

# BULLETIN of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Vol. 9 No. 1

Spring 1994

## HUNT FOUNDATIONS DONATE \$4.7 MILLION TO INSTITUTE ENDOWMENT

The Hunt Foundations of Pittsburgh recently donated an additional \$4.7 million to the permanent endowment for the Hunt Institute. The gift was announced by Carnegie Mellon University on 17 June 1993. Torrence M. Hunt, Sr., senior trustee of the Hunt Foundations of Pittsburgh and retired vice-president of Alcoa (the Aluminum Company of America), remarked on the "long-standing and close relationship" between Carnegie Mellon University and the Hunt family. "The Hunt family is pleased to provide additional funds for the ongoing operations, including expanded research activities, of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation," he said. "These funds, together with prior grants made by the Hunt family, will allow the Institute to continue to be a world leader in botanical science into the twenty-first century and beyond."

Dr. Robert Mehrabian, president of Carnegie Mellon, commented that "Carnegie Mellon University is proud to be the home of the world-renowned Hunt Institute. The Hunt family has been a generous supporter of Carnegie Mellon for more than fifty years. This latest donation, through the leadership of Torrence M. Hunt, Sr., a life trustee of Carnegie Mellon, epitomizes the generous philanthropic record of the Hunt family."



Dr. Robert Mehrabian and Torrence M. Hunt, Sr.

The Institute was established in 1960 by Roy A. Hunt, long-time president of Alcoa, and his wife Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt. Part of their initial gift was Mrs. Hunt's rich collections of botanical literature, art, and archival materials, which formed the nucleus of the Institute's present holdings. At the same time, Mr. and Mrs. Hunt also gave the University's principal library building, the Hunt Library, where the Institute is housed.



Watercolor of grapes by Ramesh Sharma

This fall the Hunt Institute will present a selection of natural-history paintings by artists from the desert state of Rajasthan in western India. This group of paintings came to the Institute as a result of Curator of Art James White's most recent trip to India, during which he met many of the skillful artists whose works will be featured in our exhibition.

### NEW ADJUNCT RESEARCH SCIENTIST

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Paul Luther Schiff, Jr., professor and chairman in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences in the School of Pharmacy of the University of Pittsburgh, as adjunct research scientist at the Institute. Dr. Schiff's recent work has focused on plants from Africa, and his area of expertise is toxicological chemistry. He earned a doctorate in pharmacognosy from Ohio State University. At the University of Pittsburgh he is a member of the Executive Committee and the Curriculum Committee of the School of Pharmacy. He has been active in numerous professional societies, including the American Pharmaceutical Association, the American Society of Pharmacognosy, the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, and the Society for Economic Botany.

### IN MEMORIAM DR. BIRGER HERMAN ERIK STRANDELL, 1901-1993

We note with much regret the death of Dr. Strandell on 9 January 1993 in Stockholm at the age of 91. A descendant of Linneaus, he was born 3 February 1901 in Strömstad, Sweden, and was a renowned physician, bibliophile and bibliographer of Linnaeana. Dr. Strandell edited the journal *Acta medica scandinavica* from 1957 to 1972, and in 1978 he lectured at the Linnean Society of London at a conference that commemorated the 200th anniversary of Linneaus' death. He was a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Science.

In 1968 the Institute acquired Dr. Strandell's Collection of Linnaeana, which was named in his honor. The Collection, the culmination of a lifetime of collecting by Dr. Strandell, includes not only all the editions of Linnaeus' works and those by his many students, but also numerous biographical works, pamphlets, broadsides, reviews, announcements and clippings about them and their work, and it is one of the most complete such collections in the world. Dr. Strandell was appointed honorary curator of the Strandell Collection of Linnaeana by the trustees of Carnegie Mellon University in 1969.

