ADDITIONAL LETTERS OF HUMPHRY MARSHALL,
BOTANIST AND NURSERYMAN.

BY THE LATE JOHN W. HARSHBERGER, PH.D.

Introduction.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania has lately come into possession of a collection of letters from correspondents in this country and Europe directed to Humphry Marshall at West Bradford in Chester County and to his nephew, Moses Marshall. Some of the letters thus secured have been published in the book of Dr. William Darlington of West Chester, entitled: "Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall" printed at Philadelphia in 1849. A considerable number of these letters were either not available, when Dr. Darlington issued his book, or if available, were overlooked intentionally. Some of them are of enough historical interest to warrant publication as a whole, by excerpts, or by reference to their contents, as they throw considerable light upon the introduction of plants into Europe, and incidentally upon the condition of affairs in the American colonies and later in the new republic. These letters emphasize the difficulties of communication between America and Europe in the interchange of data and in the shipment of perishable goods—like plants or plant parts.

The question arises: did Dr. Darlington as a scientific botanist wish to emphasize particularly the botanical careers of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall and neglect the commercial aspects of their correspondence, for many letters in the Library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society are business letters and the botanical information that they contain is a necessary corollary of the business of nurserymen.
Was Arbustrum Americanum, or the American Grove, considered to be the first book published on American trees printed by Humphry Marshall as a descriptive catalogue of trees grown in his nursery in Chester County, or was it published as a scientific treatise? It appears that both objects were filled by its publication, for in a letter from Samuel Merian dated Philadelphia, August 10, 1787, we read "a friend of myne living in the country knowing by the American Grove that you can provide with those shrubs and trees therein described desired me to wrighte for the annexed plants." (the list follows on another page of the letter). The fact that in a number of letters the slow sale of the book is mentioned by European correspondents would seem to indicate that Humphry Marshall was anxious to dispose of the book the printing of which cost him, as per bill of Joseph Cruikshank, approximately £94.13.9. To quote from a letter of C. Eddy dated London, July 18, 1787: "I have an idea if thy Nephew could spare the time to come to this Country even for a very short time he might find a great Advantage in observing which Plants are the most valuable and scarce here—am told that when the Scarlet Azalea was first introduced here a single plant was sold for £40 Stg. to a nurseryman for propagation. James Phillips informs me that very few of the American Grove are yet disposed of." In a letter from Joseph Cruikshank dated Philadelphia *February 7, 1786, we read "I have forwarded 12 of 'The Grove' to James Gibbons and have had Accts from Trenton and N. York but there is not one subscriber in either place. They sell but slow, I think we have not sold a Dozen besides those to the subscribers." By letter from Joseph Cruikshank dated *September 4, 1786 "I have lately had an account from New York the books don't sell there except 2 copies and the sale appears to be over here."
Correspondence of Humphry Marshall.

In a review of the letters received by Humphry Marshall, it is of interest to learn who the correspondents were. The following list will give that information with the number and date of letters received from each.*

Thomas Parke: (London) *July 5, 1772; *November 10, 1779; March 14, 1785; April 27, 1785; August 6, 1785; October 6, 1785; May 29, 1786; *June 18, 1786; *September 4, 1786; November 8, 1786; April 19, 1788; *October 10, 1788; December 20, 1788; March 31, 1789; April 29, 1789; May 18, 1789; *April 20, 1790; *April 29, 1795; *October 19, 1796; December 12, 1798; February 26, 1799.

Owen Biddle: (Philadelphia) January 25, 1773; February 25, 1795; March 16, 1796.

Th. Bond: (Philadelphia) September 8, 1772.

Samuel Merian: (Philadelphia) November 27, 1778; August 10, 1787; October 2, 1787.

Henry Hill: (Roxborough) November 11, 1780.

Dr. Marbois: (Philadelphia) November 9, 1780; March 10, 1781; January 1, ——.

G. W. Logan: (Philadelphia) *August 29, 1783; November 27, 1783; February 27, ——.

John Shell: (Philadelphia) December 2, 1784; December 17, 1784; March 16, 1785; May 3, 1785.

