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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.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
THE BIOLOGICAL LABORATORIES
16 DIVINITY AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

March 24, 1964

Professor W. W. Ray, Chairman
Department of Botany
University of Nebraska
Lincoln 8, Nebraska

Dear Dr. Ray:

Now that I am Emeritus and have not had graduate students for four years, I do not have the intimate contact with young people in experimental morphology and developmental biology that I formerly had. My successor, Professor John G. Torrey, has only one young man getting through this year, a superb candidate for any opening in any aspect of Experimental Morphology, or Morphogenesis or Developmental Biology, with emphasis on the plant. But he earnestly wants a year of research before settling down. His name is Howard A. Bonnett, and his address is Biological Laboratories, Harvard University. If you could wait a year, he would be an asset in any laboratory. I'll gladly write more, if you need it.

A second young man of four years' experience on the staff of the University of Virginia wishes seriously to move. This wish stems from a conviction that his three small daughters ought to be brought up north of the Mason-Dixon line. Both he and his wife are from New England. Assistant Professor James L. Riopel was my student as a candidate for the Ph.D. He is one of the best teachers I have had. He is dynamic, articulate, hard-working, of even disposition, of absolute dependability, and wise in personal relations. His doctoral problem was on the banana plant, an attempt to understand something of the banana wilt disease in relation to the host, how it entered the root, with intriguing experiments and with findings which looked profoundly significant. But politics in the West Indies had curtailed the research program of the United Fruit Company which had financed a large part of Riopel's graduate study, so he could not follow up his findings in the tropics, as planned. When this opportunity fell through, Dr. Riopel turned to experimental morphology and developmental physiology

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with a view to making this his major program. His publication list is low because of the change, but he has become proficient in new fields, in tissue culture, histochemistry, radiography, etc.

I would suggest, if possible, that if you are interested in Dr. Riopel, and he could be interested in coming, you might ask him out for a seminar. I believe you would be impressed. At Virginia, he has been given responsibility for Mountain Lake Biological Station, the summer station of the University of Virginia. I understand he has been a real success as its Director for the past three summers. I happen to know that Professor Dietrich Bodenstern, Chairman of the Department of Biology there is very anxious to keep Dr. Riopel. I suspect that it would take an Associate Professorship or a late term Assistant Professorship to move him for he has at least one more year before the oldest child will be in school.

A third possibility would be Dr. Dean P. Whittier, another Ph.D. of mine who has been teaching at Virginia Polytechnic Institute for three years. He is resigning this spring for a year of research with Professor Keith Porter at Harvard in electron microscopy, provoked by his research. If he gets his grant, he would have to be approached for a year hence. If not, he will need a position for this autumn.

I can recommend Dr. Whittier highly: intelligent, very industrious, quiet, but with a real sense of humor, high in standards for himself and others, he can always be counted upon. He is a good teacher, but not unusual as is Dr. Riopel. I shall be glad to write more of him if it is needed. He should hear from his grant application about April 1.

If you are interested in a brilliant young Indian, Dr. M.V.S. Raju, who has an American wife, and wishes to stay in this country, I would suggest that you write Professor Taylor A. Steeves, Department of Biology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, under whom Dr. Raju obtained his Ph.D.

I hope that these comments may be of some use to you.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph H. Wetmore

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