

# FOCUS

February 2011

Various botanical texts  
Pennsylvania Hospital (Philadelphia, PA)

At Pennsylvania Hospital's upcoming "Flower to Pharmacy" exhibition, visitors will learn about medicine from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, browse an inventory of the Pennsylvania Hospital Apothecary, and view original recipes written by medical students. On display will be unique botanical volumes from the Hospital's Historic Library, including the first American textbook on botany, Benjamin Smith Barton's *Elements of Botany, or Outlines of the Natural History of Vegetables*, which was first published in 1803 and features William Bartram's illustrations.

Nine texts that will be included in the exhibition recently arrived at the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts for treatment and digital imaging. Most of the volumes received treatment with the goal of stabilization. Book Conservators Theresa Cho and Rebecca Smyrl and Conservation Technician Valeria Kremser surface cleaned the text leaves, mended tears and board edges, and consolidated abraded leather on the covers. Two books, the notebook of Benjamin Morris (1750) and the memo book of Benjamin Horner Coates (1793), received full treatment. These books were disbound, their leaves washed in aqueous calcium phytate and bicarbonate solutions and then flattened. Manager of Digital Documentation Michelle Dauberman digitally captured pages from the notebook and memo book and printed facsimiles that exhibition visitors will be able to handle in order to read the writers' recipes for various ailments. The re sewn and rebound original volumes, in addition to John Gerarde's *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes* (1633), will be placed on display.

From those books that will not be displayed at the exhibition, Michelle digitally captured select images and accompanying text and printed full-size, full-color facsimiles for display. Director of Book Conservation Jim Hinz mounted each facsimile to mat board using dry mount tissue and attached each board to a Tycore panel that has a cloth hanger and metal eyelet adhered at the top for easy installation.

See the finished product at the "Flower to Pharmacy" Botanical Exhibition at Pennsylvania Hospital Historic Library (2 Pine Center, 800 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107) from March 7, 2011, to June 1, 2012.



**Clockwise from top:** Conservation Technician Valeria Kremser removes spine adhesive from a page of William P. C. Barton's *A Flora of North America* (1821) / Facsimile of a page from *New Illustration of the Sexual System* of Carolus von Linnaeus (1807) / Facsimiles mounted to mat board await trimming / Book Conservator Rebecca Smyrl trims mends in John Gerarde's *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes* (1633)

