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**William Gilson Farlow on Campobello Island:  
a brief account of his trips in 1898 and 1902**



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*Myceena. Campobello, N.B.*  
July, 1902. near summit

Cover illustration: *Mycena* sp. Campobello, N.B. July 1902.  
By Louis C. C. Krieger for William G. Farlow

**I**t is a rare scientist who studies many groups of organisms and a rarer one still who collects organisms from across the tree of life. Naturalists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had interests such that a field trip might end with a basket or vasculum containing plants, fungi, lichens, algae and bryophytes. By the time William Gilson Farlow (1844 – 1919) visited Campobello Island in New Brunswick to collect – first in 1898 and again in 1902 – such broad collecting was uncommon. But Farlow was exceptional and so too were his collecting practices. One suspects that there were few researchers other than Farlow who both collected so broadly and also could identify organisms across the various groups of the so-called cryptogams.

By 1898 Farlow had collected throughout New England. He also had made trips to Europe where he collected and met many of the prominent researchers of the day. Over his long career he published on plants, plant diseases, fungi and algae. It is easy to overlook that he also published a host index to plant pathogens, a bibliographic index to North American fungi and authored many addresses and memorial minutes. His major early contributions were on plant pathogens and the marine algae of the New England coast (published in 1879). Algae were always a research interest and were a major focus of his work on Campobello. By the time he first collected on Campobello he had written an authoritative guide to edible and poisonous fungi of the United States (1897/1898). His field activity took him to Bermuda, California, Vermont and in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Local organisms were not dismissed. Looking through his collections one is impressed by the attention he paid to the organisms that surrounded him in the Boston-Cambridge area. A number of fungi and lichens were recorded as having been collected on the “Museum grounds” in Cambridge. And, many of the early collections originated from his native Newton, Massachusetts. His gatherings there probably provide the most comprehensive record of the fungi and lichens from that now highly urbanized area.

Farlow’s summers were generally devoted to fieldwork; he seems not to have taken extended vacations. He thrived on the hunt even though it appears he found fieldwork exhausting. He was eager to discover new organisms and new distributional patterns. Through these sustained efforts in the field he laid the foundation for what was to become the Farlow Herbarium (in his era, known as the Cryptogamic Laboratory of Harvard University). Farlow’s goal was to create a reliable reference collection. With this in mind he collected, identified and preserved specimens but he also purchased herbaria that supplemented his own material. The herbaria of Moses Ashley Curtis, his first acquisition made when he was still a student in Europe, and Edward Tuckerman are reminders of his efforts.

So why did Farlow go to Campobello and how did he get there? The ‘why’ is difficult to answer. Certainly the algae drew him. He might have selected Campobello because of its accessibility and the availability of comfortable accommodations. Forests and the coast were close at hand. Farlow was 54 years old when he made his first trip to the Island and was not one to rough it. The journey from Boston to Eastport, Maine, the center of activity then, was approximately 25 hours by rail or steamer. On both trips Farlow resided at the Ty’n-Y-Coed (Welsh for house in the woods) on Campobello that offered comfortable accommodations. The Ty’n-Y-Coed was one of the large hotels then prospering. Of the accommodations he said, “hotel is good although it cannot be called cheap.” However, he would later write, “the collecting at Campobello was really very good and I should have been glad to stay another month. It is convenient things are near the house.” Furthermore, one of his students, William Codman Sturgis, had a family home on Campobello, which may have provided an additional incentive to visit the area. Farlow was interested in extending the geographical ranges for the algae of the Atlantic coast and procuring additional specimens for exchange with researchers.

At the beginning of his stay in 1898, Farlow wrote to his former student and colleague at Harvard, Roland Thaxter, that he had observed “a good many fungi but not a large number of species.... I do not expect to do much with fungi here but hope to get marine algae.” In a letter of 14

TY'N-Y-COED,  
CAMPOBELLO ISLAND, N. B.  
JOHN A. SHERLOCK.

Post Office Address,  
EASTPORT, MAINE.

Tuesday

Dear Mr. Thaxter, <sup>Sep 14</sup>  
1898  
I have yours  
of the 10<sup>th</sup>. The weather  
has been very fine but  
yesterday and today a  
little cool. Last night  
I was attacked with  
diarrhoea and if the  
cold continues I shall  
have to give up marine  
algae for here that means  
deep wading. This place  
is very pretty and looks  
as if there were lots of  
fungi but the flora is  
poor, many individuals  
but comparatively few  
species and those not  
rare. I am amazed at

Dear Mr. Thaxter,

I have yours of the 10<sup>th</sup>. The weather has been very fine but yesterday and today a little cool. Last night I was attacked with diarrhea and if the cold continues I shall have to give up marine algae for here that means deep wading. This place is very pretty and looks as if there were lots of fungi but the flora is poor, many individuals but comparatively few species and those not rare....

