Bulletin

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Epidendrum parkinsonianum, watercolor on paper by Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero (1915–1981), 27 February 1963, 21.5×28 cm, Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero papers, HI Archives collection no. 376, gift of the Rodríguez family, one of the artworks included in *The Art and Science of Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero* on display through 17 December 2025.

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Enhancing our data with artificial intelligence

Search the text in our Archives, including handwriting

The Hunt Institute is excited to share a public prototype, the Archives Text Discovery Platform, that allows users to search the words written in the pages of our digitized archives, including typed, printed and, most notably, handwritten documents. Taking advantage of recent advances in artificial intelligence and natural language processing, we have transcribed page images for most digital items currently catalogued in our Archives Collections database, and we have made that text discoverable through a simple search interface, now available to the public as a prototype.

Much valuable information is contained in handwritten materials, but not all of that can be accounted for in a finding aid or collection metadata. This is our initial effort toward surfacing much more of that content, using state-of-the-art artificial intelligence that can read both typed and handwritten text well enough to make keyword searching practical. It is the difference between browsing descriptions and asking the entire archives a question.

In June 2024 we launched our Archives Collections database, bringing our various finding aids and digitized items together into a single system based on the open-source ArchivesSpace platform. This was a first step toward standardizing, connecting and enhancing our descriptions of collections, and it made the materials much easier to find.

This new prototype is the beginning of the next step: beyond the traditionally recorded archival description and metadata, users can now search the actual texts contained within the pages themselves. At the time of writing, well over 1,400 folders and items, amounting to more than 77,000 pages and well over 18 million words, are indexed. A simple keyword search will return results from across the collections, including materials that would not otherwise have been found through their titles or metadata alone.

Of particular interest is that, by using a modern VLM (Vision-Language Model), we can harness the power of recent advancements in artificial intelligence to automate the transcription of not only typed and printed documents but also handwritten texts, with surprising accuracy. Of course, this very new technology is not perfect, and there will be errors in the transcriptions, but we have discovered the accuracy of this new HTR (Handwritten Text Recognition) method to be more than enough to include handwriting in the searchable index of the materials. The objective is for the system to unearth relevant pages so that the user can then consult the images themselves, and for this purpose we find the quality of the transcription beyond adequate.

While OCR (Optical Character Recognition) transcription for printed texts has become common, many archives (including the Institute) are still struggling to use it to its full potential, and including handwritten pages at this breadth remains a rare undertaking. Within the botanical community most automation efforts have so far focused on specimen labels or on single, well-defined collections. Even many modern commercial HTR systems rely on having many transcribed pages to train their models on the handwriting found within an organization's collections. By contrast, this prototype applies a general-purpose VLM across all our digitized archival materials, including letters, field notebooks and journals, and makes that text fully searchable. As far as we are aware, this makes the Hunt Institute unique among botanical archives in offering a public, cross-collection, full-text search that includes automated handwriting recognition across the bulk of its digitally available archival materials.

Searching this data will produce a list of results that contain the keywords or phrases provided. Each result will link to a detail page that includes the digital object's PDF opened to the page on which the search terms were found, along with various pieces of metadata about the item and the collection to which it belongs. Links on that page will take users to the corresponding levels of description in our Archives Collections database. The page transcript itself, with search terms highlighted, appears below the PDF frame and can help users locate their keywords in the PDF's page image.

Once again, the current platform is only a prototype. There may be bugs, the interface may change, and we likely will add more features soon. For instance, it might be helpful to enable limiting results to a specific collection. Currently, all collections are searched every time. We are looking into other enhancements, as well, such as adding a "concept" search in addition to the current keyword-based mechanism. However, we did not want the development time for additional capabilities to prevent the public from being able to use what is already a powerful discovery tool, and so we have released this prototype in its current state, "warts and all," to paraphrase Oliver Cromwell. We hope to keep the prototype evolving in public so that the world can use any new functionality today rather than waiting for perfection.

We also are adding far more of our digitized materials to our Archives Collections database. As we do so, we occasionally will run the data through this platform, and the text will be processed and added to the search index, enabling this tool to grow both in features and in content relatively rapidly.

We greatly would appreciate your feedback as you explore. If you find something particularly interesting through this new platform, please let us know about it. You may uncover things that nobody at the Institute even knows about yet. If this leads you to something that becomes an integral part of your research in a project, we would be delighted to hear about it. We would also like to hear if anything is not working as expected. Please use the Contact Us form on our Web site and mention "Text Discovery Platform" or "ArchSearch" in your message.

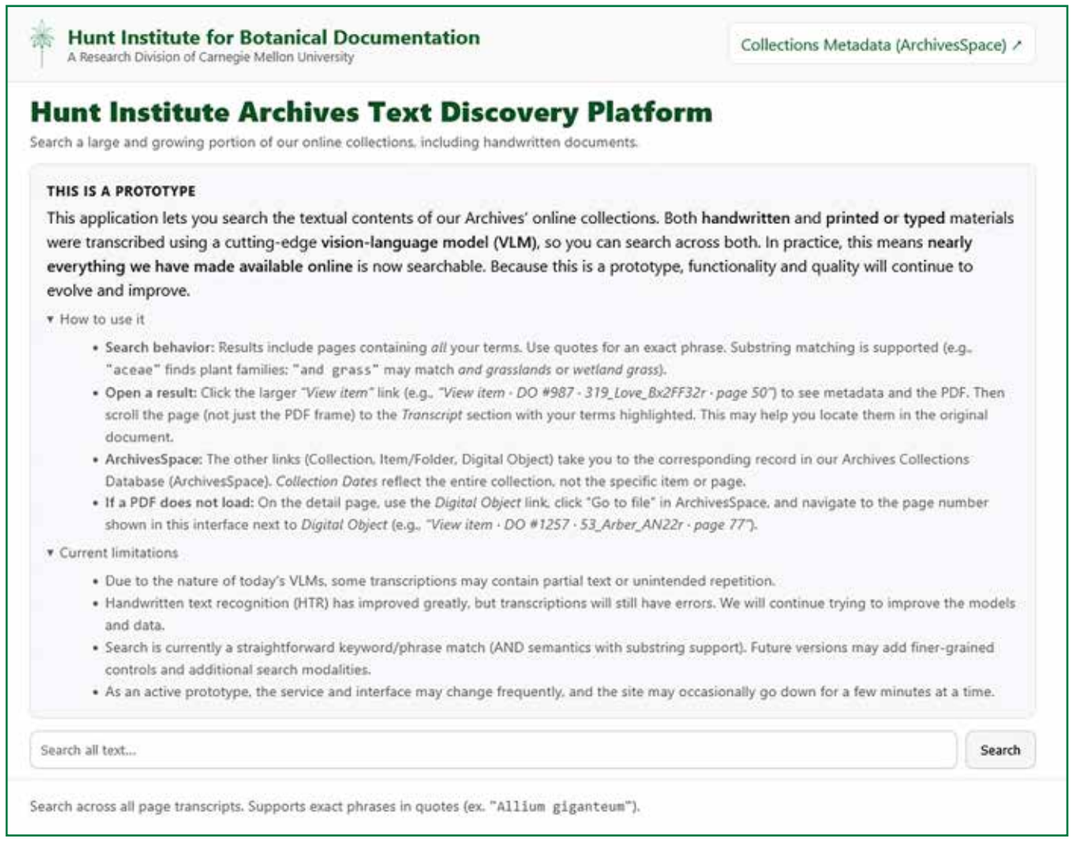
About the technology

To build this platform we used a mix of traditional and cutting-edge tools. For the automated transcription of text, we used a modern VLM that takes images and text as input and produces text as output. Unlike traditional OCR tuned mainly for print, this type of model has been trained on diverse documents and images and generalizes well to handwriting. In practice its understanding of language and logic seems to help it infer reading order and resolve ambiguous letters and words using surrounding context. The resulting text is stored at the page level and indexed for rapid searching.

Our current setup uses an open-weight VLM that did not exist even a year ago: Qwen2.5-VL, in its 7-billion-parameter form. We chose this model for its balance of speed and accuracy. Using a single desktop workstation with an Nvidia RTX 5090 graphics card, we processed over 77,000 pages during a few days. There are larger versions of Qwen2.5-VL available, which might provide even better accuracy, but they also would take significantly longer to complete the task. Still, we may test them in the future. As new open-weight models are developed and released, we plan to continue testing them. This approach of running open-weight A.I. locally keeps the work reproducible and under our control while letting us adopt improvements as the field advances.

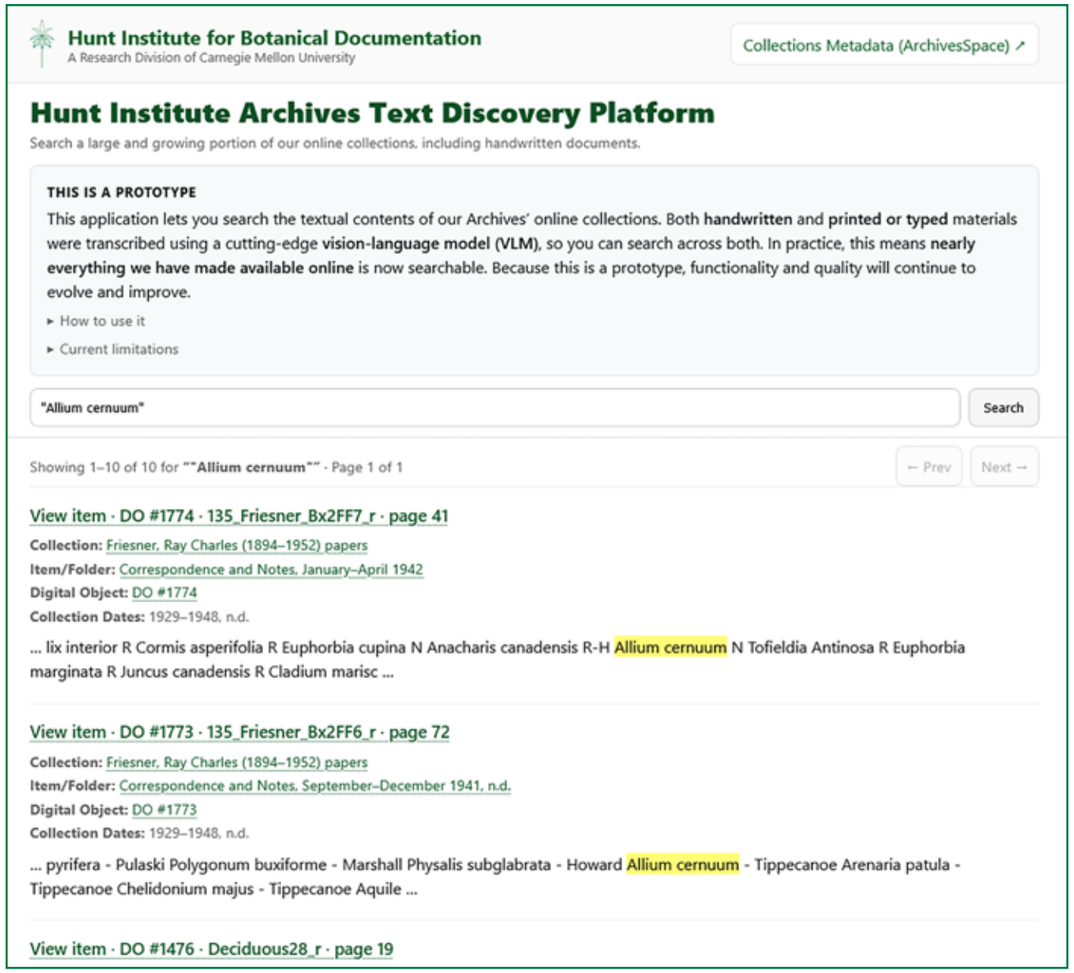
The search component of this prototype is intentionally simple for now. The text is indexed in a lightweight SQLite database, which is then served through a small Flask (a Python-based Web framework) application. The frontend is built mostly with basic, custom HTML templates. Both the database and the Web framework may change as the project grows. As previously mentioned, we are starting with something intentionally minimal so that we can get the tool out there to the public. This does not mean it cannot grow into something more advanced as we have time to further develop the platform and as new technologies become available.

