Charles Christopher Parry's name is intimately connected with American West flora. For nearly 50 years during the 19th century, his indefatigable work and western explorations enriched U.S. botanical lore. During his extensive explorations, Dr. Parry discovered hundreds of new plants, which were described by Dr. Asa Gray and by Dr. George Engelmann, who named *Opuntia parryi*, *Echinocactus parryi*, and *Agave parryi* in his honor. Two genera, *Neoparrya* and *Parryella*, are dedicated to him.

Parry was born August 28, 1823, at Admington, Gloucestershire, England. He was descended from a long line of Church of England clergymen and had two brothers and six sisters. In 1832 the family immigrated to the U.S., settling on a farm in Washington County, New York. As a youth, Parry was described as being effervescent, dark-complexioned, blue-eyed, slightly built, and somewhat below medium height. He was deeply affectionate, fond of children, and had a sense of humor which often sparkled in his private conversations. But so reticent was he that only a few intimate friends were aware of this.

Ultimately, Parry graduated with honors from Union College, Schenectady, New York. He began studying medical botany in his undergraduate years, and subsequently received a Doctor of Medicine degree in 1846 from Columbia University, New York City. That fall, Dr. Perry migrated to Davenport, Iowa, and began his short-lived (1846-1849) medical practice. Being a naturalist, he soon realized, had greater appeal than being a doctor. Except for a short time while serving as Assistant Surgeon with the Mexican Boundary Surveys (1849-1852), Parry was indeed a naturalist.

In 1853, he married Sarah M. Dalzell, who died 5 years later. His only child, a daughter, died in childhood. Then in 1859 he married Mrs. Eva R. Preston of Westford, Connecticut. Through more than 30 years of marriage, she helped Parry with all his work and plans and often accompanied him to the field.

Parry spent the rest of his life in observing and collecting—along the St. Peters and up the St. Croix; across the Isthmus to San Diego, to the junction of the Gila and Colorado, along the Southern boundary line and up the coast as far as Monterey; through Texas to El Paso, to the Pimo settlements on the Gila, and in the mountains of Colorado. He returned again and again to the mountains of Colorado and California in the pursuit of his special interest, the alpine flora of North America. More than 80 new species of flowering plants were named from Parry's Colorado collections. Indeed, he is often referred to as the king of Colorado botany. Parry made numerous other collections in Mexico and the American Southwest.

Dr. Parry is recognized as a botanical authority, not only in the U.S. (where he ranked with the best) and in England, but also on the Continent. This is remarkable because he never published a book and left most of his plant discoveries to be described by others. Despite that, his compositions were sufficient enough to produce volumes, and were of immense scientific merit. Unfortunately, they are scattered in fragmentary form through various government and society reports, rare scientific journals, and old newspapers.
Dr. Parry was fascinated with mountains—befittingly surveyor General F. M. Case named Parry's Peak (13,391 feet) in the Snowy Range of Colorado and Wyoming, northwest of Empire, Colorado, as an enduring and appropriate monument to "good Dr. Parry." A second Parry's Peak (12,682 feet) lies just south of Mount Elbert and the village of Twin Lakes, Colorado. Parry's Creek leads northwestward down from Parry's Peak to Middle Park.

An avid botanist, Dr. Parry was industrious and persevering. He assembled one of the finest private herbariums in the U.S., a collection comprising over 18,000 specimens representative of nearly 6,800 species, together with some 1,400 specimens determined only by genus. Dr. Parry also is closely associated with California's flora and botanists. Since his early explorations on the coast near San Diego, in 1849, he made several brief trips to different regions of the western slope, each intent upon some specific discovery or investigation; one trip was devoted to cacti.

Dr. Parry's last visit to California was made in the spring of 1889. Returning to Davenport in July, he journeyed to Canada and New England, visited New York and Philadelphia and returned to his home in Davenport just a few weeks before he died on February 20, 1890, at age 67.

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