Charles Mohr, Botanist

by L. J. Davenport

The afternoon shadows had long since lengthened, but the old man, riding a mule, pressed on up the mountain trail. While stiff breezes blew his long, snowy hair and gray whiskers wildly about his face, he clung fiercely to his reins and saddlehorn. Girdled to the man’s waist was a leather belt into which he had stuck a hatchet, a saw, a square, and a tape measure; his saddlebags were equally stuffed, with pencils, notebooks, a compass, and a magnifying glass.

As the mule slowly picked its way up the rocky trail, the man watched the scenery change from rich bottomlands filled with beeches and tulip poplars to dry slopes dominated by pines and scrub oaks. The air became drier and thinner, making the old man gasp and wheeze. When he finally dismounted on a ridgetop, his limbs were trembling from the exertion of the trip.

Following a brief rest, the man remounted the mule and continued his climb up Mount Cheaha, more determined than ever to reach his goal and to answer a question that had long plagued him. It was a scientific question, a question a botanist would ask, but that’s what the old man was. And what he wanted to know, no botanist in Alabama, no botanist in the world, knew in this year of 1896: Did the longleaf pine grow at altitudes above 1000 feet? This was but one of myriads of questions that Charles Mohr would answer in his lifetime. In this instance, as in all others, nothing short of personal observation would suffice, and no amount of hardship could turn him back.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Charles Mohr, one of Alabama’s first botanists, enjoyed a well-deserved reputation as the foremost expert on Alabama plants. The accuracy of his observations, his painstaking attention to detail, and his generosity with his knowledge were widely known and highly praised by the scientific community.

In his lifetime, Mohr published a total of fifty-five scientific works, including his 1901 publication, Plant Life of Alabama, which remains today the only complete flora of the state. His list of publications is one that any modern-day botanist would envy and is an especially amazing feat for a man who worked with so many odds against him: Mohr was self-taught in the sciences, never having attended graduate school; he was able to pursue his botanical interests only in his spare time, and he did not publish his first scientific work until he

Charles Mohr (1824-1901)
(Courtesy Erik Oserbey/ Mobile Public Library Collection, University of South Alabama Photographic Archives)
Oldenlandia littoralis, described by Mohr in 1897 based on specimens he collected in Mobile and Baldwin counties, is a low, weedy plant marked by strap-like leaves and clusters of small, white flowers at the leaf bases.

(From Plant Life of Alabama)

was fifty: his early adult life was filled with continuous turmoil, including frequent moves and multiple misfortunes; his generally poor health—exacerbated by vigorous botanical field work—often confined him to bed; and, except for infrequent trips to Northern cities, Mohr lacked access to needed reference books and specimens. Despite these adversities, any one of which might have deterred a less determined man, Mohr became one of the most respected botanists in the South.

The fourth of seven children, Mohr was born December 28, 1824, in Wurttemberg, Germany, where his father was part-owner of a vinegar and mustard factory. From a great-uncle who was a forester, and from a local pastor who was an amateur naturalist, young Mohr acquired an early interest in the study of plants; after a visit to an apothecary’s laboratory, he became fascinated by chemistry as well. Against the wishes of his widowed mother, who wanted him to stay at home and run the factory, Mohr, in 1842, entered Stuttgart’s polytechnic institute, where he concentrated on the study of chemistry and the natural sciences. His classroom learning was supplemented by weekend geological and botanical excursions, during which Mohr made notations of the rock formations and plant associations he observed.

In 1845, having completed his studies, Mohr decided to join August Kappler, a botanist he had met at the institute, on an expedition to Dutch Guiana (Surinam). During what was expected to be a three- to five-year trip, the pair hoped to expand on Kappler’s collection of natural history specimens from that region and to explore the headwaters of the Surinam River. They set sail for South America in November 1845, arrived at the coast of Guiana near the middle of March 1846, and ventured inland. But seven months later, Mohr was confined to his hammock, a victim of dysentery and fever, while Kappler continued on his own.

Exactly what happened on that trip is not clear. A newspaper sketch, published two years after Mohr’s death, stated that Mohr was “heartlessly left...behind, to live or die, while [Kappler] pushed onward in his ventures.” While that depiction of events may be overly dramatic, it is true that Mohr’s rather delicate health prevented him from carrying on. Unfortunately for the hapless Mohr, similar situations were to recur throughout his life, as one health problem after another interfered with his study of botany.

