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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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New York, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> 1850.

Dear Sir -

I ought, several weeks ago, to have answered your letter of September last.

It came in an enclosure from Lt. Platt, dated Fort Monroe, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> - Since it was received I have been very closely occupied in my duties at the Medical College in New York. I much regret that the specimens of fruit which you kindly forwarded by Lt. Platt, had so far decayed in his trunk, that he thought them quite spoiled & did not send them to me. The soft fruits of Southern plants are imperfectly known, & I should have been very glad to have received in good condition the principles of the Annonaceous plant that you gathered. Perhaps you may have the opportunity of collecting other specimens - which, if put into a bottle of alcohol or whisky, would keep an indefinite time without deterioration.

I should be glad also, to receive dried specimens, exhibiting the flowers & leaves.

Nothing would please me more than to obtain a general collection of Florida plants - for although I have been furnished with many specimens, from various parts of that country, my collection has some peculior & new species. Should you have time & opportunity, I beg you will pick up & dry such plants as grow in the vicinity of your station, & if it would not be asking too much, I would like to have a brief note of each - indicating the soil, time of flowering, color of flower &c. These particulars would greatly enhance the value of the specimens.

I am the more bold in making these requests, inasmuch as the work in which Dr. Gray & I have so long been occupied, (& which say new collection enables us to render more perfect) has something of a national character. Almost every

botanist has contributed something towards the stock of materials used in preparing it - I should you, my Dear Sir, furnish me with some rare Florida plants, it would not only be doing the authors of the Flora a favor, but would aid, essentially, the cause of botany in the United States.

I am my Dear Sir

Yours truly  
J. Torrey

May. Geo. H. Thomas.