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Titford's "Hortus botanicus americanus"— a supplementary note

IN THE ARTICLE ON Titford's *Hortus botanicus americanus* in *Huntia* 1, I mentioned the fact that Whitman Bennett had reported two parts of this work with the imprint "New York, 1810." These parts are now in the Hunt Botanical Library and I have examined them. They consist of the first two fascicles, the first comprising the material as described in *Huntia* 1: 118-120, 1964, the second the material there described except for H₁-H₂.

The first question that is raised here is that the actual appearance in wrappers of the second fascicle does not correspond exactly with what I had deduced from watermarks and printing evidence. The difference is the absence of leaves H₁-H₂ in the actually issued fascicle.

Part of the evidence presented for supposing that H₁-H₂ was part of the second fascicle was the observation that H₂ ended on a more definite break—the end of a sentence—than G₂. This was tenuous enough; I now know it to be based on a misconception of serial publication practice. I had supposed that when a work was issued in parts that each part would naturally end with a completed sentence at least. This I have since found to be far from true. It was quite common for a fascicle to end in mid-sentence and leave the anxious subscriber hanging in the air until the appearance of the next fascicle.

Nevertheless, the remaining evidence presented in *Huntia* 1 seems to me still to suggest strongly that, whether it was published as part of the second fascicle or not, it was certainly printed at the same time as the other leaves of that fascicle. This whole question of the distinction between printing and publishing of fascicles in serial publication requires investigation. The fact that a work was issued a certain number of leaves at a time does not necessarily mean that it was printed in the same way. The distinction will serve to clarify many apparent anomalies in bibliographical evidence in such works (*e.g.*, in Salisbury and Hooker's *Paradisus londinensis*, which was published in quarto three leaves at a time but obviously could not have been printed in this way).

The most interesting question raised by the appearance of these odd

parts, however, is their American imprint and the date 1810. To describe them a little more fully, the wrappers are a buff color, bearing on the front a decorative frame of oak leaves and oak apples. Within this frame is letterpress which, for the most part, is similar to the prospectus (*Huntia* 1, 121). Both parts are dated at the top of the wrapper "October 1, 1810." The price is given as \$2 to subscribers and "2½ Dollars" to non-subscribers. The English price was 10s 6d to subscribers and 12s to non-subscribers, which reflects a rather different exchange than obtains today. The wrapper imprint of both works is the same and reads "NEW YORK: [PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR: | Published by SAMUEL CAMPBELL, and sold by all respectable Booksellers in the United States. | 1810."

The back of the wrappers contains the following announcement, which differs in each number. In I it reads:

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THIS WORK | Are received by Samuel Campbell and Messrs. Collins and Perkins, New York, Messrs. Inskip | and Bradford, Philadelphia, and all respectable Booksellers in the United States; and in | London by MESSRS. SHERWOOD NEELY and JONES, Paternoster Row; at No. 1 Union- | street, Bishopsgate; and by all respectable Booksellers. — The remaining Numbers will appear | respectively on March 1st, June 1st, September 1st, and December 1st, 1812.

In II the names of the booksellers, J. Hatchard, Piccadilly, and J. M. Richardson, Cornhill, are added.

Below this announcement appears a list of the plants which "will be noticed," plants of the West Indies in I, and of North America in II.

At the very bottom is a note as follows:

N.B. This first Number is of itself, a concise, yet clear and comprehensive Compendium of the Elements of Botany, calculated for the use of students or as a class book for the use of schools, &c.

In II it reads:

N.B. Number I is of itself, a concise, yet clear and comprehensive Compendium of the Elements of Botany, calculated for the use of Students or as a Class Book for the use of Schools, &c, and this Number contains a further continuation of the Natural Orders, &c.

It seems fairly probable that whether or not these two fascicles were issued at one time in England they were so issued in the United States.

Turning to the contents of the wrappers we find in the front of I, in addition to the English printed text, two disjunct leaves on wove paper; each of a different quality and both clearly distinguishable from the wove paper used for the text. The first leaf bears on its recto a copyright notice, headed "*District of New York, ss.*" It begins as follows:

BE it remembered, that on the 21st day of September, in the Thirty-fifth Year of the Independence of the United States of America, WILLIAM J. TITFORD, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office the Title of a Book, the Right whereof he claims as Author, in the words following, to Wit:

There follows an exact transcription of the American title-page. The verso of the copyright notice is blank. The title is on a somewhat heavier wove paper than the copyright notice and is engraved (Fig. 79). It is dated 1810. The verso is blank. There is an extraneous blank leaf at the back of the first fascicle. Part II contains no extraneous printed or engraved matter but has a single blank leaf at the front and another at the back.

Now what is the explanation of all this? I think that the explanation given in *Huntia* 1 is indeed the true one and that this appearance of Titford's work in American clothes represents an attempt to ensure copyright in the United States.

The copyright law of 1790, in force in North America at this time, required that before publication the author or proprietor should deposit in the clerk's office of the district court where he lived a printed copy of the title of the work in question. The law also required the deposit of a copy six months after publication with the office of the Secretary of State but this requirement was probably frequently flouted.

It is clear that Titford hoped for a good many subscriptions from the United States and the subscription list shows in fact 58 names, a third of the total. (Samuel Campbell, the New York publisher of these parts, took 16 copies.) It is likely that Campbell, aware of the prevailing piracy of works printed in England, either suggested to Titford this method of protecting his work in the United States or took it upon himself to do so.

