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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.

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Cayenne November 10th 1798, the 7th year
of the French Republic, one and indivisible

The citizen Martin, botanist of the Republic, director of habitations
of the grocery, gardens and colonial nurseries of Cayenne.

to

Citizen Lepeaux, member of the executive directory

Citizen,

I have the honor of sending you by the corvette (ship) of
the Republic, the 'bayonnais', a package of dry plants, in
the pure intention that they could be agreeable to you. You
will have already, no doubt, received these plants, if this
ship arrived on time. This package was mixed in one of the
cases addressed to the National Museum of Natural History
of Paris. I would have liked very much by this ^{time} chance to
make you a second shipment of several beautiful plants
that I collected in a voyage of 40 days that I came to
make in the interior of Guiana, by order of ^{an agent} ~~the~~ ~~royalty~~ of
the executive director. This voyage was aimed to visit the
forests so as to assure oneself if one can find enough wood
suitable for naval and civil architecture; what went, I have
not terminated ^{this voyage} entirely, on account of a violent sickness that
I had, and from which I have not yet recovered. This
didn't hinder the voyage except for the results which were
not very satisfying. I found lots of suitable trees for one or
the other of these constructions; but especially for that of

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civil ships. I didn't say - I pass you this package because a part of these plants remained under the shelters that I have made, to ^{protect} guarantee myself from the extremities (stormy weather) of the climate and since the ships did not remain here long enough for me to have had enough spare time to make a package from the other part, but I will profit from the first ship that makes an expedition to France, to send everything.

The spice trees, citizen director, are in good condition. During my stay in France at the habitat of the spice trees, a great number of clove trees died; fortunately, this mortality ceased. It was the lack of care that took place in these harvestings that caused this loss. There remained too many cloves that became berries. The berries ^[stopped] consumed the ^[growth] vegetation and instigated the fall of the leaves; so the very ardent sun made them perish. I went at the beginning of the rains to replace all the clove trees that had died and to ^[cut off top] pollard lots of others that I gaged, so as to revive the growth, and, in short, I hope that it will appear no more than to have suffered.

I begged the citizen Jeannet, ex-agent of the executive director, deputy in French Guiana, to be so kind as to send you this letter; he has helped me much in providing me the means of the government in relation to my mission.

I come to abandon here the sum of two thousand pounds imputable on my emoluments in favor of my wife. I

That she touched this sum in Paris to satisfy her needs.

I beg you, citizen director, if that meets with some difficulties

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at the Mannie Bureau, to be ~~is~~ kind to continue for me
your ends. I am obliged to take this part: because I am
not paid at all by my emoluments.

Salute and respect
Martin

Nov. 1974