CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

Community Science Literature Project:

Transcribing Scientific Notebooks

GUIDELINES

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Contents

Getting Started

1. Familiarize yourself with the Project and the additional resources for transcribing at https://cbhl.libguides.com/scientificnotebooks

2. Sign in to your account on FromThePage: https://fromthepage.com/

3. Go to the **Chicago Botanic Garden Library** page: https://fromthepage.com/chicagobotaniclibrary

4. Click on the **Collection** assigned to you

   a) The Scientific Notebooks of German Orchidologist Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig Kränzlin

   b) The Scientific Notebooks of French Lily Specialist Pierre Étienne Simon Duchartre

5. Scroll down and choose a **Work** by clicking the title/name.

6. Click the **About** tab from the menu at the top:

   a) The **Description** will give you some context for the Work that will help in transcribing.

b) Also in the **About** tab of each Work is a link to the **Lenhardt Library catalog record**. There is more information in the catalog record that will help in transcribing, especially **names of people and plants**. It is strongly recommended that you review the catalog record before you begin and refer to it while you work.

7. Click the **Contents** tab from the menu at the top, and choose a page to transcribe by either
   a) Clicking on the **page** in the left column (and then the **Transcribe** tab at the top), or
   b) Clicking on the **Transcribe** button in the far right column.

8. You can click the **Fullscreen** button to enlarge the entire workspace. (Press the **Fullscreen** button again to exit full screen.) You can also click the down arrow of the **Image at the Left** button to change the positions of the letter image and the transcription window to suit your preference.

9. Hover your mouse over the image of the page to reveal the **+** / **-** buttons. You can enlarge or reduce the size of the image to help you read the handwriting.
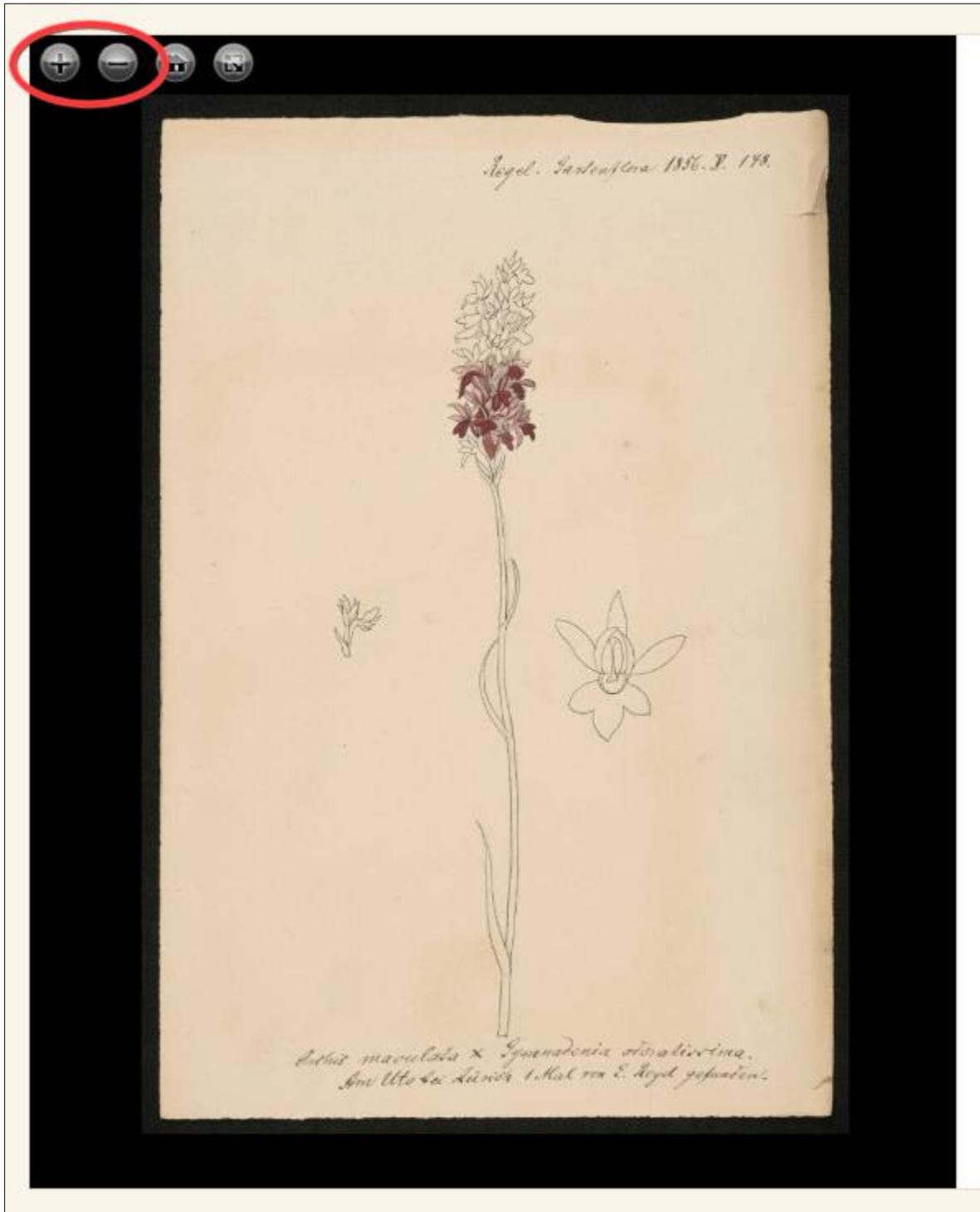
When you enlarge the page image and some handwriting is no longer visible, you can click and hold down the left mouse button and drag the image left, right, up, or down to see the hidden handwriting. Release the mouse button when the image is where you want it to be.

