



Nina Floy Perry Bracelin (1890-1973)

Biographical Sketch by Jane Radcliffe, Archives Volunteer

Nina Floy Perry was born in Star Lake, Minnesota on March 24, 1890 to Linda Lana Burfield Perry and Erwin Alonso Perry. She was educated by private tutors and at private schools, and she later took courses at the University of California in Berkeley.

Her married name was Bracelin, and she was known as "Bracie" to her friends and colleagues. A fuchsia and a salix were named after her: *fuchsia bracelinae* and *salix lesiolepis bracelinae*.

Nina Floy Bracelin became friends with Ynes Mexia in 1927 when they were both enrolled in "Six Trips Afield", a University of California Extension course. Ynes Mexia was a Mexican national born in Washington D.C. who traveled alone collecting specimens in Mexico and South America. Mexia was a plant hunter who had little interest in organizing her collections. In 1928 Bracie took over that task, preparing labels, and sending sets to specialists for naming. She built up a wide correspondence with botanists throughout the world. In addition to organizing and documenting these botanical collections, Bracelin published two articles about Mexia in *Madrono, the Journal of the California Botanical Society*: "Itinerary of Ynes Mexia in South America" (3:174-176, 1935); and "Ynes Mexia" (4:273-275, 1938.) In her will Ynes Mexia left \$3000 to the California Academy of Sciences for the employment of Bracie as an assistant to Alice Eastwood. Until that time she had been working as a research assistant at the Herbarium of the University of California in Berkeley.

In a letter from Bracie to Dr. Robert Miller, Director at the Academy in 1939, she says she'll be with them to start her employment on January 2, 1940 and that she is happy to be working with Miss Eastwood. On July 17, 1942 Alice Eastwood's letter to the CAS Council states that the time is up for Bracie's employment under the terms of the gift from Ynes Mexia, and urges that her employment be continued \$100 a month.

The Academy Newsletter of May 1947 notes the gift of one of the oldest herbaria in America, the work of Andreas Beckman, a student of Linnaeus, done in 1752: it had descended in his family to Sara Beckman, a friend of Bracie, who had persuaded her to give it to the Academy. It also notes the gift of Bracie's collection of 17,000 specimens from the Anson S. Blake Gardens in Berkeley and notes that they are of outstanding botanical interest. The following year, the Academy extended to her a lifetime membership.

In the 1950's we find Bracie doing scientific illustrations at the Department of Agriculture's Western Agricultural Laboratory. On April 25, 1960, Botany Curator John Thomas Howell writes to Bracie: "Elizabeth McClintock and I are sending you one of the deluxe bound copies of the Arboretum list - a birthday gift, retirement remembrance, and token of appreciation for your many, many gifts to our department and the Academy library. We hope you enjoy it and remember every plant name listed!"

Nina Floy Perry Bracelin died in Berkeley, California on July 8, 1973 following a long illness.