Using the Archives Text Discovery Platform

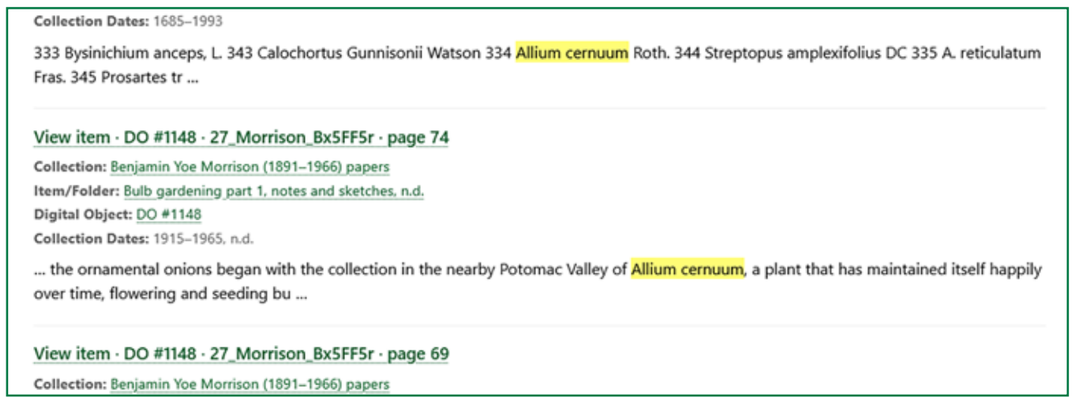


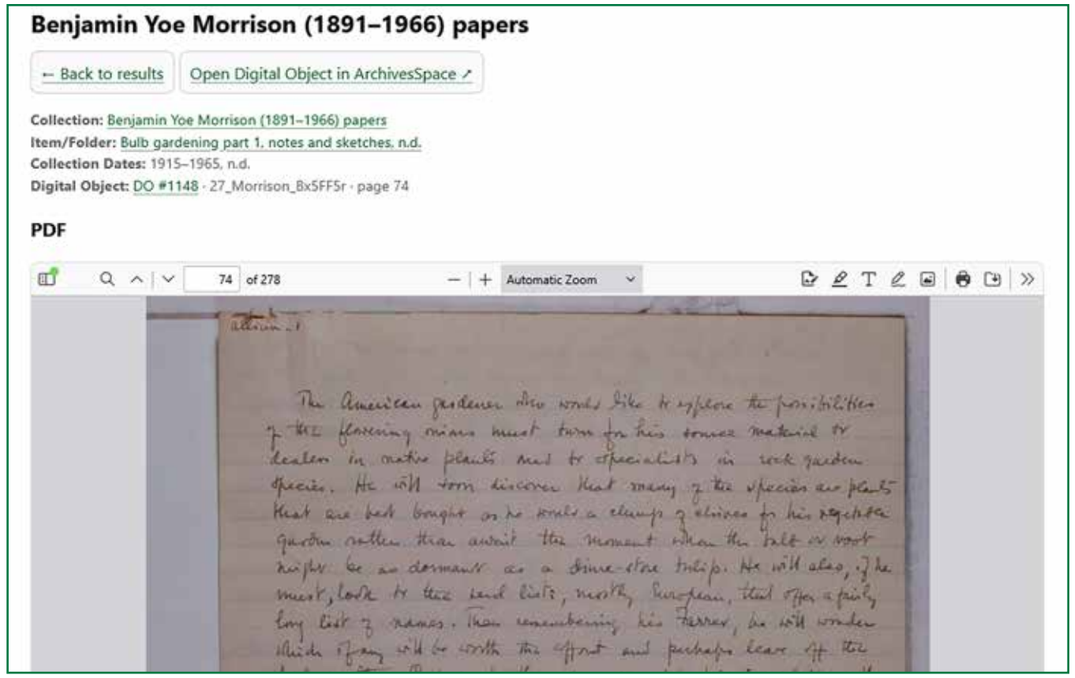
To search the text in our archival collections, begin your journey at https://archsearch.huntbot.org/. Read the introduction above the search bar and expand the "How to use it" and "Current limitations" sections if you would like to learn more about the prototype and its functionality.

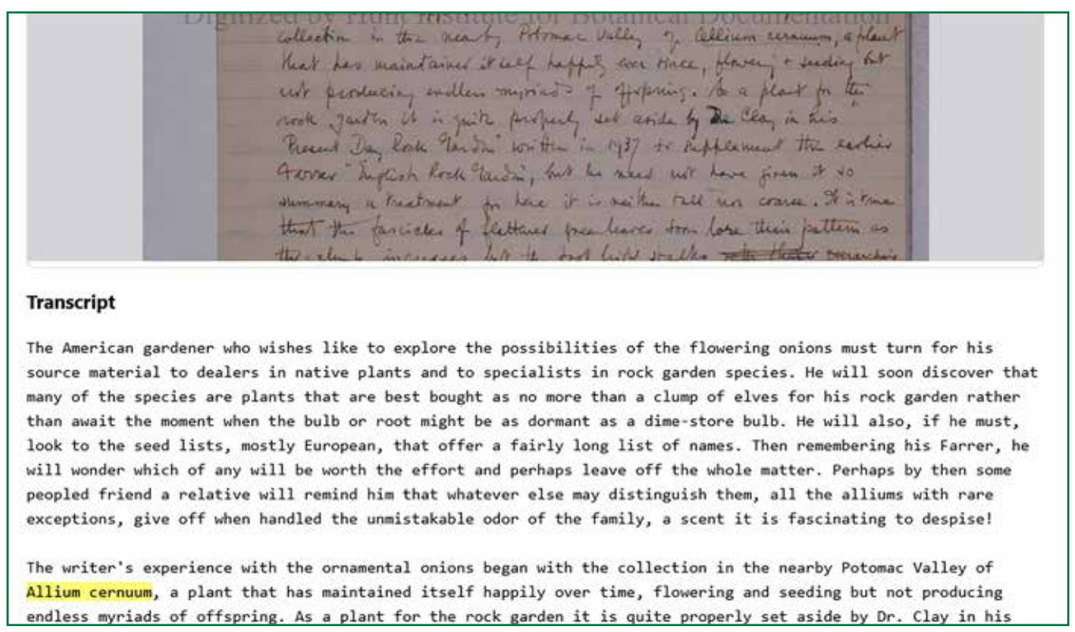
(continued on page 4)



Above, Enter a keyword (e.g., **Allium**) to search for that word and its partial matches. Enter multiple keywords (e.g., **Allium taxonomy**) to find results containing all terms. Use quotes around a string (e.g., **"Allium cernuum"**) to search for that exact phrase. *Below,* To view details, including the relevant PDF and its page that contains your search terms, click on the "View item" link (e.g., **View item · DO #1148 · 27_Morrison_Bx5FF5r · page 74**). The other links on the search results page will take you directly to the relevant level of detail in our Archives Collections database.







Transcript

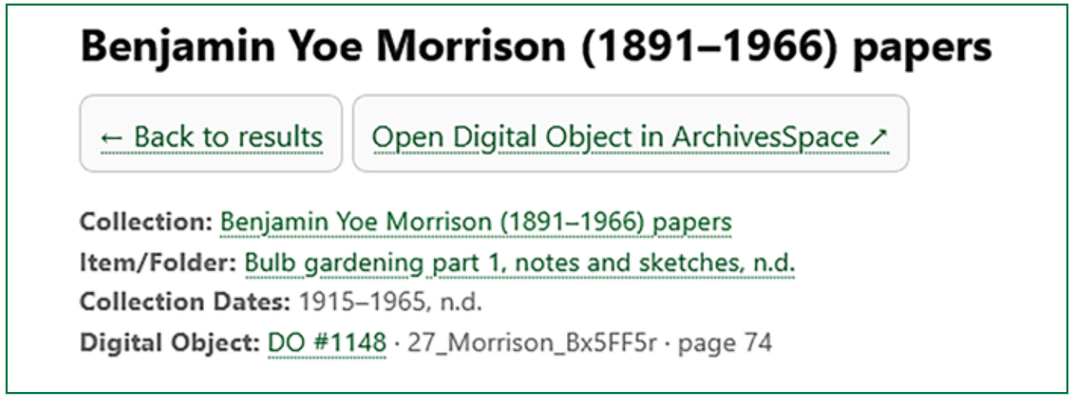
The American gardener who wishes like to explore the possibilities of the flowering onions must turn for his source material to dealers in native plants and to specialists in rock garden species. He will soon discover that many of the species are plants that are best bought as no more than a clump of elves for his rock garden rather than await the moment when the bulb or root might be as dormant as a dime-store bulb. He will also, if he must, look to the seed lists, mostly European, that offer a fairly long list of names. Then remembering his Farrer, he will wonder which of any will be worth the effort and perhaps leave off the whole matter. Perhaps by then some peopled friend a relative will remind him that whatever else may distinguish them, all the alliums with rare exceptions, give off when handled the unmistakable odor of the family, a scent it is fascinating to despise!

The writer's experience with the ornamental onions began with the collection in the nearby Potomac Valley of Allium cernuum, a plant that has maintained itself happily over time, flowering and seeding but not producing endless myriads of offspring. As a plant for the rock garden it is quite properly set aside by Dr. Clay in his

After clicking the "View item" link, you will be taken to a detail page containing more information about the item and its collection (again linking to the Archives Collections database), followed by the PDF itself set to the page containing your search terms, with the transcription of that page below, including highlighted keywords. You can use the highlighted terms in the transcription to get an idea of where to locate them in the page image above. Note: On some platforms, especially mobile, embedded PDFs are not supported, so you may instead be given an option to download and open the PDF; then you can locate the relevant page using your device's PDF viewer.

(continued on page 6)

Enhancing our data with artificial intelligence



From any page, you can use the metadata links (Collection, Item/Folder, etc.) to take you to the relevant page in our Archives Collections database. Please share with us any exciting discoveries you make.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Archivist Nancy L. Janda, Assistant Archivist—Digitization Gary Boardman, Archival Assistant Chad Denton and Administrative Assistant Leslie Shaver as well as former staff member Matteo Palmerini (housekeeper, 2014–2015; operations assistant, 2015–2019; operations coordinator, 2019–2022), who have written finding aids, scanned the pages, entered the data and linked the files. Without their efforts and long-range vision, none of this would be possible.