10. **<u>Note:</u>** There are basic **Transcription Conventions** just beneath the transcription window, and the **Page Notes** box is just beneath the Transcription Conventions.

11. Type your transcription in the transcription window and <mark>click the **Save Changes** button often and especially when you are finished transcribing the page</mark>.

Conventions for Transcribing Handwritten Documents

Transcribe It As You See It

This cannot be emphasized enough. Our goal is to transcribe as accurately as possible what is written in the letters, to optimize full-text searching of the transcriptions, so just <mark>transcribe it as you see it</mark>.

When transcribing Scientific Notebooks you will inevitably encounter issues with the handwriting that are not explained in the following guidelines. When in doubt, just do the best you can, and explain any issues you had in the **Page Notes** box located at the bottom of each page. The Transcription Coordinator or a fellow volunteer may be able to help and can leave an answer or helpful tip in the Page Notes as well.

Don't forget to click the **Save Note** button!

Abbreviations, Acronyms, Contractions, Drawings, and Symbols

The rule of thumb with abbreviations and contractions is that if it is not commonly used today, spell it out in square brackets.

Transcribe **uncommon abbreviations** with the full word(s) in square brackets.
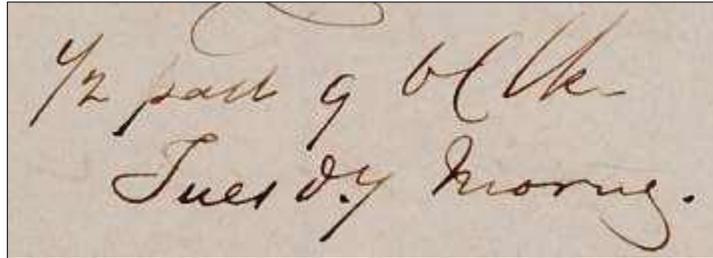
For example, transcribe the above as:

> ½ past 9 oClk. [o'clock]
> Tuesdy [Tuesday] morng [morning].

DO NOT spell out common abbreviations such as: Dr., Mrs., St., or the standard abbreviations of the months of the year, days of the week, etc.

You may encounter **superscript** used to abbreviate words. Transcribe superscript with the full word it represents in square brackets.

For example, transcribe as *Wm [William]* and as *recd [received]*.

Transcribe all characters and squiggles such as the plus sign that represent the word "and" as **&**.

Contractions of etcetera may be represented as "+c" or "&c". Transcribe these contractions as written followed by "etc." in square brackets. Pay special attention to these instances as they are uncommon and often misrepresented.

If you know the full meaning of an **acronym**, put it in square brackets.
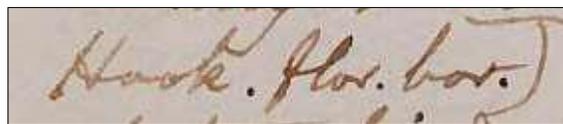
For example, transcribe the above as:

> *Hook. flor. bor. [Flora boreali-americana, by William Jackson Hooker]*

Transcribe an **illustration or sketch** with a descriptive word or phrase in square brackets.

- Use the term **illustration** for published images. Use **pencil sketches** for items that are hand-drawn.
- Use the following vocabulary to indicate illustrations relative to where they are on the page:
  - [color illustration] or [color illustrations]
  - [black and white illustration] or [black and white illustrations]
  - [pencil sketch] or [pencil sketches]
  - [color pencil sketch] or [color pencil sketches]
  - [sketch] or [sketches]
  - [color sketch] or [color sketches]

For example, transcribe the above as:

Regel. Gartenflora 1856. V. 148.

[color pencil sketches]

Transcribe **symbols** with a descriptive word of phrase in square brackets.

For example, transcribe the symbols °, ♂, and ♀ as *[degrees], [male symbol],* and *[female symbol]*. If there are shorthand symbols, then put *[shorthand symbols]*.

Transcribe **diacritics** (marks such as accents and umlauts, placed above or below a character to indicate a different phonetic value) as you see them. In **Windows**, cut and paste accented letters and characters from the **Character Map*** accessory. On a **Mac**, hold down the letter key until a small window with accent options for that letter appears and select the appropriate option.

For example, transcribe as *Santa Fé*.

