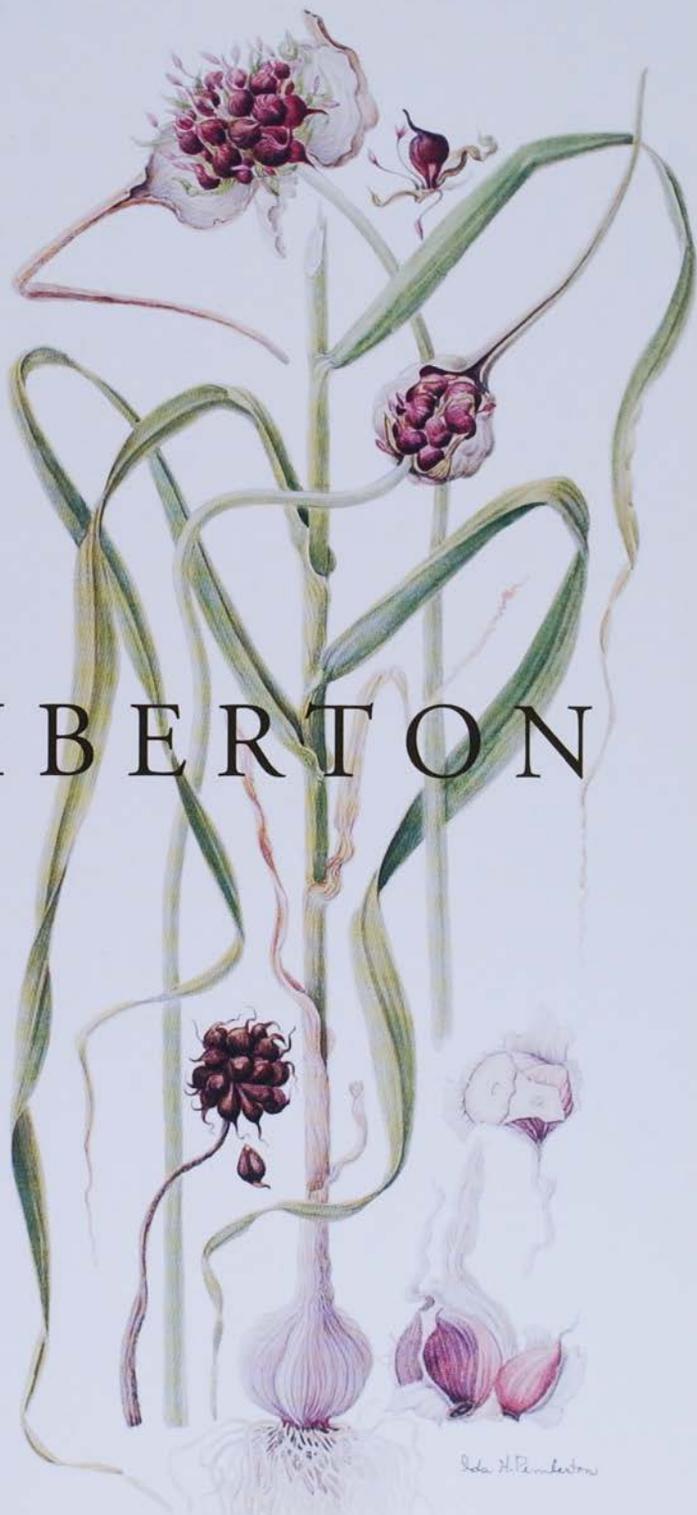


*The
Healing Plants
of*
Ida Hrubesky

P E M B E R T O N





The
Healing Plants
of

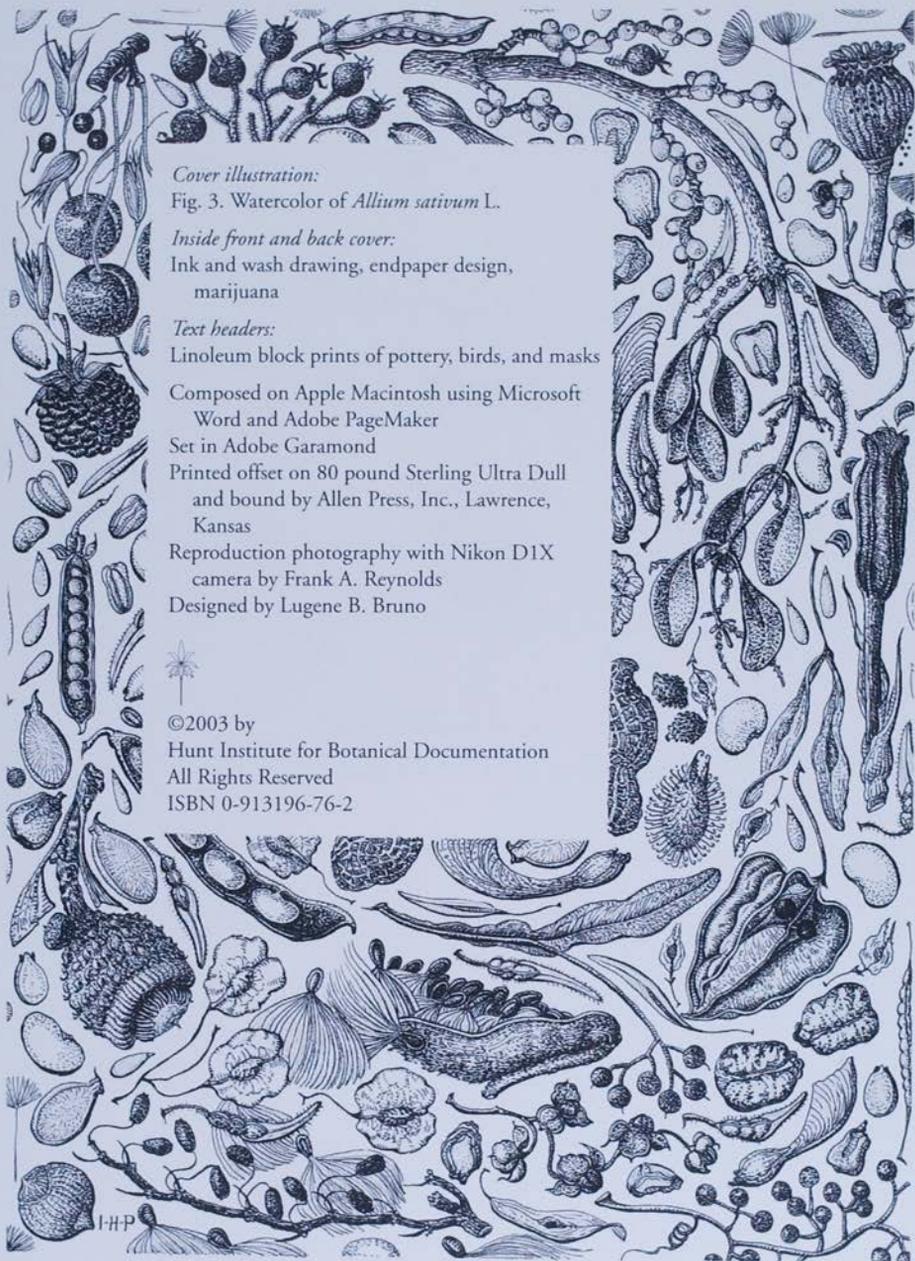
I d a H r u b e s k y
P E M B E R T O N



Catalogue of an exhibition
25 September 2003–29 February 2004

James J. White and Lugene B. Bruno
with essays by Carolyn Crawford
and Victoria Matthews

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
2003



Cover illustration:

Fig. 3. Watercolor of *Allium sativum* L.

Inside front and back cover:

Ink and wash drawing, endpaper design,
marijuana

Text headers:

Linoleum block prints of pottery, birds, and masks

Composed on Apple Macintosh using Microsoft
Word and Adobe PageMaker

Set in Adobe Garamond

Printed offset on 80 pound Sterling Ultra Dull
and bound by Allen Press, Inc., Lawrence,
Kansas

Reproduction photography with Nikon D1X
camera by Frank A. Reynolds

Designed by Lugene B. Bruno



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ISBN 0-913196-76-2

The Hunt Institute

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31. *Linum usitatissimum* L.



PREFACE

James J. White

Between 1935 and 1942 Ida Hrubesky Pemberton, a Denver artist and an enthusiastic gardener, sought bulbs, roots and seeds from around the world in order to create 64 paintings of medicinal herbs. With the aid of a microscope she incorporated enlarged details into her paintings. Her growing collection of artworks was made with a book in mind (though it was not published) for she prepared designs for endpapers and a cover titled "Drug Plants."

Mrs. Pemberton's paintings were praised more than once in the correspondence to the Hunt Institute from artist Anne Ophelia Todd Dowden. Mrs. Dowden sent us a brief article from a 1951 *Herb Grower* in which author Carol Woodward described Mrs. Pemberton's earlier visit to the New York Botanical Garden library and extolled the contents of the portfolio that the artist modestly displayed.

The paintings were exhibited at the Denver Museum of Natural History (now the Denver Museum of Nature and Science) and the New York Botanical Garden (1950). There they gained widespread recognition and were acquired by the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History in Boulder (1955). After display at the Smithsonian Institution that same year, they were organized for a tour by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) that included the Cranbrook Institute of Science in Michigan (1957) and two venues in the Pittsburgh area—Old Economy Village (1966) and the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (1976).

The SITES exhibition was displayed for a second time (1974) at the Smithsonian, where I was then employed in the Department of Botany. I shared my enthusiasm for this exhibition at a meeting of the Botanical Society of Washington and again in correspondence with Curator of Art John V. Brindle at the Hunt Institute. More recently our friend and botanical artist Carolyn Crawford, whose career was influenced by Mrs. Pemberton, contacted the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History on behalf of the Hunt Institute, expediting the loan of two of Pemberton's paintings, *Castor Bean* and *Pumpkin*, for our *10th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration* (2001/2002) and accompanying catalogue.