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The next few years of Mohr’s life found him frequently on the move. Returning to Europe in March 1847, he accepted a position as a chemist in a dye factory in Brunn (then in Austria), where he hoped to pursue graduate studies. Although he was quickly accepted by the Austrian intellectual crowd and was asked to present a lecture in Vienna on the geology of the Surinam region, Mohr had to abandon his plans for graduate education when political upheavals brought on by the Revolution of 1848 closed down the factory in which he worked. He then moved to London, where his older brother, Paul, held a position in paleontology at the British Museum; within a few months the two decided to immigrate to the United States. They arrived in New York in October 1848, tarried briefly in Philadelphia, and finally settled among the large German population of Cincinnati where Mohr again found work as a chemist. But a few months after his arrival in the city, Mohr set off on another ill-fated adventure.

In March 1849, the twenty-four-year-old Mohr and about fifty other young men, all members of the Cincinnati Gold Mining and Trading Company, struck out for the West, hoping to find their fortunes in the gold fields of California. Outfitted in Independence, Missouri, the wagon train, with ten mule-drawn wagons, made good progress crossing the prairies during the first part of the trek, and Mohr used every opportunity to gather and press plants for his collection. The group’s rapid progress, however, was made at the expense of their animals, which foundered under the heavy loads. As the terrain became more mountainous and the journey increasingly difficult, members of the party were forced to abandon many of their unessential belongings. Rather than give up his books and plant collection, Mohr traded his gun to a Sioux Indian in exchange for a pack horse.

By July the group’s animals were in such poor condition that the wagons and most of the remaining baggage had to be abandoned. Unable to transport his books and plant collection, a distraught Mohr dumped them in the Snake River. As a botanist friend later described it: “This was a loss which caused the deepest regret to the young collector, and one which can be appreciated only by those who have known by experience the labor, cost, and delight of collecting unrecognized material in an unknown region.”

One-hundred-and-ten days after leaving Independence, the group arrived in the Sacramento Valley, and soon thereafter began mining for gold. Mohr and his comrades enjoyed some success at placer mining in the hills fronting the Yuba River, but working conditions were brutal. Laboring waist-deep in the river—in icy water and 100 degree heat—Mohr soon fell ill, and he and several others decided to sell their mining interests and return east.

If the trip to California had been harsh, the return east must have been a nightmare for Mohr. Still suffering from poor health, he booked passage from San Francisco to Panama, where he planned to cross the Isthmus and board a steamer for New Orleans. (The Panama Canal, of course, had not yet been built.) When Mohr reached Panama, however, he was too feeble to make the land trip, and his friends proceeded without him. Finally regaining some of his strength, Mohr took off on his own, but during the trip his guides ran off with the pack mules carrying his collection of California plants and minerals. In keeping with his usual run of luck, he arrived on the Atlantic coast just in time to watch his steamer sail away. He finally reached New Orleans and traveled on to Cincinnati without mishap, arriving near the end of December 1850.

For the next seven years, Mohr attempted to live a relatively sedentary life, but again poor health intervened. He and his brother bought a farm in southern Indiana, and he married a fellow German emigree, Sophie Roemer, with whom he would eventually have five children. Frequent bouts of rheumatism, however, convinced Mohr to give up farm life. Thanks to his training as a chemist and his network of German friends, he became an assistant in a German apothecary in Louisville, Kentucky. There he met the well-known bryologist, Leo Lesquereux, and resumed his botanical studies, concentrating on the mosses.

Still plagued by poor health, Mohr took his physician’s advice and moved further south, first to Louisiana and then to Mexico, where the climate suited him well. But, as it had once before in his life, political turmoil (due to the civil war following the passage of Mexico’s new constitution) forced Mohr to move on. In the autumn of 1857, thirty-two-year-old Mohr brought his wife and growing family to the city of Mobile. He would live there for the next forty years.

Charles Mohr prospered in Mobile. He established a successful drug business and became well known in pharmaceutical circles, publishing a number of articles over the years in various German and American pharmacology journals. He also contributed to two revisions of the *Pharmacopeia*, the standard work on medicines and their forms of application. When the Civil War erupted in 1861, Mohr began working for the Con-
Eupatorium mohrii is native to the coastal plain of the southeastern United States, from Virginia to Louisiana. The heads of white flowers appear in the summer. This species was described by E. L. Greene in Plant Life of Alabama and named in honor of Charles Mohr.