September 1898, we get a glimpse of his mood and expectations. He lamented that he would return “with only a stock of rubbish on my hands.” His doubts about the quality of his fieldwork notwithstanding Farlow returned to Campobello in 1902, intent on continuing work with fungi. Farlow would convey to Thaxter that larger fungi were scarce but that lichens were abundant. Among the lichens collected in 1902 was *Erioderma pedicellatum* (described from Farlow’s specimen by Hue). This lichen, historically found around the boreal regions of the world, is highly endangered and absent now from many previously known localities, including Campobello.

Throughout the 1890s, Farlow worked on a project to describe and illustrate the common fungi of the Northeast United States and adjacent regions. For this purpose he retained illustrator Joseph Bridgham and later Louis C. C. Krieger. This venture led to a book, the *Icones Farlowianae*, completed by E. A. Burt and published in 1929, ten years after Farlow’s death. The book included high quality lithographs derived from the renderings of Bridgham and Krieger. Farlow carefully supervised the production of these lithographs to the most exacting standards. By 1902 a number of these lithographs were in storage until text could be produced and further specimens could be illustrated. Krieger was hired to prepare further illustrations as suitable material was collected. Krieger, who appears to have accompanied Farlow to Campobello in 1902, produced 24 illustrations of Campobello fungi, several of which were included in the *Icones Farlowianae*. Krieger’s fungus portraits not only demonstrated his close study of the organism, but also captured the “personality” of the fungi; they are among the best ever produced. Several of Krieger’s original illustrations are reproduced here.

Farlow’s collecting methods seem to be fashioned around getting specimens processed rapidly. He did not assign collection numbers and there is no comprehensive list of his collections other than what we can assemble from the specimens themselves. His original labels are handwritten in his distinctive loose scrawl, which is difficult to decipher both by those who are practiced in his penmanship and to the uninitiated. Farlow wrote preliminary descriptions and made spore prints of some specimens, particularly the fleshy fungi that were studied for his *Icones* project. These are now located in the Farlow Library Archives. The notes sometimes provide additional detailed information about collection sites. The specimens were dried, by methods we do not know, and presumably studied microscopically back in Cambridge and as they were studied the packets were annotated. Farlow also consulted experts in North America, particularly Charles H. Peck, and in Europe regarding his identifications.

As mentioned above Farlow undertook the identification of all that he collected and he often consulted with experts. His identifications were made through comparison of his collections with those in his herbarium and with published descriptions. He knew the literature well and used his personal library – one of the finest in North America for the study of cryptogams – to aid in identification. However, the mosses, or at least those that resisted his attempts at identification, were sent to Hugh Neville Dixon in England. Other taxa were sent to specialists as well. In these cases Farlow’s method was to split the collections, number them, and list them in a cover letter. When identifications were received packets were annotated. Many of the original labels bear these reference numbers; the original identification lists can be found in letters in the Farlow archives.

Farlow collected massive quantities of material whenever possible. These collections were divided and sent for identification, exchange, or as gifts. As a result, his materials have made their way into many herbaria. They were included in the *Reliquiae Farlowianae* that was issued as a quasi-exsiccatae after Farlow’s death. The *Reliquiae Farlowianae* is composed of numbered specimens from various groups and contains many examples of specimens he collected on Campobello. Some of the specimens of the *Reliquiae* are still available for exchange from the Farlow Herbarium. Algae were issued in the *Phycotheca*

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*Collybia dryophila.*  
 monstrosus stage.

Camphobella, N.B., July 8, 1902.

L.C. Krieger bin.

R. 4

*Boreali-Americana* by Collins, Holden and Setchel. Charles Bullard, a Farlow associate, followed Farlow's example and collected on Campobello. He was there in July 1913 (see *Phycotheca Boreali-Americana* issued by Collins, Holden and Setchel). Unlike his colleague, Bullard seems to have collected only algae.