We acknowledge crucial assistance from Linda Cordell, Director of the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, Tom A. Ranker, Associate Professor and Curator of Botany, and Tim M. Hogan and Nan Lederer, Collection Managers, all of the University of Colorado Museum Herbarium. We are indebted to Carolyn Crawford and her husband William F. Jennings of Louisville, Colorado, for their research and biographical information on Mrs. Pemberton and to Victoria Matthews, horticultural taxonomist and editor, for her study of Mrs. Pemberton's technique. Also we acknowledge Hunt Institute editor Scarlett Townsend for diligent proofreading and graphics manager Frank Reynolds for his usually excellent photography.



27. *Gossypium hirsutum* L.



11. *Cannabis sativa* L.



22. *Digitalis lanata* J. F. Ehrh.



9. *Brassica nigra* (L.) W. D. J. Koch and *Sinapis alba* [= *Brassica hirta* Moench]



IDA HRUBESKY
PEMBERTON
—
A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY
Carolyn Crawford

INTRODUCTION

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi, or Kinnikinnick, is a rather diminutive, evergreen ground cover in the Heath family, found primarily in the montane and subalpine zones in the Rocky Mountains but also in the eastern United States. Because it is nondescript in overall appearance, most people would not expect this lowly plant to be an inspiration for a beginning botanical artist. But thanks to Ida Hrubesky Pemberton's insightful depiction of this plant, among others, I was inspired 21 years ago to follow in her footsteps.

One day in early January 1982, I found a brief notice in a Denver newspaper of an exhibit of Ida's paintings. I had decided to pursue a career as a botanical artist, and curiosity about anything to do with botanical art led me to seek out the exhibit at the Belmar Museum in Lakewood, Colorado. However, I was not prepared for the powerful, stunning watercolors that greeted me when I walked into the museum. *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* was a species of which I had already painted several in-depth studies. Among the 50 paintings was Ida's own *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (Fig. 5), one of the most thorough, intense pieces of botanical art I had ever seen up to that point. I distinctly remember going weak in the knees and feeling tears well up in my eyes. I went back to that exhibit at least a half-dozen times during the next month-and-a-half, dragging friends and neighbors along to see Ida's work. The staff at the museum was so kind as to give me a color poster of Ida's *Trillium erectum* (Fig. 42), which I had framed and cherish to this day.