> * *Character Map is a utility included with Microsoft Windows operating systems. It is located in **Windows Accessories** in the **Start Menu** —or— search for **Character Map** in the search box on the taskbar. Once the utility is open, copy and paste the needed characters into the transcription.*

Blank Pages

If a page is blank, tick the **Mark as blank** box and click **Save Changes**.
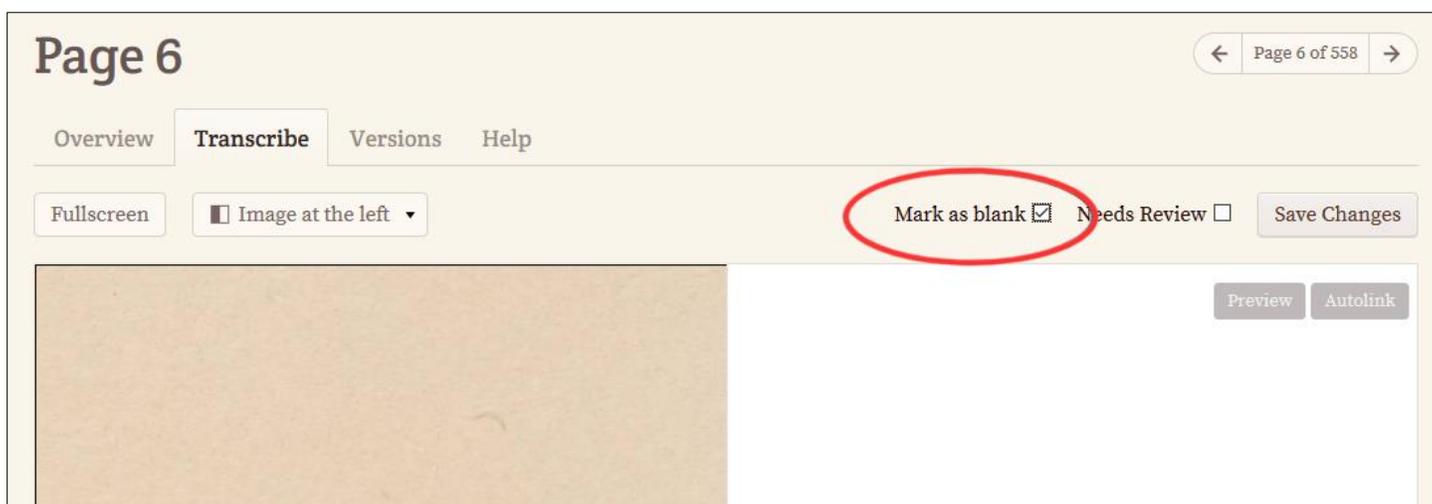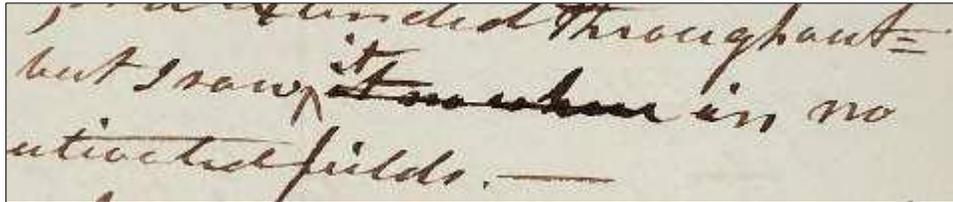
Crossed Out and Added Text

If a word has been crossed out but is **legible**, put the crossed out word in square brackets, preceded by "crossed out:" like this: *[crossed out: crossed out word]*.

If a word has been crossed out but is **illegible**, put *[crossed out: illegible]*.

If a word has been inserted (either using a caret or written above crossed out words), put the word in square brackets, preceded by "added:" like this: *[added: added word]*.
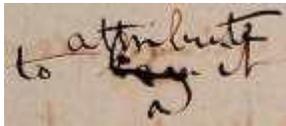

For example, transcribe the above as

> *but I saw [added: it] [crossed out: nowhere] in no*

And if you can't read the crossed out word in the example above, transcribe it as

> *but I saw [added: it] [crossed out: illegible] in no…*

If text has been crossed out, and additional text added in its place, put the crossed out text first, then put the added text.

So transcribe this as *to [crossed out: illegible] [added: attribute] it*

Illegible Words

If you have difficulty deciphering a word or phrase but think you might know what it is, put the word or phrase in square brackets, followed by a question mark like this:

