



Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
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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.

J. Breck. Esq.
March 19.

In relation to his
Book of Flowers

Boston March 19 1857

Dear Sir,

Your very flattering letter in commendation of my Book of Flowers and past labours was duly received. I am certainly very much obliged to you for your great kindness in noticing my humble efforts to advance the cause of Horticulture. I think, however, you have given me more credit than is my due. To be sure I have been long engaged in the study and cultivation of useful and ornamental plants. It has been my business for the last twenty years, and also my pleasure. I have not desired more agreeable relaxation than to spend a few hours occasionally among my plants and trees. I find as years pass away, my interest in the vegetable kingdom increases; and nothing more pleasant suggests itself for the future than to spend a quiet old age in the continued study and cultivation of plants. In the mean time if any thing suggests itself as being useful to my fellow citizens, I will always give me pleasure to communicate it to the public.

The book you have in so friendly a manner noticed, has often been called for, and one I thought might be useful to new beginners. I fear I have not done myself, or the subject justice, for although the plan was conceived and much written

some twenty years ago, it was entirely neglected and abandoned till about the first of last December, when I was urged by the publisher to prepare the present work, and have it ready for the press by the 1st of February. — Upon looking over the old manuscript I found, as you may well imagine, that it would be of little value, so great had been the improvements and changes in floriculture. It was therefore mostly laid aside, and I commenced the work entirely new.

It was written in too great haste, surrounded as I was, the greater part of the time by my customers. I find upon looking it over now it is in print, that there are many typographical errors; these of course will be corrected in the next edition — I also made many omissions. This can be remedied by the addition of a chapter or two — The subject you have suggested is an important one for which I am much obliged, and will give a chapter on Sylviculture — I find too that some of the ladies find fault, on account of my omission to give directions for the culture of parlour plants.

My dear Sir I feel highly complimented and flattered by your kind letter, coming as it does from one who I have always considered the head and the front of our Horticultural Society. The impulse given to this society by your efficient labours at the commencement of its existence has not ceased to be felt at the present time. I am sure your name

will be held in grateful remembrance by all Horticulturists
as long as the Society and Mount Auburn are in
existence. No one of the presidents or officers of
the Society have done more than you have
to build it up, and make it what it is - the
leading, and most honorable society of the kind in
the Union. I am Sir Yours with great respect

Your Obedt Servt
Jos Breck

To Mr Hon H A Dearborn
Hawthorn Cottage. -