

SCOTT HASELTON BIOGRAPHY

Chuck Staples, CSSA Historian

Haselton, Scott Edson (1895–1991)—CSSA founder and publisher of *Cactus and Succulent Journal* and several important books on succulent plants.



Born in Bath, New Hampshire on 27 November 1895, Scott Haselton was instrumental in co-founding The Cactus and Succulent Society of America in 1929. Scott graduated from a 2-year teacher training program at College Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, in 1917. He taught art and manual training in the public schools in Summit, New Jersey until shortly after America entered World War I in 1917. Scott served in the army with American forces in the European theatre. However, he didn't get a chance to celebrate the end of the war, because he contracted tuberculosis in France. His return to America toward the end of 1919 was on the luxury liner "Leviathan" which had been converted to a hospital ship. For a man in his condition, the hospital ship doctors suggested southern California as a good place to live for the rest of his life, so Scott was discharged from the army at Camp Kearny near San Diego, California. While combating tuberculosis he discovered he found breathing easier in the desert, and there he became increasingly curious about cacti.

After a short time at odd jobs (including print shops) in southern California in 1920, Scott found work at Great Western Milling acting as pressman, setting type and layouts for leaflets, paper bags, and burlap sacks. After the company went bankrupt around 1923, Scott went to work for Mayers Brothers (Jesse, Henry and Arthur), an advertising agency, in Los Angeles. It wasn't long before he was given enough money to buy type and set up a typographic department at the agency. Mayers Brothers had a blotter printed announcing Scott to their staff as "a typographer of rare good taste". His job was to set up headings and captions to be pasted on art work. When another printing company went into bankruptcy in mid 1920s, Mayers Brothers paid off their debt and moved the failed company's printing equipment into their building. Scott was placed in charge of a subsidiary printing company for the firm.

After attending a cactus show in Pasadena in 1928, Scott found that there was a movement to form a cactus society. Excited to find other people with a similar taste for these unusual plants, he offered to publish and finance a cactus journal. The Cactus and Succulent Society was formally organized in early 1929 and the first journal came off the printing presses at Mayers Brothers in July of that year. Scott paid the company for use of their printing equipment. By the end of 1929 Scott had rented a studio at Abbey San Encino, Los Angeles, California to print the journal. It was in 1935, with the printing and publishing Edgar M Baxter's *California Cactus*, that Scott first imprinted the book at his Abbey San Encino Press. After moving his printing business to the rear of The Castle Press building in 1938, Scott changed the name of his company to Abbey Garden Press. This remained the name of his business for the rest of his printing and publishing career.

During Scott's printing career he published botanical books and magazines. He started by publishing mostly cactus plant books such as *The Cactus Book* by Arthur Duvernoix Houghton (1871–1938) in 1930, *Texas Cacti* by Ellen Dorothy Schulz [later Quillin] (1892–1970) and Robert Runyon (1881–1968) in 1930 and *Our Native Cacti* by Ethel Phoebe Bailey Higgins (1866–1963) in 1931. The first non-cactus succulent plant book he published was *Succulents for the Amateur* by John Robert [JR] Brown (1885–1977) in 1939. He published many specialized books along with plant catalogues for Sherman Beahm, Cactus Pete, Howard Gates, Robert Poindexter, Arthur Houghton, Ed Hummel, Knickerbocker Gardens, Ventura Epiphyllum Gardens and others.

Of special interest to succulentists, Scott published cactus and succulent plant books such as *The Stapelieae* (White & Sloane) in 1933, *Cacti of Arizona* (Benson) in 1940, *The Succulent Euphorbieae* (White, Dyer & Sloane) in 1941, *The Mammillaria Handbook* (Craig) in 1945 and *The Cactaceae* (Britton & Rose) which he reprinted in 1937. The journal he started remains the longest continuously published magazine dealing with cactus and succulent plants. He supported the journal publication for all his years as its editor. Scott wrote a few books himself, including *Cacti for the Amateur* (1938), *Cacti and Succulents and How to Grow Them* (1943) and *Epiphyllum Handbook* (1946).

The genus *Haseltonia* was named in his honor by Curt Backeberg in 1949; now a synonym of *Cephalocereus*. The species *Copiapoa haseltoniana* was named in his honor by Curt Backeberg (1894–1966) in 1957, transferred to *Copiapoa cinerea* ssp *haseltoniana* by Nigel Paul Taylor (1956–) in 1997. Scott Haselton received the prestigious CSSA Fellow award in 1942 for editor and publisher of 'CSSA Cactus and Succulent Journal' and author of books and articles. He became a member of IOS in 1955. The CSSA Yearbook *Haseltonia* (beginning in 1993) was named in his honor.

