

Principes, 26(2), 1982, pp. 55-69

Early Days of The Palm Society and Principes Revealed in Letters: Excerpts from Correspondence between Dent Smith and H. E. Moore, Jr.*

November 28, 1955

Dear Dr. Moore:

Mrs. Lucita H. Wait was kind enough to send me your address so that I might write to you about the newly proposed Palm Society. I enclose a memo about it.

I expect to write to any other scientists known to be working with the palms, in the hope that they will assent to becoming members of the Society. I dare hope that the replies will be favorable if only I can make it clear that the Society is not intended to be yet another garden club or organization given over to meetings and discussions of trivial garden subjects.

The Society has no credentials other than its roster of members. Your own well-known work with the palms, and hence identification with them, has made it seem to me imperative to try to engage your interest in the Society and to ask your assent to becoming a member right here in the very beginning.

* * *

2 December 1955

Dear Mr. Smith,

I like the prospectus of the society very much. It appeals to me particu-

* Edited with permission from Dent Smith by John Dransfield and Natalie W. Uhl.

larly in that it is more or less a loose grouping of people having a common interest but without the formality that so often accompanies such societies.

It will be a pleasure to join so many of my friends. I only regret that I will be an absentee member for some time yet since my return to the States is not scheduled until next November. In the meantime I shall be storing up valuable information about the bases of our knowledge of the palms, the types and historic specimens collected over a century ago in many instances and described by von Martius, Blume, Griffith and others. Thus far it has been rather exciting work in Brussels where the personal herbarium of von Martius now reposes—as distinct from the von Martius collections that are incorporated in the museum at Munich and which I also hope to study while abroad.

May I wish you the best of success in rounding up the many people who are fascinated in any one of many ways by this extraordinary family of plants.

* * *

January 2, 1956

Dear Dr. Moore:

Our first mimeographed paper, or Bulletin, should go into the mails this week, and I shall send one to Ithaca to be forwarded to you. It is hardly all

that could be desired, for, besides a few longish quotations, it consists pretty much of a monologue. In later papers we may have enough contributions from the members to provide more engaging fare.

* * *

February 11, 1956

Dear Dr. Moore:

Much to my distaste I have had to face up to some of the details attendant upon organization. I enclose a sheet containing some proposals under that head. It seems we cannot avoid organization, but I hope that it can be kept fairly simple and never fouled up with all sorts of red tape.

I had thought it was best not to propose your name as a Director during your absence. My thought there was not to bother you at all during your stay in Europe.

A new paragraph to return to the question of Directors. It seemed to me extremely doubtful that there would be time to get your assent to having your name placed on a proposed slate which would be placed in the printer's hands next week, and I surely would not place it there without assent. It seems to me a better way would be to nominate you as a Director at the meeting itself, making it clear that such a post would be strictly subject to your acceptance and the effective date of it strictly subject to your convenience. (Maybe I should have been a lawyer instead of a field hand.)

The Society now has about 90 members, among them many more of your friends or acquaintances.

* * *

10 April 1956

Dear Mr. Smith,

The last bulletin of the palm society arrived some time ago, in fact during our very cold weather here. I shall try to give you some information on cold damage in a later letter but for the moment will confine myself to a few notes and to forwarding the postcard proxy. You were very right in thinking that I would prefer to be omitted from consideration for posts. To have a title without doing anything about it doesn't sit well with me and certainly I am in no position to do more than applaud your fine efforts. I have been very much interested in watching membership climb and hope that eventually I may have some contributions of a technical nature to make to the group.

* * *

April 21, 1956

Dear Dr. Moore:

On my return from the big doings at the FTG (our meeting) I found your welcome letter here. Before commenting upon it, I'll tell you something about the meeting.

I got stuck with the job of president. Though all the offices are to run for two years, I said that I would resign at the end of one year. This because the job of editing the papers entails much correspondence and other work, and is quite enough by itself for any one mortal to undertake.

What a challenge it is to tackle the palms! The more I see of them, and the more places I visit, the better I realize how much remains to be learned. It would be appalling if nothing were being done about it. Fortunately for us growers, you have evi-

dently got the great resolve and courage that it takes.

* * *

11 May 1956

Dear Mr. Smith,

It would seem ungracious not to accept the directorship in the Palm Society so kindly offered and, indeed, I am most pleased to have been thought of. In view of the present situation I cannot guarantee to be much more than a name but if that is sufficient can accept without reservation.