In 1973, to celebrate the opening of the Strandell Room, which houses the Collection, scholars from all over the world were invited to participate in a Linnaean Symposium at the Institute. Dr. Strandell delivered an address in which he described how he came to acquire many of the materials in the Collection (see *Taxon* 25(1): 3-8). "My interest in books was...well-documented," he stated in his address. "Even before reaching my teens, I had made my first purchase at a book auction in Strömstad, the town of my birth, on the Swedish west coast, and in due time had acquired a fairly large collection of works from that region. My interest in Linnaeus had also been well rooted since, in addition to being his direct descendant (via his eldest daughter Elisabeth Christina), in 1907 I accompanied my family to Uppsala to attend the outstanding festival in commemoration of the second centenary of his birth" (p. 4).

Dr. Strandell continued to frequent book auctions and secondhand booksellers to fill gaps in the collection, and he also acquired manuscripts, portraits, engravings and medallions. Although his original intention was that the Collection be preserved by his descendents, he realized that its value and its space, shelving and care requirements made it increasingly difficult for him or for any individual in a private home to accommodate and maintain the collection properly. Yet he did not want the materials to "remain on shelves without serving any useful purpose, or...end up in



packing-cases in a cellar, as has happened to other extremely valuable collections..." (p. 5). When an opportunity for the collection to be curated by the Institute arose, and when he was assured that the Collection would be a "living collection" available to scholars, he remarked that "it was clear that if the collection went to the Hunt Botanical Library, it would be...preserved for the future as a unit and would be of the best benefit to science" (p. 5).

Following the transfer of the Collection to the Institute, Dr. Strandell assisted in its continued development by studying book catalogues and bidding on books at auctions. "Collecting books and manuscripts, as well as reading catalogues from booksellers and book auctions, is indeed very interesting, informative, and stimulating," he observed in his address. "There are moments of great satisfaction, as when a highly desired item is acquired; there are also moments of disappointment when you fail to secure such items. The work is indeed exciting..." (p. 8).

Dr. Strandell's enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to scholarship will be missed, and we extend our sympathy to his family.

# A BIOGRAPHICAL REGISTER OF BOTANY — A CHALLENGE AND AN OPPORTUNITY

Over the years our biographical collection has been praised by the many researchers who consult the Archives. They have often expressed the desire that the information contained in our master biographical file (approximately 200,000 3 x 5 cards) be made available in printed volumes and/or in a database, and we have decided to accept the challenge and to proceed with the project. We have begun compiling an alphabetical dictionary containing citations to information about plant scientists of all time periods and all geographic areas. In this *Biographical register of botany*, each entry will provide the scientist's full name, vital statistics, botanical specialty and a list of citations to biographical accounts, to portraits and to the location of primary source material.

Most of the information will be obtained from the cards already in our master file which refer to approximately 40,000 persons. This master file is an essential component of our project and includes amateurs as well as professionals. All persons in the service of botanical science and its history, including biography, bibliography and visual communication, are represented in our files. The Institute began compiling these citations in 1960 by acquiring data from sources throughout the world, such as the Royal Horticultural Society Library in London, the Bibliotheque Centrale of Paris' Museum Nationale d'Historie Naturelle, the Conservatoire et Jardin Botanique in Geneva, the L. H. Bailey Hortorium at Cornell University, and many others. The file is

BULLETIN OF THE HUNT INSTITUTE FOR BOTANICAL DOCUMENTATION

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Published biannually by the Institute. Subscription rates: U.S. \$4.00 per volume; elsewhere \$5.00, airmail \$6.00. Hunt Institute Associates receive the *Bulletin* as a benefit of membership.

All correspondence regarding subscriptions, missing issues, and announcements for publication in the *Bulletin* should be directed to the editor.

The *Bulletin* does not publish book reviews. Books for review in the Institute's journal, *Huntia*, should be directed to Ms. Charlotte Tancin, its book reviews and announcements editor, at the Institute.