> *[possible word or phrase?]*

If a word or phrase is completely illegible, put the word illegible in square brackets like this:
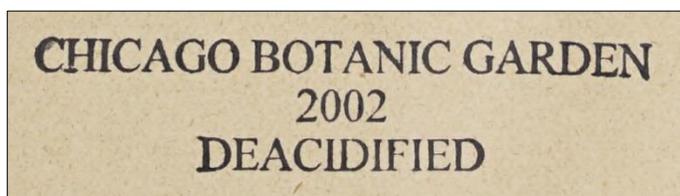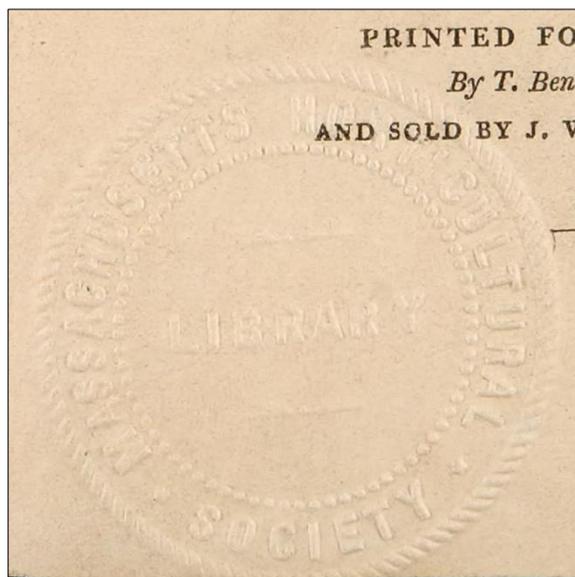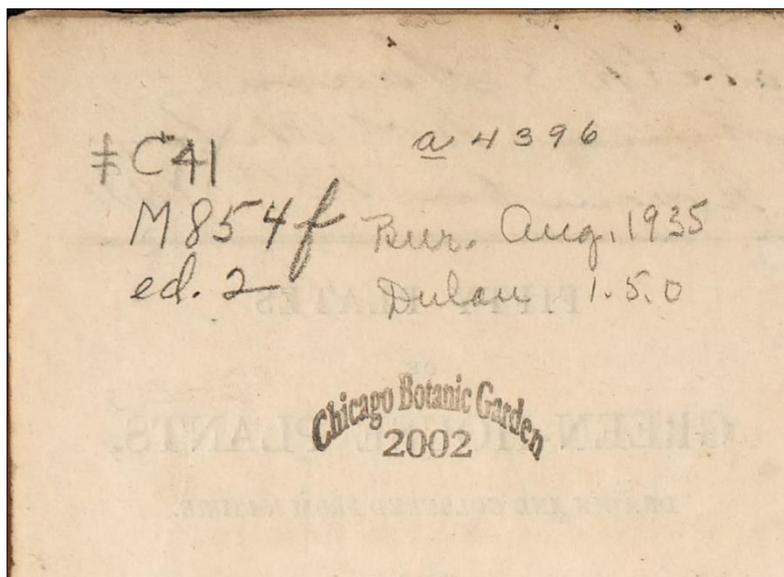
> *[illegible]*

Line Breaks

Transcribe the line breaks as written on the page.

Use two line breaks to indicate a new paragraph. (Press **Enter** twice.)

Library Stamps and Markings

You may encounter stamps or notes on the letters that were placed there by a library or archive, like these:

These do not need to be transcribed and can be ignored.

Misspellings, British Spellings, and Other Languages

If you encounter an obvious misspelling, transcribe it as you see it and put the correct spelling in square brackets. For example: *manuel [manual].*

Retain British spellings. For example, *centre* or *neighbourhood*. Again, transcribe it as you see it.

Retain all non-English words as accurate to the original source as possible.
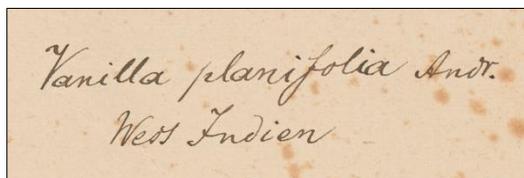
In the above example, *Indien* is the correct German spelling for India and does not require correcting. If you are a German speaker and encounter an obvious misspelling, transcribe it as you see it and put the correct spelling in square brackets. For example: *wiederspiegeln [widerspiegeln].*