I trust that things are off to a good start and will be watching progress eagerly. Best of fortune in your new (but really not so new considering all you have done) job.

* * *

May 16, 1956

Dear Dr. Moore:

The Society is progressing in numbers (181 now) fairly fast. We are falling down, though, abroad—in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia, Oceania, Central and South America. This is not because we cannot enlist interest. It is because we have not solicited it, not having the names and addresses of the foreign palm-fanciers and scientists. Perhaps after your return you can steer us in the right direction.

* * *

July 25, 1956

Dear Dr. Moore:

As you may have noticed in our July bulletin, I expect to supplant our mimeographed papers with a quarterly

journal, printed and illustrated. I am hopeful to have some interesting matter for the first number of it, and with that end in view I wonder if you might have the time and inclination to send me something for inclusion. I remember that you had thought you might say something for us about the work you are doing in Europe. My rejoinder was that it would be swell, but that I did not think we should ask you to let it impinge upon your time. I still say the same thing, adding only that it seems now a very opportune time if circumstances are more favorable for you. My deadline with the printer is Sept. 1st.

On the head of a quarterly journal, I should value greatly your opinion of the proposed name—*Principes*. I ask myself if it's too grandiose. I also recall that old Berthold Seemann argued with it, on the grounds that the palms have some very "low relations."

The Society has many problems that are not easily solved during your absence. I believe that you may know some or all of the solutions and could give us some much needed guidance. I'd be quite willing to make a special trip to Ithaca, after your return, if it would help matters.

* * *

November 12, 1956

Dear Dr. Moore:

I hope very much to see you in Ithaca some time this month if it can be arranged to suit your convenience. It is not hard to imagine how busy you are at the moment after the long absence, but I am hopeful that, ten days or so hence, you will have had a chance to catch up with some of the accumulations.

If I could visit with you by corre-

spondence, the trip up there could be avoided. I fear, however, that it would be quite impossible to deal with the matters I have in mind even in a whole series of letters. I should like to consult with you about the Society's affairs—its future and its policies, its methods of operation and its management—and also several other things.

* * *

November 19, 1956

Dear Mr. Smith,

The interval between my landing and the present has been somewhat hectic due to a deadline on a book manuscript which I expect to have met by Thanksgiving. After that I can devote full attention to other problems. I must confess that I have misgivings as to the amount of help that I may have to give. I can, however, assure you of the best assistance I know how to give.

* * *

30 November 1956

Dear Hal:

First, I wish to thank you for all your kindnesses and attention. I came away with a feeling of great pride in you for having accepted the post of editor, and in our young and promising Society. My visit would have been enjoyable and also informative even had your decision been different; but all such workaday adjectives were transcended by the fact of your acceptance. Please count upon me at all times for any assistance or support that I might be capable of rendering. That would be forthcoming anyhow, but, you see, you have relieved my mind of terrible forebodings and anxieties.

* * *

10 December 1956

Dear Dent:

I was glad to have your letter describing your visit to Longwood and the reaction from Mrs. Wait. Now that I am free to think about other things, I suppose the Palm Society will receive the attention it deserves. Although I am a little apprehensive, I am looking forward to tackling this stimulating job.

Apart from any editorial matters, it was a very real pleasure to have you visit us here in Ithaca. I am only sorry that you couldn't have stayed longer. I am looking forward to the possibility of exploring new subjects in conversation when and if I get to Florida again.

I have sent a small packet containing six fruits of an extremely interesting palm from the Fiji Islands. Its name, *Neoveitchia Storckii*. It is not to be confused with *Veitchia Joannis* for although somewhat similar in habit, it is quite distinct in technical characteristics. The material was sent by surface post from Fiji and I have little hope that the seeds are still viable.

* * *

December 20, 1956

Dear Hal:

Many thanks for the *Neoveitchia* seeds. We'll hope for the best.

I have a pretty good backlog of ideas for the contents of *Principes*. I'll try to put them in some sort of order and send them to you next month. You may have to discard some or all of them, but perhaps they would be worth a glance. Among other things, I had asked Mrs. Wait if she would do a series of very brief sketches of various members of the Society, preferably in each case accompanied by a

photograph. She began it with a few paragraphs about A. C. Jordahn who has written for us a little paper on the cultivation of palms in the limestone area of Fla.