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continually augmented by the staff at the Institute, who scan journals, newspapers and other publications for data, and by interested individuals who send us reprints or citations. Ruth Schallert of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries; Ina Vrugtman of the Royal Botanical Gardens Library, Hamilton, Ontario; Céline Arseneault of the Montreal Botanical Garden; and Pamela Burns Balogh of Koeltz Scientific Books, Champaign, Illinois are a few who have enhanced the value of this project by contributing the data they have collected.

We take this opportunity to invite contributions from our readers. Although our files contain a good representation of individuals in varied ethnic groups and cover many specialties, there are some voids that we hope our readers can fill. One in particular, about which we presently receive many queries, is information about blacks in the plant sciences. Also, there may be some readers who have knowledge of little-known plant collectors or authors who have restricted their efforts to a certain locality. We invite these readers to send us data about any individual who they feel should be included in this register.

The *Biographical register* will be alphabetical by surname, but we envision access also by botanical specialty, country, time period, or gender, as well as by author, title, or journal. The Institute proposes to assemble the citations into a computer-generated multiple volume publication. We envision four volumes, each containing approximately 40,000 to 50,000 citations. Presently, we assist persons who request information via mail, phone or Fax by sending them copies of relevant citation cards, but we look forward to the day when those interested in the history and personalia of botany can scan our *Biographical register of botany* on their computer screens or page through its published volumes and feel confident that they have searched the most comprehensive source available on the subject.

— Anita L. Karg

Correction *Bulletin* 8(2): On page 5, in the article "*Digitalis:* From the garden to the apothecary," "*Digitalis lantana*" should have been "*Digitalis lanata.*" We regret the error.

### NOTES FROM THE FIELD BOTANICAL ART IN INDIA AND SRI LANKA

Natural-history artworks and their repositories in India seem to be documented poorly in the literature of art and science. For research in this area, I made three trips to India, each of five to six weeks' duration — in Fall 1991, Fall 1992 and early 1994. While the first trip emphasized the north, including Rajasthan, the second one took me to cities in the south and also to Sri Lanka, and the third repeated some of the earlier cities, plus Calcutta and Bhubaneswar. "India rewards the patient traveller," my guidebook advised. Then perhaps I've been especially patient, for I journeyed home with copious information on original botanical



Watercolor of "Hollyhocks" by Kripal Singh Sekhavat (Rajasthan, 1924 - ), courtesy of Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad

paintings, literature citations for a bibliography of natural-history art in India and Sri Lanka, and — on the last trip — half of our Fall 1994 exhibition on natural-history paintings from Rajasthan. Some of the more significant finds from these trips follow.

The National Museum in Delhi contains a small number of botanical watercolors, including some Company paintings (paintings executed by Indian artists working under British patronage). The Forest Research Institute in Dehra Dun contains well over 300

watercolors and ink drawings of plant subjects. The majority of these were created between 1930 and 1960 by Thakur Ganga (Rai Sahib) Singh (1895-1970) and his student P. Sharma (born 1922). The famous Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad (which has collections of the Nizam of Hyderabad's prime minister, his son and grandson) yielded no botanical artworks except for a 20th-century watercolor titled "Hollyhocks" by Kripal Singh Sekhavat, but its library contained some interesting old titles on drawing nature. Salar Jung Museum restorer Khwaja Owais Qarni helped me acquire a photograph of the painting.

The collections in Madras too were lacking in botanical art, except for the prodigious private collection of artist O. T. Ravindran, nurseryman, landscape designer, ecologist, journalist



Curator Dr. D. S. A. Wijesundara, National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, currently on leave at Queens College of the City University, Flushing, New York

and interesting personality. William Roxburgh (1751-1815) served as superintendent of the Calcutta Botanic Garden (now the Indian Botanic Garden) and had paintings made by native artists of the plants that he described. The Roxburgh Collection contains 2,579 paintings of which all but 32 are duplicated at Kew. The Indian Museum in Calcutta displays no fewer than 389 (by hasty count) botanical watercolors by artists of the Botanical Survey of India from the 1950s, whose names — Devi Prasad Deb, B. P. Roy Chowdhury, S. Dasgupta, A.

