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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.



IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

P.O. Box 252-C

HOBART

Telephone 2 7741

12th. Oct. 1964

Dear Dr. Lawrence,

The yearbook "Huntia" has just arrived and I am very honoured to be a recipient of this, the first volume. I value the gift for many reasons: for your remembrance; for the pleasure of having and handling the fine production; in the appreciation of being able to know something of the founder of the Hunt Botanical Library and so to share, in some measure, the expression of the tributes from those privileged to know Mrs. Rachel McMaisters Miller Hunt; for the intrinsic interest of the contents — and this leads me to quite a long explanation.

Of all the interesting articles in the volume three have a very special appeal for me. Heller's "History of Binomial Nomenclature" concerns a topic which I find fascinating and which I try to make "alive" for my students.

For personal reasons the establishment of an Agnes Arber collection gives me particular pleasure; the account of the botanical significance of letters and manuscripts prompts me to send you my cherished collection of letters from Professor F.W. Oliver. Although these letters have a considerable sentimental value to me I shall be glad to know that they will be in the care of an archivist.

I am privileged to be a student of Professor F. W. Oliver and, following his retirement from University College London in 1929, and particularly after my parents and I came to live in Tasmania in 1939, I corresponded with him. The letters I am sending cover the period 1940 - 1949, that is during the war and until he finally returned to England from Egypt.

I should explain the references in these letters to books which Professor Oliver sent us. They were for my father who, after retiring (in 1938) from his appointment as a British Civil Servant (technical advisor on timber) maintained a keen interest in woods and continued to pursue his hobby of making furniture by hand. He still does so, at the age of 91! Professor Oliver sent him two books on old English furniture.

In 1950 I spent part of my Sabbatical leave in England and joined Professor Oliver on an excursion to Holland to see the progress of the Spartina plantations. The first of the Spartina polders was then being brought into production. Prof. (as his students called him) talked to me about former students of U.C.L. and especially of Mrs. Arber whom he held in high regard.

After Prof.'s death I wrote to Mrs. Arber for I thought that, although she obviously had enjoyed Prof.'s friendship, she would like to know that he had expressed his admiration and regard.

Mrs. Arber and I continued an exchange of short notes and cards and I will see if I have any of interest to add to your collection of her papers.

Other botanists I should like to see represented in your collection are the late Drs. H.H. Allan of New Zealand and W.B. Turrill of Kew. I have a photograph and letters from Allan, but no photograph of Turrill and only characteristically brief type-written letters. I did postgraduate work under Turrill's direction and continue to miss his interest and thoughtful advice. I correspond with Mrs. Turrill and if you haven't a photograph and would like me to ask for one I should be pleased to do so.

With very good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Winifred M. Curtis