* * *

December 27, 1956

Dear Hal:

Here are a few random thoughts and notions concerning *Principes*. First, I have thought that it would be of immense practical value to record lists of palms actually under cultivation in New World collections—a sort of series or continuing effort to determine what grows where. Such lists to be accompanied, if possible, by a general description of the plantings and preferably a few pictures. Obtaining this kind of thing has been like pulling eye teeth up till now. At last, however, Stanley Kiem advises me that the FTG palms have been indexed on cards (the old catalog had become quite undependable). Then there's the Montgomery collection still to tabulate. After Chapman Field and my own plantings, the only other collection in the state containing more than 100 palm species is at Melbourne—H. Bertram Smith. So far as I know, I should say. But with the stimulation resulting from the formation of our Society, several new and expanding collections are now in process, and in another year or two there will be plantings qualifying as something more than representative. Then there are the other notable gardens of the hemisphere—and after that, there's the world. I don't know whether you'll want to continue this series, so called, but I thought I'd try to put into words my somewhat vague and necessarily flexible notions about it.

And there's at least one article in

Baileya that should be reprinted in *Principes*! Dr. Dress's "On the Gender of Scientific Plant Names," Mar., '55. This article could be assimilated by our members with much more ease if all the plant names employed were substituted with the names of palms. The examples then would have more point and be more apposite for our members. I shouldn't think that Dr. Dress would object to such substitution. Some examples used are already existing in palm binomials and would not be substituted, e.g., *albus*, *niger*, *elatiior*, etc. There's other good stuff in *Baileya* that would help to reduce the growers' mystification. I doubt that 10% of our members ever see it. But everything I say is for you to accept, reject or retire to the "possible" drawer.

I had thought that we would index the volumes (of P.) and not bother with an index in each issue; but I'm not sure that it is for the best.

* * *

31 December 1956

Dear Dent:

The idea of publishing lists of palms cultivated seems to me a good one for, from my point of view, it would serve as a basis for including many things in *Hortus* that are now not dealt with simply because we have no catalog reference to their existence in the United States as plants for sale. It would also serve as a basis for comparison in the future. My ideas on *Principes* are being formulated rather slowly, but tomorrow being a holiday I hope to find time not only to answer a large pile of personal correspondence but to set down on paper some of these thoughts and to begin functioning. Although I regret that your trip to Mexico must be postponed, it is somewhat comforting

to know that you will be reachable through the period of initial struggle. Of course, if you would like to do the July number yourself, I should be most happy to have you take over or rather continue the job you have started. If you want to have a finger in the July pie please don't hesitate to say so. Regarding the index I definitely feel that a terminal index for each volume would be most helpful.

The project for the present is to attempt, if possible, to straighten out the confusion that now exists amongst the plants cultivated as *Veitchia Joannis* and to elaborate the description of *Neoveitchia*. With excellent series of specimens from the Fiji Islands and all of our cultivated material, I should manage at least to make a beginning. I also hope that I can finish up my notes on the genus *Reinhardtia* since I note that Bruce is puzzled by the varying treatments in *Gentes Herbarum*. As I think I told you while you were here, I cannot separate *Reinhardtia* and *Malortia* and in this regard follow Burret. Since these are coming into cultivation, it would perhaps be well to get them on the road with some good names.

* * *

3 January 1957

Dear Hal:

I have already advertised pretty widely that you are to take over as Editor after the April *Principes* appears (this because it seemed a bright feather in the Society's cap and justifiably something to crow about), and it would be something of an anti-climax were I to do the July issue. Apart from that, I need a breathing spell so that I can attend to my neglected affairs and mend my fences. But I can and will contribute something—both text and

illustrations—to that and subsequent issues, subject to your acceptance. Very likely I'll have on hand to turn over to you a fair number of MSS., good, bad and indifferent, and perhaps enough material to make up an entire issue.

Actually, Hal, I believe your only worry will be how to accommodate all you want to print rather than to be at a loss for matter. I believe you will get more printable papers than you can use.

A final word about *Principes*. It's a lead-pipe cinch if you have a good printer, and it's a preposterous and almost un-doable chore if you don't. The thing to do is to take time by the forelock, get all set well in advance and then the draught will go down like nectar instead of nitric acid with castor oil for a chaser. If you ask me, I think for you it's going to be a barrel of fun. So, having pontificated in this very high style, I'll bow out before getting started all over again.