(From Plant Life of Alabama)
that he lacked the spare time. "I only get home twice a week before 10 o'clock in the night," he wrote. Nevertheless, said Mohr, he was willing to do what he could. But by the end of that year, Mohr was bubbling with enthusiasm about the project.

"To assist you in getting up a Catalogue of the plants of our state," wrote Mohr, "will be a labor of love and pleasure to me." Any collections that Smith had on hand, and any collections he might assemble in the future, would "be studied carefully and returned in the best order with the proper reports. By such course," Mohr assured Smith, "I would get a chance to learn more of the Flora of the interior [of Alabama] and at the same time might assist in the foundation of a [state herbarium]."

The cooperative efforts of Mohr and Smith quickly led to the publication of a fifty-six page paper entitled "Preliminary List of the Plants Growing Without Cultivation in Alabama, from the Collections Made by Eugene A. Smith, Tuscaloosa, and Charles Mohr, Mobile, Ala." Although this paper was simply a checklist of plants known to grow in the state, it formed the basis for Plant Life of Alabama—a 900-page study that would take Mohr the next twenty years to write, and which, at its publication, would be regarded by botanists as "the most complete and philosophical local flora ever published."

For the first few years of their collaboration, Mohr and Smith never met. Plans for joint field trips were made on a number of occasions, but something always intervened. A meeting in the summer of 1879, for example, was cancelled by Mohr, as the threat of a yellow fever epidemic approaching Mobile forced him to keep to his "post"; and their planned meeting in July 1881 was scuttled due to the illness of Mohr's son. The two finally met that October in Tuscaloosa, and they became fast friends.

Following that initial meeting, the correspondence between the two men became more personal and encompassed a wider variety of subjects. In one letter of 1883, Mohr described his frustration at returning to his drug business after a successful and invigorating botanical foray, and he expressed his "desire for a situation which would enable me to give my services to my adopted state." Specifically, Mohr asked Smith to consider him as a possible "curator of your museum," should such a position arise. "In such a capacity I know I would be happy, feeling myself able to assist in the furtherance of the higher interests of the state, as well as those of science at least to some extent." In 1883, however, the University of Alabama was still struggling to rebuild its campus, which had been destroyed during the Civil War, and funds for new positions were nonexistent. Not surprisingly, the correspondence between Mohr and Smith reveals nothing more about this proposal.

From their letters, we cannot determine exactly when the two men decided to produce a full-fledged flora (a treatment of the plants of the state), but by 1882 the project was Mohr's top priority. All he wanted, Mohr wrote to Smith, was "to be left quietly at home" until he had completed "our Flora." Unfortunately, Mohr's time to devote to the project was severely depleted by other long-standing commitments: He was in charge of natural resource exhibits at several exhibitions (including the 1884 New Orleans World's Fair); under contract, he produced a list of natural resources on the land owned by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad; in 1880, at the request of the prominent forester Charles Sprague Sargent, Mohr began an investigation of the forests of the Gulf states for the Tenth U.S. Census assessment of natural resources. To complete this particular project, Mohr traveled extensively throughout the Southeast, taking detailed notes on the forests that he encountered. Although this work provided him valuable experience and marked the beginning of a long association with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Mohr was appointed a special agent), the flora was greatly delayed.

The conscientious Mohr made up the time as best he could. He collected specimens while on field trips for other projects, during holidays on Dauphin Island, on vacations to Mentone and Springville, and on visits to his brother, who had left the Midwest to join the German community at Cullman. His colleague Smith admired both his persistence and his stamina:

The amount of travel by rail, by private conveyance and on foot, which he accomplished in pushing these investigations was enormous, and to be appreciated only by those who enjoyed his personal acquaintance, for he counted no trouble too great, no hardship too severe, when there was something to be determined by his personal inspection; [at age 72] we find him riding all day on muleback up Cheaha Mountain to establish beyond doubt that the yellow [or longleaf] pine grew at altitudes above 1000 feet. He rarely took account of the fact that his health was not robust, and often overtaxed his powers, paying the penalty by being confined to his room for days.
Plants Named for Charles Mohr

Halesia, a shrub or small tree native to the southeastern United States, flowers in mid-spring, producing drooping clusters of white "bells" just behind the new leaves, hence its common name "silverbell."