Jos. Cruijkehank: (Philadelphia) *April 28, 1785 (with reference to the cost of Arbustrum Americanum); January 12, 1786; *February 7, 1788; April 20, 1788; *September 4, 1788; Bill for Arbustrum Americanum November 15, 1787.

Thos. & Geo. Eddy: (Philadelphia) November 1, 1785.

Charles Eddy, Sam. Bressingham: (London) February 22, 1786; July 28, 1786; February 19, 1787 (with list); bill of lading February 1, 1787; July 18, 1787; September 14, 1789.

Grimwood, Hudson & Barrit: (London) February 6, 1787; August 4, 1787; August 7, 1787; August 1, 1788; June 3, 1789; to Moses Marshall June 21, 1791; December 6, 1791.

Lewis William Otto: (New York) October 7, 1787.

Will Thornton: (Wilmington) November 3, 1787.

Jean (Johannes) Reichert: (Belvedere bei Saxen Weimar in German) April 28, 1788 (with translation); March 22, 1789 (with translation); May 30, 1791 (to Moses Marshall with translation); April 23, 1792 (to Moses Marshall); May 25, 1793 (with translation); July 12, 1795; January 12, 1797 (to Moses Marshall).

* The letters prefixed by an asterisk have been printed in "The Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall" by William Darlington.

Lord Suffolk: (Guntun, Suffolk, England) September 17, 1788; December 2, 1788 (reply letter in rough by Moses Marshall); December 2, 1788; November 12, 1789.

O. A. Bertrand: (Malines) June 15, 1789 (with translation).

A. Frenchman: (Bordeaux) November 12, 1789.

A. David: (Washington) February 9, 1790.

H. H. Damin: (Ship broker, Amsterdam) March 5, 1790; June 1, 1791 (to Moses Marshall with bill of lading).


Grommee & Comp.: (Amsterdam) April, 1790.

Baker & Abell: (Philadelphia) June 22, 1790 (and sale of 33 cases of gin for Moses Marshall for £46.4 less £11.18.8 commission, net £34.5.4.

A. Mons de Maupion: (Paris) July 8, 1790 with translation; July 6, 1791 (with list).

Wm. Hamilton: (Lancaster) October 25, 1790 (The Woodlands near Philadelphia) November 22, 1790; *November 23, 1790; *May 3, 1799; one letter no date.

J. C. Hesse: (Hambro) March 12, 1791.

John Gordon, Jun: (Aberdeen) June 27, 1791 (with list of desiderata).

Hyacinthe Delonguemare: (Havre) July 28, 1795 (with translation); February 25, 1792.

Printed Announcement of the Death of J. L. Buellan: Chief of the firm Ruellan & Co., Havre, June 1, 1792, and statement of widow on separate slip and letter regarding dated July 22, 1792 (3 items).

Baron Itzenplitz: (Berlin) August 26, 1793 (with list); March 10, 1794 (with list); March 12, 1794 (relating to his business from Hambro; March 20, 1795 (with long list); June 9, 1796 (to Moses Marshall with list); May 1, 1796; May 12, 1797; December 16, 1798, to Moses Marshall translation and bill of lading; November 15, 1799 (with list to Moses Marshall).

John Fling: (Philadelphia) May 4, 1796.

John Stevens: (New York) February 27, 1797.

Thomas Russell: (Philadelphia) June 29, 1795. (Middletown, Conn.)

August 24, 1797.

Richard Gemon: (Philadelphia) October 7, 1797.


Daniel Grimwood: (Kensington Nursery) February 3, 1801.

F. S. Bommer: (Strasbourg) May 12, 1801, Prof. d'histoire Naturelle a l'Ecole Centrale du Departement du Bar a' Strasbourg.

John Hayes: (Wilmington) September 5, 1801.


Sheets of Drying Paper and 2 Specimens of Grasses.
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To the Reverend Mr. Humphry Marshall, of Chester County, in the State of Pennsylvania.

Philadelphia, May 12th, 1801.