* * *

11 January 1957

Dear Dent:

Your recent postal card is very much in line with my thinking. Unfortunately, I don't know any of Martius' works that are translated. As time goes on, perhaps I should attempt to make translations as I work with his writings. Most of the literature on fossil palms is in German or French. There is one very interesting paper on the oldest fossil palm which appeared not too long ago. I'll attempt to get hold of the periodical in which it appeared (a French or Belgian journal) and if not translate, at least abstract for *Principes*. Along the lines of your thoughts regarding brief biographies of members of the Society, I have been

wondering whether a series of sketches about the botanists who have worked with palms might not be of interest. Linnaeus himself would, of course, be one of the first, but some of the early explorers made rather good notes on the palms they saw and Linnaeus' son prepared a small manuscript which today rests unpublished in the Library of the Linnean Society in London. I hope that we will be able to obtain the microfilm of this manuscript. Written in Latin, it would not be the sort of thing that could be published in its entirety, but an article could be written about it and perhaps the Linnean Society would grant permission to reproduce one or a few pages. I have a few hurried notes on it made during a visit to the Society's headquarters, but time didn't permit the kind of study that it deserves. Others on this list would be one of Linnaeus' students, Giseke, some of the Dutch botanists who early noted palms in the East Indies, Wurmb, Rumphius, Blume, then such giants amongst palm students as von Martius, von Humboldt, Wendland, Drude, the incomparable Beccari, Bailey and some of today's older but still living students such as Burret and Furtado. This would make a series that would last for a good number of years. Of course, it may be that because these men are so interesting to me, I assume they would be interesting to others. Many times I shall be referring thoughts to you for your very frank comment regarding their pertinence to *Principes*. I get carried away and if time permitted, could very happily sit down and write several numbers of the Journal right now. Unfortunately, time is not that free, so that there is no danger of my over-writing.

* * *

Jan. 16, 1957

Dear Hal:

Your letter for publication. Swell. Just what I wanted. If any members fear that the journal will become so technical as to be unintelligible, this letter will completely convince them otherwise. (See *Principes* 1:77—Eds.)

A series of sketches on the botanists who have worked with the palms would be ideal, and would indicate excellent editorial perception. If possible, one such sketch should appear in every number. Don't forget Seemann—an interesting fellow. But aren't they all? Pictures often tell a story. There are two of Ekman in *Flora de Cuba*, Vol. 1, that intrigue me no end. Sort of a Before-and-After combination: No. 1 shows him in "civies" looking so very mild and smoking a pipe; No. 2 shows him in the jungles looking very grim and somewhat fierce. No words could ever make such a graphic presentation of what the collecting botanist has to endure. I believe that Hermano Alain might lend you the 2 engravings—worth a million to *Principes*!

Do you know Dr. Velva Rudd at Smithsonian? She's a member, was O. F. Cook's secretary and helper for some years. (*We'll be publishing her article later this year—Eds.*) He would have Orator for a given name. I think his "palm families" and his many other oddities were quite mistaken, but no one could say that he was bereft of strange and novel and even fascinating ideas.

* * *

6 February 1957

Dear Dent,

The manuscript arrived shortly after my last letter went off to you. I have

read and enjoyed it. The fact is that I have no blue marks to make anywhere. I have so long taken it for granted that the fan palms are and should be more hardy than others that I was surprised at first to read your comments. Just for fun, I have gone through a number of books and articles on palms (especially on those cultivated) and find that no one has come out with a bold statement. Even Chabaud (do you know his *Les Palmiers de la Côte d'Azur?*) fails to do more than suggest indirectly this propensity of the fan palms.

When I get to Daytona Beach perhaps we can talk a bit about this. Being more than casually interested in the geography of palms and the processes of evolution that have brought them to their present state of development and distribution, I have done some rough plotting. To my way of thinking, most of the fan palms have gone an independent way almost since (and perhaps quite since) the first. They are found, generally speaking, much to the north of the usual concentration of palms. Someday I am going to write an essay on palm distribution and evolution but this not until I have finished a *Genera Palmarum* and a popular book and have gotten a better understanding of the fossil record.

* * *

February 9, 1957

Dear Hal:

This doctor and mister business is quite a puzzle as well as a headache when you have no means of checking. Pichi-Sermolli refers to you as *Mr.* Moore and Furtado addresses me as *Dr.* Smith. So there you are.