The collection of Ida's paintings belongs to the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History. Her husband, W. E. Pemberton, sold the entire group of paintings to the museum in 1955, shortly after Ida's death. Since the Belmar exhibit in 1982, I have had the privilege of viewing parts or all of the collection several more times at the museum. Truly the collection improves with each viewing, and the singularity of her thorough approach to botanical illustration becomes more and more obvious.

In October 2002, I was invited to exhibit my botanical art at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History. On the opening night, I gave a short talk to the museum patrons, members and other attendees about Ida's work and how she had inspired me. I might also add that it has been a goal of mine for 21 years to have Ida's work displayed at the Hunt Institute and for her to receive the recognition she so richly deserves. In January 2001, Tom Ranker, curator of botany at the museum herbarium, and I selected two of Ida's pieces, her *Pumpkin* and *Castor Bean*, to be exhibited in the Hunt Institute's *10th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration*, which premiered in October 2001. In the fall of 2002, I was delighted to learn that an agreement was made between the museum and the Hunt Institute to do this one-person tribute to Ida and her work. It is my privilege to write this essay on her life.



5. *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (L.) K. Spreng.



EARLY LIFE

About 40 miles west-northwest of Omaha, Nebraska, just north of the Platte River, is located the town of Schuyler. It is the county seat of Colfax County, both named for Schuyler Colfax (1823–1885), vice-president during Ulysses S. Grant's first term. It was here in Schuyler on 24 April 1890 that Ida Rohann Hrubesky was born, the youngest of five children.

Ida's parents were Chauncy W. (1850–1932) and Anna Hrubesky (1852–1931), and Ida's middle name, Rohann, was her mother's maiden name. Both the Hrubeskys and the Rohanns had emigrated from Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic. The Hrubesky surname has at least two alternative spellings (Hrubecky and Hrubeska), and different branches of the family use different spellings. Ida's paternal grandparents, Anton (1810–1891) and Anna (1820–1884) Hrubesky, and their three sons came to America in the late 1850s from the town of Temelin, Bohemia, apparently spending some time in Wisconsin and Iowa before settling permanently in Nebraska. Ida's maternal grandparents, John and Julia Rohann, were farming near Waukau, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, in the 1850s. The Rohanns had four children, Leopold, Thomas, Eva, and Anna. Chauncy Hrubesky and Anna Rohann were married in 1878 in Racine, Wisconsin, shortly before moving to Nebraska.

In 1878, Ida's paternal grandparents, parents, two uncles (Thomas H., 1847–1912 and Frank J., 1858–1937), an aunt (Mary, 1865–1893), and Thomas' wife and children moved to Schuyler, a total of about 11 Hrubeskys. They immediately set up business as blacksmiths and carriage- and wagon-builders, under the name of Hrubesky Brothers, with Ida's father Chauncy W. and uncle Thomas H. as principals. They were hardworking and active in the community. Chauncy W. Hrubesky is listed as being on the volunteer fire department and on the board of trustees of the Opera House. Ida's other uncle, Frank J., was Colfax County commissioner in 1898–1899. Ida's grandparents, aunt, uncles, and most of their families are buried in the cemetery at Schuyler.

In 1896, Ida's parents relocated their family to Geneva, Fillmore County, Nebraska. By 1898, Chauncy W. had purchased a combination furniture store and undertaking business in Geneva. Ida was 6 when the family moved to Geneva, which is located approximately 45 miles southwest of Lincoln. It is here that she spent the rest of her childhood, graduating from high school in 1908. Little is known of Ida's early years. She had two sisters, Lilian May and Lucile, and two brothers, Frank W. and Chauncy G.

According to Lilian, Ida's talent was probably inherited from their mother. Early in her childhood, Ida was known to "... have sketched and splashed



Ida Hrubesky as a young girl in Nebraska

paints about generously, ever alert to beautiful form and color. Various friends were happy recipients of cards and letters illustrated often with copied drawings of children's activities ..." (letter from Lilian Hrubesky to Hugo Rodeck, 2 April 1956). Obviously, Ida's abilities with design and color manifested themselves at an early age. We can also presume the young scientist in her was peering deep into flowers, ever curious of their inner workings.

Ida's sister Lucile (1879–1944) graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1911, with an A.B. degree in botany. She studied under Charles Edwin Bessey (1845–1915), a prominent botanist who developed a system of plant classification, and it is likely that Ida's interest in botany was influenced by her sister. Lucile is reported to have taught school and was the librarian at Kearney High School, Kearney, Nebraska, in the 1920s and 1930s. She never married and is buried in the family plot at Geneva.

Ida's sister Lilian (1880–1977) also was a librarian and was reported to be a college graduate as well, presumably from the University of Nebraska. Correspondence held in the University of Colorado Museum's Pemberton collection shows that Lilian lived in Nebraska City, Nebraska, and in Los Angeles. She also never married and is buried in the family plot at Geneva.

Ida's brother Chauncy G. (1884–1951) was a Fillmore County surveyor. He, too, is buried in Geneva. Ida's brother Frank W. (1886–1964) also attended the University of Nebraska, and was on campus in 1906, but I have not determined whether he graduated. In 1915, he received his embalmer's diploma and then operated the family's undertaking business in Geneva after 1920. He and his wife Myrtle are also buried in Geneva.



COLLEGE YEARS

For two semesters (1910–1911), Ida attended Doane College in Crete, Nebraska, a small college located about 20 miles southwest of Lincoln. Her transcript indicates she pursued a rather typical liberal arts course of study, including a four-hour course in general botany. Ida was taking botany as a freshman at Doane at the same time that her sister Lucile was a senior in botany at the University of Nebraska.

