John Merle Coulter Encyclopedia Article

John Merle Coulter

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Contents

John Merle Coulter Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

John Merle Coulter.....3

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1851-1928

American botanist who established botany academically in the United States. Receiving a University of Indiana doctorate, Coulter became director of the University of Chicago's botany department in 1896. He was a mentor to hundreds of graduate students, who formed the first group of American-educated botanists. Coulter led reform efforts to transform botany from a descriptive process to a system based on laboratory experimentation. He wrote numerous books about morphology and plant evolution. He also created and edited the *Botanical Gazette.*