Furtado quite enthusiastic and wish-

es to be enrolled. Please remind me to pull his letter from the files when you come down here. Several other interesting ones too. Nothing from Burret so far. I hope that your letter has elicited an answer.

I fear I'm going to lose that *Zombia* I was so elated over getting from Loo. Another thing about fan palms—tougher to transplant when young than the feathers. In this case the usual trouble—not enough roots.

* * *

14 February 1957

Dear Dent:

I was glad to hear that Pichi-Sermolli and Furtado have shown interest. Since Burret is retired it may be that he no longer cares about palms, so I am not too surprised that you have heard nothing from him.

The Mr. and Dr. business really needn't bother you. There are some who have a title and worry about it. However, it's been my experience that they are the least likely to be people about whom you would worry. Since Pichi and I are on a first-name basis, I suppose we have never worried about titles and certainly it's the last thing that I ever concern myself about.

* * *

February 20, 1957

Dear Hal:

Another notion: An article on the subject of palm nomenclature, with the reasons for name changes. This subject seems to get little comprehension in most quarters.

* * *

February 28, 1957

Dear Hal:

The next issue of *Principes*, I regret to say, chiefly contains junk. This fact will tend to make your own first issue look like a great improvement.

* * *

9 April 1957

Dear Dent:

Made it back with only minor difficulties and am now trying to get my desk cleared up. I really don't know how to thank you for all the kind things that you and Marta did for me during my two visits. It's really a great pleasure and privilege to know you.

* * *

17 April 1957

Dear Dent:

I bet Lucita is up to her ears in arranging things on shelves by now. I am in the last stages of manuscript writing and can begin to devote my attention to *Principes*—a job too long delayed, but certainly a challenge in the next month or so. Our printer here has fallen in everyone's estimation.

* * *

April 23, 1957

Dear Hal:

Again thanks for the reprints. Cook did not deal with the history of the coconut palms in Fla. That's one for *Principes*. Let's have it, please. Would take a little digging to get the facts straight. Many people are under the impression that the coco is native;

Mowry so included it. I believe that's quite wrong. The earliest explorers were never mentioned seeing the coco palm. Cowgill told me that in 1900 there were blessed few cocos anywhere in Fla., said they really got going in quantity when shiploads were brought into Tampa. The subject would fascinate our members. Why don't I undertake it? No library. (Those interested in the latest on this question see Harries, H. 1978. *Evolution, dissemination and classification of Cocos nucifera L. Botanical Review* 44: 265-320.—Eds.)

* * *

30 April 1957

Dear Dent:

It seems to me most appropriate that we include photograph and biographical sketch of our retiring president along with what I hope will be the retiring president's report. If you can do that for me, I think somehow we will manage without the article on *Washingtonia*. Barry Tomlinson has sent in a long article on palm morphology—a report on progress to date as it were—which will take a fair amount of space accompanied as it is by two plates. With my own article on *Reinhardtia*, ones on the ages of palms, cultivation of *Sabal minor* in Pennsylvania, *Zombia*, and Dave Barry's note on *Jubaeopsis caffra* things are beginning to fill up. With the president's report, treasurer's report, a message from the editor, classified ads etc. it should be possible to manage a 28 page issue without too much filler material. At any rate, don't worry about the *Washingtonia*.

For the moment I am going to put a note in the suggestions file regarding

the history of *Cocos* in Florida. The reason for this being that with daylight saving time I seldom get in from Moorings before 9:00 p.m. and on my docket for this summer I have *Principes*, the finishing up of these blessed palm papers, a little job to do on the palms of Okinawa for Walker at the Smithsonian, a job to do on the palms of Guatemala for the Flora of Guatemala, some odds and ends on *Chamaedorea*. Since there are time limits on the two floristic treatments I have to give them preference and since these are all evening jobs, you can see that time is again at a premium.

* * *

May 24, 1957

Dear Hal:

Do you know anyone qualified to write an article on house palms for *Principes*? Occasionally somebody pesters me on that subject. Also occasionally on "how to start a palm nursery." '*-&,* Have you thought of trying to continue a series on living palm collections in the U.S. at least? We have not yet had anything on the FTG or Jennings Collections. A small but good collection in Miami is Frank May's. I have various and sundry ideas for future issues of *Principes*, but hesitate to spring them for the reason that you probably have more on hand than you can get at. Any problems I can help you with?