The prospectus of the work declares the first part due for publication on October 1st, 1811. The American wrappers are dated exactly a year before this. The copyright notice is dated September 21st, 1810, and this date is the only date which could not have been dissimulated. Since it must be accepted as correct the date of the engraving of the title leaf too can be accepted, because, as we have seen, a copy of the title leaf had to be submitted at the time of copyrighting. When Campbell received his copies of the work he removed the English title-page, which bore the date 1811, and substituted his own engraved title-page, maintaining the fiction that the work was published in New York. He could not issue the work in the English wrappers, which presumably also bore the London imprint and the date 1811 and he therefore had new wrappers printed and set the date on them back exactly a year to conform to his title-page date.

No other explanation need be looked for. These were probably the only

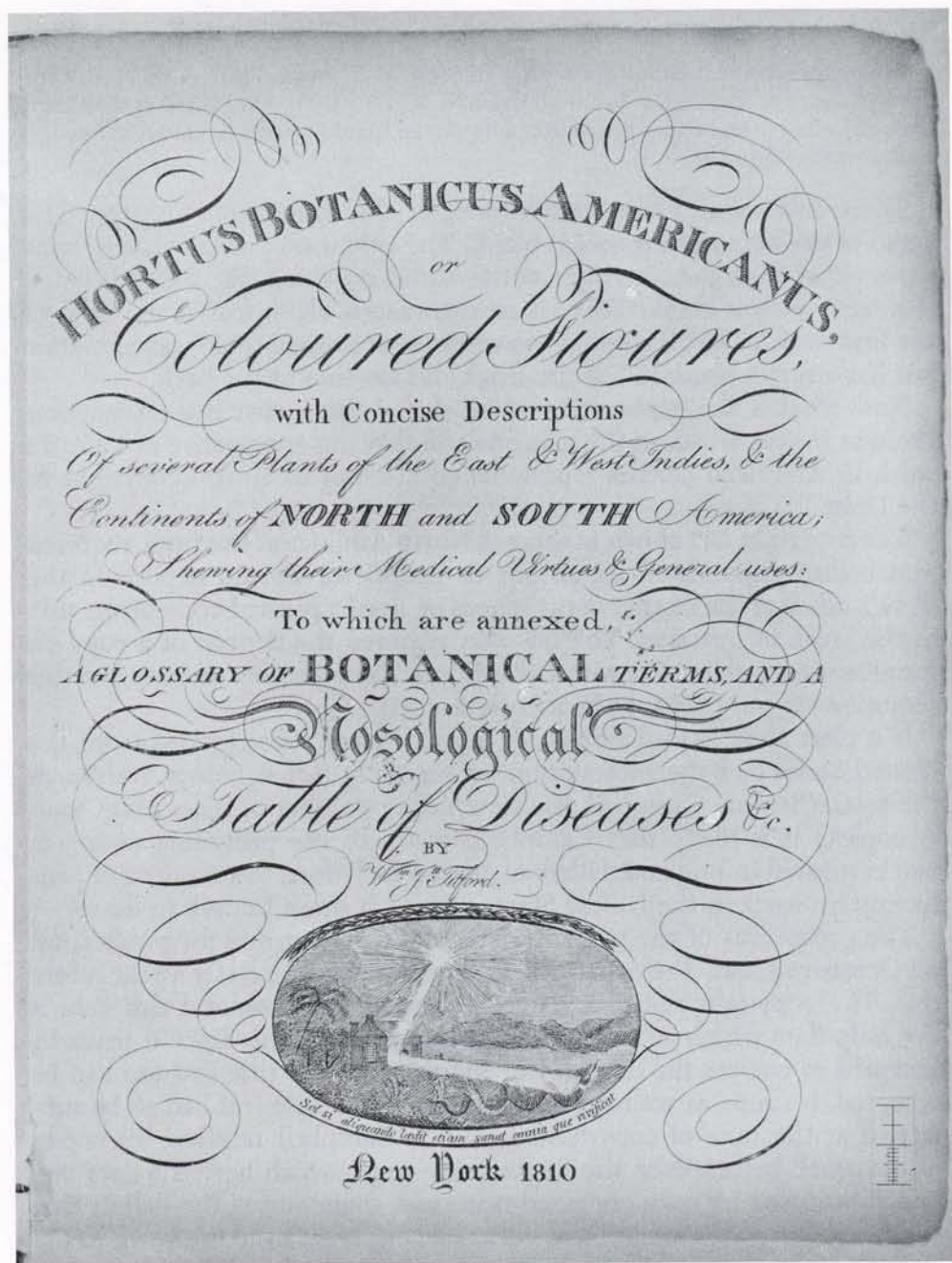


Fig. 79. Engraved title-page of Part I, for W. J. Titford, *Sketches towards a Hortus botanicus americanus* (1810).

Hunt Botanical Library copy

two parts that Campbell ever received. The War of 1812 broke out on June 18th, 1812. According to the statement on the verso of the wrappers the third fascicle was due to be published in March 1812. Taking into account the slowness of communications and the turbulent political situation it is likely that it never reached Campbell. It would be interesting to know if his subscription was completed after the war. If it was not, his care and effort to protect the copyright would have been, for him, commercially fruitless.

Ian MacPhail