Sir,

This post of th'jule times, Mr. Kalm, coming from your country and returning thither, told me that you are his friend. I made use of this occasion to offer my sentiments of respect to a man, who is known with us. If he were on the scene of New America, by the same occasion I would recommend of you several Mr. Kalm, to permit me to gather for my cabinet of natural history, for my botany garden, and for my economical society, whatever may be useful and interesting for us. I have given him the proper instructions and I hope, that you would comply with my desire, to succour him in his purpose, to enrich our country with the produce of your gardens; and you country produce many products, who are said can be of great utility for ours.

If you were to consent for you a looking ready for your eyes, which are suffering as Mr. Kalm told me. You would be surprised, that I take a great part of your situation and that I would the able to alleviate it.

If I can be of any service, you would apply to me, and be spared the necessity of writing, with which I am.

Your devoted,

[Signature]

Petit voyage historique naturelle
à l'île centrale de Spermacé

Foreign Trade in American Plants.

John Bartram, William Bartram, William Young, Jr., Peter Kalm, Robert Carr, Humphry Marshall, Moses Marshall, Andre Michaux, Francois Andre Michaux were instrumental in the introduction of American plants into European gardens and Americans received in exchange foreign plants, which were grown in American gardens.

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Gardens, like the one established by John Bartram at Kingsessing, by William Hamilton at The Woodlands, by the Marshalls in Chester County, were stocked with plants which came from abroad. The story of the early introduction of foreign plants into America has never been told adequately. It remains for some one botanically, historically and horticulturally inclined to write that account. The letters received by Humphry and Moses Marshall contribute materially to our appreciation of the facts connected with the collection, growth and shipment of American plants to Europe, the great demand for many of these plants and the prices paid for them. The difficulties encountered in getting living plants across the sea with the long time it took sailing vessels to make the passage, and the delay in the unloading and delivery of such plants to the purchasers after arrival in Europe appear evident in a perusal of the Marshall correspondence. Seeds carried much better and there was a constant demand for them.

It will be of interest first to give the names of the correspondents, who sent lists of desiderata, and second to enumerate the plants which were most in demand, and third, to narrate some of the vicissitudes presented in this foreign trade.

**Business Correspondents.**

The following firms and persons sent considerable lists of plants desired for growth and trial in European arboreta and gardens: Grimwood, Hudson & Barrit (London); C. Eddy (London); Maddock & Son; John (Johannes) Reichert, Premier Jardinier de la Cour de Monsig. le Duc de Saxe Weimar & Eisenai (Belvedere beij Saxen Weimar); Le President de Cassaux (Bordeaux); C. Loddiges & Son (Hackney near London); Lord Suffield (Gunton, Norfolk); M. de Maupion (Paris); John Gordon, Jr. (Amsterdam);
Baron Itzenplitz (Berlin); L'Abbe Fontana (Florence); Sir John Menzies.

A letter from C. Loddiges & Son, Hackney near London, dated March 16, 1802, is addressed to Mr. Humphry Marshall, Botanist & Seedsman, Chester County, Pennsylvania, The Rose, Capt. Silas Jones. The use of the word “seedsman” in the above address is significant. The correspondence shows that the Marshalls were requested to furnish plants from their nursery at West Bradford to be grown in American gardens. The Americans, who furnished lists of desiderata, were the following: Samuel Merian (Philadelphia); De Marbois (Philadelphia); Will Thorton (Wilmington); T. Kitt (Norwich); William Hamilton (The Woodlands); Richard Gernon (Philadelphia); W. S. Gilpin (Philadelphia).

Plant Desiderata.

The following lists of plants have been compiled from the lists of desiderata sent to the Marshalls by home and foreign business correspondents. They have been arranged in the numerical order of the demands made for such American plants.

Desiderata of 15 Lists, or over. Liriodendron tulipifera (18)*, Kalmia latifolia (15), Magnolia (every available species) (15), Taxodium distichum (15).