* * *

27 May 1957

Dear Dent:

You must be wondering by now whether any progress has been made on *Principes*. I am happy to say that although I haven't written you for

some time I have kept a succession of letters going and finally Saturday morning after a solid week of working on it got *Principes* manuscript with the exception of a few filler items off to Lucita. As I was typing the accompanying letter I received a telegram from her stating that she had located a printer in Miami and surprisingly enough at a price less than Menninger's. I don't know how this will work but feel that most of my work has been done for the moment. Now I must finish the papers for *Gentes Herbarum* so that I can have a month or two without any sword hanging over my head.

I don't know what your reaction is going to be but I hope you will like what you see. I had enough material for 48 pages but have held back two articles so that we can have a 36 page issue. This seemed wiser in view not only of finances which apparently are OK but of balance in the magazine. I have held out Tomlinson's 11 page article on progress in anatomical studies in the palms since that plus my own paper on *Reinhardtia* would have considerably over balanced the issue on side of the technical. I would have dropped *Reinhardtia* were it not for the fact that I am including the combinations and one new description in it for "scientific tone." Tomlinson's work will make a nice technical contribution for October and in January I can follow up with a second taxonomic paper on *Veitchia*. It took a while to get some background for this job, but with the first issue on its way I think succeeding issues should be less difficult. I sincerely hope that you haven't been worrying and that your freedom has given you a chance to use the boat and do some of the many things that you have had to give up for the past year and a half.

You asked what I was doing on the land in addition to admiring it. Only

rain prevents me from working each evening there from 6 to 9. This is one resolution made to myself that I am keeping regardless of anything else. Weekends give me a chance to do even more. Thus far I have gotten most of my major lawn areas into some sort of shape and at last have finished the first dam bringing the water level up sufficiently so that I will have a very nice water lily pool close to 150 feet long and 20 feet wide. It is already planted and now I can hardly wait for action. This is my answer to the palms you have in your front yard. I hope the latter are doing beautifully.

* * *

June 3, 1957

Dear Hal:

No, I haven't wondered much and have not worried in the least about *Principes*. For several reasons. It would just not occur to me to doubt your ability to cope with the task, and much less to think that you would just let it slide. Besides those things, I must again say that I couldn't worry about any lack of original matter because of the marvelous library you have there at the Hortorium—which you could fall back upon any time that you were in a jam for material. But I hope you'll give us ignoramuses some of the older writings (and the older the better) without being in any jam. Unless you do, we shall never see the likes of them, for we haven't got access to Linnaeus, Humboldt, von Martius, y Cia. Or Beccari. Or even Small.

Still about *Principes*. You don't know what my reaction will be, but I can tell you in advance. It will be much better than just favorable. And as for the sweat that editors sweat, I don't care if it's perfumed or not, but always think it's as admirable as such

exudations can possibly be. Anyhow, the contents, as you outline them, sound good to me. I do hope that you remembered to use Russ Seibert's hydra-headed royal.

* * *

4 June 1957

Dear Dent:

So far things seem to be going reasonably well. Lucita's new printer has a good series of type faces and I can only hope that my scaling on previous issues of *Principes* will serve for this printer as well. There certainly is a lot to learn about this business and at this point I can only hope that the first issue under my name will be up to par.

* * *

19 June 1957

Dear Dent,

My own boat is out but not caulked nor varnished. Guess I'll be in the boat-owner but not -user category too! Your comments on the ownership of land are most true. Every second that I can manage finds me there. It is amazing what progress has been made. Now that plans for the basement are in my hands I hope to get going on construction—that is if I can find a contractor who will tackle the problem for a reasonable figure at this late date. Hope to be at RFD 2 this fall.

* * *

June 24, 1957

Dear Hal:

I'm glad to hear the pressure is letting up a little. I can readily understand how you would spend every

available moment at your bucolic retreat.

* * *

7 July 1957

Dear Dent,

Principes page proof went off to Lucita yesterday 30 seconds before the post office closed at noon. It looks fairly decent though I find I have a great deal to learn about editing. The next issue should be much easier all around. I feel that the printer has been very good so far and hope that the finished product will please you.

McCurrach wants to do a picture book along the lines of Hawkes with some help from me. I'm not sure that this will work out but do hope that we can talk it over. I am still holding out myself for a more definitive work even though it may take another few years. I can understand his hurry but can also understand my own desire for a more cautious approach especially after the headaches of the gesneriad job. If things work out, I want to convince him to come here where we can sit down in the midst of things and work with material as well as ideas.