Kurrent: German cursive

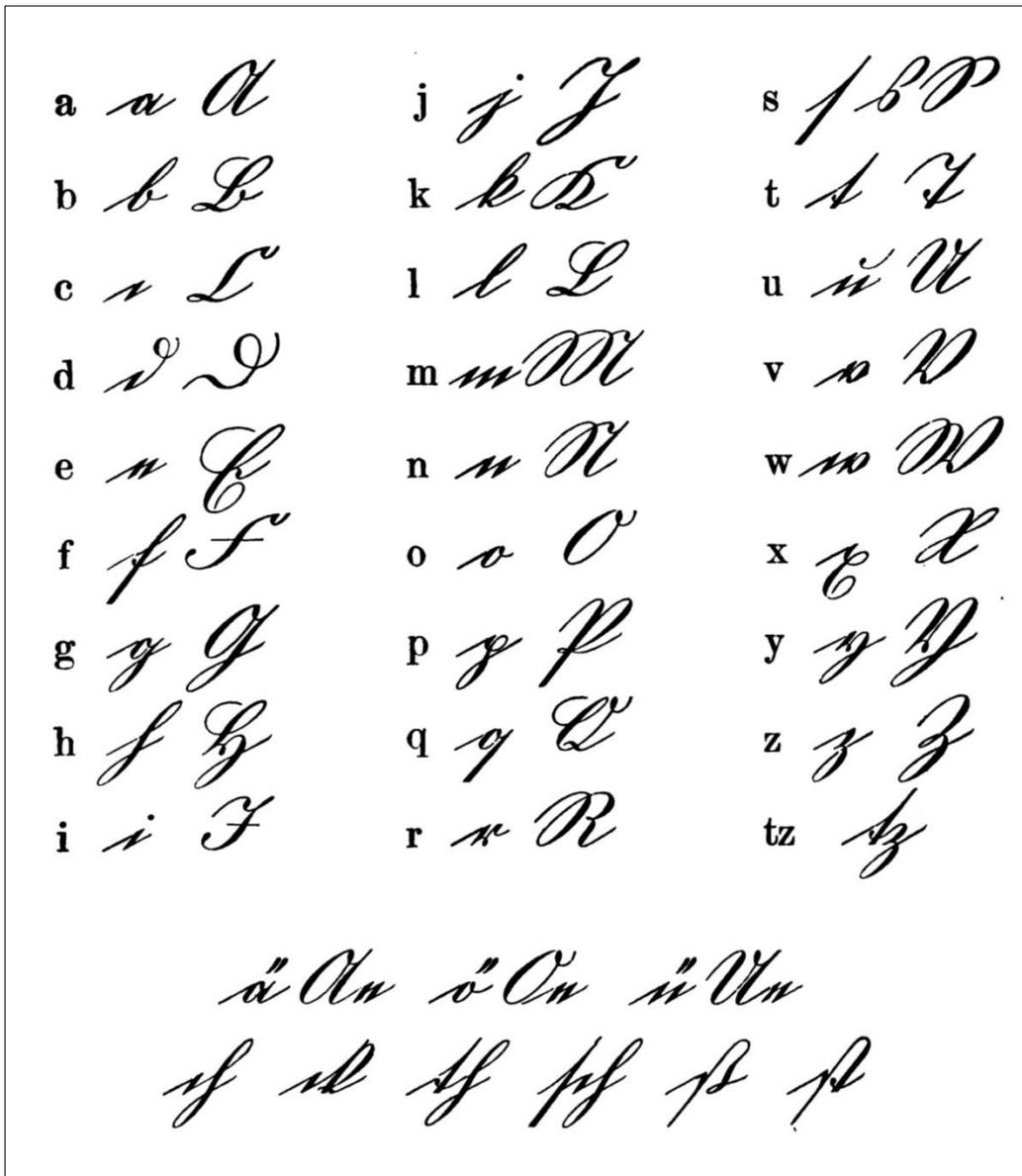Some German in the Kranzlin manuscripts may be difficult to decipher because German writers used both cursive styles, [Kurrent](#) and [English cursive](#), in parallel.

Alphabet in Kurrent script from about 1865. The next-to-last line shows the umlauts ä, ö, ü, and the corresponding capital letters Ae, Oe, and Ue. The last line shows the ligatures ch, ck, th, sch, sz (ß), and st.

Location, contents, and context of the text may help to determine which script style was used.
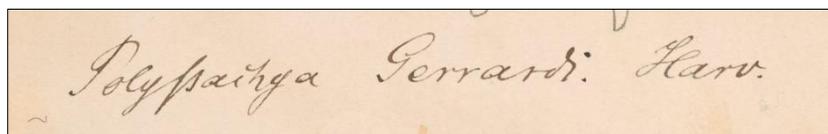
For example, the above reads

 Polystachya Gerrardi. Harv.

What at first looked like a "p" actually turned out to be a "st" in *Polystachya*.

Spacing and Punctuation

Many of the correspondents used **dashes, hyphens, and underscores** to indicate a **full stop** as well as **comma**. Be guided by the context of the letter and use a full stop or a comma, not dashes, hyphens, or underscores.
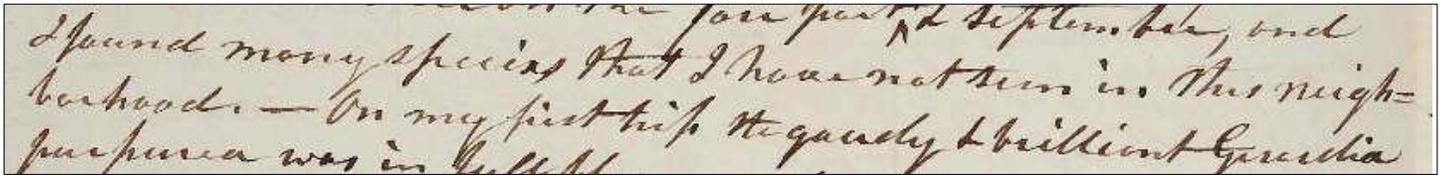
Use only one space after a **full stop**.

If a word is **hyphenated** at the end of a line and continues on the following line, put the entire word on the initial line, and then begin a new line. In nineteenth-century handwriting, hyphens sometimes appear like an "equals" sign.

