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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

TOM GILL
1214 SIXTEENTH STREET
WASHINGTON, D. C.

November 28, 1939

Dear Pop -

By this time you are probably alternately cussing me for not having written earlier, and yourself for having written at all.

But these be hectic times, and I've only just returned to Washington with your ms., which I am sending back to you by the more leisurely ordinary mail -- I wanted you to get this letter as soon as possible.

All I can say at the present time is that I am delighted -- really and truly and sincerely delighted. You've done the grand job that I knew you would, you're using just the material that seems to me to be right, and my only prayer now is that you go ahead and finish up as many chapters as you feel you want to include in the book. When this is done, I'd like another swipe at it, and then either shanghai Helen and you up here to stay with me while you put on a last few finishing touches, or if that's impossible I'll fly down and growl ominously in your ear until it's ready for the printer.

I've been casting about in my mind what specific improvements I could suggest. Frankly, there are none as to style -- which I hope you'll keep just as it is, clear and easy and colloquial -- but I do want you to ransack your memories for anecdotes, especially the humorous ones at which you're so good. And don't forget to play up for all it's worth the important implications of the trips that you've made, how they tied in, and what the long-range results are and may yet be.

I wish in a letter like this I could express one-half my delight in the fact that you're actually at work, and still more that the work is turning out so marvelously well.

My best love to Helen and you.

Tom
Dairing for Venezuela Dec 29 via Grace line
to spend a month in its oil fields.

TOM GILL
1214 SIXTEENTH STREET
WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 5, 1939.

Dear Pop:

Thanks for your note of November 10th, and the reprint about sigatoka.

I am hoping you have had my letter by now regarding your manuscript and that the manuscript itself has reached you safely.

And this is also to wish you and Helen every good thing for Christmas and the New Year.

I was touched very deeply by her invitation to me to spend those holidays with you. I only wish I could. I shall, however, certainly raise my driest sherry to you both and think of the library with the fire going and probably Julia whistling her way through the patio.

As to my botanical error, it only seemed an error to you because you have failed to keep up with the latest developed varieties of papaya. The one that had the birds singing in the branches is the well-known fairly new papaya grandissima which according to both botanists Spoof and Hokum bears horizontal branches often thirty feet in length.

Hoping that this throws you into a deep depression,

My love to you both,

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TOM GILL
1214 SIXTEENTH STREET
WASHINGTON, D. C.

July 8, 1940.

Dear Pop:

It was grand to get your letter of June 23rd and to know that all goes well with Helen and you.

However, in my role of Simon Legree -- which I cherish no end -- I see no reference in any of your pellucid prose to chapters having been knocked off on your book. This, my dear sir, I hope is an oversight on your part; if not, I take it as a personal affront on two counts -- (a) as a simple member of the great reading public I want to read that damn book, and (b) if you don't have something for me to go over in Guatemala next February, there will be no excuse for my coming -- and if I did come, and there was no manuscript I would be in such a vile humor that neither Helen, you, Maria, Julia, nor the fecund chauffeur of that fantastic contraption both you and he indulgently call an automobile will have anything to do with me.

Parenthetically the above sentence is not intended as a model for your memoirs.

Had a nice letter from Bump acknowledging a copy of the banana yarn, and he complains of my highly generalized treatment of Luz Morales. I intend to write him telling him that I feel the need for more prolonged research in that field, and am hoping to persuade you to collaborate with me on that project.

I am really looking forward with a lot of pleasure to February in the hope that Helen and you will really be there, and we can knock around Guatemala a little before the end of the world comes at which time I expect to be very busy taking notes for my historical novel which I shall give some such title as "Too Late Posterity!"

Always my best to Helen and (provided you are working) to you.

Always,

Tom

Antigua G., 8 December 1940

Dear Tom,

Helen showed me your letter, with news that you might get down here in Feb. próximo futuro. It tears me to shreds, for the way things are lined up now I am going to be shot out of here early in January. I dont see how I can stand it off, for there are two jobs lined up and it seems to be a question, simply, of which I am to tackle first.

These are parlous times. For the past six months I have been devoting most of my time to two separate and distinct National Defense projects, and there is other work in view which seems just about as important. Cinchona and Rubber are the two on which I have been working, and if I can succeed in assisting in their development in this part of the world I can die content, though not until after I have finished that book. I havent made any progress on it for the past several months, "due to the pressure of other business" but I have five chapters finished, first draft, and sooner or later the thing is going to be turned over to your tender mercies for revision, emendation and correction.

Last news is to the effect that I might possibly be called up to Washington in January. Quien sabe. Or as the old man said when asked if it was going to rain, "puede ser que si; tambien puede ser que no; pero lo mas probable es, quien sabe."

