

THE WHITE-BRACTED HYMENOPAPPUS STILL GROWS IN ILLINOIS

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Just a century ago—in July, 1842—Charles A. Geyer collected the White-bracted Hymenopappus, *Hymenopappus scabiosaeus* L'Hér. (*S. carolinensis* of current botanical manuals) in sandy soil near Beardstown, Cass County, Illinois. In June, 1845, Dr. S. B. Mead collected the plant in Mason County, and eleven years later—on May 23, 1856—Elihu Hall collected it again in Cass County. These three records probably are the basis upon which the species was included in Lapham's 1857 list of Illinois plants and upon which the range given for it in Gray's *New Manual of Botany* (1908) and Britton and Brown's *Illustrated Flora* (1913) includes Illinois. During 85 years no further collections of the plant were made in the localities in which it was first discovered and no records of its occurrence in other parts of Illinois were made.

In the summer of 1941 the writer collected the White-bracted Hymenopappus in the southeastern part of Kankakee County. This latest locality, approximately 50 miles north and 130 miles east of the earlier recorded localities, lies about 145 miles from them. The site occupied by the plant is almost exactly one and one-half miles due east of the town of Wichert. It lies on the western section line of Section 25, Township 30 North, Range 12 West, about midway between the northwestern and southwestern corners of the Section.

The range of the White-bracted Hymenopappus lies generally to the south of Illinois. It is defined in Rydberg's *Flora of the Prairies and Plains of Central North America* (1932) as from "South Carolina westward to Kansas and southward to Texas and Florida," in Britton and Brown's *Illustrated Flora* as from "Illinois and Texas east to South Carolina and Florida," and in Gray's *New*

Manual of Botany as Illinois to South Carolina and southwestward. In habitat, the plant is restricted to sandy barrens.

Since the publication of these manuals, little additional evidence of the northern limit of the species has been published. Charles C. Deam, in his *Flora of Indiana* (1940) records the plant in two widely separated Indiana counties, Vigo and Stark. Collections were made in Vigo County, near Terre Haute, in 1890 by Blatchley and in 1925 by A. R. Bechtel. Four sites were found in Stark County, in northwestern Indiana, by Deam in 1930.

The isolated occurrences of the plant in Illinois and Indiana, hundreds of miles north of its normal range, is not easily explained. Both the Illinois and the Indiana records are for sandy habitats close to rivers. The Illinois and Stark County, Indiana, sites form an interrupted chain along most of the length of the Illinois-Kankakee river valleys, and the Vigo County, Indiana, sites are close to the Wabash River. Such facts would suggest transportation by water fowl, except that what is known about migratory routes and food habits almost certainly precludes the possibility. However, smaller birds following overland migration routes might have served as chance carriers.

It is possible, also, that these northern occurrences of the plant represent surviving outposts of a former general range and date back, perhaps, to a warmer age or the time when the Gulf of Mexico extended northward to and beyond the present Ohio River valley. They might then be regarded as remnants of a retreating southern flora, persisting only where, in small localities, some factor of soil or climate continues to favor their existence.