In 1960 a fire at his Abbey Garden Press resulted in a substantial loss of some \$78,000 in equipment and book stock due to fire and water damage. Scott retired from most of his printing business in 1962. In 1965 he sold his remaining book stock to Charles Glass (1934–1998). He turned the journal editing job over to Glass at the beginning of 1966 after publishing and editing the journal for 37 years.

It is amazing that a man that came home from the first world war as an invalid soldier not expected to live very long, lived to 96 years of age. During those years he earned the respect and admiration from botanists, printers and succulentists all over the world. After spending 3 years in a nursing home, Scott Haselton died on 10 September 1991.

References:

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ABBEY GARDEN PRESS PUBLICATIONS 1928-1968

Since I retired, Charles Glass and Bob Foster have encouraged me to record a chronological list of books that I printed with my Abbey Garden Press. With their cooperation in buying back books to complete my files I have listed as many as I can recall with their date of publication and the press run. These thirty-five titles deal mostly with cacti and the other succulents with a total of 237,800 books ranging from 32 pages to 400 pages. Add thirty-eight years Journals, catalogs, reprints, etc. and the total would exceed half a million. If you find omissions in this check list we will appreciate your contacting us. Future notes will include anecdotes about some of the authors.

*Indicates previous printings by installments in the Journal. **Indicates printed for the author.

SCOTT E. HASELTON

- 1933 (1000) *The Stapeliaceae*—White & Sloane.**
 1934-35 (1500) *Succulents*—Translation of Van Laren.
 1935 (1500) *Cacti*—Translation of Van Laren.
 1935 (1000) *California Cactus*—Baxter.
 1937 (2500 sets of 3 vols.) *The Stapeliaceae*—White & Sloane.** (Some lost in fire 10-29-60).
 1931-37 (1000 sets of 4 vols.) *The Cactaceae*—Britton & Rose.

- 1937 (500 sets of 4 vols.) *The Cactaceae*—De Luxe Edition.
 1938-58 (21,500) *Cacti For the Amateur*—Haselton (Six printings).
 1938-45 (3000) *Glossary of Succulent Plant Terms*—Marshall & Woods.
 1938-61 (15,000) *Guide to the Desert Plant Collection*—Hertrich.**
 1939-60 (15,000) *Succulents For the Amateur*—Brown (many lost in fire 10-29-60).
 1940 (2000) *Colorado Cacti**—Boissevain**
 1941 (1750 sets of 2 vols.) *The Succulent Euphorbiaceae*—White, Dyer & Sloane." (Some lost in fire).
 1941 (1000) *The Cactaceae*—Marshall & Bock.
 1942 (2000) *Amateur Bulletin**—Haselton.
 1942 (1450) *Brazil and Its Columnar Cacti**—Translation of Werdernann.
 1943-61 (127,000) *Cacti and Succulents and How to Grow Them*—Haselton. (An additional 50,000 have been printed since).
 1944 (2000) *Naturalists Lexicon*—Woods.**
 1944 (3000) *Hummel's Picture Book*—Hummel.**
 1945 (1200) *Mammillaria Handbook*—Craig.**
 1945 (2000) *Night Blooming Cereus and Its Allies**—Cutak.
 1946 (2100) *The Epiphyllum Handbook*—Haselton.
 1947 (1000) *Succulent Plants*—Marshall.** For View-Master Co.
 1947 (2000) *Supplement for Naturalists Lexicon*—Woods.**
 1949 (500) *Phyllocactus*—Translation of Knebel.
 1951 (1100) *Palms and Cycads*—Hertrich.**
 1951 (500) *The Cactaceae*—Marshall & Bock (The only book reprinted outside by Litho).
 1951 (1900) *Epiphyllum Handbook*—Haselton (Revised Edition).
 1954 (1650) *Unusual Plants*—Brown.
 1954 (1600) *Camellias in the Huntington Gardens*, Vol. I—Hertrich.**
 1955 (1600) *Camellias in the Huntington Gardens*, Vol. II—Hertrich.**
 1956 (1200) *Growing and Enjoying Succulents**—Cutak.
 1957 (1000) *Culture of California Plants in Rancho Santa Bot. Gard.*—Everett.**
 1957 (500 of 3 parts) *Morphology of Cacti**—Buxbaum.
 1957 (2500) *Native Plants for California Gardens*—Lenz.**

MISCELLANEOUS:

- 45 Reprints of Journal Articles, inc. *Victory Picture Book*—Hummel.
 Catalogues for Poindexter, Gates, Knickerbocker, Houghton, Hummel, Ventura Epiphyllum Gardens, Kelly, Beahm, Cactus Pete, Marks, etc.
 Grand Canyon books: *Prehistoric People of the Northern Southwest*, *Butterflies of the Grand Canyon National Park*.
 Magazines: *The Orchid Journal*, *Aliso*, *Lasca Leaves*, *Euphorbia Review*, *Cymbidium News*, etc.

From 1973 Sep-Oct US Journal pages 246-147.