—J. Dustin Williams,
Assistant Director/Principal Data Curator

2025 Hunt Institute Sponsors

The following individuals donated monetary or material gifts to the Institute for 2025. We thank them for supporting our mission and programs and strengthening our collections. Monetary gifts are applied to our gift fund to support general operations, to the endowment generously established by the Roy A. Hunt Foundation to provide ongoing support for Hunt Institute, to the Anne Ophelia Todd Dowden Art Acquisition Fund, to the T. D. Jacobsen Endowed Acquisition Fund or to the Ronald L. Stuckey Endowment for the Preservation of Botanical History. Material gifts are added to the collections in our Archives, Art Department, Bibliography Department and Library. See our Sponsorship program on our Web site for more information and links for online donation options.

We would like to thank our Sponsors for their generous support of the Institute's mission and programs!

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Charlotte A. Tancin
Thomas Wendt
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Delectus Huntiana 63

Gustav Fischer (fl.ca.1903–1938)

Even with access to vast research materials and the ability to instantly reach out to archivists around the world, some acquisitions still hold gaps and mysteries. One compelling and potentially tragic example is the Gustav Fischer (fl. ca.1903–1938) papers, Archives collection no. 308. It includes a business card with a photograph of a laboratory worker named Gustav Fischer, two copies of a two-page letter by Gustav Fischer, and three copies of a one-page letter by the former director of the Botany Department at the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Natural History Museum of Vienna), Karl von Kiessler (1872–1965). The copies include original German versions of the letters and English translations. All materials except the business card are dated from 13 September to 6 December 1938.

The letters are addressed to the botanist and anthropologist Harley Harris Bartlett (1886–1960), then the head of the University of Michigan's Department of Botany. They represent an effort by Fischer and Keissler to secure Fischer a job in the United States. Fischer's desperation to leave Austria is palpable: "My situation is a very grave one; all my existence is at stake" (the underlining is in the original letter). Fischer's fear is driven by what he refers to as "the great political change here." Given the date of the correspondence in 1938, this is without doubt a reference to the Anschluss, Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria, which took place earlier that year in March.

Fischer describes his professional experience working for the Volksuniversität (Vienna People's University), where he claims to have "established a micro-technical laboratory." At some point, he later joined the Botany Department of the Natural History Museum of Vienna as a "micro-technician," where he worked under Keissler. Also, Fischer cites attending lectures at the University of Vienna given by the prominent botanists Richard Wettstein (1863–1931), Hans Molisch (1856–1937) and Julius Ritter von Wiesner (1838–1916). He concludes his letter with the plea, "You may [be] sure that I should try with all my might to prove my thankfulness to you through industry and zeal."

Keissler wrote a "Testimonium," or letter of recommendation, that was included with Fischer's original letter. He confirms Fischer's claim that he had worked for the Natural History Museum, crediting him as a "master" at "microscopic cuts, especially microtome cuts."

There is a hint from Fischer's own letter that Keissler was not the only established botanist trying to guarantee Fischer's relocation from Austria. He references having a "special recommendation" from Agnes Chase (1869–1963), who at the time was a senior botanist with the United States Department of Agriculture.

Keissler himself was a well-established name in Austrian botany. A student of Wiesner, Keissler received a doctorate in botany from the University of Vienna in 1895. He became a mycologist and lichenologist, specializing in the study of lichen parasites. In addition he had been a curator and then director of the Natural History Museum of Vienna's Botany Department until his retirement in 1933.

Unfortunately, far less is known currently about Gustav Fischer. It is not clear from the correspondence exactly why he feared being targeted by the Nazi regime, nor is it certain if he succeeded in leaving Vienna or survived the Holocaust and World War II. We do not even have definite birth and death dates for him. Aside from the scant biographical and professional details found in the letters, the only tangible clue for further research is Fischer's residential address in Vienna from 1938, which is stated on both his letters and business card.

From our research and with the help of archivists in Austria, what we can say is that he is almost certainly the same Gustav Fischer who worked at the People's University of Vienna as a cashier, editor and staff member and curator in natural history from at least 1903 to 1913. He also may have been the Gustav Fischer who married a woman named Regina Oberländer in 1915 in Vienna, although biographical details on Oberländer also are elusive. While there are several Gustav Fischers who were victims of the Holocaust, none of the relevant details from records available through the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the International Center on Nazi Persecution's Arolsen Archives, the Museum of Jewish Heritage, and Yad Vashem align with what we know about Gustav Fischer, suggesting he was possibly not a casualty of the Holocaust. At the same time no records could be found confirming that Fischer was able to leave Austria before or during World War II. We have not been able to locate any responses from Bartlett or any correspondence between Fischer and Chase or Keissler.

Complicating research efforts is the basic fact that Gustav Fischer is a very common name as well as the name of a prominent German publisher of scientific books that was active at the time and still exists today. There is also the possibility that records may have been lost or deliberately destroyed, that the letters may have been misleading in some way to improve Fischer's chances of migrating, or that at some point after the letters were sent Fischer assumed an alias.

Despite the many questions we have that are unanswered, this article would not have been possible without the generous assistance and guidance of archivists from other institutions. I especially want to thank Zaremba Andrea of the Natural History Museum of Vienna, Stefan Westacott of the Austrian Archives for Adult Education, Ulrike Denk of the University of Vienna and Carole Chee of the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan.

If anyone has information on Gustav Fischer, please contact Archivist Nancy L. Janda. The collection has been digitized and is available through our Archives Collections database.

—Chad Denton, Archival Assistant

Tancin retires

In September Charlotte (Chuck) A. Tancin (assistant librarian, 1984–1987; librarian, 1987–2025) retired after 41 years at the Hunt Institute. Effective 30 September she became an adjunct research scholar at the Institute.

Tancin joined us in 1984 as assistant librarian to Bernadette G. Callery (1947–2012; assistant librarian, 1971–1977; librarian, 1977–1987). Although Callery left the Institute in 1987 to become librarian at New York Botanical Garden, by then she and Tancin had formed a deep friendship that lasted through job changes until Callery passed away in 2012. Tancin easily transitioned from mentee to mentor, guiding four assistant librarians over the years (Sarah Y. Leroy, 1987–1998; Candace R. Lisle, 1998–2002; Donald W. Brown, 2002–2010; Jeannette McDevitt, 2011–2023), numerous interns from the University of Pittsburgh's School of Information Sciences and many student assistants from Carnegie Mellon.

Tancin oversaw the Institute's book collections. In that capacity she was responsible for Library administration, all aspects of collection development, maintenance and preservation, and the journal exchange program. She shared reference work for on-site and off-site Library users with the assistant librarians. She conducted Library tours and group presentations for visitors, such as botany classes, garden groups and library school students. If you have visited us in the last 41 years, you have met Chuck, enjoyed her talks and been impressed by her vast knowledge of our collections and how they reflect the history of botany.

Together Tancin and McDevitt finished recataloguing most of our Strandell Collection of Linnaeana in 2023. They added about 4,000 records to Carnegie Mellon University Libraries' online catalogue and noted our holdings in OCLC's WorldCat. Additionally, they prepared the first edition of a browsable compendium, providing author(s), translator(s), editor(s), date, title, edition (after the first edition), publisher place and name, Strandell number and Hunt Institute call number. The second edition is available as a PDF on the Strandell Collection Web page, and a third edition is in process. Tancin also digitized the newspaper clippings in the collection, and they will be available soon on our Web site. In the 35(2) *Bulletin* Tancin recounted the discoveries she and McDevitt made while cataloguing the Strandell Collection.

Over the years Tancin also participated in many projects across the Institute. She was the book review editor for *Huntia*, our journal of botanical history, from 1992 until we ended reviews in 2019. She was the site coordinator for our Web site from 1996 to 2012, overseeing the Institute's first forays online in our ongoing quest to make our collections easily accessible to the world. In 1999 we published the *Index to Scientific Names of Organisms Cited in the Linnaean Dissertations together with a Synoptic Bibliography of the Dissertations and a Concordance for Selected Editions*, which had been compiled by Robert W. Kiger, Tancin and Gavin D. R. Bridson. Information from this publication was incorporated into the Index to Scientific Names of Organisms Cited in the Linnaean Dissertations database and the Original Linnaean Dissertations database. Also Tancin provided books and wrote text for many exhibitions and the accompanying catalogues or Web pages, most notably *Order from Chaos: Linnaeus Disposes* (2002) and *Botany and History Entwined: Rachel Hunt's Legacy* (2011).

From left, Sylvia Fitzgerald, Lawrence Dorr, Margaret Hedstrom, James L. Reveal, Charlotte A. Tancin, Samuel Demas, Judith Reed and Malcolm Beasley, Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries symposium, XVI International Botanical Congress, St. Louis, Missouri, August 1999, photograph by John Reed, HI Archives group portrait no. 0759, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

Tancin earned her B.A. in philosophy from Mount St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, and a master's in library science and advanced certificate in preservation management from the University of Pittsburgh.

She is a member of the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries (president, 1996–1997; secretary, 1999–2005) and in 2008 received its Charles Robert Long Award of Extraordinary Merit. Over the years she represented the Institute at the CBHL annual conferences, which she chronicled as "Notes from the Field" in our *Bulletin* (see 13(2), 14(2), 15(2), 31(2)). Over decades she worked along with other CBHL members to help researchers as well as to work on projects within the organization, and she forged lasting personal friendships with many fellow librarians. As part of CBHL outreach, she attended the XVI International Botanical Congress in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1999 (see 11(2) *Bulletin*). In 2004 Hunt Institute hosted the CBHL annual meeting (see 16(2) *Bulletin*).

She represented Hunt Institute in the Linnaeus Link project and detailed those meetings as well (see 16(2), 19(2), 27(1) *Bulletin*). She is a fellow of the Linnean Society of London, a member of the Society for the History of Natural History and a research associate in the Museum Library at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. She has a strong interest in the preservation of library and archival materials as well as in the history of the book, literacy, scholarly communication and the spread of ideas. Her personal interests include genealogy, backpacking, Web work and other recreational computing, quilting, music and, of course, books. She is working on several projects documenting the history of her hometown, Freeland, Pennsylvania, including a set of Web pages.

From left, Charlotte A. Tancin, Ronald L. Stuckey and Angela L. Todd, Hunt Institute Archives, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 8 December 1999, photograph by Frank A. Reynolds, HI Archives portrait no. 74, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

From left, Charlotte A. Tancin, Rogers McVaugh (1909–2009), Donna M. Connelly (1940–2019) and Bernice Poellnitz, McVaugh's 100th birthday party, Carolina Club, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 6 June 2009, photograph by unknown photographer, HI Archives group portrait no. 1060.