For example, transcribe the above as

> *I found many species that I have not seen in this neighborhood.*

> *On my first trip the gaudy & brilliant…*

If the author has written in the **margin** of the page, put this transcribed text at the bottom of the page, or at the bottom of the relevant section to which the text is associated. If there is a clear indication where the text is to be added, put it in that section of the document using "added" in square brackets like this: *[added: text in margin goes here]*.

When transcribing underlined words there is no need to make note of which words are underlined. Transcribe them as if they were not underlined.

Additional Things You May Encounter

You may encounter a **double s** ("ss") written like this:

The first **s** looks like a modern **f** and the second **s** looks like a modern **s**. Transcribe this as **ss**. So the example above would read as *classes*.

You may encounter **cross writing** like this:
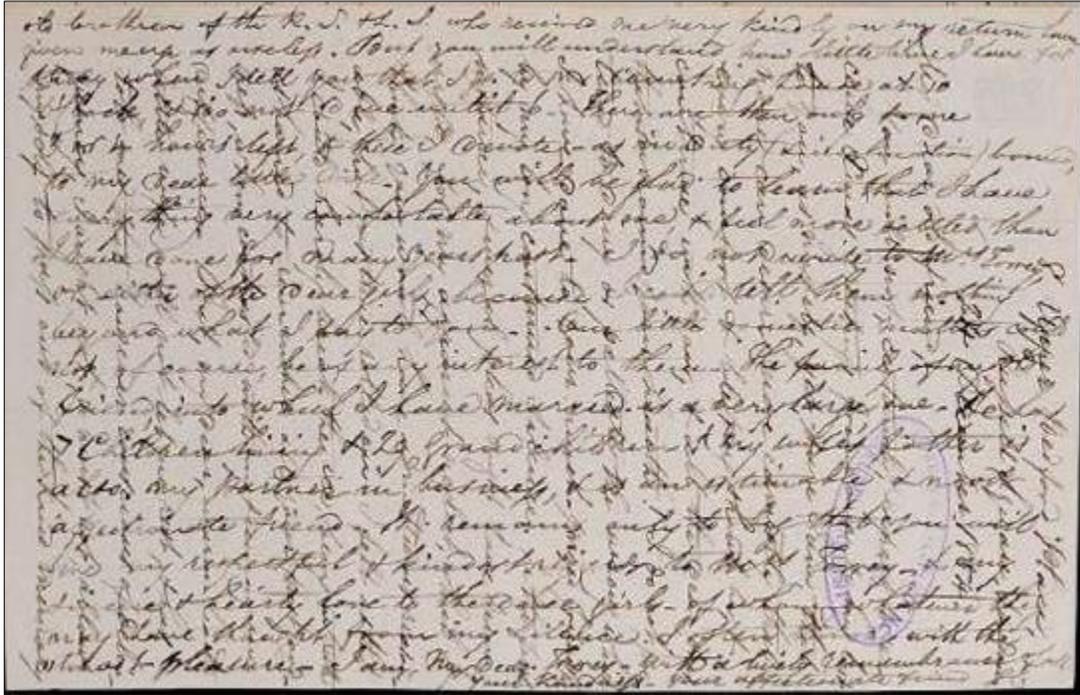
Cross writing occurs when the writer has turned the page 90 degrees and continued writing the letter on top of already existing text. If a letter has cross writing, put *[continues with cross writing]* where the cross writing begins.

Scientific Plant Names and Descriptions

When transcribing Scientific Notebooks you will inevitably encounter scientific names and words, particularly for plant families, genera, and species. These scientific names are created using a system called "binomial nomenclature." Binomial nomenclature is a naming system in which an organism is assigned two names used in conjunction with one another to describe the organisms' Genus (which is always the first word) and their Species (which is always the second word).

> For example, in the case of *Vanilla planifolia*, Vanilla is the Genus and planifolia is the species.

Note: The genus is always capitalized, but the species—*or specific epithet*—is not.

In scientific works, the "authority" for a binomial name is usually given and the date of publication may be specified. This is a way of designating the scientist(s) who first published the name. Often, the authority name is shortened to a standard abbreviation and the date omitted. Therefore, you may see the Spotted Ponthieva orchid, *Ponthieva maculata*, written as:

> *Ponthieva maculata* Lindley 1845 –or– *Ponthieva maculata* Lindl.

If two or more species of the same genus are listed, the genus will normally be written in full for the first species listed. For all subsequent species in the list, the genus is abbreviated to the first letter, like this:
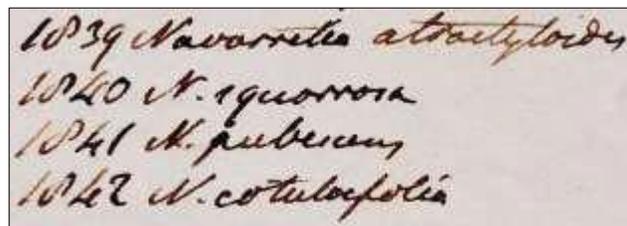
Transcribe scientific names as they appear on the page, but if the writer has varied from the standard form described above, add a note in square brackets that provides the name in its standard form. For example:

> Transcribe *R. setosus* as *R. setosus [Rubus setosus]*

> Transcribe *Carex Argentina* as *Carex Argentina [Carex argentina]*

If species names are difficult to decipher, **check the catalog record** of the Work for clues.