After one year at Doane, she enrolled at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, beginning in the fall of 1911, just after her sister Lucile had finished. She took several courses in drawing and fine art and studied there until 1913. Much larger classes, coupled with a hearing impairment, made Ida's studies there a greater challenge. Records show she left after four semesters and did not graduate.



In 1915, after a two-year hiatus, Ida finally decided to “play to her strengths” and enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago. Her family helped her financially so that she could afford to attend. Complete transcript records were apparently not kept on each student at that point, but according to a letter from the institute dated 13 April 1956, Ida more than likely studied pictorial illustration, decorative illustration, decorative composition, still life, and sketching from life. She studied there until 1916 but apparently did not graduate.

Postcards Ida sent to Lilian during this period indicate that she and her friends definitely enjoyed the opera and the many other cultural amenities Chicago had to offer. It is also very likely that Chicago is where Ida met her future husband, William E. Pemberton.

Ida in costume, ca.1915–1916, most likely during her time at the Art Institute of Chicago



MARRIAGE and FAMILY



William E. Pemberton, born in 1881, was nine years Ida's senior. His obituary (Denver Post, 5 November 1963) states he "was born in Ontario, Canada." They were married in Ida's hometown of Geneva, Nebraska, in 1918. Ida was 28 and William was 37.

I have not been able to determine where Ida and William first settled after their marriage. Perhaps they lived in Nebraska near her family, but their whereabouts from 1918 to 1924 have not been determined with certainty. Ida is reported to have been teaching school in 1920.

However, city directories accessed at the Denver Public Library place them in Denver starting in 1924, where they are listed as living at 1320 South Vine Street. At that time, William was listed as a manager for the Farmers & Merchants Creamery Company. He worked for several different companies in different capacities until the early 1940s. At that time, he became a realtor, sold insurance, and brokered mortgage loans.

Over the next 26 years after their arrival in Denver and before Ida's death, they lived at several addresses. Between the time they arrived in Denver and the end of World War II, in addition to the Vine Street address, they lived at 1080 South Franklin Street (1926–1931), 331 Corona Street (1934–1940), and 20 Corona Street (1942–1946), all on Denver's near southeast side. They were at 331 Corona the longest, and during that period it is likely that Ida was able to establish the garden that produced the plants for these paintings.

In 1931, at age 41, Ida gave birth to their only child, a son. Tragically, the boy was killed at age 4 from being struck by a car. Records do not indicate that Ida and William had any other children, and William's obituary does not mention a son preceding him in death.



Ida and William Pemberton



Ida Pemberton's book jacket design for her proposed book "Drug Plants"

In 1935, Ida found inner solace at this point in her life by commencing the painting of these outstanding, majestic botanical artworks. It took Ida about 7 years to complete the 65 works that comprise the collection. Her decision to choose herbal and medicinal plants was out of a perceived necessity of limiting her focus on "one group of plants at a time." She definitely had plans for more groups later. She also intended these works to be published somewhere in a book and worked tirelessly to try to make this a reality.

Amongst the "lore" that surrounds Ida's botanical art career, one fact keeps popping up: she grew all of the plants she painted from seed and bulbs she acquired from around the world. It is also said that she was an avid gardener, and even Lilian said she had an extensive collection of botanical and horticultural books. Clearly the approach Ida took to creating each painting would indicate all of the above had to be true. The period 1935 to 1942, during which she painted the collection, correlates well with the dates she and William lived at 331 Corona Street. This would have provided the time to establish and maintain a garden to cultivate these plants. Many of the plants are large-rooted perennials that would take several years to mature sufficiently to paint a truly representative portrait of the species.

However, from the end of World War II to 1951, Ida and William lived in four different residences in Denver. From 1942 to 1946, they lived at 20 Corona Street; in 1947, 788 Adams Street; in 1948, 970 Corona Street; and

from 1949 to 1951, at 1170 South Garfield Street. It would be very unlikely that she would have been able to establish any sizeable kind of garden at any of these residences in such short periods of time.

Letters from Lilian to Dr. Rodeck also indicate that William's health began to suffer around 1946 (he would have been 65 at that time) and that he and Ida were experiencing financial reverses. It was largely because of this that Ida began to pursue the idea of publication with even greater zeal than before. She designed endpapers in ink and a cover in ink and watercolor for the unpublished "Drug Plants." She also produced botanical art for the Home Garden Club of Denver: very detailed, intricate pen-and-ink drawings of many different seedpods.

In October of 1949, Ida carried her portfolio to the Art Institute of Chicago, the New York Botanical Garden, *National Geographic Magazine*, the Smithsonian Institution, and *Life Magazine*. Always in the hope that she would find a publisher, she never gave up.

In the fall of 1950, Ida was honored with a one-person exhibition at the New York Botanical Garden. It was at this exhibit that another Colorado native, botanical artist Anne Ophelia Todd Dowden, found inspiration that really got her career going. A personal friend of mine, Anne Ophelia needs no introduction to anyone familiar with superlative botanical art. She still talks of how Ida's work inspired her.

Sadly, Ida's life and career were cut short. On Tuesday, 23 January 1951, she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage (stroke) and died at her home at 1170 South Garfield in Denver. She was interred two days later at Crown Hill Cemetery in suburban Wheat Ridge, Colorado. There was no obituary in either of the two Denver dailies; only a very short funeral notice was published.



Ida's marker in Crown Hill Cemetery, Wheat Ridge, Colorado
Photo: Carolyn Crawford



16. *Conium maculatum* L.



21. *Delphinium ajacis* L. [= *Consolida ambigua* (L.) P. W. Ball & Heyw.]



UNIVERSITY
of COLORADO
ACQUISITION
of COLLECTION

Shortly thereafter, William moved from the South Garfield address to 1350 Fillmore Street. In 1955, after some negotiations, he sold Ida's collection of paintings, along with incidental drawings, to the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History. Soon after acquisition of the collection, the museum agreed to loan 50 of the paintings to the Smithsonian for a traveling exhibit. During the next several years, the exhibit traveled to a number of different venues around the United States.

