

Ada Nesta Dunn Ewan (1908–2000)

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In systematic botany there are some names that are inexorably associated. One cannot think of Bentham without Hooker, Engler without Prantl, or Ruiz without Pavon. For those interested in the history of natural history in the Americas, the names of Joseph (Joe) and Nesta Ewan similarly will be forever linked. This couple forged not only a remarkable union (they were married for 64 years), but also an amazing scholarly collaboration. Together they built an unparalleled library and



Fig. 1. Ada Nesta Dunn Ewan in the year of her graduation (Los Angeles, 1933).

archive devoted to the history of botany (Dorr, 2000; Holland & al., 1997) and they used the resources they assembled to write, review, teach, and advise. Countless students and scholars worldwide benefited from their generous counsel.

Nesta published but a single article under her own name (Crotz, 1989, sub 190a) and was co-author with Joe on about a dozen papers and books (Dorr & Holland, 2000). Most notable among these were book-length biographies of John Banister (Ewan & Ewan, 1970) and Benjamin Smith Barton (in press), and the “second edition” (Ewan & Ewan, 1981) of *Rocky Mountain naturalists* (Ewan, 1950). These few citations, however, can scarcely be considered the sum of her published work. None of us who knew the couple can truly separate Nesta’s contributions from Joe’s publications and even when her co-authorship is not explicitly stated, it is clear that more often than not the phrase “et uxor”

justifiably could be added to Joe’s byline. Like Joe, too, she provided much information and other help for people working on a wide variety of projects. Fortunately, her scholarship did not pass unnoticed and when the Henry Shaw Medal of the Missouri Botanical Garden was awarded in 1994, it was awarded to both Joe and Nesta Ewan.

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