If you cannot decipher a scientific name, put the phrase "possible scientific name" in square brackets followed by a question mark like this: *[possible scientific name?]*.

Please pay particular attention to personal names. Please compare the name you see in the documents to the list on names in the catalog entry. Names in the document may be misspelled or difficult to read. The catalog entries were created to establish consistency

in transcribing personal names and many hours were dedicated to the creation of this list so that your work as a transcriber is made easier.

Subject Indexing Plant Names

When binomial nomenclature occurs in normal text, the genus and species are italicized (or underlined in handwriting). Thus the binomial name of the vanilla orchid is written *Vanilla planifolia*.

Instead of italics or underlining, you will use FromThePage's subject indexing feature to denote plant names.

To create a link within a transcription, surround the text with double square brackets.
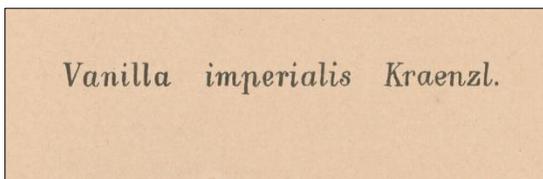
For example, the above text, *Vanilla imperialis* Kraenzl., would be transcribed as

> *[[Vanilla imperialis* Kraenzl.*]]*

If the term has not already been indexed, when you save the page, a new subject will be created for *Vanilla imperialis* Kraenzl., and the page will be added to its index. If prompted, add the new subject term to the correct category by typing or selecting a category. For plant names—scientific or common—type or select the category **Plant Names**.

Click **Continue** and proceed with the transcription.

To create a subject link with a different name from that used within the text, use double braces with a pipe as follows: [[official name of subject|name used in the text]].

For example:

> *[[Vanilla imperialis* Kraenzlin|*Vanilla imperialis* Kraenzl.*]]*

This will create a subject for "*Vanilla imperialis* Kraenzlin" and link the abbreviated "*Vanilla imperialis* Kraenzl." to that subject.

Renaming Subjects

If the name is abbreviated in the text but we don't know the full name, create a subject for it anyway. For example:

   [[Presc. densiflora]]

If we later discover the full name is "*Prescottia densiflora*", all we have to do is edit the subject title:

> Click on "*Presc. densiflora*" on the page,

or navigate to **Subjects** on the home page for the project.

Then click on the category ***Presc. densiflora***

Click the **Settings** tab.

> **The Scientific Notebooks of German Orchidologist Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig Kränzlin**
>
> ## Presc. densiflora
>
> Overview Settings Versions
>
> **Description**
>
> *Edit the description in the settings tab.*
>
> See also:
>
> ⚠ **22 Possible Duplicates**
>
> **Categories**
>
> Plant Names

Change "*Presc. densiflora*" to "*Prescottia densiflora*".

Click **Save Changes** at the bottom of the page.

> **The Scientific Notebooks of German Orchidologist Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig Kränzlin**
>
> ## Presc. densiflora
>
> Overview Settings Versions
>
> Title Prescottia densiflora
>
> URI
>
> Description
>
> Categories
> × Plant Names
>
> "Autolink" will suggest subjects certain words could be linked to or you can use double braces to link subjects. `[[Jane Doe]]` will link the text "Jane Doe" to the subject Jane Doe, while `[[Jane Doe|Jane]]` will link the text "Jane" to the subject Jane Doe. We recommend that linking be left to an editor after the initial transcription is made.
>
> Autolink   Save Changes
>
> **22 Possible Duplicates**
>
> Please review the list below and select the subjects to combine. Duplicates will be remapped so all existing links will point to the "Presc. densiflora" subject.
>
> ☐ Prescottia — 5 pages
> ☐ Prescothia. Lindl. — 0 pages
> ☐ Prescothia leptostachya — 0 pages
> ☐ Presc. Laihgoder? — 0 pages
> ☐ Presc pellucida Wright Cuba — 1 page
> ☐ Presc. laurifolia — 1 page
> ☐ Presc. Senuir ? — 0 pages
> ☐ Presc Phleois — 0 pages
> ☐ Presc. micrantha — 1 page
> ☐ Prescotia — 0 pages
> ☐ Galeoglossum prescottioides Rich + Gal. — 0 pages
> ☐ Presc. pachyrhiza — 1 page
> ☐ Prescottia plantagines — 0 pages
> ☐ Galeoglossum prescottioides. Rich. & Gal. — 1 page
> ☐ Prescottia pachyrhiza Rich & Gal — 1 page
>
> Combine Selected

This will change the links on the pages that mention that subject, so our page is automatically updated:

> *[[Prescottia densiflora|Presc. densiflora]]*

From this page you can also add a **Description** of the term *Prescottia densiflora*—perhaps biographical notes or references.