We are off to Coban in the morning to look over a batch of Cinchona trees.

Sufragio Efectivo y No Reelección

Antigua, Guatemala, 29 Novbr 1959

Tom Gill Esq.
1616 16th St NW Washington D C

Dear Tomás:

This - and it Sunday - morning I sat back in front of the old fireplace where you and I solved the problems of Luz Morales, and as I read L R Holdridge on Ecological Indications of the Need for a New Approach to Tropical Land Use (Bob Pendleton could have put that in four words) I found at the end a citation, No. 6, Tom Gill, Widening Horizons (Bob Pendleton couldn't have done better on that title).

So I gets out my file of the Journal of Forestry - and I have never thanked you enough for putting me into that august body along with Franklin D Roosevelt, same year it was. I only began receiving the Journal a few years ago; I was overlooked for a few years, but not for the same reason I was overlooked by Pomona College until they suddenly discovered that I had attended that really fine institution for a number of weeks and by all means should be a member of the Alumni Association, or in other words, a contributor to the Alumni fund. To convince me, they quoted Noah Webster who said any guy who attended an institution of higher learning for even a few weeks, until he got fired for having five F's, was automatically an alumnus. I doubt that Noah realized what he was doing for numerous small colleges in the U.S.

But let us return to our muttons. That paper of yours - those widening horizons - is just exactly what I would hope for and expect of you. Hombre, you hit the clavis on the caput every time. You and good old Bob Pendleton. And you don't confuse me by talkigg about steppe-prairie agriculture (maybe I grew up on that in Kansas but we just called it prairie farming) nor do you send me hunting out Noah Webster again - and in vain - to learn about codominant trees of the overstory. All of which is neither here nor there, but as a guy with biological leanings I feel hurt when they talk about a pair of oxen. We always call them a yoke, or a yugo, incolunt vocantur. It had been my understanding for many years that those poor fellows did not come in pairs, but maybe the hormone boys have changed all that. What is that old saying about times change, et mutamus in illis? My Latin is getting very rusty.

It was pleasant to see you mention in the Widening Horizons George Ahearn, whom I used to know at the Cosmos Club in those dear dead days beyond recall, and Henry Graves. Lots of water has run out of the Rio Grande River (as they say in Texas) onto the Brownsville flats since those days.

*****Just at this point who comes in but Hilda Taillon, wife of Bill who is now Genl Mgr here in Guatemala, and she started talkigg about your hero Tapachula Sam; she saw him recently in Arizona, which indicates he is still alive though he doesn't deserve to be, after the way he used to swoop down over our motor car on the tracks at La Lima, when he was dusting bananas for Sigatoka, and let loose a hundredweight of copper sulfate on top of us, just for fun. Incidentally, the Co had a hard time convincing the courts in those days that spraying bananas with Bordeaux mixture wasn't a primary cause of TB.

But enough for today; only I wish the Good Lord in His Infinite Wisdom and Mercy could have turned the salvation of tropical America over to you and Bob Pendleton. Again, what a perfectly magnificent paper of yours on the Widening Horizons!



CHARLES LATHROP PACK
FORESTRY FOUNDATION

1214 Sixteenth Street, N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

December 15, 1959

ARTHUR N. PACK, *President*
TUCSON, ARIZ.
PHOEBE F. PACK, *Vice President*
TUCSON, ARIZ.
JAMES A. O'HEARN, *Treasurer*
New York, N. Y.

TOM GILL, Executive Director

Dr. Wilson Popenoe
Antigua, Guatemala

Dear Pop -

The Magi in their most generous moments could never have brought a more welcome gift than your letter about "Widening Horizons."

It was characteristically thoughtful of you to have written me about it, and to say that I appreciate your words is a vast understatement.

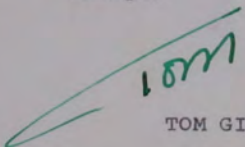
And it was good to have you talk about Bob Pendleton. We worked together on a commission in Ceylon some years ago, and I got not only to respect him but to feel a real affection for him. I even became fond of those damned laterites because of his interest in them.

Last month I was talking to an old friend of yours and -- as seems inevitable -- the talk got around to "Pop." The old friend was George Harrar, who says that "to listen to Pop's Spanish is like taking a tour of the Americas -- you get one word from the Argentine, a phrase from Mexico, and a grammatical construction heard only in Peru!"

Tomorrow I leave for Puerto Rico and the British West Indies, and I only wish it were possible for me to go on to Antigua and drink your best health in the dry sherry you made so memorable for me.

But failing that, this is just to thank you again and wish Helen and you the best of everything.

Always,


TOM GILL, Executive Director