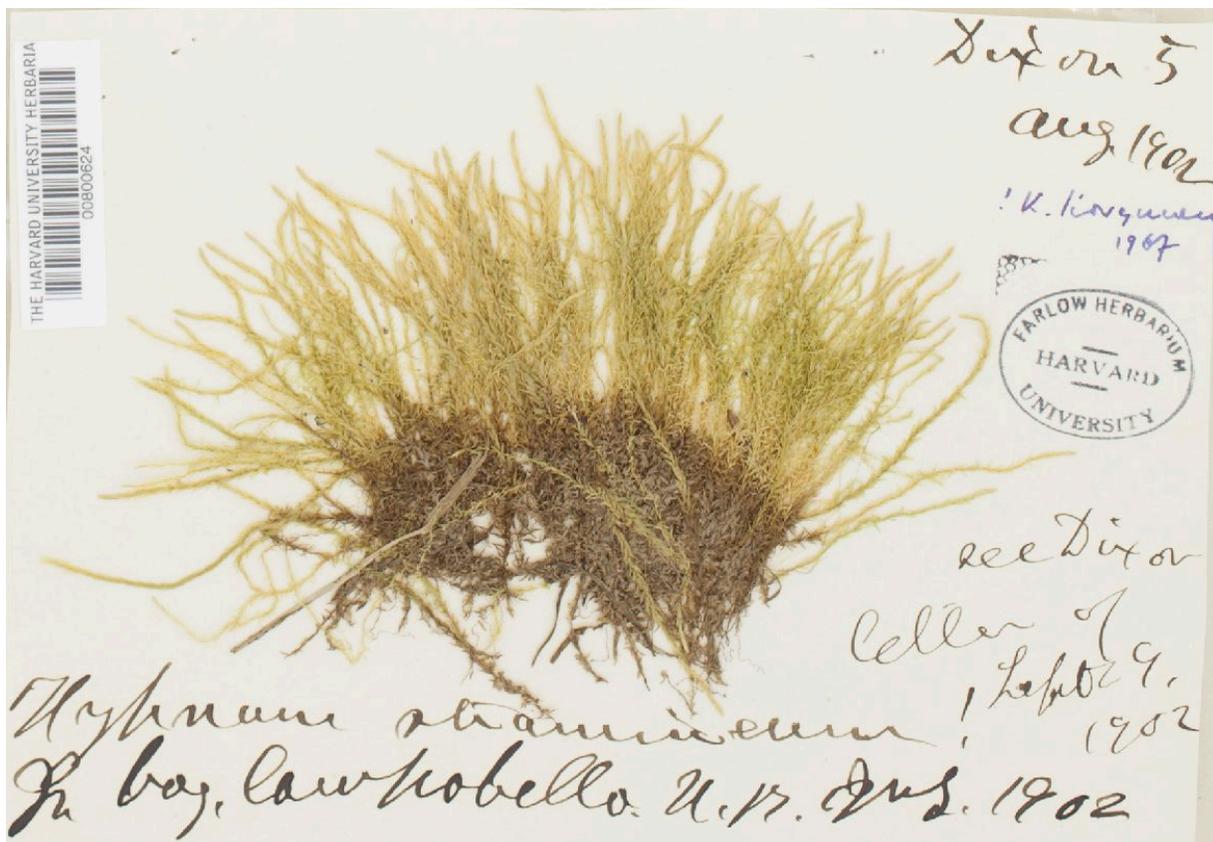
Today, William Farlow's collections stand as an important guide to the flora and mycota of Campobello. As we consider future changes in land use, climate and sea level, returning to the collections of this American pioneer may provide the basis for discoveries yet to be imagined.



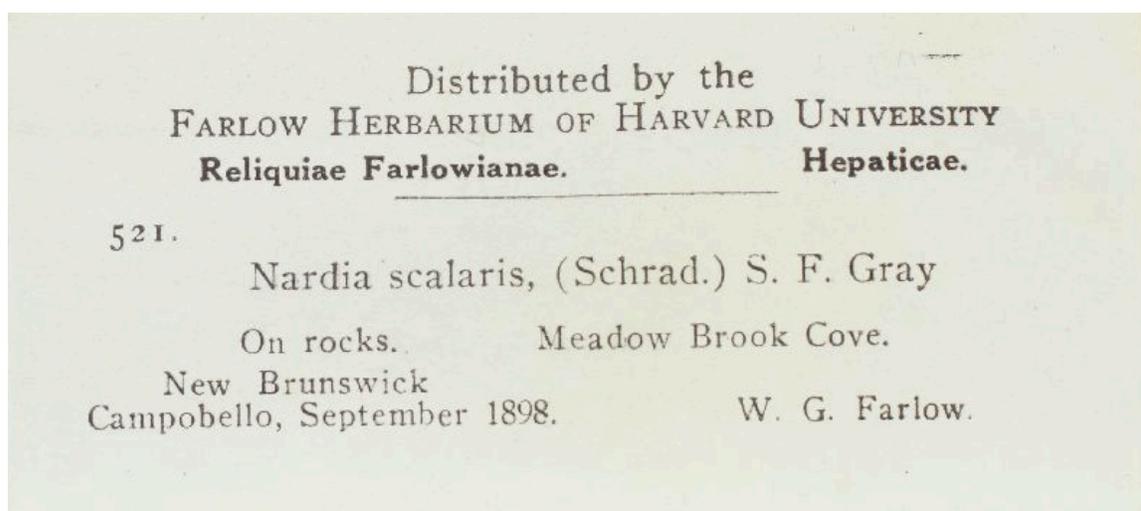
Specimen labeled *Polyporus schweinitzii* (*Phaeolus schweinitzii*)  
July 1902. Growing laterally from log