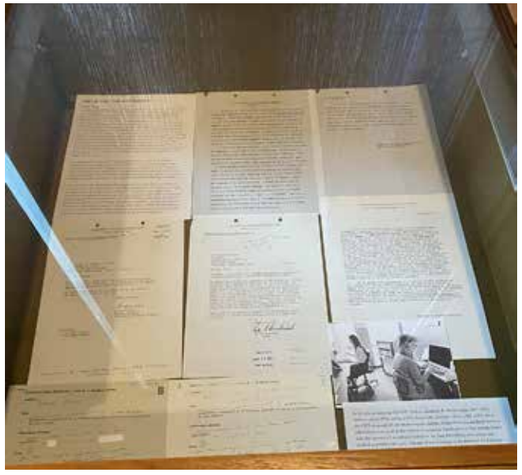
It is difficult to measure the impact Tancin has had on the Institute because it has been so extensive. During her time with us our Library collection has grown to 30,726 book and serial titles. The Institute has flourished from the depth and breadth of her knowledge not only of the Library collection but also of the collections across the Institute. We would not be the world-class research institute that we are without Tancin's contributions over these many years. We will not see her like again. We wish her well and thank her for everything she has done for the Institute and the Library over those years.

—Scarlett T. Townsend,
Publication and Marketing Manager

Bibliographia Huntiana: Visionary project or Institute albatross

Every organization has that project that defines it. Sometimes that project can become an albatross, dragging down an organization until one of them ends and casting a specter over future projects. Rarely is a project so visionary that it must wait for the world to evolve and create the technology to fulfill its promise. For the early Hunt Botanical Library (now Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation), Bibliographia Huntiana (BH) was such a project. Join us through the end of the year for "Part 2, the '70s and beyond" of this lobby display as we chart a course through our past and count down to the launch of our future.

—Linda White, Adjunct Research Scholar;
J. Dustin Williams, Assistant Director/Principal Data Curator; and Scarlett T. Townsend, Publication and Marketing Manager and Institute Historiographer



Carnegie Mellon outreach events

Earth Day pop-up event at graduate student lounge
Earlier this year Sarah Fakhreddine, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering here at Carnegie Mellon University, brought her graduate seminar for a tour of the Institute and a display of some special items from the Art and Library collections. Later one of the Ph.D. candidates who also organized campus events for graduate students invited us to do a pop-up event in the graduate student lounge for Earth Day on 22 April 2025. During collaboration with Senior Curator of Art Carrie Roy and Librarian Charlotte A. Tancin, a theme emerged that took a commonplace fruit, the banana, as the organizing subject for each of the three collections-based departments to demonstrate how we can coordinate collection holdings around a given research topic, which we used for a special brochure we produced for the event.

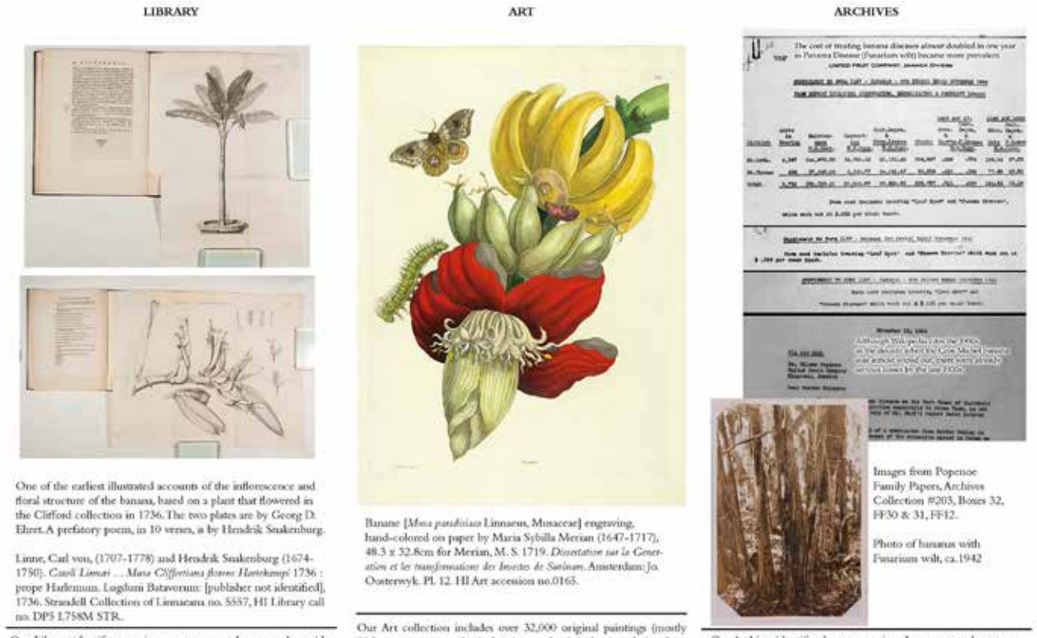
The idea for the banana as unifying subject matter was spearheaded by Janda, who already had a great deal of knowledge of where the banana featured most interestingly in the Archives, namely in the Wilson Popenoe (1892–1975) family papers, Archives collection no. 204, where early images of the dreaded Fusarium wilt as well as documents tracking the decline of the Gros Michel (the major banana variety sold in the United States before the 1960s) are held. Our Art Department shared a poster advertising the Dwarf Cavendish plantain, *Musa acuminata* Colla, from 1843 and a mysterious, 18th-century model of a banana from Mexico. Our Library shared two plates by Georg D. Ehret (1708–1770) of one of the earliest illustrated accounts of the inflorescence and floral structure of the banana, based on a plant that flowered in the Clifford collection in 1736.

The brochure was not the only item in the display. Janda baked two kinds of vegan banana bread, using two different varieties (lady finger bananas and manzana) she procured from a local international foods store. Along with the banana bread, she brought in examples of the fruits themselves. She also put together some materials from the Popenoe family papers, featuring additional photographs of banana cultivation and transportation. The Art Department brought along posters and postcards of botanical art, and Rosenberg made a batch of conventional banana bread. The two-hour event yielded meaningful dialogue as we sampled the fruit and baked goods and shared stories with graduate students who came from a range of disciplines, including materials science and mechanical engineering. Our discussions covered many subjects: which banana varieties were most familiar to students who grew up in the United States compared to students from international backgrounds, how they were eaten and the differences in the flavors and preparations, what brought on the rise of one variety over another and how Fusarium wilt and other diseases threatened—and still threaten—once ubiquitous varieties. What seemed like a simple piece of fruit became an avenue for rich discussion of the role of plants in international commerce, scientific study and culture. The gesture of food and information opened

Archivist Nancy L. Janda with the banana-themed display, *above*, and talking with attendees, *below*, at the graduate student lounge pop-up event for Earth Day, 22 April 2025.

the door to students being able to share personal anecdotes about plants and their lives and for us to introduce ourselves and our work outside of our usual setting. Several of these students returned to visit the spring exhibition, and the brochure we created for that event has been used in other outreach events since then.

—Lydia Rosenberg, Curator of Art,
and Nancy Janda, Archivist



Inside the brochure produced by Archives, Art and Library for pop-up event for Earth Day, 22 April 2025.

Workshop for students from the School of Art's Pre-College program
On a Friday in June with sessions in the morning and afternoon, I gave a three-hour workshop about botanical documentation to 15 local, national and international high school students participating in the School of Art's Pre-College summer program at Carnegie Mellon University. As curator of art and a practicing artist, I wanted to give the enrolled students a broad understanding of some core concepts and methods represented in our collections that help us deepen the questions: what is botanical documentation, and what is the influence of art on science and vice versa? A studio classroom in the College of Fine Arts building was our home base where messy experimentation could be safely explored.

When the students arrived, I started with the questions: what do you think we are going to be doing today, and why did you sign up for this workshop? Many students immediately thought we would be drawing plant subjects from life while a few thought it might have been a photography workshop. Most said they were interested in learning to draw plants. While this is part of what took place in the workshop, our three-hour journey took a wider view of the subject at hand.

We walked over to Hunt Library, and after a tour of the gallery and the reading room, we talked our way through the display and discussed the general history and purpose of botanical illustration. The items on display were broken out into categories. Beginning with a survey of historical herbals and florilegium, we discussed the re-introduction of realism in representation and observed how illustration style alongside developing technologies and ideas about how to categorize rapidly evolving information transformed the content and categorization of plant information, starting with 15th-century herbals and moving into herbals and flora from the 19th century. At one moment I asked the students if they could read the roman numeral publishing date on a title page of a 19th-century flora. One student had been introduced to it in school, but none could decipher the old style of dating. We talked about how easily knowledge could be lost and how much collective effort it took to produce the complex world of botanical knowledge we have today.

We then moved on to some examples of plant photography from the 20th century, including a first-edition monograph on photographer Karl Blossfeldt, some interesting color

(continued on page 12)

Carnegie Mellon outreach events

photographs (not accessioned but kept in the collection as examples) and a radiograph by Harold Frank Sherwood (1908–?), which was included in our inaugural International Exhibition in 1964. The next and perhaps largest area of focus (being the main process we would explore in the making part of the workshop) was a selection of nature prints. One anonymous set of nature prints we have in the collection on indefinite loan from the Smithsonian includes herbarium sheets, which show the pressed plant alongside the print of the plant itself. We looked at examples of direct prints by historic and contemporary artists, compared them with prints made from pressing plants into lead or other soft metal plates and discussed techniques the students could explore in our short time together.

The next section of artworks we perused focused on illustrations for field guides where students got to see the original drawing and how it was reproduced in print publications, as well as field sketches from Frederick Andrews Walpole (1861–1904) and other process work from various artists. We debated over which method produced the highest level of accurate information. Would you rather have a photograph, a detailed illustration or a nature print if you were asked to identify and collect a medicinal plant from nature? One modern field guide I put out included photographs alongside text and illustration, and most agreed that would be the most useful tool in that scenario. The final selection of materials focused on the appearance of plants in fiction, literature, conceptual art frameworks and some more recent examples of scientific illustrations made with digital tools, such as Andreia d'Almeida's wild carrot (*Daucus carota* subsp. *carota* Linnaeus), which was included in our *17th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration* (2024).

This deep survey allowed us to talk as a group about the efficacy of different styles and art forms for different purposes and to think about how collections of plant information were organized by different conceptual frameworks. Students gravitated towards more expressive forms and marveled at skilled craftsmanship. They were interested in contemporary approaches to illustration as well as being curious about how art and science continue to share common legacies. Before leaving the Institute, I sent the students out to photograph, observe and non-destructively collect small samples with which they could experiment in the studio. I also asked them to consider the idea of a book of botanical information. What would their framework be? Would they make a flora of a special area? A book of imaginary or magical plants? Would they use photography, drawing, printmaking or other skills to make the images they would use? What kind of textual description would their project include?

After some time to go outside, collect, sketch and reflect on the display and conversation, we met back at the studio for a brief demonstration of direct printing from leaves and twigs, and then they were left to draw, make photos and prints,

School of Art's Pre-College students looking at a display surveying botanical documentation from the 15th century to present day with Curator of Art Lydia Rosenberg, Hunt Institute reading room, June 2025, photographs by Leslie Shaver, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

some even using leaves and plant matter as collage materials for their compositions. Several students returned during their summer programs to look around in the lobby at the displays and in a couple of instances made appointments to see more artworks and ask more questions.

We hope to offer more opportunities like this to students studying art and to see botanical art continue to inspire future generations to observe closely and care greatly about our plant companions on this planet.