* * *

17 July 1957

Dear Dent:

Mr. and Mrs. McCurrach have been here all day and undoubtedly will be here a good part of tomorrow. I am enjoying them very much indeed. I only hope that we will have given him enough stuff to make his trip worthwhile. In any event we certainly are glad to have had the company. I must say that I admire him for his enthusiasm and courage in attempting a job that is really a pretty big one.

Guess that is all for the moment. I hope that you will send me a criticism of the July issue of *Principes* without waiting to be asked. It may not be possible to get together on my ideas for the editorial board for a little while yet so any comments you have will be more than welcomed.

* * *

July 23, 1957

Dear Hal:

I have *Principes* before me. The thing that really "sends" me is, quite naturally, your contribution on *Reinhardtia*. It tells us non-botanists everything we are capable of absorbing and it tells the botanists much that is new to them and further illustrates for them a fact they should know, viz., that the publication will not hold interest for freshmen only. Now I know much more about the plant I have here, which appears to be *R. gracilis* var. *gracilior*. I have long hankered for a start of *R. elegans*, not only because it is called elegant but because it is a mountain palm and so should be very happy here. I must interject something else that has nothing to do with criticism, to wit, that my little plant now has incipient flowers on each of 3 stems, that it is more vigorous and a better color now, that I have to counsel caution about concluding that Florida may be too cold for it, and that I devoutly hope it will fruit this year. The illustrations accompanying your article are swell (the others are good too), and if the article seems too learned to some members it will nevertheless tend to make those members have increased respect (a synonym for admiration) for the work we are attempting to do. I especially commend it because you did not write down too

much and did not confine it to strait-jacket space. A very fine job, Hal.

In short, without going into any more detail, I think the issue is very good and I am truly pleased with it.

* * *

29 July 1957

Dear Dent,

Your fine letter of the 23rd was on my desk this morning when I returned from my summer's "vacation" of a weekend at Tanglewood in the Berkshires listening to some fine music during dry spells. It was encouraging to have your comments on *Principes*. I blanch at a number of items—none of them DS—to wit that the page head *Principes* was omitted throughout though I'm sure it was on the dummy I sent down. I certainly missed it in page proof too. Ah well! Also some typographical errors missed such as "beraking through." The fillers were written single column more or less at the last minute to fill space remaining in page proof. I rather prefer a 30 em line myself for such and will ordinarily use it when I can plan on it. The October issue ought to go much more easily for I have learned a great deal through this first issue of *Principes* and through a week of proof-reading with Miss Kurtz at Macmillan. I almost begin to feel that I know something of an editor's duties now.

* * *

20 Sept. 1957

Dear Dent,

Nothing like starting out with business. Firstly, since the Society is now incorporated I supposed that something should be done on the masthead

and wrote Walter about it. He feels, and I agree with him, that it is probably not necessary to have an Inc. after the title so we will leave it as is but substitute corporation for association in the write-up. October *Principes* is at the printers now but I haven't seen galleys. Perhaps Lucita will stir things up when she returns from her vacation. It looks as though we will have 40 pages this time with 8 of these being index. A quirk of mine—indexes—but I have hunted through so many unindexed periodicals of this sort that I felt we should do better by our members.

Here, things are beginning to straighten out. The book is out of my hands, *Principes* is in the works, I am making some progress in cleaning up the old farmhouse where I now live and once an editorial job for another book company is out of the way I hope to be free for palm work evenings. *Chamaedorea* is on the docket and I begin to feel the excitement that comes with setting out on a new project.

* * *

6 December 1957

Dear Dent,

I am substantially in agreement that palm lists are important to readers of *Principes*. In addition to the identification problem of palms in collections and errors in naming I have another objection to the repeated use of individual lists. That is in their repetitious nature. Unless they have a particular slant, i.e. at high latitudes, in areas where palms are being newly tried, my reaction (and perhaps only mine) is that they become just one more list of the same thing with perhaps a few additions or subtractions.

As a counter, would you comment on the following proposal. Nat has

asked more than once how botanical gardens could grow palms under erroneous names and often with plants grossly misidentified. For *Hortus*, I must of necessity deal with all the plants and names for the United States. As I read your letter, therefore, my mind jumped to a thought that cannot be put into effect immediately but might, in the long run, solve the problem—to wit an annotated list of the palms known to be in cultivation, not just in the United States but in both hemispheres.