An example of a label of a Farlow collection from the exsiccatae set  
*Phycotheca Boreali-Americana* by Collins, Holden, and Setchell



Specimen labeled *Hypnum stramineum*  
 In bog. Campobello. N.B. July 1902  
 This is an example of a specimen sent to Dixon for identification.



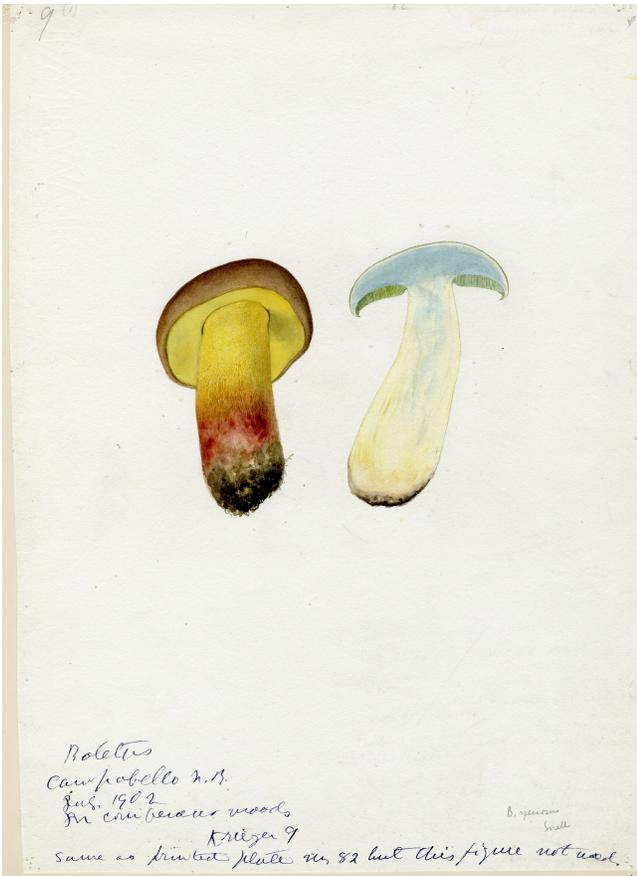
An example of one of the label used with the *Reliquiae Farlowianae*



Tricholoma  
 On the ground under cover  
 Very common. Campbell's N.B.  
 Aug. 1902  
 Same as no 81 of printed plate but these figures not used.  
 Krieger 8



Tricholoma  
 On the ground under cover  
 Campbell's N.B. Sept. 1902  
 Krieger 9



Boletus  
 Campbell's N.B.  
 Aug. 1902  
 In coniferous woods  
 Krieger 9  
 Same as printed plate no. 32 but this figure not used.  
 B. speciosus  
 Swell



Cortinarius  
 Campbell's  
 Aug. 1902. Krieger 10.  
 Krieger's  
 mountain



*Amphalia*

Campobello.

July, 1902.

Krieger 12

On spruce needles.

Color nuttish. Gills anastomosing.

Stipe woolly especially near apex, askenately colored, flesh white. Fr. 12.



*Amphalia umbellifera*  
Campobello. N. B. Krieger 1902.

Krieger  
no. 6

1. Color of pileus dry  
2 " " " moist.



*Collybia laccata*  
Campobello,  
July, 1902.  
Krieger no. 7



This is probably one of  
the forms of *Collybia platyphylla*.  
See Friess' Spores.

Campobello N. B.,  
July, 18, 1902.

Krieger 11.