—Lydia Rosenberg, Curator of Art

Students process work as part two of the botanical documentation workshop, College of Fine Arts studio, June 2025, photographs by Lydia Rosenberg, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database

The next step toward a revived and revitalized Bibliographia Huntiana

The Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database is a newly developed resource that enhances access to periodical literature from the Bibliographia Huntiana (BH) project. Representing more than six decades of collaborative work, the Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database offers detailed records of botanical articles published between 1730 and 1840.

Originally known as the B forms, these records were created during the BH project as handwritten or typed entries documenting individual articles from historical periodicals. Each entry includes the author, article title, abbreviated citation and notes. Previously available only in a physical format, the entries have been transcribed and digitized into a searchable online format.

This dataset is the most comprehensive resource of its kind, bringing together material that has never been available in a single, searchable collection. For the first time, researchers have direct access to a nearly complete record of botanical articles from this formative period. While earlier bibliographies have offered partial coverage, no other single source provides such extensive access to data about the periodical literature from this era. This new resource opens unprecedented avenues for discovering, verifying and citing the published botanical scholarship of a very important period, filling a longstanding gap in the historical record of botanical science. It supports historical research in botany by preserving and contextualizing primary literature from a period marked by the development of modern classification systems, the expansion of global botanical exploration and the rapid growth of scientific publishing.

Development of the database is ongoing. Future updates will include linking to digital copies of the article and its associated periodical as well as integration with other Institute databases to further enrich access to the botanical literature. The Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database is designed to operate in conjunction with the Institute's BPH Online and Biographical Records databases, enabling users to explore connections among authors, articles and the journals in which they appeared.

A brief history of Bibliographia Huntiana

One of the first major projects to which the Hunt Institute (then the Hunt Botanical Library) committed, and by far the largest and most ambitious, was Bibliographia Huntiana. The BH project was envisioned to be a record of essentially all botanical literature published from 1730 to 1840. These dates would allow the project to include the major works of Linnaeus and to cover a significant period of exploration and discovery. It was during this time period that modern nomenclature developed, many new plants were discovered and much important botanical literature was produced.

Bibliographia Huntiana was announced in our first volume of *Huntia*, where its original intended scope was described:

> The Hunt Botanical Library announces the initiation of a project to produce a multivolume work to be known as *Bibliographia Huntiana*; a publication to serve as a guide to the world's botanical literature published during the period 1730 to 1840. This project will consume a major portion of the time and effort of the staff of the library for at least the next decade. The finished work is to comprise an estimated sixteen quarto volumes. It will include comprehensive treatments of all pertinent books, pamphlets, preprints, and effectively published exsiccatae, and will cite also the periodical literature of the authors concerned and published during the period. An attempt will be made to treat all books and articles dealing with plants from a botanical point of view (McVaugh 1964, p. 17).

The announcement went on to describe the need for such a resource, details on what exactly would be covered and the original plans for the publication of many physical volumes. Existing bibliographic works would be used for some of the data, and much more would be added by bibliographers and others employed by the Institute. Individuals would travel around the world to other libraries to analyze and describe the works they held that may not be available locally.

Of note is that, even in 1964, the article described how computers would be necessary to manage and organize all the data that would be recorded. Hindsight now makes it clear that this was a wise decision indeed, but that the technology of the time was not quite ready to meet the requirements of these great ambitions. Technology has, however, evolved greatly since those early years and now provides capabilities beyond what would have been needed to fulfill the project's original goals. (For more information on the history of BH and how we are currently working to revitalize it, see Williams 2025.)

Over time, the various components of BH were separated into smaller projects. The one for which the Institute is perhaps most well-known is BPH, an index of bibliographic information on periodicals published between 1665 and the present that have addressed the plant sciences, including their recommended title abbreviations. Our Biographical Records database grew out of BH and expanded to cover all history up to the present. A large portion of the data that the Institute provides today began as a component of BH. This new Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database is the latest of these BH-incubated datasets to be enhanced and made available to the public.

B forms: The making of the Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database

The Bibliography Department has recently focused its attention on the completion of the B forms project. Botanical literature in the BH project was not limited to books but also was meant to include writings published in periodicals during the BH time period. A compilation of botanical literature that included periodical literature and provided more than a minimal amount of information had not been produced yet in modern times. Thus, the BH project sought to fill this niche and provide "an annotated guide rather than an index to the botanical writings of the period" (McVaugh 1964, p. 18).

B forms, now known as Botanical Article Bibliographic Records, were introduced during the BH project for periodical literature, focusing on transcribing the pertinent details of botanical articles. The Botanical Article Bibliographic Records were written for authors included in the Master Book List to provide a detailed account of all the written works by a particular author, working towards achieving the original intent of BH of compiling both book and periodical literature. The Botanical Article Bibliographic Records helped to inform a new master list, known as the Master List of Periodicals (MLP). This acts as a comprehensive list of periodical publications from the BH period that contain articles with botanical information. These references can be found in the Bibliography Department's BPH Online database.

The Botanical Article Bibliographic Records included four fields: author, title, abbreviated reference and notes. Abbreviated reference included both the MLP number of the periodical as well as the citation for the specific article. The notes field had the most variance because it was utilized for notes about the publication itself as well as notes about the location where the publication or article had been found. The Botanical Article Bibliographic Records were either filled out by hand or typewriter in libraries and repositories around the globe.

It is important to note that the Botanical Article Bibliographic Records project is not merely a transcription effort; it serves as a crucial link to botanical literature from the BH period, facilitating research and scholarship in botanical studies. By meticulously documenting botanical articles from periodical publications, the records provide researchers with organized and accessible information, streamlining scholarly inquiry and contributing to a deeper understanding of botanical history and development. Moreover, the digitization of the Botanical Article Bibliographic Records enhances access to botanical literature by making it available in a centralized database. This equalizes access to botanical knowledge, enabling researchers from around the world to explore and engage with historical botanical publications.

Furthermore, the integration of Botanical Article Bibliographic Records data into bibliographic resources such as the MLP and the BPH Online database enriches these resources and enhances their utility for researchers. The addition of new titles and digitized records ensures the comprehensiveness and relevance of these databases for botanical scholarship. By preserving and digitizing botanical literature from 1730 to 1840, the Botanical Article Bibliographic Records project ensures that the legacy of botanical scholarship endures, providing future generations of researchers with the necessary information to explore the history of botany.

References

McVaugh, R. 1964. Announcement: Bibliographia Huntiana. Huntia 1: 17–24.

Williams, J. D. 2025. Biographical Records database enhanced, reimagined, relaunched. Bull. Hunt Inst. Bot. Doc. 36(1): 6–15.

—Linda White, Adjunct Research Scholar, and J. Dustin Williams, Assistant Director/Principal Data Curator

Huntia published

In the 21(1) *Huntia*, published 28 July 2025, Ronald H. Petersen takes us back to 1924 and the founding of the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research and the Tropical Plant Research Foundation. Although the organizations had different missions, they shared scientists. In their biographical sketches Petersen traces the evolution from taxonomy and floristics to "The New Botany" of morphology, anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, ecology and genetics as well as the lineage of botanical education from universities through major professors to students who became the next generation of researchers. Through it all the *Botanical Gazette* has its own academic career, following its editors from university to university. Drop the needle on the Gershwin, grab a beverage and settle in for a good read, but choose your drink with care as it is also the time of Prohibition.

In the 21(2) *Huntia*, published 17 September 2025, we travel the world solving bibliographic and botanical mysteries. In "Equivalences of alternative series and numbering sequences on the variant title-pages of otherwise identical volumes of J. C. Loudon's *The Gardener's Magazine* (1826–1843)," R. B. Williams unravels bibliographic complexities. In "The eccentric Lutheran pastor 'Dr. Lippold' (1790–1852): From scandal in Germany to plant-collecting in Europe, Madeira and Brazil," Williams uncovers the true identity and life story of a man known mainly as a name on herbarium specimens. Don your deerstalker for this issue, the game is afoot!

If you're ready to take us on a new journey in the pages of our journal of botanical history, check out the topics and submission guidelines available on the *Huntia* page and our call for papers about botanical artist John Tyley.

—Scarlett T. Townsend,
Publication and Marketing Manager
and Editor, *Huntia*

News from the Archives

Exhibition opening

The Art and Science of Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero opened on Tuesday, 16 September, with an evening reception. I gave a brief talk with new insights into the life and work of Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero (1915–1981) and the hidden meaning he worked into some of the pieces on display. Attendees enjoyed the beautiful and scientifically detailed orchid paintings. They also appreciated the humor and attention to detail highlighted in the framed non-botanical work and the case containing notebooks and projects from his student and teaching days.

Featuring items chosen from the Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero papers, Archives collection no. 376, donated to the Hunt Institute in 2019, the exhibition also includes photographs from the Archives portrait collection and works from the Art Department. The exhibition focuses on Rodríguez's life and his extraordinary creation of over 1,200 paintings of orchids from Costa Rica and South America. *The Art and Science of Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero* is on display in our 5th-floor gallery, Mondays to Fridays through 17 December 2025 (closed 27–28 November). The gallery is open from 9 AM–4:30 PM; please call ahead to ensure the gallery is open.

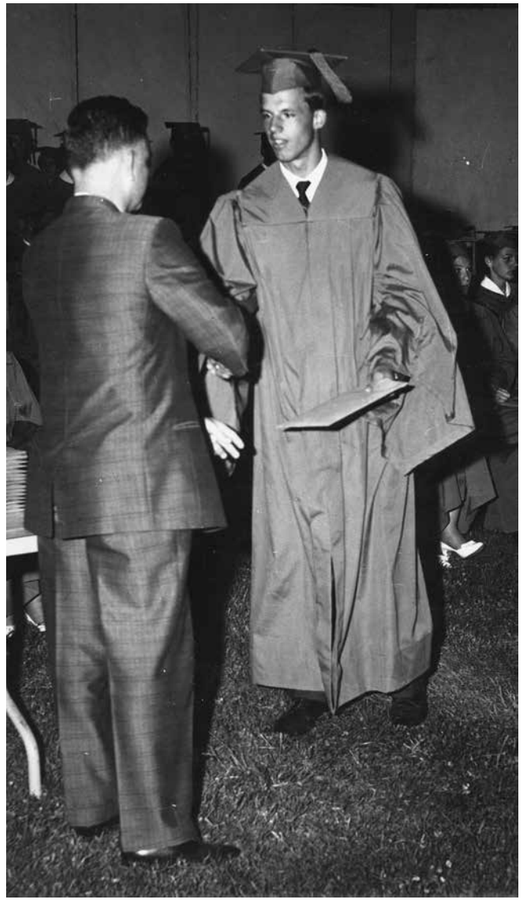
Welcome to the Archives

I am pleased to introduce our archival assistant. Chad Denton became a member of the Archives in July 2025, coming to us via Carnegie Mellon's Temporary Employment Services. He earned his MLIS in Archives and Digital Humanities from the University of Pittsburgh, and his Ph.D. in French History from the University of Missouri. At his home, a Venus Fly Trap (*Dionea muscipula* J. Ellis) and two butterworts (*Pinguicula* Linnaeus) vigilantly keep the premises free of flying pests.