Also in mind: a series of biographical sketches of palm students such as Martius, Beccari, Furtado, Dugand, Drude, Wendland, Giseke, Blume, Linnaeus f. (whose palm manuscript lies unpublished in the Linnaean Society and which we hope to have microfilmed with permission to write a story), Spruce, Wallace, Barbosa Rodrigues and so on for several lines; these obviously not to be written by one person!

I want sometime to contribute a "life history of a search for a name" (e.g. for *Chrysalidocarpus* "Soledad") to attempt an explanation of the "delay" in coming up with an identification.

These are a few of the many things that come to mind for original contributions and I suspect they will begin to come in as letters already written and to be written bring response. There are, as you point out, many re-usable accounts too. I hate to use too many of them if a supply of freshly written material keeps up. It seems too bad to duplicate when so much has yet to be said. Either way, one could keep *Principes* in fuel for years once the supply begins to flow.

I have noted your comments about the cover. May I give you mine? I cannot feel that the use of a handsome photograph and bold but simple print

on the cover of *Principes* can in any way cheapen it. We can't duplicate *Natural History* but if we can come close to having the photographic attraction of that magazine I'd feel we were doing something. When I look at a couple of Tibetan lamas with their pipes, or a New Guinea bird hunter, or Michaelmas Daisy on the cover of that magazine, I don't get that "Marilyn Monroe" sensation but I do get a very strong compulsion to dash for the contents but only after really absorbing the cover content. I would hope that we might do something of the same for palms in *Principes*. Shall we see how the January issue fares with the critics?

You are concerned with the amount of time required for *Principes*. So am I. One learns as one goes. Editing a college newspaper is a far cry from *Principes* (especially as it was years ago and I wasn't exactly the best editor the paper ever had). It sounded much easier than it has proved to be. The fault is mine and though I know it, I either have to do it my way or not at all. And the latter possibility appeals strongly at the moment.

If my name is to be associated with *Principes* then the criticism or praise should attach to me.

Unfortunately, by nature I seem so constructed that I can only do one thing at a time and that I like to do as well as I know how. If I can continue to feel that *Principes* warrants the time it takes from (to me) more productive research, then I want (whether I can or not remains to be seen) to do it in a piece with my full attention. My greatest headache here is the piecemeal way in which so many things have to be done at once—I find it extremely distressing and never do my best work that way.

The personal life that I promised myself is being pressured out of exist-

tence. I'm unhappy, to say the least, at the prospect of even further reduction. *Principes* is done, palms for Guatemala will be done, but I still don't have a sink to wash dishes in, nor have I finished painting, nor have I had time to work up a scale model of a prospective home to say nothing of thinking about it or getting a well drilled or electric plans made *ad nauseam*. And on top of all this, I fairly itch to work with palms and other plants, not with a typewriter. There's a satisfaction in working out problems with living materials and specimens and literature that no amount of editing, letter-writing, looking up answers to other people's problems, can match. In short, I'm a botanist.

* * *

15 December 1957

Dear Dent,

I cannot tell you how relieved I was to read through your letter. My spirits are considerably higher now and I had been afraid that in my lowness I might have offended. Actually, I enjoy the chore immensely—the real problem is the unceasing flow of questions and aggravating little jobs that come in here and keep me from my work as they keep you from your garden. But in 15 years I can shed all that. I am

trying to keep abreast of things as they come in for April and am confident that the job will be easier next time and increasingly so as manuscript piles up—and I think eventually it will do just that. From all appearances, it may be possible to have a 40 page issue in April. I would have done so this time were it not that adding 4 pages would have disrupted the arrangement of articles around the center spread.

Time flies and half this Sunday morning is gone. This afternoon I am going to put up my sink if it kills me thus eliminating one crying point!

* * *

17 January 1958

Dear Dent,

Principes for January arrived this morning. I'm pleased; are you? I'm looking forward to your comments.

Am at *Chamaedorea* hammer and tongs temporarily trying to get enough straightened out for the Guatemalan species. What a job the whole thing will be but what a wonderful pleasure it is to be at work on it. Ideas buzz around in my head 24 hrs. a day and I begin to see light. This is the life for me!

* * *

CLASSIFIED

AVAILABLE at this time, year old palm seedlings: *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*, *Arenga engleri*, *Phoenix rupicola*, *Neodypsis decaryi*. RICHARD RUDY, 6830 77 St., Vero Beach, FL 32960.