Desiderata of 10 to 15 Lists: Juniperus virginiana (13), Chamaecyparis thyoides (13), Dirca palustris (12), Fothergilla gardeni (12), Laurus benzoin (many times), Liquidambar styraciflua (12); Quercus (every available kind) (12), Calycanthus floridus (10); Rhododendron maximum (10).

Desiderata of 5 to 10 Lists: Chionanthus virginicus (9), Epigaea repens (9), Franklinia altamaha (9), Cercis canadensis (7), Diospyros virginiana (7), Kalmia angustifolia (7), Morus rubra (7), Nyssa aquatica (7), Sassafras officinale (7), Aralia spinosa (7), Azima triandra (6), Callicarpa americana (6), Itea virginica (6), Juglans nigra (6), Ulmus americana (6), Aesculus octandra (5), Castanea

* That the tulip tree Liriodendron tulipifera, heads the lists is interesting in connection with the advocacy of it as the state tree of Pennsylvania and its flower, the state flower. Why not?
pumila (5), Gordonia lasianthus (5), Halesia diptera (5), Platanus occidentalis (5), Pinus palustris (5), P. taeda (5).


Desiderata of 3 Lists: Andromeda mariana, Amsonia glabra, Asclepias tuberosa, Azalea nudiflora, Ilex cassine, I. verticillata, Menispermum canadensis, Prunus americana, Rhodora canadensis, Robinia pseudoacacia, Spiraea murlandica, Thuja occidentalis, Tilia americana.

Desiderata of 2 Lists: Acer pensylvanicum, Arctostaphylos uva-ursi, Azalea viscosa, Betula nigra, Carpinus caroliniana, Celtis occidentalis, Cornus canadensis, Dionaea muscipula, Fraxinus americana, Gaultheria procumbens, Gleditschia aquatica, Ilex glabra, Negundo aceroides, Polygala senega, Populus deltoides, Prunus maritima, Quercus alba, Ribes cynosbati, Sarracenia (of sorts), Smilax bona-nox, S. rotundifolia, Sorbus americana, Spiraea tomentosa, Styraea americana, Tecoma radicans; Tillandsia usneoides.


Lord Suffield of Gunton House, Norfolk, England, in a list dated November 12, 1789, requested the following grasses and edges whose names are now identifiable; Carex folliculata, C. squarrosa, Cina arundinacea, Eriophorum cyperinum, Hordeum jubatum, Stipa avenacea, Tripsacum dactyloides, Uniola paniculata. The firm of Grimwood, Hudson & Barrit (London) wrote for two pitcher plants Sarracenia flava and S. purpurea in a letter dated December 6, 1791. By reference to the above lists, it will be noted that the Venus flytrap, Dionaea muscipula, was also in demand. Those acquainted with American plants by their scientific names will appreciate that European botanists, gardeners and nurserymen early recognized the best eastern American shrubs and trees, as for example, the tulip tree (Liriodendron tulipifera), the laurel (Kal-
mia latifolia), the magnolias, the deciduous cypress (Taxodium distichum) the sweet gum (Liquidambar styraciflua), the shrub (Calycanthus floridus), the bay (Rhododendron maximum), etc.

Difficulties of Communication between America and Europe.

The news from abroad during colonial days was conveyed by letters and magazines, which were sent across the sea and the delay experienced in the transmission of important business, political and social information must have been embarrassing to say the least. In a letter to Humphry Marshall from Thomas Parke dated London, July 5, 1772, we read: "Before this comes to hand thee will probably hear of our friend Sam'l Fothergill's being deceased—he departed ye 15th of last month after a long and tedious Illness of a complicated Disease!"