Dr. Hugo Rodeck, the then-director of the museum, and Lilian Hrubesky corresponded frequently, and she became his one good source for biographical information about her sister. By this time, William's health had become so fragile and his memory so impaired that the museum and Lilian felt it best to rely on other people for information about Ida's life and career.

When I began this project, I was given a file box of correspondence, photos, and other artifacts, with which to piece together as best I could the pertinent facts regarding Ida's life. As I said earlier, the letters Ida's sister Lilian wrote were by far the best source of insight. However, several of Ida's friends provided information to the museum at the time the collection was acquired. Nellie Williams Beaven (Mrs. W. C. Beaven), a librarian in Geneva, Nebraska, penned a lovely tribute to Ida, stating: "I can truthfully say that I never knew anyone more loveable. Naturally of sunny disposition and unusual thoughtfulness, she was helpful to all who knew her." Katherine Bruderlin Crisp (Mrs. W. H. Crisp) of Denver responded to inquiries of the museum with a great deal of helpful information about Denver addresses and her garden club activities. Mrs. Crisp provided the Home Garden Club of Denver directory with the artwork acknowledgement to Ida. Of Ida's work, Mrs. Crisp said: "The result is not a cold recording of minutiae, but warm, lifelike images, with texture of leaf and petal that give sensation to the fingertips, without their being touched."

In the packet of materials about Ida, I came across William E. Pemberton's obituary. He passed on Sunday, 3 November 1963. Since he was buried at Crown Hill Cemetery, I decided to search for Ida's grave marker there as well. The office staff directed me to the two separate gravesites. Since Ida preceded William in death by 12 years, they were not buried side-by-side, but in separate sections of the cemetery. A Pemberton family plot had not been purchased ahead of time.

Much could be said about the artwork, but it speaks more clearly than anything I could say. My colleague, Victoria Matthews, was drawn to Ida's two pieces at the Hunt Institute in 2001 and asked me to arrange a viewing of the entire collection before her return to England in the summer of 2002. She will tell you in her own words about the day that Ida came into her life.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In compiling this biographical sketch of Ida, I must acknowledge the help of several individuals, without whom I would not have been able to finish this research. The staff at Western History and Genealogical Library at the Denver Public Library was most helpful in directing me to microfilm records and other references. Ms. Sharlene K. Miller, Webmaster for the Fillmore County, Nebraska, Web site of the Nebraska Genealogical Web (NEGenWeb), provided additional material on Ida's brother Frank. Her tireless work in maintaining the very helpful Web site is also deeply appreciated. Most helpful was Ms. Sarah Schneider of Springfield, Virginia. She and her brother James C. Murdoch have been compiling the Hrubesky/Hrubecky/Hrubeska and Rohann family genealogies. They provided us with the conclusive genealogical information to tie together the bits and pieces about Ida's family that were gleaned from the internet. Sarah and James, descendants of both the Hrubeckys and Rohanns, are distant cousins of Ida. But most of all, I thank my husband, William Jennings, for all of his help with the internet searches, the section on the Hrubesky family history, the compilation of the Hrubesky family tree (now deposited in the Hunt Institute Archives), and most of all for his unwavering moral support throughout this project.



Carolyn Crawford

Carolyn received a bachelor of fine arts degree in education from Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma. She is a botanical artist working in watercolor pencil. Her work has been included in numerous exhibitions, including the Royal Horticultural Society's *Westminster Fortnightly Show* where she received the Grenfell Silver Medal (1988); the Hunt Institute's *6th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration* (1988); the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators' *Picturing Natural History* held at the Smithsonian Institution (1996); and Longwood Gardens' *Flora 2000*. She was one of three judges at the Denver Botanic Gardens' *Third Annual Botanical Illustration Show* in 1999. Her work has been commissioned by numerous organizations, such as the Denver Orchid Society, the Colorado Native Plant Society, the American Rock Garden Society, and Botanical Interests, Inc., a seed company of Broomfield, Colorado. From 1991 to 2000, she was a member of the faculty of the School of Botanical Illustration at the Denver Botanic Gardens and is currently teaching classes for the Colorado Native Plant Society. She is also a field botanist and a plant taxonomist specializing in the milkweed family (Asclepiadaceae).



Dela. H. Permentosi

14. *Citrus aurantium* L. var. *sinensis*



38. *Punica granatum* L.



39. *Sanguinaria canadensis* L.



43. *Tussilago farfara* L.



IDA HRUBESKY
PEMBERTON

—
AN

APPRECIATION

Victoria Matthews

I first saw paintings by Ida Hrubesky Pemberton at the *10th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration* at the Hunt Institute in 2001. From across the gallery an extraordinary watercolor caught my eye, for among the many fine works by contemporary artists it stood out in its complexity and vitality. I remember rudely breaking off in the middle of a conversation and rushing to inspect it more closely. It depicted the common castor oil or castor bean plant (*Ricinus communis*), and it initially reminded me of some of the much earlier illustrations by Ferdinand Lukas Bauer for his *Illustrationes Florae Novae Hollandiae* (London, [1806–]1813), or Georg Dionysius Ehret's sand-box tree (*Hura crepitans*) that appeared in Christoph Jakob Trew's *Plantae Selectae* (Nuremberg, 1750–1773). The similarity lay in the numerous minute dissections of flowers and fruits, all painted in remarkable detail and forming an integral part of the composition. In the Institute exhibition there was another painting by Ida, of a pumpkin (*Cucurbita pepo*), the plant spreading exuberantly across the paper, with a fat fruit cut in half to show the arrangement of seeds. Both these paintings shouted “look at me” in a way that could not be ignored.

At the time, I lived in Denver, Colorado, and I was excited to discover that the collection of Ida's paintings is housed at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History in Boulder. I *had* to see more of Ida's work and find what other plants she had painted, and so I was delighted when Carolyn Crawford offered to arrange for me to see the collection. It did not disappoint. The sheer quality was astounding.

