69) of MSU Bessey Hall was one of the students.

A. J. Cook was appointed Professor of Entomology and Head of the Department of Zoology and Physiology in 1869. The first MAC insect Collection was housed in the College Museum in College Hall in 1871. Following the introduction of microscopy at MAC by Dr. William J. Beal, Head of the Department of Botany and Horticulture, Professor Cook requested the purchase of student microscopes. From 1877 through 1892, entomology was taught during the 12-week summer session. The Department of Zoology and Physiology moved to the new Library and Museum Building (Linton Hall) in 1882. Before the Hatch Act of 1887, enrollment in entomology courses ranged from 7-45 students annually. A significant increase in demand for entomologists resulted in an enrollment of 120 students in 1891. After 27 years of tenure, A. J. Cook resigned to accept the position of Chair of the Department of Biology at Pomona College in Claremont, California. In 1895, the amount of laboratory time was increased in Entomology IV and a senior elective course in entomology became available. Entomology was offered to women as a separate unit of academic instruction in 1896. The following year, Rufus Pettit joined the faculty as an Instructor and Assistant Entomologist of the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station. In 1906, the Department of Entomology was formed with Professor Pettit serving as its first Chair.

¹Developed by G. W. Bird (Professor) from Houk, W. E., 1954. *A Study of Some events in the Development of Entomology and its Application in Michigan*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State College of Agricultural and Science. East Lansing, MI. 307 pp.