Mukherjee and D. Sen — are almost forgotten by staff members. I particularly enjoyed meeting the present staff of artists there and informing them about the activities of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators.

At the turn of the century many fine lithographs were prepared by students of the Government College of Art & Craft in Calcutta for the Botanical Survey of India's publications, but only a few references in a centenary publication from the college mention this important artwork. No original lithographs remain, and any correspondence, if it indeed exists, is inaccessible and fast deteriorating. A 17th-century Persian manuscript, dedicated to the Emperor Aurangzeb, in The Asiatic Society in Calcutta, is an encyclopedia of plants, animals and geological features. The

Lalbagh Botanical Garden in Bangalore contains a collection of perhaps 400 watercolors and 200 pencil drawings, many by K. Chelviah Raju (active ca. 1905-1909), but some of the collection, dated 1923-1943, depicts fruit.

A notable collection of perhaps 1,000 artworks of native plants and cultivated orchids is housed at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. The artists are



Director K. M. Matthew, S.J., The Rapinat Herbarium, St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli



Assistant Director of Horticulture T. S. Umesh, Lalbagh Botanical Garden, and Cecil J. Saldanha, Centre for Taxonomic Studies, St. Joseph's College, Bangalore

Haramines De Alwis Seneviratne (19th century) and perhaps his family members. An album of drawings and the earliest plan of the garden, both by De Alwis, are in the Lindley Library of the Royal Horticultural Society, London, and I was fortunate to examine them last year. Other De Alwis works are reported in the collection of The Natural History Museum in London.

The following collections of botanical artworks also were found: Original ink drawings at St. Joseph's College, Bangalore, by M. Vijayalaxmi, Kumari T. Gowri and G. Rajasekhar, commissioned by Fr. Cecil J. Saldanha for the Flora of Hassan District; about one dozen botanical designs by K. Venkatappa (1887-1965), artist for the Maharaja of Mysore, in the K. Venkatappa Art Gallery, Bangalore; 3,600 ink drawings in Tiruchirapalli by a team of draftsmen under the leadership of J. Jeyarani and A. Rajasekharan (1,794 on the flowering plants of the Tamil Nadu plains, published by K. M. Matthew in 1982 and 1988; 2,800 drawings of flowering plants of the Palni hills to be published in 1995); 1,910 amateur watercolor drawings of flowering plants of the Palni hills by Fr. A. Anglade (ca. 1915-1918) and 114 of orchids by Fr. E. Gombert (ca. 1902-1910), both collections at Sacred Heart College, Kodaikanal; two volumes of watercolors "painted by Serfoji's artists" in the Saraswati Mahal Library, Tanjore, ca. 1802; the original ink drawings for A. Abraham and P. Vatsala's Introduction to orchids (1981) in Trivandrum; and originals for the forthcoming flora of Orissa prepared at the Regional Research Laboratory in Bhubaneswar by Assistant Director Dr. H. O. Saxena (also head of the Aromatic and Medicinal Plants Division) and doctoral student Nirad Rout.

During my visits I had the great pleasure to visit additional artists such as Manjeet Kaur and her husband, also an artist, who have a beautiful studio in Delhi. The botanical subjects in her ink

drawings are identifiable though decorative. Mr. J. P. Irani, a skilled artist in a Bombay advertising department, met me in the library of the Bombay Natural History Society. He has made drawings of birds under the guidance of internationally recognized ornithologist Dr. Salim Ali. I have missed meeting artist Arundhati Vartak in Bombay on two occasions — in 1992 because of the Ayodhya crisis and in 1994 for lack of a telephone number! Her paintings of trees have been reproduced by the World Wildlife Fund and were displayed in Bombay in April of this year. The Hunt Institute has acquired artworks by each of these artists. In Rajasthan I visited several studios where young male artists sit cross-legged, copying and embellishing naturalhistory illustrations from books. On my trips I have met Jaggu Prasad, Damodar Gurjar, the brothers Ramesh and Suresh Sharma and Vijay Kumar, all artists from Jaipur. Entries for Jaggu, Damodar and Ramesh were included in the catalogue of our 7th International Exhibition. Paintings by each will be included in an exhibition planned for the Fall (see page 1).

