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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.

Oct. 17.

My dear Mr. Wreny
Will you be so good
as to present my respect-
ful compliments to His
Grace the Duke of Nor-
thumberland & thank
him for his obliging
offer of the Vegetable
rason-strats from
Brazil. We possess I
believe the same article,
& all that I have seen
are cut out of the wi-
thred flower-stems of
the great American Aloe,

Agave Americana.

And the property
of sharpening knives &
razors arises from the
siliceous particles which
abound in so many
monocotyledonous plants,
— grasses for instance :
so that when this mine-
ral is imbedded in mi-
nute ^{particles,} in an elastic
cellular substance, as
in the case of the *Agave*,
it becomes an excellent
material for sharpening
razors. Travellers in
search of insects make use
of the same material for
lining their boxes, & it

holds the pins more firmly
than cork.

It is true the Spaniards
& Portuguese might pro-
cure the same material
almost at their own doors,
if they but knew it came
from their American
aloes, which flourish in
their Peninsula. So true
is the saying

"Abroad ~~to find~~ wonders the
traveller goes,
and neglects the fine things
that lie under his nose."

I am extremely glad to
hear that his Grace is im-
proving in health. He may
be glad to know that
Mr. Bentons is returned
from Canada & paying visits

in Ireland. So Sheena
today.

Bad as the weather
has been universally this
summer & Autumn, there
is understood that it was
better in the north than
in the south & this
crops better harvested
there.

Most faithfully,

my dear Sir,

Yours,

W. J. Hooker