The interest which was taken in the departure and arrival of vessels from American ports by which intelligence and goods were sent from Europe to America, and vice versa, was due to the slowness of communication. This is demonstrated in a letter of John Abell to Humphry Marshall dated Philadelphia, March 16, 1785: "As I have an opportunity William Woodward thought it best to let thee know timely as possible that there is a Vessel now here intended to sail for Dublin in the Course of about 15 to 20 days by which the Gentleman for whom I bespoke the box of Shrubs wishes to send it, he says to the amount of a Guinea. If thou hast any Letter for London Capt. Willett is expected to sail on first day next & Capt Gibbs in about ten days." (Quotation from a letter from Thos. Parke, Philadelphia, May 29, 1786.) Jos Cruikshank writes from Philadelphia under date of September 4, 1786, as follows: "No vessel has arrived from London except 1 small Schooner that brought but few Letters
Eddy's Ship the 'Friendship' Cap. Kennedy was arrived sometime towards the end of June at London. I believe no vessel is expected till the beginning of next month.''

The difficulties of communication are emphasized further in a letter of Thomas Parke dated Philadelphia, April 27, 1785, from which the following quotation has been made:

"In answer to thine of yesterday, I now inform thee I received by the Harmony Capt. Willett (who arrived a few days ago) two small Parcels one from R. Barclay & the other from W. Hamilton which the bearer undertakes to deliver. By Capt. Willett I am informed the Brig Flanders Capt. Boaz did not arrive in England till the day he sailed from London—this will account for thee not having from R. Barclay respecting the Shrubs & forwarded by that vessel thee sent by Willett to Dr. Lettsom afforded him great satisfaction, but I fear the Cargo by Capt. Boaz will suffer from the long passage they underwent. W. Hamilton has sent a number of curious Flowering Shrubs & Forest Trees to be transplanted at his Seat on the Schuylkill."

"I have not been able to find the parcel sent thee by Dr. Lettson, but I shall continue my enquiries & if I am successful it shall be forwarded to three." (Thomas Parke to Humphry Marshall, Philadelphia, November 8, 1786.)

Charles Eddy in a letter dated February 18, 1787, writes:

"I was much mortified to find them in a very bad state indeed owing chiefly to their being improperly packed in the boxes whereby the labels were lost from the Plants and the branches exceedingly broken & injured—to sustain the tossing upside down & end for end in moving on board the ship in stowing them & discharging from the ship into a lighter & from them to the Custom House for examination they ought to be so secured as to be impossible to be removed & the labels should be secured with something stronger than grass. Again: "for without good Roots & good packing the plants seldom do well that come from America."

"I have observed that the acorns of the different species of oak, as well as the seeds of the Magnolia & Laurus, grow with great difficulty in this country & I am persuaded that this is entirely owing to the careless manner in which these grains are sent to us by which they are generally quite dried up by the time they arrive—and yet it would be a very easy matter to prevent this inconvenience by putting in the large box a smaller one filled with layers of moss between which ye seeds of the Laurus, Magnolia, Oak, &c. & of every kind of tree & shrub which require to be planted quickly might be placed."
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"I am well aware, Sir, that thee will require much time & care & therefore should be paid for accordingly. I am for this reason willing to allow a greater price than what is generally demanded for boxes coming from America. (Letter from M. de Maupion dated Paris, July 8, 1780).

Condition of Trade Relations.

The following letter received from Charles Eddy dated London, July 18, 1787, indicates the unsatisfactory character of the trade relations in the endeavor of Humphry Marshall to find purchasers for the seeds and the plants shipped abroad.

"Esteemed Friend. I am duly favor'd with thine of 5 Ulo Inclosing one to Grimwood, Hudson & Barret of this City and desiring my opinion of them. I believe they are people of property & for aught I know men of Honor in their dealings at the same time I could not chuse if I were in thy place to rely too much on any of the people in this line for I think there is little doubt but that when thy seeds & plants arrived last there was a combination among several of them to endeavour to obtain them for less than their value—I have since conversed with some of them who informed me they would have been glad to have had some boxes at £4 or £4.4 each which those certainly ought to have brought though at the time I could obtain no more for them than what Grimwood & Co. gave & as to the plants I had a great number of the Nursery Men to look at them & none of them would offer more than if I remember right 5/ for them undoubtedly they looked badly being as I observed before much broken owing to their being tumbled & tossed about in the Ship's hold, & improperly packed—besides there was a number of them of no value here 6 or 7 of the sorts only being in demand. Grimwood & Co. had promised to send me a list of those sorts that were most in demand but this I could never since obtain from them. I have an idea if thy nephew could spare the time to come to this country even for a short time he might find a great advantage in observing which plants are the most valuable & scarce here—am told that when the Scarlet Azalea was first introduced here a single plant was sold for £40 to a nurseryman for propagation. James Phillips informs me that very few of the American Groves are yet disposed of. Thou dost not mention having rec'd a small order which I sent thee from a Gardener here & also one from Maddox & Son. I will cheerfully at any time under thee agreeable Service. I think it would be advisable to send some parcels to me of the same sorts ordered by Grimwood & Co. by the sales of which to other People thou will obtain a better Knowledge of their true value here.