My great appreciation is extended to the Smithsonian Special Foreign Currency Program for two grants; to the American Institute of Indian Studies in New Delhi and National Institute of Advanced Studies, Indian Institute of Science, in Bangalore for special courtesies; to each artist, curator and scientist whom I visited; and to the special families who took such good care of me in Delhi, Dehra Dun, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Madras and Bombay. We welcome further information about botanical art and its literature in India.

-James J. White



Watercolor of "Talauma hodgsonii" by D. P. Deb (1959) in The Indian Museum, Calcutta

### THE FLORAL ART BOOKS

During the week of 23-27 September 1991, Yukihiro Tamura of Shuieisha, Inc., Shozo Tanaka of Daiichi Art Center, Inc., and Yasumori Yasaka of Yasaka Shobo, Inc., all of Tokyo, visited the Institute. They were considering using botanical images from the Institute's collections in a new Japanese publication, tentatively titled *The flower museum*, to be published by Daiichi Art Center–Shuieisha. It would highlight botanical art using illustrations

from among 250 landmark botanical publications from the 17th through 19th centuries as well as from other sources. The original scope of the project, later revised, called for publication of 100 32-page volumes.

During their weeklong stay, our visitors examined thousands of botanical illustrations in the library and art collections. At the end of the week, they presented us with an extensive "first cut" list of chosen illustrations, to which additional requests were added later by mail. We were to produce a transparency of every illus-

tration on the list, providing Daiichi, the editor of the series, with a large pool of images from which to select for publication. We arranged a work schedule which would allow a steady photographic output while meeting the publisher's deadlines. After submitting test exposures, the Institute sent the first 64 4x5 transparencies for *The flower museum* to Daiichi in November 1991. By June 1992, 2,135 transparencies had been sent, making this the largest photographic project of this sort ever attempted by the Institute.

As the project unfolded and evolved, its scope was modified and the title was changed to *The floral art books*. The first volume of the series was published in February 1993 and focused on orchids. Volumes 2 through 4 feature roses, lilies, and fruit, respectively. The size of a volume has grown from 32 to 82 pages, while the number of volumes planned for the series has been reduced. Each volume contains an intriguing blend of old and new botanical art and illustration, photography and various

decorative arts relating to both the overall theme of botanical art and the specific subject treated in each individual volume. Subsequent volumes are appearing at the rate of one every few months, and 10,000 copies of each volume are being produced. The text is in Japanese.

The sheer size of this project and its fairly tight deadlines made unprecedented demands on the Institute's photographic re-

> sources and services. Also, while some of the illustrations chosen for The floral art books came from the Institute's art collection, the vast majority were chosen from books in the Institute's library. This presented special challenges for the photographer, and by extension also to the librarians, given that the chosen illustrations were from old and rare botanical publications, often involving very large folio works or fragile volumes which required special handling.

Despite these challenges, or perhaps because of them, the project has been an enriching

experience for the Institute. In the course of the project, Institute staff developed creative approaches to problem solving, time management, documentation, preservation and other issues. The experience has strengthened our photographic and imageresource services and has given us an enhanced appreciation of large-scale project management. But even beyond those benefits, we are enjoying the satisfaction of knowing that halfway around the world there is a large audience being introduced to beautiful botanical images from the Hunt Institute collections.

