

Guide to the Ithaca Natural History Society Collection

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COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Ithaca Natural History Society was founded in 1872. Members met to discuss topics and deliver papers concerning local flora and fauna. This small group of nature-lovers may be considered one of the many precursors to the Nature Study Movement which flourished throughout the US in the late 19th and early 20th century. Two luminaries of that movement, which explored “the relationship between humans and the environment,” were Anna Botsford Comstock (the first female professor at Cornell University and the author of *The Handbook of Nature Study*) and Liberty Hyde Bailey (renowned horticulturist and the first Dean of the College of Agriculture at Cornell).

This collection includes a lengthy essay by L. O. Howard that offers an account of the Boys’ Natural History Society (a forerunner of the Ithaca Natural History Society) and also recounts his encounters with Louis Agassiz, renowned Harvard zoologist and geologist, when he was a visiting lecturer at Cornell in the late 1860s.

The book of minutes is a handwritten record that describes, in detail, each meeting during the years 1872-1876. The account book lists dues paid and expenses incurred during the years 1872-1877.

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