Despite mentioning Bauer and Ehret above, I would not put Ida into the same elevated class as these supreme masters. Nevertheless, she had an outstanding ability to show a plant in great detail and to produce a representative painting in which the identification of the plant was in no doubt. She painted in relatively broad strokes, refined by overpainting in more detail, yet without the tiny, often labored brushstrokes used by some artists—brushstrokes that sometimes kill the vitality of an illustration. Her paintings demonstrate her meticulous observation of the form and structure of plants and her accurate use not only of color but also of light and shade, both in the main plant portraits and in the dissections. Luckily for a modern audience, the paintings have been hidden away from light, and so the color to which she gave so much attention has been preserved.

The inclusion of dissections puts most of her paintings firmly into the category of botanical illustration rather than flower painting. She chose to paint medicinal and other useful plants. Most are American natives, but there are occasional “exotics” such as *Citrus aurantiacum* var. *sinensis* (Fig. 14) and *Punica granatum* (Fig. 38) as well as introductions from Europe, for example *Colebitum autumnale* (Fig. 15) and *Convallaria majalis* (Fig. 17).



15. *Colchicum autumnale* L.

A small number of Ida's paintings are straightforward portraits, lacking dissections, such as *Solanum dulcamara* (Fig. 40). In some of her paintings she has shown the underside of a detached leaf, placed behind the main plant, paler and in monochrome, which is not only botanically useful but also artistically effective. This can be seen in, among others, the paintings of *Sanguinaria canadensis* (Fig. 39), *Trillium erectum* (Fig. 42) and *Tussilago farfara* (Fig. 43).

Most paintings include careful dissections that, like the complete plants, are depicted in color or in a monochrome wash. Spectacular examples are *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (Fig. 5), *Cimicifuga racemosa* (Fig. 13) and *Hyoscyamus niger* (Fig. 29). Usually the dissections are arranged to fill spaces and balance the composition: sometimes, as in *Atropa belladonna* (Fig. 8), they successfully overlap the main plant. The painting of *Thymus vulgaris* (Fig. 41) has large-scale dissections that almost overwhelm the plant itself. Occasionally her compositions are unexpected: in the painting of *Cimicifuga racemosa* she placed a fruiting spike and some detached fruits towards the center of the plant, among the leaves, perhaps because the leafy stem and flowers take up so much of the space on the paper. A feature of most paintings is that all stages in development are included: buds, flowers and fruit. The painting of *Geranium maculatum* (Fig. 26) even shows an old leaf that has developed the typical red coloration of age. *Allium sativum* (Fig. 3) and *Hyoscyamus niger* are painted with dead and dying lower leaves, and some of the leaves of *Atropa belladonna* have insect damage. Roots are frequently shown because in medicinal plants they are often important. Indeed the inclusion of roots adds to the overall attractiveness of the portrait.

Some artists prefer to paint only certain types of plants: they may be skillful at depicting delicate plants such as the narrow-leaved *Dianthus superbus*, but they are not so happy dealing with large areas such as the big leaves and flowers of a rhododendron or a water lily. Plants with heads of many tiny flowers, such as *Ceanothus* or members of the Umbelliferae, present a different challenge—one that not all illustrators will undertake. Looking at the range of species painted by Ida, it is obvious that she had the ability to paint any plant successfully, from the solid *Urginea scilla* (Fig. 44) to the fragile *Linum usitatissimum* (Fig. 31). She possessed a technique that could express both strength and subtlety.

Her seaweed illustrations were presumably done from specimens that had been gathered and floated onto stout paper or board, the standard way of preparing marine algae for painting. This is why they appear to be rather two-dimensional, yet she still captures the “essence” of the plants.

A design in ink and watercolor for the jacket of the unpublished “Drug Plants” shows her ability to create an interesting composition making use of elements from different plants. She used the creeping root and a leaf of the mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*, Fig. 36) to link the front and back covers, and added a





42. *Trillium erectum* L.

bulb of the autumn crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*, Fig. 15) and a longitudinally sliced root of pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*, Fig. 35). In addition to the jacket, Ida designed endpapers for the same book, drawn in ink and inspired by hemp (*Cannabis sativa*, Fig. 11). The repeat pattern of the leaves and enlarged male and female flowers is typical of some of the late 19th-century textiles and wallpapers that used plant forms, by designers such as William Morris, C. F. A. Voysey and Lewis F. Day. Ida's design is relatively simple with none of the elements overlapping as they do in some more complex Victorian designs, but it is nonetheless effective.

It is a pity that Ida was never able to publish her book of drug plants and that her paintings have been seen by relatively few people since they were last exhibited 21 years ago. We should be grateful that the Hunt Institute has, some 60 years after they were painted, made these watercolors available to a much wider audience and produced this catalogue that shows Ida's considerable expertise.

Ida did not paint for financial reward (no evidence has been found that she ever sold a painting) but because she really loved what she was doing. She was no hack illustrator merely "doing a job": her enthusiasm for her subjects shines through the paint. Her paintings are not only a testament to her powers of observation and her ability to create strong images on paper: they are inspirational. She deserves a place among the elite of American botanical artists.



Victoria Matthews

Victoria received a bachelor of science degree with honors in botany from the University of Liverpool and a diploma in plant taxonomy from the University of Edinburgh. She worked for eight years with the late Peter Davis on his 11-volume *Flora of Turkey* (Edinburgh, [1965]–1988) before joining the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh as horticultural taxonomist. In 1986 she moved to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, as assistant editor, and later editor, of *The Kew Magazine*, which has now reverted to its original title of *Curtis' Botanical Magazine*. She was appointed to the staff of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) in 1993, where she launched *The New Plantsman*, the society's scientific journal. The following year she moved to the United States but continued to work for the RHS as international clematis registrar. After five years in Miami and three in Denver, she returned to the United Kingdom and is now in charge of registering lilies as well as clematis for the RHS. She has written books on climbing plants and lilies and contributed both text and illustrations to several botanical and horticultural publications. In addition to looking for and photographing plants worldwide, she has a long-standing passion for botanical illustration and has collected original illustrations for some 40 years.