—Frank A. Reynolds & Charlotte Tancin



### **BRIEFLY NOTED**

- The first two of 14 volumes of Flora of North America, the first-ever comprehensive description of native and naturalized plants in the United States, Canada and Greenland, were published in October 1993 by Oxford University Press. The Hunt Institute, which initiated the Flora project, serves as its bibliographic center and is developing a comprehensive bibliographic data base. The Missouri Botanical Garden serves as the organizational center for the project, which is a collaborative, bi-national effort of 30 botanical institutions and hundreds of botanists. Hunt Institute Director Robert Kiger is bibliographic editor for the Flora and also is one of the taxonomic editors. Volume 1 contains introductory essays, and volume 2 contains taxonomic treatments of pteridophytes and gymnosperms. Look for more information about the Flora in the next issue of the Bulletin.
- Assistant Director T. D. Jacobsen, together with Director Robert Kiger, D. M. Kiger, F. H. Utech, and Assistant Editor Elizabeth Smith, compiled and edited TOXIGEN: A MEKA application for computer-aided identification of toxic flowering-plant genera found in North America north of Mexico with printed illustrations for visual confirmation, an on-line identification system and directory for toxic plants. TOXIGEN was made possible by funding from the Vira I. Heinz Endowment and currently is in use at the Pittsburgh Poison Center.
- Bibliographer Gavin Bridson's book *The history of natural history: An annotated bibliography* was published earlier this year by Garland Publishing. The first such guide to this rapidly growing field of historical study, *The history of natural history* features information on personnel and organizations; biographies of naturalists; histories of naturalists' societies; natural history library resources; a core bibliography on the history of natural history, history of botany and history of zoology; historical and bibliographical methods; and indexes. It is volume 24 in the Bibliographies on the History of Science and Technology series and volume 991 in the Garland Reference Library of the Humanities.
- In April of this year Librarian Charlotte Tancin was elected second vice president of the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries (CBHL). She will become first vice president next year, and president the year after that. Her responsibilities as second vice president will include generating new membership and chairing the Publications Committee. While first vice president she will serve as Board liaison for those hosting the annual meeting.

- Curator of Art James White and Editor Sharon Tomasic are preparing a *Register of Pennsylvania curators*, a first-ever directory of curators in the state and indexed by specialty, institution, city and county. The *Register* is based on data from questionnaires received from curators working in museums, institutions of higher learning (public and private), historical societies, archives, historic gardens and arboreta, historic houses, and state government agencies. It will be published soon by the Institute and the Greater Pittsburgh Museum Council.
- Gavin Bridson and James White are preparing a supplement to their *Plant, animal & anatomical illustration in art & science: A bibliographical guide from the 16th century to the present day* (1990). The open-ended *Supplement,* listing all literature published from 1989 onwards, is in continuous preparation as new titles come to notice; a 67-page list of *Addenda and corrigenda,* which attempts to complete the record of pre-1989 literature, has been completed.
- Assistant Curator of Art Autumn Farole was a co-curator and exhibition designer with Charlotte Tancin for "The John Clayton Exhibition," James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. She also designed an exhibit on the Institute's Strandell Collection for the Herb Society of America's annual meeting.
- Tr. Carmen Quesada Ochoa, from the Department of History of Science, University of Granada, Spain, has been a visiting research scholar at the Institute for several months. Her research interests include the biography and writings of Spanish botanist and naturalist Simon de Rojas Clemente y Rubio, botany and scientific policy during the Spanish Enlightenment, specialization in science and scientific language.
- In August 1993 the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts awarded a grant to partially fund transferring images of 2,000 watercolors from the Institute's Torner Collection of Sessé and Mociño biological illustrations to CD-ROM.
- The Archive Department has received the papers of Dr. Joseph Robert Bernard Boivin (1916-1985), an eminent Canadian botanist who amassed files of over 3,000 references, photocopies of over 40,000 specimens and information about 15,000 collectors, much of which was used in his nearly 200 publications. The department was also privileged to be chosen as the repository for the papers of Bernard Lowy (1916-1992), professor emeritus of botany, Louisiana State University, and Professor Robert Davidson (1927-1980), The Catholic University of America.

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