(Photograph by L. J. Davenport)

During his lifetime, Charles Mohr's many achievements were well recognized by the scientific community. One of the greatest honors that can be bestowed on a botanist is to have his or her name used as the basis for a species name. As long as a strict set of rules is followed—including the rule that the name must not have been used previously—the new name becomes a permanent part of the botanical record. To this end, a number of newly discovered plant species were named in Mohr's honor: vascular plants such as Aristida mohrii, Liatris mohriana, Quercus mohrii, and Silphium mohrii (right), and mosses such as Bartramia mohriana and Bryum mohrii.

Because a genus is a larger unit of classification than a species, having a genus named after one is considered an even greater honor. But attempts to name a genus after Mohr backfired badly because the rules of nomenclature were incorrectly followed. The result was a conflict within the botanical community that was not resolved for fifty years.

In 1893, the preeminent North American botanist, Nathaniel Lord Britton, insisted that a new name was needed for the genus Halesia, the silverbell tree, which is native to the southeastern United States; a new name was required because the name Halesia had been used previously for another genus and was, therefore, technically illegitimate. To replace the illegitimate name, Britton proposed the name Mohria, in honor of "Dr. Charles Mohr, of Mobile, Alabama, who is more thoroughly conversant with our southern forests than any one else of the present day, and who has contributed most largely to our knowledge of the flora of his adopted state."

The name Mohria, however, was also shown to be illegitimate, and for the same reason—it had been used earlier to honor another botanist named Mohr. Two other names were then proposed as substitutes: Carlomohria by Edward L. Greene, and Mohrodendron by Britton. Mohr was deeply touched by the attention, and he wrote to Britton: "To find my efforts in the field of Botany rewarded in dedicating to me these graceful trees, ranking with the most attractive forms which adorn the Southern forest, is indeed an honor and a lasting source of gratification to me, which is most deeply appreciated."

Greene's name, Carlomohria, predated Britton's Mohrodendron by five days; it thus had nomenclatural priority and became the legitimate name for the genus. The sheer force of Britton's reputation, however, induced many American botanists to ignore the correct name, Carlomohria, in favor of Mohrodendron; other botanists chose to stick with the old name Halesia, even though it too was incorrect. In such situations—when an illegitimate name is more frequently used than a legitimate one—botanists often resort to "conserving" the illegitimate name by setting aside the rules of priority, thus reducing the confusion. And so, in 1944, the name Halesia was restored as a conserved name, and the three names honoring Mohr—Mohria, Carlomohria, and Mohrodendron—were dropped from usage.
Silphium mohrii, a two- to four-foot tall rosinweed native to the Cumberland Plateau region of Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, is marked by extremely hairy stems. Its yellow-orange flowers appear in the summer or early fall. The species was first collected by Mohr in 1885 during a visit to his brother's home in Cullman County; it was described by John K. Smell in 1897 and named in honor of Charles Mohr.

(From Plant Life of Alabama)
Clearly Mohr enjoyed these field trips, despite the toll they took on his health, and for the most part he enjoyed meeting the people who lived in the countryside, many of whom invited him in for supper and offered him a place to sleep. According to Lida B. Robertson, one of Mohr’s Mobile neighbors, on one occasion, Mohr—with his long hair, gray whiskers, and his “botanizing box,” which he carried across his shoulders like a pack—was mistaken for Santa Claus by two small children who were so excited that they ran home “as fast as their short limbs could bear them.” When Mohr stopped at the children’s home a few hours later, he was invited in for supper. Mohr kept up the pretense that he was Santa Claus, and the next Christmas he sent the children “a bountiful pack.”

But not all encounters with country folk were so pleasant. According to Robertson, one evening Mohr sought lodging in house after house “only to encounter gruff refusal, and he began to condemn the natives as the most cold-hearted, inhospitable people that he had ever traveled among. At last, thoroughly jaded from his all-day tramp in the woods, he resolved that if he was refused at the next house, he would beg permission to sleep on the porch or in the barn.”

Spying a “neat little piney woods home” in the distance with “a man sitting on the porch in a cane-bottom chair,” Mohr approached and asked for lodging. Again he was refused. “Utterly exhausted, [he] unbuckled his belt, with its incumbents of ax, saw, etc., and in desperation threw them on the floor,” announcing that he was going to sleep right there.

“When the man spied the ax and saw, his countenance changed. Hastily rising, he said: ‘Come in, sir. I thought you was Rube Burrows, the outlaw that has been holding up trains. I had taken that belt with its ax and saw as arms!’”