Digital accessibility

The Archives has been moving forward on our ongoing digital accessibility project, and the results of our efforts are astounding. Denton has entered 67 collections in ArchivesSpace in his three months here, bringing the total number of collections with finding aids online to 106. Most of these collections have digitized material now accessible through their finding aids. Some collections' finding aids are available and still in process, such as the entry for our General Autograph collection, Archives collection no. 370. This collection consists of handwritten letters, manuscripts and signatures of hundreds of botanists worldwide. With 170 manuscript items already available for viewing, we have not quite finished the *A*s and *B*s. Denton has created the lion's share—over 100 listings and growing—of these entries. Many of the entries are already searchable through J. Dustin Williams' groundbreaking text search engine (see "Enhancing our data with artificial intelligence," page 2).

Above, Archivist Nancy L. Janda introduces *The Art and Science of Rafael Lucas Rodríguez Caballero* and answers questions from attendees at the opening reception, Hunt Institute gallery, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 16 September 2025, photographs by Carrie Roy, reproduced by permission of the photographer.



Above, Sidney Waxman (1923–2005), family photo of Waxman fishing off the rocks, Narragansett, Rhode Island, August 1993, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 1.

Right, James L. Reveal (1941–2015), Sonora Union High School graduation, Sonora, California, 5 June 1959, photograph by Robert M. Hooe, HI Archives collection no. 399.

The online presence of our Archives portrait collection of over 30,000 portrait images of botanists is also growing rapidly. Our administrative assistants, Leslie Shaver and Perry Covington, have been digitizing portraits for upload to the redesigned Portraits database. Currently, they have digitized over 3,000 portraits. Denton and I are carefully adding these portraits to the database with information about the images. To date we have added 253 of these 3,000 portraits and will continue digitizing and adding information until the database is fully populated.

If you wish to see a portrait or a collection item that is listed but not digitized, please contact the Archives. We can arrange to have the item or portrait moved to the head of the queue and made available sooner. For more immediate research needs, we also can send a PDF of the requested information.

Visitors to the Archives

The Archives received two visitors from the archives at New York Botanical Garden, Ashley Aberg and Nicole Font, on 5 September 2025. Among the many subjects discussed during this informative and productive visit were cross-referencing digitized collections and material in order to enrich our respective offerings and increase engagement on both of our institutions' digital platforms.

New collections received

Sidney Waxman (1923–2005), a horticulturalist and professor of plant science at University of Connecticut, studied and propagated dwarf conifers from natural sports, or witches' brooms, found on evergreens throughout the New England states. From seeds collected from these sport growths, Waxman raised many varieties of dwarf conifers, offering the most promising to nurseries around the United States. Some of the varieties he developed are still available to landscapers today.

The Sidney Waxman papers, Archives collection no. 398, consists of lab notebooks, slides of people and plants, reprints of botanical and horticultural articles and digital copies of

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many of Waxman's papers. It also includes the contents of the briefcase he used at work and on collecting expeditions, holding maps, notes on the location of witches' brooms to collect, field notes and plant tags. This photograph of Waxman, a family favorite, arrived with the collection and has been added to the Archives portrait collection.

James L. Reveal (1941–2015) specialized in and collected Polygonaceae, especially *Eriogonum* Michaux, commonly known as the wild buckwheat family, which comprises over 250 species. These papers cover much of Reveal's work with Polygonaceae, including his treatment of *Eriogonum* for the Flora of North America. The James L. Reveal papers, Archives collection no. 399, also holds family history, correspondence, papers and photographs from Reveal and from his parents, John "Jack" Lilbern Reveal and Arlene Hadfield Reveal, who were botanical collectors.

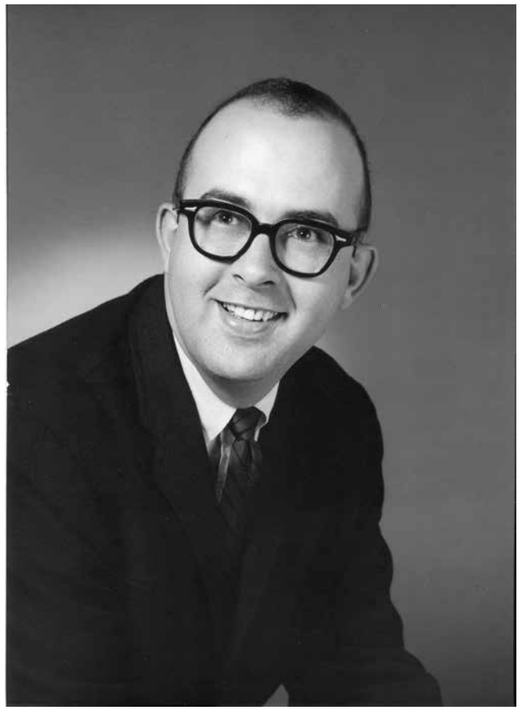
Francesca Anderson (1946–) is a botanical artist who creates illustrative and artistic botanical images in pen-and-ink and graphite. She also is honorary curator of art at the Hunt Institute. Her work was featured in the *7th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration* in 1992. Our Art Department holds 57 pieces of her work, created from 1985 to 1995. The Francesca Anderson papers, Archives collection no. 400, contains papers, slides, prints and correspondence, tracing years of her illustrious career in fine art and botanical illustration.

Ronald H. Petersen (1934–), a mycologist and professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee, collected biographies for hundreds of mycologists over several decades. During that time he continued to update and add to his collection, committing it to digital format before sending the papers and digital files to the Hunt Institute Archives. The Ronald H. Petersen papers, Archives collection no. 401, is invaluable for any researcher seeking information about mycologists in history.

The John R. Crutchfield photographs, Archives collection no. 402, is a small but valuable collection, containing photographs from several botanical expeditions to Texas and Mexico in the 1960s. Through it, we were able to add to our portrait collection our first image of Crutchfield (1936–2022) and an additional one of Donovan S. Correll (1908–1983).

Lee B. Kass (1946–) visited the Hunt Institute in September 2025, bringing research papers and correspondence in printed and digital format, covering topics from the Bahama Flora to biographical research on Barbara McClintock (1902–1992) to plant breeding and genetics. Kass also contributed rare reprints, reference items, appointment books, rare books and the actual ears of corn McClintock used in her Nobel Prize-winning discovery of transposons/mobile genetic elements. As we go through Kass' contribution, I am certain that we

From left, 13th International artist Catherine Watters, 7th International artist Francesca Anderson and 12th International artist John Pastoriza-Piñol, *17th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration* reception, Hunt Institute gallery, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 17 October 2024, photograph by Carrie Roy, reproduced by permission of the photographer.



Ronald H. Petersen (1934–), near the beginning of his collection of mycological biographies, unknown location, 1965, photograph by an unknown photographer, HI Archives portrait no. 2.

Ears of corn used by Barbara McClintock (1902–1992) in 1931 research, 21 October 2025, photograph by Nancy L. Janda, HI Archives collection no. 403, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

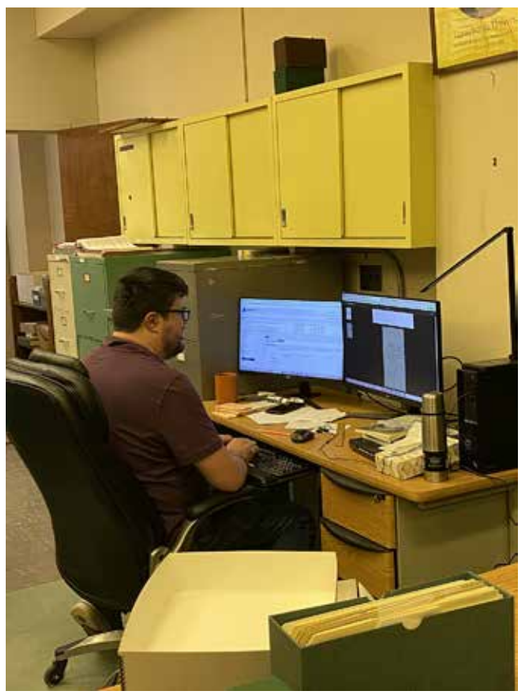
will find more historically significant items on which to report. It is an honor to hold the Lee B. Kass papers, collection no. 403; it may take time to thoroughly catalogue and place them online, but it is a task well worth the time.

Kass also contributed the collected research and correspondence for her articles with W. Hardy Eshbaugh (1936–) on William T. Gillis (1933–1979), whose research and published findings comprised a valuable but long-overlooked contribution to the Bahama flora. The Lee B. Kass and W. Hardy Eshbaugh collection on William T. Gillis, Archives collection no. 404, includes letters, photographs and records from Gillis' students and colleagues. These items and research are the foundation of Kass and Eshbaugh's "The contributions of William T. Gillis (1933–79) to the flora of the Bahamas" (Rhodora, 1993, 95(883/884): 369–391) and "A historical perspective on the contributions of William T. Gillis to our knowledge and understanding of the Bahama flora" (Huntia, 2024, 20(1): 5–46).

We also received 3 group photographs from Michael Wynne: Marine Botany Class, summer 1961 (27 subjects, all identified); Marine Biological Laboratory, June 1971 (6 subjects, all identified); Department of Botany, University of Texas, ca.1973–1974 (20 subjects, 19 identified).

We at the Archives extend our gratitude to all those who contribute in ways large and small. Your efforts make the Hunt Institute Archives a premier resource for those who wish to learn about the history of botany.

—Nancy L. Janda, Archivist



Archival Assistant Chad Denton hard at work entering information for the above new collections into the Arcives databases, photograph by Scarlett T. Townsend, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

White departs Institute

It is with heavy heart that we report that Bibliographer/Data Curator Linda White left us at the end of July. Her husband is in the military and has been transferred to another state. We were hoping she could work remotely, but unfortunately the university does not have business interests in that state. In less than two years White had a tremendous impact on the Institute, the Bibliography Department and our database development. In recognition of the deep connection we have forged, we have named White an adjunct research scholar.

With her disciplined work ethic, White accomplished much in a short time. She began with BPH Online. A spin-off of our Bibliographia Huntiana project that described the botanical literature in the period 1730–1840, *Botanico-Periodicum-Huntianum* provided a standard for periodical title abbreviations in the plant sciences from 1665 to 1966. Published in 1968 at nearly 1,100 pages that first edition of BPH included abbreviations for 12,500 periodicals with cross-references to 12,000 additional abbreviations found in the botanical literature. It quickly became and remains the standard of botanical journal abbreviation. It is impossible to overstate the importance of BPH and its continued relevance to botany today. It was a tangible example of the scope of the information in the Bibliographia Huntiana project and what could be done with it. Gavin D. R. Bridson (1936–2008; bibliographer, 1982–2008) and Elizabeth R. Smith (1917–2005; assistant editor, 1966–2003) published *Botanico-Periodicum-Huntianum/Supplementum* (BPH/S) in 1991 with over 25,000 title entries. Bridson published a second edition, BPH-2, in 2004, spanning 1665 to 2002 with 33,000 titles. White had BPH Online well on its way to a third edition with 800+ new titles added and 1,700+ updated entries in the last year. She was updating the entire database, entry by entry, inputting the edits from BPH-2, incorporating preceding and superseding titles, adding new periodicals published in the last 20 years and completing records for those that have ceased publication.