44. *Urginea scilla* Steinh. [= *U. maritima* (L.) Bak.]



13. *Cimicifuga racemosa* (L.) Nutt.



23. *Dryopteris marginalis* (L.) A. Gray and *Dryopteris filix-mas* (L.) Schott



8. *Atropa belladonna* L.



40. *Solanum dulcamara* L.



20. *Datura stramonium* L.



See H. & G. 1891

41. *Thymus vulgaris* L.



18. *Coriandrum sativum* L.



26. *Geranium maculatum* L.



36. *Podophyllum peltatum* L.



7. *Ascophyllum nodosum* (L.) Le Jolis



12. *Chondrus crispus* J. Stackhouse



28. *Hydrastis canadensis* L.



35. *Phytolacca americana* L.



Oda H. Pemberton

25. *Gaultheria procumbens* L.

Right: 4. *Aralia racemosa* L.





34. *Panax quinquefolius* L.



6. *Arisaema triphyllum* (L.) Torr.



30. *Inula helenicum* L.



24. *Eupatorium perfoliatum* L.



32. *Marrubium vulgare* L.



33. *Mentha x piperita* L.



1. *Aconitum napellus* L.



37. *Pulsatilla hirsutissima* Britton [= *Anemone* sp.]



17. *Convallaria majalis* L.



19. *Cypripedium pubescens* Willd. [= *C. calceolus* L. var. *pubescens* (Willd.) Correll]



2. *Agropyron repens* (L.) Beauvois



45. *Zea mays* L.



10. *Calendula officinalis* L.



CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

Figures 1–45 are watercolor on paper. Sheet sizes are mostly 62.5 x 45 cm or 50.5 x 36 cm, including some smaller watercolors that are attached. These artworks and the miscellaneous items are on loan from the Ida Hrubesky Pemberton Collection at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History.

1. (page 54) *Aconitum napellus* L. • Ranunculaceae • aconite, helmet flower, garden monkshood
2. (page 58) *Agropyron repens* (L.) Beauvois • Gramineae • quackgrass, witchgrass
3. (cover) *Allium sativum* L. • Liliaceae • garlic
4. (page 47) *Aralia racemosa* L. • Araliaceae • American spikenard
5. (page 11) *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (L.) K. Spreng. • Ericaceae • common bearberry, kinnikinnick
6. (page 49) *Arisaema triphyllum* (L.) Torr. • Araceae • jack-in-the-pulpit, Indian turnip
7. (page 42) *Ascophyllum nodosum* (L.) Le Jolis • Phaeophyta–Fucaceae • bladderwrack, brown algae
8. (page 34) *Atropa belladonna* L. • Solanaceae • belladonna, deadly nightshade
9. (page 9) *Brassica nigra* (L.) W. D. J. Koch • Cruciferae • black mustard and *Sinapis alba* [= *Brassica hirta* Moench] • Cruciferae • white mustard
10. (page 60) *Calendula officinalis* L. • Compositae • pot marigold
11. (page 7) *Cannabis sativa* L. • Moraceae • hemp, marijuana, hashish
12. (page 43) *Chondrus crispus* J. Stackhouse • Rhodophyta–Gigartinales • Irish “moss,” red algae
13. (page 32) *Cimicifuga racemosa* (L.) Nutt. • Ranunculaceae • black cohosh, black snakeroot
14. (page 22) *Citrus aurantium* L. var. *sinensis* • Rutaceae • sweet orange, Seville orange
15. (page 27) *Colchicum autumnale* L. • Liliaceae • autumn crocus, fall crocus, meadow saffron
16. (page 18) *Conium maculatum* L. • Umbelliferae • hemlock, poison hemlock

17. (page 56) *Convallaria majalis* L. • Liliaceae • lily-of-the-valley
18. (page 39) *Coriandrum sativum* L. • Umbelliferae • coriander, Chinese parsley
19. (page 57) *Cypripedium pubescens* Willd. [= *C. calceolus* L. var. *pubescens* (Willd.) Correll] • Orchidaceae • yellow lady's slipper
20. (page 37) *Datura stramonium* L. • Solanaceae • common thorn apple, jimsonweed
21. (page 19) *Delphinium ajacis* L. [= *Consolida ambigua* (L.) P. W. Ball & Heyw.] • Ranunculaceae • larkspur
22. (page 8) *Digitalis lanata* J. F. Ehrh. • Scrophulariaceae • digitalis, foxglove, Grecian foxglove
23. (page 33) *Dryopteris marginalis* (L.) A. Gray • Polypodiaceae • marginal shield fern and *Dryopteris filix-mas* (L.) Schott • Polypodiaceae • male fern
24. (page 51) *Eupatorium perfoliatum* L. • Compositae • common boneset, thoroughwort, ague weed
25. (page 46) *Gaultheria procumbens* L. • Ericaceae • wintergreen, teaberry, mountain tea
26. (page 40) *Geranium maculatum* L. • Geraniaceae • wild geranium, wild cranesbill, alumroot
27. (page 6) *Gossypium hirsutum* L. • Malvaceae • cotton
28. (page 44) *Hydrastis canadensis* L. • Ranunculaceae • goldenseal, orangeroot, turmeric
29. (page 36) *Hyoscyamus niger* L. • Solanaceae • henbane, black henbane
30. (page 50) *Inula helenium* L. • Compositae • elecampane
31. (page 4) *Linum usitatissimum* L. • Linaceae • flax
32. (page 52) *Marrubium vulgare* L. • Labiatae • common horehound, white horehound
33. (page 53) *Mentha x piperita* L. • Labiatae • peppermint
34. (page 48) *Panax quinquefolius* L. • Araliaceae • American ginseng
35. (page 45) *Phytolacca americana* L. • Phytolaccaceae • pokeweed, Virginian poke, pigeon berry
36. (page 41) *Podophyllum peltatum* L. • Berberidaceae • mayapple, mandrake
37. (page 55) *Pulsatilla hirsutissima* Britton [= *Anemone* sp.] • Ranunculaceae • pasque-flower
38. (page 23) *Punica granatum* L. • Punicaceae • pomegranate
39. (page 24) *Sanguinaria canadensis* L. • Papaveraceae • bloodroot, red puccoon
40. (page 35) *Solanum dulcamara* L. • Solanaceae • bittersweet, deadly nightshade
41. (page 38) *Thymus vulgaris* L. • Labiatae • garden thyme, common thyme
42. (page 29) *Trillium erectum* L. • Liliaceae • purple trillium, stinking benjamin, squawroot, brown beth