Mohr completed the majority of the field work for the flora in the 1880s, but he did not concentrate on writing up the project until the early 1890s, when approval of funding was granted by Alabama Governor Thomas Goode Jones (in 1891), and when Mohr’s son Charles took over management of the pharmacy (in 1892). Although Mohr still had commitments to the U.S.D.A., by 1896 he had received a temporary reprieve from his Department of Agriculture duties, allowing him to devote himself almost exclusively to the flora.

That same year, 1896, an incident occurred that angered Mohr but prompted him to speed up his work. Auburn botanist P. H. Mell, utilizing data he had obtained from Mohr, published a short bulletin describing two families of Alabama plants. The Botan-
Croton alabamensis, a shrub noted for silvery scales on its leaves, twigs, and fruits, is native to rock outcrops along the Cahaba and Black Warrior rivers. Eugene Allen Smith discovered the species in 1874 at Pratt's Ferry, Bibb County (above left), during one of his early geological expeditions. Discovery of previously unknown plants such as Croton prompted Smith to contact Charles Mohr. This photograph of Pratt's Ferry was taken by Smith in 1889.

Photograph courtesy Geological Survey of Alabama; drawing from Plant Life of Alabama

Botanists outside of Alabama have known for years that Dr. Mohr has been working upon a flora of his state, and we have expected a model state flora, because Dr. Mohr's zeal and patient accuracy are well known. In Mell's work before us certainly one-half of the Leguminosae [pea family] and one-third of the Rosaceae [rose family] are credited to Dr. Mohr alone; and we cannot believe that this extensive information was obtained from our good friend with the expressed intention of anticipating his own flora. In other words, Dr. Mohr must have granted a favor that has been abused.

Mell protested such "cruelly unjust" treatment by the Gazette, and, indeed, a later article in that journal exonerated him from blame; however, a series of letters exchanged between Mohr and Smith indicate that the Gazette's criticism of Mell was well founded. Mohr decided to treat the Mell affair with "silent contempt," at the same time speeding up work on his book.

"To this end," he wrote, "I am willing to make any sacrifice, even to [the] cost of some of the little [time] I can call my own in this world."

Additional pressure to complete and publish the flora came from the North. During the 1890s, Northern botanists, such as Thomas H. Kearney and John K. Small, were exploring the South; while Kearney concentrated on the Dismal Swamp region of Virginia and North Carolina, Small studied the entire Southeast. "By the activity with which of late the younger northern botanists begin to explore these parts, they are apt to take the wind out of my sails on many points," Mohr complained in a letter to Smith. Mohr was further disdained by the publication in 1896 of An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States, by Nathaniel Lord Britton and Addison Brown, because it included a large number of what Mohr considered to be Southern plants. To save time and prevent additional encroachment on his territory, Mohr decided not to save his botanical "novelties" for the flora but to publish them quickly in the Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club.

As the writing of the flora proceeded, details concerning the mechanics of its publication had to be worked out. Smith and Mohr had originally planned to print Plant Life of Alabama as one of the publications of the Geological Survey of Alabama, which had partially supported Mohr from 1892 on. But as the manuscript grew, Smith realized that the cost of printing the work
Vaccinium melanocarpum, a gooseberry or huckleberry, was described by Mohr from specimens collected near Ashville, St. Clair County, Alabama, in 1880. Found in dry woods throughout the state, these plants produce juicy, dark purple fruits that, according to Mohr, "are eagerly consumed by man and beast."

(Drawing from Plant Life of Alabama)

Charles Mohr
(Courtesy Erik Overbey, Mobile Public Library Collection, University of South Alabama Photographic Archives)

Eugene Allen Smith
(Courtesy Geological Survey of Alabama)
Life of Alabama

Charles Mohr's final and greatest work, *Plant Life of Alabama*, represents over forty years of study of the plants of his adopted state. Although it is probable that Mohr began making mental notes for this volume soon after his arrival in Mobile (his earliest known Alabama specimen dates from August 1858), formal work on the project did not begin until the 1880s when Mohr began examining the botanical specimens collected by the director of the Geological Survey of Alabama, Eugene Allen Smith.

Mohr began writing *Plant Life* in the early 1890s when the necessary field work had been completed and funding for the project was approved by the state. Under terms worked out by Smith, Mohr received $50 a month as a retainer, with the total amounting to $5 per finished, printed page. For the 921-page volume, the total came to $4,605, the last installments of which were delivered to Mohr's widow.