Combining Subjects

Occasionally you may find that two subjects actually refer to the same thing. When this happens, rather than painstakingly updating each link, you can use the Combine button at the bottom of the subject page.

For example, if one page reads:

> *[[Vanilla planifolia* Andr.*]]*

while a different page contains

> *[[Vanilla planifolia* Andrews*]]*

you can combine "*Vanilla planifolia* Andr." with "*Vanilla planifolia* Andrews" by going to the "*Vanilla planifolia* Andr." article and reviewing the combination suggestions at the bottom of the screen. Combining "*Vanilla planifolia* Andrews" into "*Vanilla planifolia* Andr." will update all links to point to "*Vanilla planifolia* Andr." instead, copy any article text from the "*Vanilla planifolia* Andrews" article onto the end of the "*Vanilla planifolia* Andr." article, then delete the "*Vanilla planifolia* Andrews" subject.

Auto-linking Subjects

Whenever text is linked to a subject, that fact can be used by the system to suggest links in new pages. At the bottom of the transcription screen, there is an Autolink button. This will refresh the transcription text with suggested links, which should then be reviewed and may be saved.

Using the previous example, the system already knows that "*Vanilla planifolia* Andrews" links to "*Vanilla planifolia* Andr."

If a new page reads:

> *Vanilla planifolia* Andrews.

> *Prescottia orchioides*

pressing Autolink will suggest these links:

> *[[Vanilla planifolia* Andr.|*Vanilla planifoli* Andrews*]].*

> *[[Prescottia]] orchiodes*

In this case, the link around "*Vanilla planifolia* Andrews" is correct, but we must edit the suggested link that incorrectly links only the genus Prescottia. The transcription should read: *[[Prescottia orchiodes]]*.

The autolink feature can save a great deal of labor and prevent collaborators from forgetting to link a subject they previously thought was important, but its suggestions still need to be reviewed before the transcription is saved.

Resources for Scientific Names

Tropicos: Encompasses all of the nomenclatureal, bibliographic, and specimen data accumulated in the Missouri Botanical Garden electronic databases. One nice feature is the Name Search, which completes the name spelling as you type.

Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS): A partnership between U.S., Canada, and Mexico scientific government agencies. The database provides reliable information on species names and hierarchical classification. You can search by common and scientific names, and taxon author.

International Plant Names Index (IPNI): Collaboration between Kew, Harvard Herbaria, and the Australian National Herbarium. IPNI is a database of the names and basic bibliographical details of seed plants, ferns, and lycophytes. It provides detailed search options including the ability to search taxon name or original name authors. There is a plugin available for searching plant names in Firefox.
PLEASE NOTE: IPNI does not distinguish between obsolete plant names and those that are still in use.

The Plant List: Collaboration between Kew and Missouri Botanical Garden. It collects information from a variety of databases and aims to be a comprehensive list for species of vascular plants and bryophytes. It does not include algae or fungi. When searching, use ? for wildcard characters and * to truncate family, genus, and species names. You can also browse taxonomic hierarchies.

Encyclopedia of Life: A resource attempting to gather information about all life on earth from numerous sources. It includes detailed taxonomy information. It can be searched by common and scientific names.

For Orchids:

> **Plants of the World:** Bringing Kew's science data online by 2020. Browse 1,113,000 global plant names, 65,800 detailed descriptions, and 191,400 images with an initial focus on tropical Africa.
>
> - **Orchidaceae**
>
> **American Orchid Society Orchids A-to-Z:** A definitive source for concise information on orchid genera. Full descriptions and culture requirements provided by experts hand-picked for their knowledge of select genera.

For Lilies:

Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Lily Register: The RHS is the International Cultivar Registration Authority for lilies, and publishes a Register of cultivar names used in the genus.

B&D Lilies Wild Lilies Photo Gallery: Wild Lily bulbs making up the genus Lilium belong to the family Liliaceae comprising of approximately 20 genera made up of approximately 750 species. There are in the neighborhood of 110 to 115 distinct Lilium species. Robert J. Gibson began this project in 2008, with the assistance of 85 individuals in 16 countries, and it is now nearly completed; however, editing and cross-checking will remain an ongoing project. At last count there are over 500 individual photographs of all the known Lilium species (and their variants) found worldwide.

For Deciphering Botanical Terminology:

FloraBase Glossary of Botanical Terms: Produced by the staff of the Western Australian Herbarium, Biodiversity and Conservation Science, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

Missouri Botanical Garden Dictionary of Botanical Latin: The Grammatical Dictionary of Botanical Latin is intended to help taxonomists prepare Latin diagnoses and descriptions of new taxa, and to read certain published Latin scientific literature, primarily in botany.

Resources for Deciphering Handwritten Documents

Digital Volunteers Transcription Center | Smithsonian

How to decipher unfamiliar handwriting: a short introduction to paleography | Natural History Museum (UK)

Palaeography: reading old handwriting 1500 – 1800: A practical online tutorial | The National Archives (UK)

Useful Tips for Reading Handwritten Documents | Archives Outside

Have you found other helpful resources? Share them with your Transcription Coordinator!