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Botanical explorations and discoveries in colonial Maryland: An introduction

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The research published in this volume of *Huntia* is the result of a five-year investigation on the flora of colonial Maryland as represented by collections of vascular plants found in the Sloane Herbarium at the British Museum (Natural History) in London, and in the Fielding-Druce Herbarium at the University of Oxford. We have concentrated on the collections made prior to the 1753 publication of the first edition of Linnaeus' *Species plantarum*, the starting point for the modern system of botanical nomenclature. To a large extent, this means we have examined the large collections of vascular plants made in the British colony of Maryland by the Reverend Hugh Jones, Maryland's first naturalist, who resided in the colony from 1696 until his death in early 1702, by Dr. David Krieg, a ship's surgeon and naturalist who gathered plants in Maryland during the summer of 1698, and by William Vernon, a Fellow at the University of Cambridge and a noted botanist (especially of cryptogams), who also visited Maryland during the summer of 1698. We have examined also the smaller collections of other ship's surgeons, notably Drs. Charles Coombs, William Brown and John Smart. These men visited the colony with the tobacco fleet or on slave ships, and each was probably in Maryland only for a part of a single growing season: Coombs in 1698 or more likely 1699, Brown around the turn of the century, and Smart in 1708. Dr. Andrew Scott, a resident physician, sent a small collection of mainly garden specimens to England in the late 1730s. Other persons collected specimens in Maryland before 1688, and again in the 1720s, but we

have been unable to determine who they were or when they botanized in the colony.

Several of the plants discovered in Maryland were taken to Europe, where they grew and became a part of the horticultural flora of the Old World. Many of these, and others, were described by the early naturalists who published on Maryland plants from 1688 until the early 1730s. During the late 1730s and the 1740s, Carl Linnaeus commented on some of the flowering plants previously discovered in Maryland, and in 1753 summarized his findings in a new treatment of the flora of the world.

We have attempted to trace the history of botanical explorations in colonial Maryland prior to 1753, and to account for all species of vascular plants described in the early literature, including those mentioned in a 1698 Maryland florula published by the London apothecary James Petiver. Because of the significance of Linnaeus' first edition of *Species plantarum* on modern botanical nomenclature, we have concentrated on the Maryland references in this work. Also, we have consulted his second edition, published as two volumes in 1762 and 1763. Finally, we have attempted to reconstruct and summarize the vegetation of colonial Maryland as known to us from the literature and specimens.

Prior to 1753, more than 700 polynomials were published for Maryland vascular plants, and over 2000 specimens of Maryland vascular plants representing 653 species, subspecies or varieties were available to European naturalists. About two-thirds of that number were actually described in the scientific literature of

the time. Sixty species of exotic weeds, garden and agricultural plants are included in the early collections.

Travel to England to examine the collections of colonial Maryland plants was supported by funds provided by the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station (1979, 1983), a National Science Foundation grant (DEB 80-04628, 1980), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Endangered Species (1980, 1982), the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Delaware (1980), the Graduate School of the University of Maryland (1982), and the United States Department of Agriculture (1985). An exhibition of early Maryland collections was held in Maryland during the spring of 1983; this was made possible by a series of private donations to the University of Maryland from several organizations, corporations and individuals. We wish to thank the University of Maryland, and in particular its president, Dr. John S. Toll, Dr. W. L. Harris, Director of the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station, and the Chairman of the Department of Botany, Dr. Glenn W. Patterson, for their support of our research and the exhibition.

Our efforts would not have been possible without the aid of the staffs at the Department of Botany, British Museum (Natural History) and the British Library in London, and the Fielding-Druce Herbarium at Oxford. In particular we wish to thank Dr. John F. M. Cannon of the British Museum (Natural History), who not only made our many visits to London enjoyable, but who also came to the United States to participate in the exhibition. At Oxford we were assisted by Mr. F. White and Miss S. Marner. At the British Museum (Natural History) we were aided by Mr. A. O. Chater and Dr. N. K. B. Robson. We wish to especially acknowledge Dr. Charlie Jarvis (BM) who helped us unravel some of the mysteries regarding typification of Linnaean names. Jarvis kindly reviewed a draft of our

paper on this subject. In that regard, we wish to thank the Linnean Society of London and its Executive-Secretary, Cdr. J. H. Fiddian-Green, R.N. who have been most helpful in our studies of Linnaean type material. We must acknowledge the assistance given to us by the library staffs at the British Museum (Natural History) and especially Ms. Judith Diment, the British Library, the Royal Society of London, the University of Oxford (notably the Botany School and the Bodleian Library), the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland, where Dr. Alan Fusonie has been particularly sympathetic to our efforts. A set of photographs of Maryland specimens examined by us in England, many of our original notes, and related documents may be examined at the University Archives of the University of Maryland at College Park (accession no. 87-63). Additional material is in the Hall of Records, Annapolis (file G 1422). The efforts by the staff at the Hall of Records, and especially Dr. Edward C. Papenfuss and Dr. Gregory A. Stiverson, in making available numerous items of interest to us have been most helpful. We also wish to thank the Calvert County Historical Society for providing us with background information on the history of the county during the late 1600s and early 1700s. The Reverend William Plummer, Jr., rector of Christ Church Parish of Port Republic, Maryland, has given his time to help us better understand the duties of a seventeenth-century Maryland minister. Finally, we thank Keith and Penny Mann of Kew Gardens, who kindly provided us with accommodations during our visits to England.

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