*Plant Life of Alabama* was published on July 31, 1901—exactly two weeks after Mohr's death. At the time of its publication, the book was praised by one reviewer as "the most complete and philosophical local flora ever published" and by another as "a mine of floristic and ecological information." Mohr's attention to detail and his emphasis on the ecological relations of plant species—a fairly new consideration at the time—rendered the volume especially praiseworthy.

The first 137 pages of the book are largely descriptive and can be easily understood by the general reader. Included are sections on the history of Alabama botany; the topography, geology, and climate of the state; plant distributions and associations; the relation of native Alabama plants to those in other parts of the world; and a discussion of introduced plants and their influences. Following this descriptive section, each species or variety of plant known to occur in the state—from slime mold to angiosperm—is listed. Included for each plant are common names and important synonyms, worldwide distribution and occurrence in the state, and type locality (the place where the plant was first collected), along with the location where representative specimens might be examined. To this day, *Plant Life of Alabama* remains a model of painstaking botanical research.

As part of Eugene Allen Smith's agreement with the U.S. Printing Office, which published the work, another edition of *Plant Life* was published as an Alabama state document. The Alabama edition differs from the U.S. edition in that it has additional material at the beginning, including a biographical sketch of Mohr and portraits of Mohr and another early Alabama botanist (and judge), Thomas Minot Peters. Smith planned to distribute the Alabama edition broadly, stating in a letter to Mohr's son, "The book will be mailed to any one who will send 33 [cents] for postage."

Mohr and Smith envisioned *Plant Life* as the first of two volumes on the botanical resources of Alabama, with the second volume dedicated to plants of economic value, especially the forest trees. Although Mohr's letters to Smith indicate that he had made significant progress on the economic flora, a search of Mohr's belongings after his death failed to turn up a manuscript.

The combined plant collection of Charles Mohr and Eugene Allen Smith, eventually totaling nearly 4,600 specimens, is now called the Mohr Herbarium. This collection, the basis for *Plant Life of Alabama*, is on permanent loan to the University of Alabama Herbarium, located in the Biology Building on the University of Alabama campus.
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Mohr advertised his Mobile pharmacy in an 1885 publication, Scenes and Settlers of Alabama, pointing out proudly in his ad that cocaine was "constantly on hand."

Bama quickly deteriorated. Smith was stunned by the printing costs that the Survey would have to absorb. "To say that I am paralyzed by the estimate is to put it mildly," he wrote to Mohr. He was also distressed by the little credit that the National Herbarium planned to give the Survey, as evidenced later by the tiny print used for the Survey's acknowledgment on the title page. And the printing delays were maddening. Although Mohr was informed in July 1897 that the U.S. Printing Office was ready for his manuscript, four years would elapse before the book was published.

While the book was in press, Mohr and his wife Sophie moved to Asheville, North Carolina, to obtain a change in climate. During their years in Mobile, Mohr's health—except for his recurring rheumatism—had been generally manageable, but in the late 1890s he began to fall rap-...
all new plant collections from Alabama. He also kept in touch with the government printing office, making changes in the proof to ensure that his volume would be as up to date as possible. Then, early in the summer of 1901, he became ill with acute gastritis, and on July 17, 1901, he died at the age of 76. His life’s work, Plant Life of Alabama, published as volume six of Contributions From the U.S. National Herbarium, appeared in print two weeks later.

Mohr’s death was noted with great sadness by the American scientific community; the fact that he had not lived to see the finished product of his labors only heightened that sadness. As one reviewer of Plani Life wrote, “He had so eagerly anticipated the completion of his work... that the circumstances of its publication seem almost pitiful. But the massive book... must forever remain as a silent testimonial to a long and useful life spent largely among the plants in the woods and fields.” Smith—Mohr’s long-time friend and collaborator—summed up Mohr’s life and works in this manner:

Personally, Dr. Mohr was one of the gentlest and most lovable of men, totally devoid of affectation and pretense, making fast friends with old and young wherever he went, and inspiring in them love and respect for the fullness and accuracy of his knowledge and for the nobility of his character.

The amount and quality of the botanical work accomplished by him fills us with admiration when we consider that it was done in hours that otherwise would have been hours of rest and recreation. His unselfish devotion to science is coming to be appreciated and the name of Charles Mohr will long be held in loving remembrance by all who recognize and honor true merit.


(Courtesy Geological Survey of Alabama)