When White joined us in 2023, we were investigating the feasibility of resurrecting the Bibliographia Huntiana project since current computer technology had finally caught up with the vision of George H. M. Lawrence (1910–1978), our founding director (1960–1970). While searching through Bridson's computer files, White quickly found that he and Smith had input the master book and periodical lists. Suddenly, we were no longer looking at inputting file cabinets of handwritten data records. We could begin to design the databases. That was a transformative moment for the 60+-year-old project. Then we discovered that White not only had experience with Python but also was eager to learn. She and Assistant Director/Principal Data Curator J. Dustin Williams began working on the Bibliographia Huntiana databases and a framework that would interconnect the project with our existing databases.

Linda White, Hunt Institute staff office, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 11 September 2023, photograph by T. D. Jacobsen, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

One of the ongoing data entry projects for the Bibliography Department has been of the various forms (B, C, D and E) from the Bibliographia Huntiana project. While the C forms (biographical articles) moved to Archives, where they now form the foundation of our Biographical Records database, the Bibliography Department began with the B forms, the handwritten or typed entries documenting individual articles from historical periodicals. Each entry includes the author, article title, abbreviated citation and notes. Smith typed about 9,000, and after she retired, our front office staff assisted with typing. Notably, our now Archivist Nancy Janda typed over 20,000 forms when she worked in the front office. White resumed the project, checking everything and then entering the rest. In June we launched the Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database, the first of our Bibliographia Huntiana databases. The Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database is a newly developed resource that enhances access to periodical literature from the Bibliographia Huntiana (BH) project. Representing more than six decades of collaborative work, the Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database offers detailed records of botanical articles published between 1730 and 1840. Previously available only in a physical format, the entries have been transcribed and digitized into a searchable online format. The Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database is designed to operate in conjunction with the Institute's BPH Online and Biographical Records databases, enabling users to explore connections between authors, articles and the journals in which they appeared. The D (reviews) and E (announcements) forms remain to be input.

In the 1970s the Bibliographia Huntiana project was transformed into a series of manageable subsets, the first of which was the Floras. While the Floras information did eventually evolve into a database, White began rechecking each entry, adding new edits from Bridson and older edits from A. F. Günther Buchheim (1924–2007; fellow

152370

BIBLIOGRAPHIA HUNTIANA / Form B — Botanical articles **B**

Author(s) P [Vallot, ~~JN~~] Jean Nicolas

Title Notice sur deux espèces de fleurs doubles. [Sambucus nigra, ver. fl. pleu.; Renonculus RENONCULUS asiaticus Linn.] [sic.]

MLP 1311A

Abbreviated reference ~~Séance Publ.~~ Acad Sci Dijon 14-16. 1817.
Séance Publique

Notes resumé
Mémoire read 9 June 1816.

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
A Research Division of Carnegie Mellon University

Introduction Search Bibliographic Records

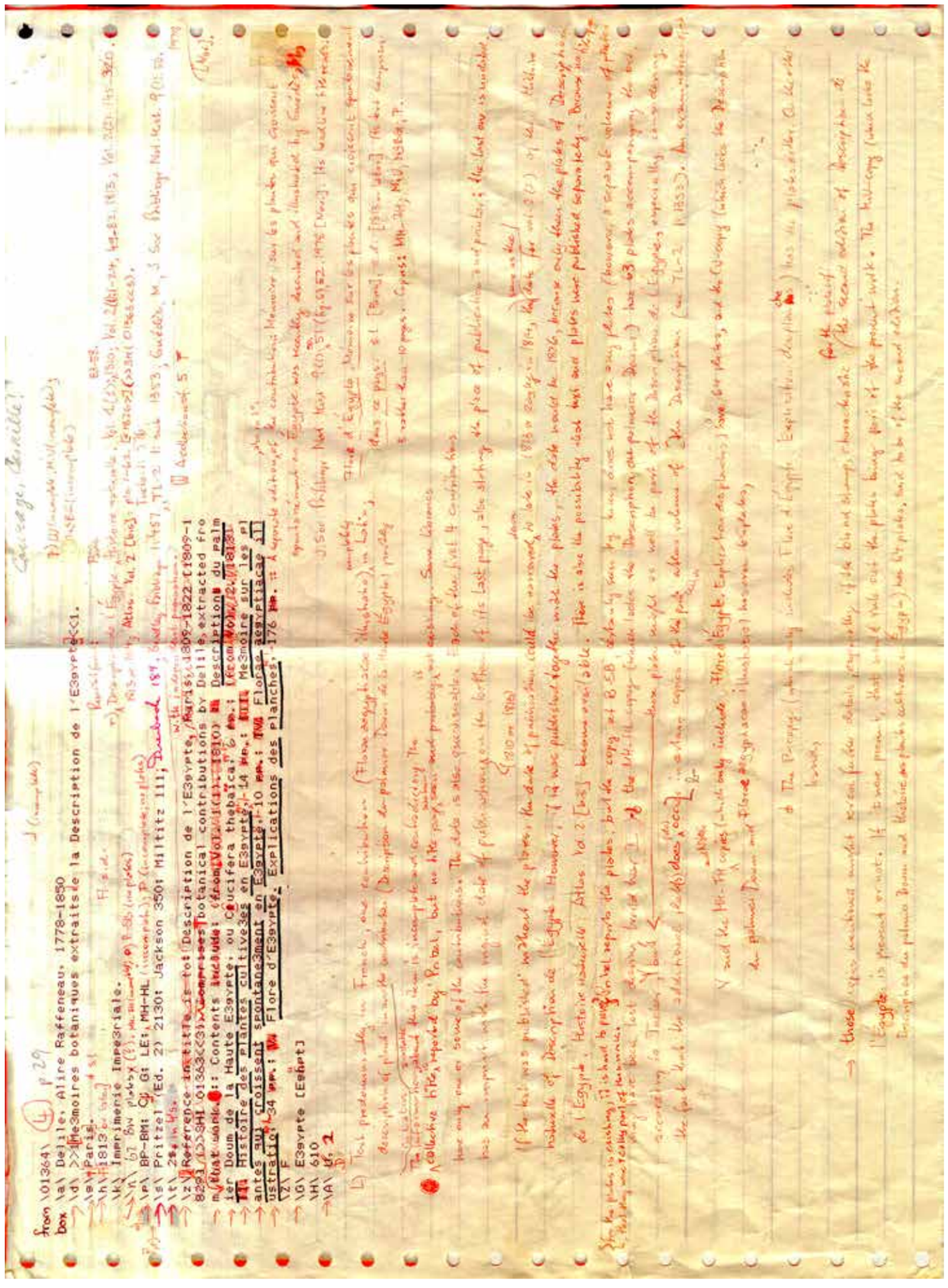
Botanical Article Bibliographic Records

HI Number 152370

Author: Vallot, Jean Nicolas
Coauthors:
Title: Notice sur deux espèces de fleurs doubles. [Sambucun nigra, ver. fl. pleu.; Renonculus asiaticus Linn.] [sic.]
MLP no: 1311A
BPH Series Abbreviation: Séance Publique Acad. Sci. Dijon
Citation: 14-16. 1817.
Year(s): 1817
Note: resumé.
Mémoire read 9 June 1816.
View/Download PDF

Handwritten B form and database record for an article by J. N. Vallot in the Botanical Article Bibliographic Records database.

(continued on page 22)



Left, heavily edited original information with extensive additions and note of encouragement for the typist and, *right*, database record for A. R. Delile's [*Mémoires botaniques extraits e la Description de l'Égypte*] (s.d. [1813 or later]) in the forthcoming Floras database.

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Director Jacobsen contributes foreword

Hunt Institute Director T. D. Jacobsen (Ph.D., Plant Systematics, Washington State University) wrote the foreword for *Secrets of Trees: History, Ecology and Botany Revealed through Drawing* by botanical artist Pamela Taylor (Ph.D., Plant Ecology, Cambridge University). The book was published in April 2025 by Two Rivers Press. The original artwork used for the cover of *Secrets of Trees* was featured in our *17th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration* in 2024 and is in our Art collection as a gift of the artist. (See the Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration database and the Catalogue of the Botanical Art Collection at the Hunt Institute database.)

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
A Research Division of Carnegie Mellon University

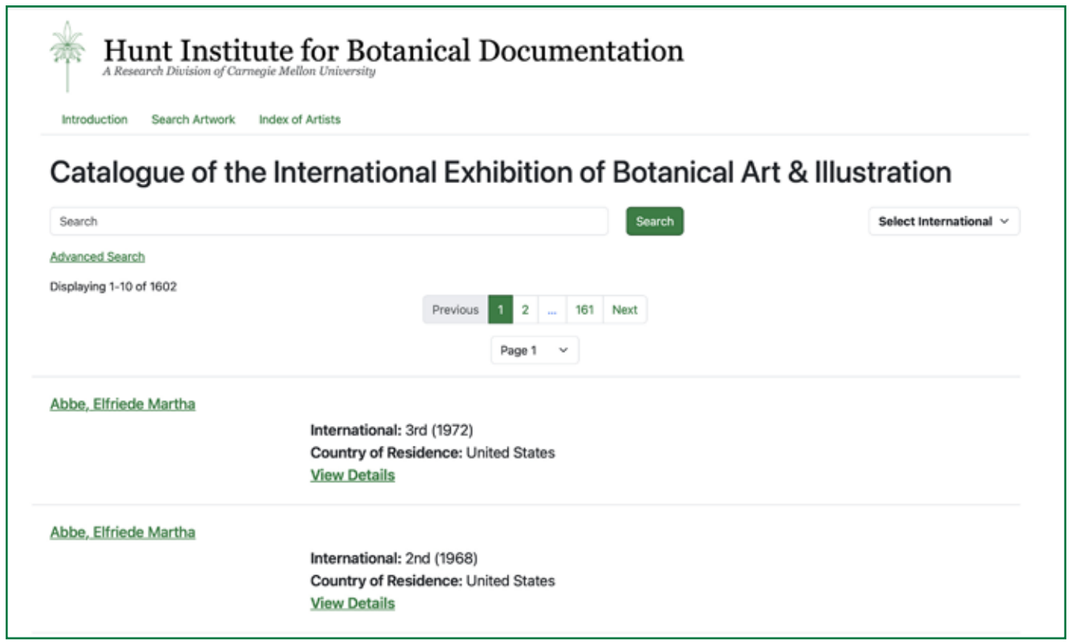
Floras

MBL 1364

No title page image available at this time.