43. (page 25) *Tussilago farfara* L. • Compositae • coltsfoot
44. (page 31) *Urginea scilla* Steinh. [= *U. maritima* (L.) Bak.] • Liliaceae
• sea onion, red squill
45. (page 59) *Zea mays* L. • Gramineae • corn, Indian corn, maize

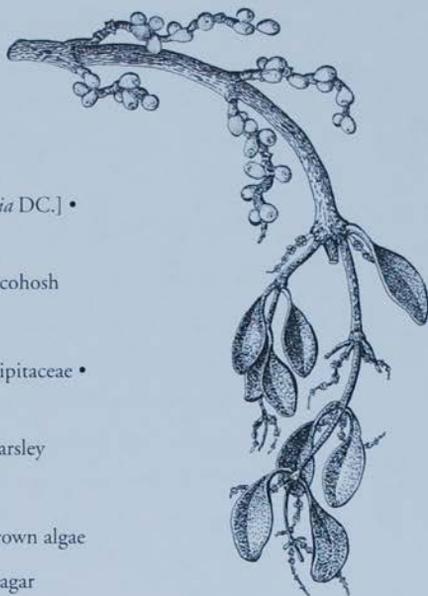


MISCELLANEOUS

- (page 16) Ink and watercolor drawing, book cover, "Drug Plants"
- (inside cover) Ink and wash drawing, endpaper design, marijuana
- (page 2) Ink drawing of seedpods for a bookplate and the *Twenty-Second Year Book of 1947* of the Home Garden Club of Denver, Inc.
- *Twenty-Second Year Book of 1947* of the Home Garden Club of Denver, Inc., with Pemberton's illustration of seedpods
- Ida H. Pemberton's tusche on zinc plate of a Hrubesky family Christmas card showing their mulberry tree and two quarreling canaries Billy and Jenny, at their house in Geneva, Nebraska
- (pages 13, 14) Two black and white photographs of Ida Hrubesky as a young girl and as a young woman
- (page 14) Black and white photograph of Ida Hrubesky in costume, ca.1915–1916
- (page 15) Black and white photograph of Ida Hrubesky and William E. Pemberton
- Four postcards from Ida to her sister Miss Lilian Hrubesky 1915, 1916 (while attending the Art Institute of Chicago) and 1927 (after her marriage, on a trip East from Colorado)
- (see individual items with text headers) Sheet with 12 linoleum block prints of pottery, animals, birds and kachina dolls
- Sheet with a letter to Nellie [Williams Beaven] (friend and librarian in Geneva, Nebraska) and nine linoleum block prints of Peruvian dogs, Indian masks, moths, birds and pottery
- Three linoleum block printed greeting cards of kachina dolls
- Reprint of P. Glen Crabtree's "Red Squill—Most specific of the Raticides" for *Economic Botany* (October–December 1947, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 394–401), which includes illustration of Ida's Red Squill watercolor (see fig. 44)
- University of Colorado Museum brochure describing Ida H. Pemberton's plant portraits
- "The fund helps scholars," an article from the *Colorado Alumnus* (November–December 1955), which includes photograph of W. E. Pemberton (Ida's husband) showing her paintings to Hugo Rodeck, director of the University of Colorado Museum



These items are not exhibited but are also in the Ida Hrubesky Pemberton Collection at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History



- Brauneria angustifolia* (DC.) A. Heller [= *Echinacea angustifolia* DC.] • Compositae • purple coneflower
- Caulophyllum thalictroides* (L.) Michx. • Berberidaceae • blue cohosh
- Citrus limon* (L.) Burm. f. • Rutaceae • lemon
- Claviceps purpurea* (E. M. Fries) L. R. Tulasne • Fungi–Clavicipitaceae • ergot of rye
- Coriandrum sativum* L. • Umbelliferae • coriander, Chinese parsley
- Cucurbita pepo* L. • Cucurbitaceae • pumpkin
- Fucus vesiculosus* L. • Phaeophyta–Fucaceae • bladderwrack, brown algae
- Gelidium cartilagineum* Gaill. • Rhodophyta–Gigartinaceae • agar
- Iris* • Iridaceae • Florentine iris
- Leptandra virginica* Nutt. [= *Veronicastrum virginicum* (L.) Farw.] • Scrophulariaceae • Culver's physic, Culver's root, Bowman's root
- Matricaria chamomilla* L. [= *M. recutita* L.] • Compositae • Hungarian chamomile, German chamomile
- Mentha ×piperita* L. • Labiatae • Peppermint and *Mentha viridis* L. [= *M. spicata* L.] • Labiatae • spearmint
- Nepeta cataria* L. • Labiatae • catnip, catmint
- Phoradendron flavescens* Nutt. [= *P. serotinum* (Raf.) M. C. Johnst.] • Loranthaceae • American mistletoe
- Ricinus communis* L. • Euphorbiaceae • castor bean
- Symplocarpus foetidus* (L.) Salisb. • Araceae • skunk cabbage
- Valeriana officinalis* L. • Valerianaceae • common valerian, garden heliotrope
- Zingiber officinale* Roescoe • Zingiberaceae • common ginger, Jamaica ginger