I am very respectfully,
Thy Assured Friend,
C. Eddy."
The attitude of Grimwood, Hudson & Barrit is expressed in a letter to Humphry Marshall dated Kensington, August 4, 1787.

"Sir: Yours we duly rec'd, but not so much to our satisfaction as we could have wish'd, you not fixing the Price to the Plants you mention having, is a great disappointment as we cannot judge how to give an order for it, if your Charges should be high, we shall not get anything by them as the Risk we run is great, as probably they might arrive in bad Condition by a Tedium Voyage or other accident that makes it on our side exceedingly Hazardous, we hope you will bear this in mind & charge accordingly."

"Dear Sir: Your acceptable Letter of the 8th of Nov.—88 I had the honour to receive together with the two Boxes directed to me the one containing the Seed and the other the Plants, and to my satisfaction they all succeeded well except the Quercus Seed, these were all moulded under the shell so that none of them grew, if you send me Quercus Seed again please to put them in Sand in strong Bags taking care that each sort be separate in this manner they may be preserved good. The Plants particularly the Pinus I request the Roots may be bound in moss as soon as they are taken out of the Earth by which means they may be kept good. I am well satisfied with the five Guinea's charge on the two Boxes. I wish to be always so moderately dealt with, and I shall send an Order every Year; it is the Business I follow, and I have a variety of sorts both of forest trees & other exotic Plants; If I can serve you with anything in my Way shall do it with pleasure. You inform me that I may remit the five Guinea's in fine Linen this shall be done, as there is no Country in Europe in which better Linen is made than in Saxony."

"I should be glad to have the beautiful Dionaea Muscipula, as I have understood it may be procured in your Country, if so, do please to send me some of them."

That the seeds and plants shipped by Humphry Marshall usually arrived in good condition is indicated by this paragraph from a letter received from Johannes Reichert dated Belvedere near Weimar, May 25, 1793:

"I had the honor to receive your two acceptable Letters, the two Charts, which were first sent, arrived here in February, and the Plants & Seeds came to hand safe and in good condition."

That barter entered into the transactions of Humphry Marshall with foreign tradesmen is indicated in
HIPPED in good order and well conditioned, by Messrs Marshall in and upon the good ship called the America whereof James Evings is Master for this present voyage, and now riding at anchor in the Port Delaware and bound for Hamburg.

To say

One Box of Seals

being marked and numbered as in the margin; to be delivered in the like good order, and well conditioned, at the aforesaid port of Hamburg (the danger of the seas only excepted) unto Mr. Dobler or to their assigns, he or they paying freight for the said goods, three Shillings sterling with privilege and average accustomed. In witness whereof the Master or Purser of the said ship hath affirmed to two Bills of Lading, all of this tenor and date; one of which being accomplished, the other two to stand void. Dated in Philadelphia, the Second day of December 1796.

James Evings.
a letter received from Charles Eddy dated London, July 28, 1786:

"By Capt. Hawthorne of Birmingham I received yours of 24 Decem'—last together with 4 Boxes Seeds and sundry copies of a publication entitled the American Grove of the former you have enclosed Account Sales rendering me at £7.8.9 against which I have ship'd agreeable to your desire a Parcell of Genoa Velveret Amount to £8.18.0 as per annexed Account the Balance therefore now due me is £1.9.3 which pray note."