Title: [Mémoires botaniques extraits e la Description de l'Égypte].
Author: Delile, Alire Raffeneau, 1778-1850
View biographical record for author
Place of Publication & Publisher: s.l. [Paris].
Date of Publication: s.d. [1813 or later].
Geographic Region(s): Égypte [Egypt]
Geographic Region Number(s): 610
Printer: Imprimerie Impériale.
Data Acquisition Location: B-SB (no plates)
Location Observed: BP-BM; C (incomplete); G; LE; MH-FH (incomplete); MH-HL (incomplete); P (incomplete; no plates)
Secondary Source(s): Pritzel (Ed. 2) 2130; Jackson 350; Miltitz 111; Dierbach 189; Bradley Bibliogr. 1: 487; Tucker 1: 576; TL-2 1: sub 1353; Guédès, M. J. Soc. Bibliogr. Nat. Hist. 9(1): 50. 1978 [Nov.].
Publication Format: 2° in 4's.
Pagination: 1-6, 1-14, 1-10, 1-34, 1-176.
Notes: A collection of 5 botanical contributions by Delile, extracted from: Description de l'Égypte, with independent pagination. :: The information available about this item is incomplete and contradictory. The collective title is reported by Pritzel, but no title-page has been seen and probably none is existing. Some libraries have only one or some of the contributions. The date is also questionable. Each of the first 4 contributions has an imprint with the original date of publication (1810 or 1813) on the bottom of its last page, also stating the place of publication and printer; the last one is undated. If the text was published without the plates, the date of publication could be narrowed down to late in 1813 or early in 1814, the same as the date for vol. 2(2) of the Histoire naturelle of Description de l'Égypte. However, if it was published together with the plates, the date would be 1826, because only then did the plates of Description de l'Égypte. Histoire naturelle. Atlas. Vol. 2 [bis] become available. There is also the possibility that that text and plates were published separately. Because no title-page for the plates is existing, it is hard to prove they were really part of this work. Pritzel reports the plates, but the copy at B-SB (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz), certainly seen by him, does not have any plates (however, a separate volume of plates may have been lost during World War II). The P (Laboratoire de Phanéogamie, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle) copy (which only includes Flore d'Égypte. Explication des planches) has no plates either. On the other hand the MH-HL (Harvard University Herbaria Libraries) copy (which lacks the Description du palmier Doum) has 63 plates accompanying the text, according to Tucker, and the MH-FH (Farlow Herbarium of Harvard University) and NYBG (New York Botanical Garden) copies (which only include Flore d'Egypte. Explication des planches) have 64 plates, and the CU (University of California) copy (which lacks the Description du palmier Doum and Florae aegyptiacae illustratio) has even 65 plates, but those plates might as well be part of the Description de l'Égypte, especially considering the fact that the additional plate(s) does (do) occur in certain copies of the particular atlas volume of the Description (see TL-2: 1353). An examination of those copies mentioned might reveal further details, especially if the blind stamp, characteristic for the plates of the second edition of Description de l'Égypte, is present or not. If it were present, that would rule out the plates being part of the present work. The MiU (University of Michigan) copy (which lacks the Description du palmier Doum and Histoire des plantes cultivées en Égypte) has 64 plates, said to be of the second edition. :: Contents: Description du palmier Doum de la Haute Égypte, ou Cucifera thebaïca, pp. 1-6; Histoire des plantes cultivées en Égypte, pp. 1-14; Mémoire sur les plantes qui croissent spontanément en Égypte, pp. 1-10; Florae aegyptiacae illustratio, pp. 1-34; Flore d'Égypte. Explications des planches, pp. 1-176. :: A separate edition, also in 2°, of the contribution: Mémoire sur les plantes qui croissent spontanément en Égypte, was recently described and illustrated by Guédès, M., J. Soc. Bibliogr. Nat. Hist. 9(1): 50, 51 (fig. 6), 52. 1978 [Nov.]. Its headline title reads: Flore d'Égypte. Mémoire sur les plantes qui croissent spontanément dans ce pays. s.l. [Paris], s.d. [1813 or later]. Its text comprises 8 rather than 10 pages. Copies: MH-FH (Farlow Herbarium of Harvard University); MiU (University of Michigan); NYBG (New York Botanical Garden); P (Laboratoire de Phanéogamie, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle).
Language Statement: Text predominantly in French; one contribution (Florae aegyptiacae illustratio) completely in Latin; description of plant in another contribution (Description du palmier de la Haute Égypte) partly in Latin.
Illustration Statement: 62 BW plates (?).
Reprint Information: Reprint from: Description de l'Égypte. Paris. Histoire naturelle. Vol. 1(1): 53-58. 1810; Vol. 2(1): 1-24, 49-82. 1813; Vol. 2(2): 145-320. 1813 or 1814; Atlas Vol. 2 [bis]: pls. 1-62. [<1826>] (HI 01363).

White departs Institute



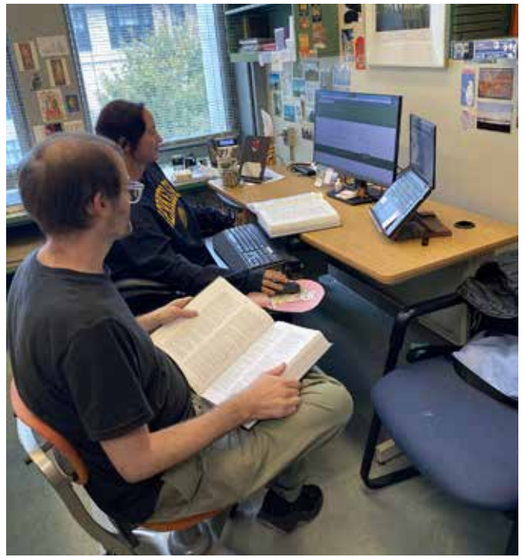
To see artwork by and biographical information of the 1,255 artists in our International series, search the Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration database.

in bibliography, 1963–1965; bibliographer, 1965–1981) and others who worked on it during the 1970s. The Hunt Institute is pleased to debut the retooled Floras as the second of our Bibliographia Huntiana databases. We will launch the retooled database soon.

White took the lead in redeveloping the Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration database before the 17th International in 2024. The beauty of the database is that it takes 60 years of limited-access print catalogues and makes the artwork and artist biographical information accessible to everyone, wherever in the world they are, for free. Since its debut on 17 September 2024, the database has had 9,251 pageviews with 1,275 active users engaging with the content of the 1st–17th Internationals.

In the new year we hope White can return on a consulting basis so that we can get back to work. In the meantime Assistant Director/Principal Data Curator J. Dustin Williams with the assistance of Bibliographic Assistant Helena Meier, who joins us from Carnegie Mellon's Temporary Employment Services, are handling BPH queries and continuing production of our databases.

—Scarlett T. Townsend,
Publication and Marketing Manager



Assistant Director/Principal Data Curator J. Dustin Williams and Bibliographic Assistant Helena Meier hard at work on BPH, photograph by Scarlett T. Townsend, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

News from the Art Department

As the leaves start to change color and the buildings fill with students, we in the Art Department welcome the fall and the possibilities it offers on a college campus. This spring and summer Curator of Art Lydia Rosenberg balanced a busy exhibition schedule as a practicing artist with her Institute work, engaging with aspiring artists on campus and leading the charge on workshops and mini displays while I answered research queries, worked on some exciting projects with outside partners and focused on long-term planning for the department. This fall's exhibition is a co-curated project with our Archives, allowing for interesting cross-departmental collaborations and freeing the team for some much-needed time to focus on organizing artwork storage, updating our databases and other administrative tasks.

One task that has been a source of interest has been auditing and data cleaning the Catalogue of the Botanical Art Collection at the Hunt Institute database and its sibling databases, the Catalogue of the Botanical Art Collection at the Hunt Institute: Digital Public Domain Images database and the Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration database. This has provided a great opportunity to answer some statistical questions about the 33,000+ objects in our care. For example, did you know that our collection is approximately 52% drawings, 33% paintings and 15% prints? While we do have photographs and sculpture in our collections, they number too few to make much of a wedge in the pie chart.

These data audits are an ongoing project, and one of the upcoming areas we plan to revisit could use the help of our incredibly knowledgeable audience: the identification of our unknown artists. While there are many artists for whom we truly have no information, there are also quite a few who are known only by initials or simply as "Miss" or "Mrs." We hope to gain clarity and recognize the contributions made to botanical history by any artist we can identify. The next time you are scrolling through our databases and come across an artist you recognize but whom we have labeled as "Unknown," please feel free to contact us.

Abbe sculpture

We are very pleased to welcome *The Illuminator* back to the Hunt Institute. This sculpture, carved from American black walnut by Elfriede Abbe (1919–2012), was displayed here in 1969 in an exhibition featuring her botanical sculptures along with drawings by Peter Takal (1905–1995) and parchment flowers by Norris P. Jones (1895–1978). Born in Washington, D.C., on 6 February 1919, Abbe graduated with a B.F.A from Cornell University in 1940 and from 1942 until her retirement in 1974 worked there as a scientific illustrator, best known for her botanical subjects. Her wood engravings of herbs, flowering plants and fungi were included in our *Contemporary Botanical Art & Illustration* [1st International] (1964) and our *2nd International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration* (1968), but this was a unique showing of her large-scale botanical sculptures, some carved in wood or marble and others cast in bronze.

At this exhibition Dorothy Sterling saw the sculpture and subsequently purchased it for the Fine and Rare Book Room in the Hunt Library at Carnegie Mellon University in memory of her husband, Homer E. Sterling. At the time of his death in 1961, he was associate professor of graphic arts in the Department of Printing Management at the university. He collected illuminated manuscript leaves and books on fine printing, which his wife also donated in his memory to the Fine and Rare Book Room. It is no surprise that this sculpture spoke to her.

As Abbe described it, this sculpture was inspired by her time in Europe in 1961 while researching and developing *Plants of Virgil's Georgics* (1965), which included woodcut illustrations of the plant species described by Virgil in his poem, organized by modern botanical standards into families, and including botanical information on each plant. While abroad, Abbe visited historic libraries, rare book collections, gardens and herbaria. As Abbe described in a contemporaneous brochure for the piece, she "thought particularly about Matthioli [*sic*], and perhaps something of his character crept into the figure, although it is certainly not a specific person." *The Illuminator* features a capped kneeling figure drawing a golden illuminated leafy vine on a scroll, the only pigment on the otherwise polished natural walnut finish. In his other hand, he holds the living portion of the plant, which emerges as though coming directly off the page and wraps up over his right shoulder. This simple and elegant detail creates layers of real and rendered in the sculpture, a meta portrayal of an artist documenting botanical subjects by an artist known best for her

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Bulletin
of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation

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News from the Art Department

work documenting botanical subjects. We thank Sam Lemley, curator of special collections at Carnegie Mellon University Libraries, for his work facilitating the transfer of this sculpture to us, where it joins the 83 artworks, 4 original printing blocks and several books in our Art and Library collections. Next time you visit, take a moment to admire this newest addition, residing beside the glass doors to the reading room.

Recent gifts

We are grateful to artist Elizabeth Golz Rush for donating two original artworks to our collection this summer. Both illustrations of iris and associated insects and violets and fritillary butterflies are composed in watercolor and graphite pencil on paper and highlight the relationships between these beautiful flowering plants and their respective insect allies.

Future exhibitions

This spring we invite you to learn about pollination and the history of how we came to understand, and depict, such a complex system. Through artworks, books and specimens, we will trace how our knowledge of plant reproduction changed over time, how the concept of coevolution developed and how some of these relationships have been depicted over the centuries. Join us in March to learn what those birds and bees are up to.

We are already planning for our *18th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration*, scheduled for fall 2029. See our International Series Web page for submission guidelines and form and deadlines. As always, if you have any questions not answered in the guidelines, please reach out directly. We look forward to seeing your submissions.

—Carrie Roy, Senior Curator of Art

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