



Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
5th Floor, Hunt Library
Carnegie Mellon University
4909 Frew Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890
Telephone: 412-268-2434
Email: huntinst@andrew.cmu.edu
Web site: www.huntbotanical.org

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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.

West-Chester, Pa., April 8, 1862

Dear Sir,

Your esteemed favor of the 1st inst. came duly to hand, and found me rather "under the Weather," as the phrase is. A few days since, after stooping over some shrubbery, I was planting, I had a slight attack of apoplectic symptoms; which somewhat disqualified me for both physical and intellectual exertion. It is an heredity infirmity, and has been so in my family for several generations. It is especially inconvenient at my age (now within a few days of Fourscore); and you will be prepared, I trust, to make due allowance for the bungling style of one so far advanced. I was glad to learn that you were so well on, with your work on the War of 1812. I should be exceedingly interested in its perusal, though I have no right to expect a sight of any thing yet in the future. Your projected work on the Great Rebellion, will tax all your powers to do full justice to that Great Wickedness. I am sure you will strive to do exact Justice to all concerned; and, for the sake of Posterity, let "Young America" profit by the fearful teachings of the present calamity. Lord Bolingbroke tells us, ^History is Philosophy teaching by Examples: If we, as a People, cannot profit by the Instruction now afforded, we had better prepare for an ample crop of future troubles. I trust the History of this epoch will be couched in the plain and frank style of honest Truth, and earnest admonition. As I can neversee it, I am perfectly willing to commit it to your hands, under such grave responsibilities.

I am now nearly through with my Chester County Notes. Two or three additional numbers will probably bring them to a close. I had very scant materials for the compilation; and they are very imperfect. Yet I found the task quite interesting. I put the articles from the Newspaper, in which they appeared, and made Three Scrap-books of them, one of which I propose to put in the Library of a Society here; one in the Library of the Penna. Historical Society, at Philada. and the third in the Library of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington City. If allowed a place in those Institutions, they may always be accessible to any one who may choose to look at them.

I met your interesting correspondent, Mrs. Bradford, the other day; and was glad to learn from her, that you had been successful in obtaining Photographs of several curiosities connected with her gallant Father's military history. I trust they may prove acceptable for your work on hand. The poor dear Lady is an Enthusiast in her Patriotism, being apparently the only surviving Heir of her Father's sound Principles; for I gather from her that her family connections are mostly tainted with the Secessionism of Baltimore and Virginia. She criticises their lamentable Heresies with admirable tact and just severity. She thinks, and so do I, that she is best intitled to, and ought to have inherited, the famous Star-spangled Banner, her father so gallantly defended. Many thanks for your Photograph. I was glad to get it, as we have never met, and never may. Truly yours,

Truly yours,

Wm. Darlington

B. J. Lossing, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.