Identification and Documentation of the Fungal Type Collections in the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Herbarium

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A project to identify and document the fungal type collection at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Herbarium (NCU) is reaching its end, with a little over 100 more type collections to be verified and 400 to be photographed and entered into the online database MyCoPortal. Of the 1,100 type specimens currently verified representing nearly 600 taxa, 732 are currently accessible in MyCoPortal. They have been verified through a combination of literature references and information from other herbaria, including the online resources Index Fungorum, MycoBank, and books written by and about Chapel Hill’s own Drs. William C. Coker and John N. Couch. The project is projected to be completed by the end of 2018, with the collections photographed and added to MycoPortal. This will be accompanied by a formal publication in a scientific journal. The importance of this project lies in the special scientific and historic significance of type specimens, and has already lead to multiple requests of type specimens for research purposes including from seven different countries on four different continents in the past two and a half years.

Type Spotlight: *Hebeloma tottentii* Murrill

As *Pholiota tottentii* under current nomenclature, this collection from December of 1914 is one of the many Chapel Hill types, specifically from Battle Park on the eastern edge of campus. This taxon is one of the many named after prominent UNC botanists. NCU type collections contain types for 6 taxa named after Dr. Coker including *Rhizopogon cokeri* A. H. Smith.

Type: Ineditus

Of the estimated over 1200 type collections at NCU, 48 are “Ineditus”, representing 18 proposed taxa for which there is no formal description in the scientific literature. These proposed taxa still need to be researched in more depth to potentially confirm their status.

Type Density

The NCU fungal herbarium has a type density higher than most southeastern United States fungal herbaria and comparable to major national fungal herbaria.

Geographic Distribution

Collections in NCU’s type collection come from every continent except Antarctica, 31 different countries, and 32 states in the continental US, Hawaii, and Washington D.C. Though this is a wide distribution, the vast majority of the types come from North Carolina (327), with 225 from Orange County, where Chapel Hill is located, and another cluster from the environs of the Highlands Biological Station in western North Carolina.

Prominent Type Collectors Affiliated with UNC-CH

Prominent Type Collectors Not Affiliated with UNC-CH