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Arizona Native Plant Society to Host Sara Lemmon Presentation — Thursday, Oct. 11

Hello, Friends of Sara — and welcome to Newsletter No. 7 of the project!

My thanks go out to Arizona Native Plant Society for inviting me to speak **this coming Thursday, October 11**, on “Sara Plummer Lemmon, 19th-Century Artist and Botanist”!

You don't need to be a member to attend. The event is free and will be at 7:00 p.m. at the Ward 6 Office, 3202 E. 1st Street, southeast of the Speedway/Country Club intersection and one block south of Walgreens. Parking is available on the street.

In general, I try to adapt my presentations to fit the different audiences. So, this particular talk will focus more closely on some of Arizona's native plants in addition to the story of Sara Lemmon. (And because I'm a naturalist/science writer and not a botanist, attendees are welcome to offer [gentle] botanical corrections...)

One section of the talk will examine the highlight of Sara's scientific career: an entire genus named for her.

After their 1881 botanical honeymoon clambering up what would become known as Mount Lemmon (named for Sara, not John, as many of you now know), the couple traveled on to El Paso, then to the Chiricahua Mountains. By

them recognized.

They sent it to the leading American botanist at the time, Dr. Asa Gray at Harvard. To Sara's joy, he declared it to be, not just a new species, but a whole new genus. He named it *Plummera floribunda*, commemorating her maiden name.

Sara wrote her sister Mattie, "I was so delighted with the honor – and such a fine plant – 2 feet+ high, that I danced around our big herbarium, overturned the chairs, embraced L & Mother in the most enthusiastic way, and they joined me in the celebration, and declared that it was only right to have something cheery after so many hardships."

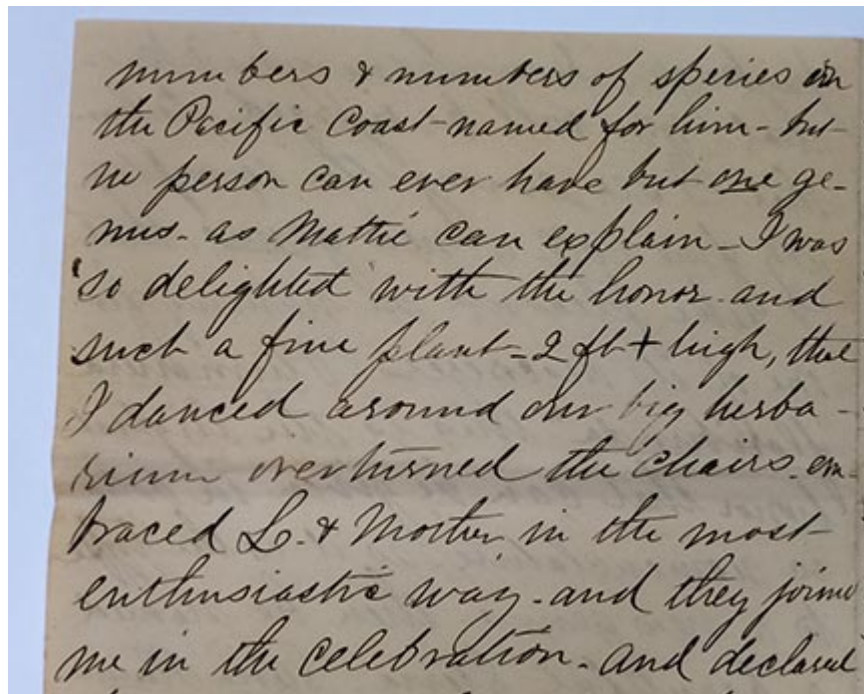


Photo by Wynne Brown

Original at the University and Jepson Herbaria Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Here's a photo of the actual specimen, which is now in the Smithsonian:

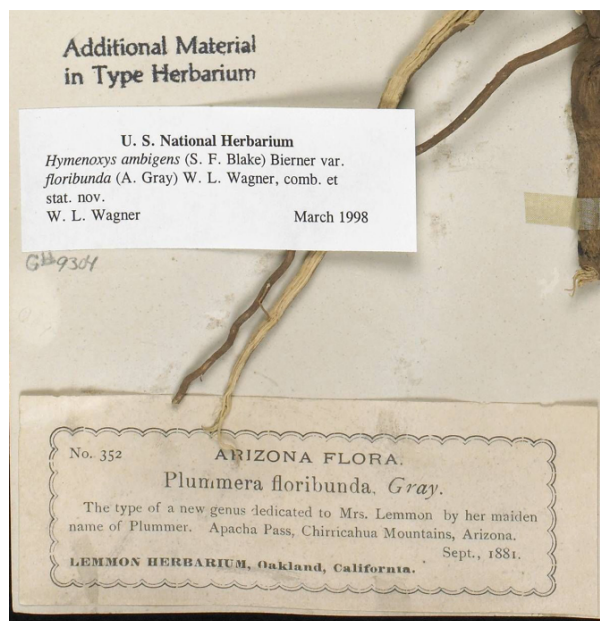
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Photo of specimen discovered by Sara Plummer Lemmon and now at the U. S. National Herbarium, part of the Smithsonian Institutes



A closer look at the collecting label reveals Sara's name.

Sadly, Sara's fine plant is no longer called *Plummera floribunda*. Genetic

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Hymenoxys microcephala. It's commonly known as Apache Pass Rubberweed or, even less appealingly, Sneezeweed. So goes botanical progress.

Fortunately, other Arizona plants do still carry her name. Thursday's event will be an opportunity to explore some of those through the eyes – and paint brushes – of Sara Plummer Lemmon.

More news to come, especially about – at long last, whew – the manuscript! Stay tuned ...

And do please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested.

Cheers,
Wynne

PS/ Comments on the project? Sara? the newsletter? Please email me at wynne@wynnebrown.com



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