



Magnolia

Magnolia grandiflora
The Laurel Tree of Carolina
Catesby's *Natural History*, 1743

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Beyond Boxwood and the Herb Garden

Saving the Places of our Lives, Preserving 20th-Century Southern Gardens

Davyd Foard Hood, Vale, North Carolina

Over the weekend of May 4-6, 2007, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Southern Garden History Society, with our second annual meeting in Annapolis, and the third held in Maryland. St. Clair Wright hosted the society's third annual meeting in 1985. The highlight of the gathering was the newly-installed garden at the William Paca House. Now, twenty-two years later, with Mollie Ridout, director of horticulture, as our host, it is again a principal attraction of our program.

The Southern Garden History Society was organized in 1982, an outgrowth of the Conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, first held at Old Salem in 1979. In retrospect, that pioneering conference, and the founding of the society three years later, represented the culmination of a long-held, steadily increasing interest in historic gardens, garden history, and garden preservation in the South. It was one product of a movement, awakened in Virginia in the early-20th century, which



soon saw fruition with the publication of *Historic Gardens of Virginia* in 1923, and the creation of the Colonial Revival gardens of Colonial Williamsburg. Activity quickly spread through the South, and it continued with a growing professionalism and increased historical accuracy.

Those efforts, seen in every state of the South and the District of Columbia,

were a prelude to works of the past quarter century, and initiatives yet to come. Garden archaeology has yielded up artifacts and evidence that has altered and invigorated the interpretation of existing historic gardens and supported the restoration of others. Scholarship has broadened and deepened throughout the South. Important research at



Photo by the author. April 1988

The garden at Morven, Albemarle County, Virginia, was designed by Annette Hoyt Flanders for Charles Stone.

Gunston Hall, Poplar Forest, Montpelier, Tryon's Palace, and other sites, still insufficiently published, is fueling debate among stewards of their grounds. One valuable publication, among others, is Barbara Wells Sarudy's *Gardens and Gardening in the Chesapeake, 1700-1805*. Published in 1998, the book addresses gardening in this region, and its gardeners, including Annapolis artisan

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CALENDAR

September 27-29, 2007. “Lost Landscapes—Preserved Prospects: Confronting Natural & Human Threats to the Historic Landscape” the biennial Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference at Old Salem, Inc. in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. This year’s conference considers the efforts of local governments, various land trusts and conservancies, and private individuals to preserve lost features and aspects of the historic landscape. Updated information about this conference will be posted on the SGHS Web site. For program registration information, contact Sally Gant, (336) 721-7361; sgant@oldsalem.org

October 19, 2007. “Fragrance: History, Mystery, and Design, *An Herb Symposium*” at Elm Bank Horticulture Center, Wellesley, Massachusetts. This symposium, presented by the New England Unit of the Herb Society of America and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, features Edwin Morris on “The Story of Perfume,” SGHS member Dr. Art. Tucker on “The Therapy of Aroma,” and Holly Shimizu on “Creating a Garden of Fragrance.” For details about the symposium, visit the MHS Web site at www.masshort.org. For information and ticket registration, contact Elizabeth Hoyt, (617) 933-4983, email ehoyt@masshort.org; or Sydney-Anne Jones, (617) 933-4934, email sjones@masshort.org

October 19-21, 2007. “Charleston Green: What’s Old is New Again,” Charleston Garden Festival at Middleton Place, presented by the Charleston Horticultural Society and the Middleton Place Foundation. For information, call (843) 723-9293 or visit: www.charlestongardenfestival.org

October 21, 2007. “Madam President,” a one-day symposium on the future of heritage roses, at Garden Valley Ranch in Petaluma, California. The Heritage Rose Foundation will honor the lives of two women who have led the cause of old roses for more than 35 years with two scholarships named in their honor: The Barbara Worl Award and the Miriam Wilkins Award. Speaking at this event are Odile Masquelier, President and founder of *Anciennes Roses en France*; Ann Bird, President of the Royal National Rose Society in England; and Marilyn Wellan, President of the

American Rose Society. For more information, contact Ron Robertson at (707) 795-0919, or visit www.heritagrosefoundation.org

October 26-27, 2007. “The Sweet Smell of Success—Fragrance in the Garden,” 14th Annual Oktober Gartenfest at Winedale, Texas. Dr. Arthur O. Tucker, Research Professor, Delaware State University, will discuss “Natural Sources of Perfume,” commemorating the 300th birthday of Carl Linnaeus. Greg Grant, Research Associate at the Stephen F. Austin Pineywoods Native Plant Center, will speak on “Heaven Scent in the Garden (How I Smell Head Over Heels for Plants),” and Dr. William C. Welch, Professor and Extension Horticulturist, Texas Cooperative Extension, The Texas A & M University System, on “Fragrant Roses for Texas Gardens.” Other activities include the always popular plant sale and tours of local gardens, including for the first time, Chardonnay Farms Retreat, next door to Winedale. For additional information see <http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/southerngardens>.

October 26-27, 2007. “Exploring Southern Gardens,” the 19th Annual Southern Garden Symposium & Workshops in St. Francisville, Louisiana. Workshops and lectures are held in Genevieve Trimble’s Ruins Garden of Afton Villa and at Hemingbough. Speakers and presenters include: Dr. James DelPrince, Marth Hill, Nellie Neal, Norman Winter, H. Parrot Bacot, and Edward C. Martin. SGHS members Mary Palmer and Hugh Dargan, principals of their Atlanta-based firm, Dargan Landscape Architects, will share design techniques and advice from their recently published book: *Timeless Landscape Design: The Four-Part Master Plan*. For more information about the symposium, call (225) 635-3738



Future SGHS Annual Meetings

April 11-13, 2008, “High Cotton, Tall Columns,”
in Athens, Georgia

April 2-5, 2009, Camden, South Carolina

2010 we return to Mount Vernon, Virginia

Visit www.southerngardenhistory.org for updates

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William Faris (1728-1804). We have also seen, in 2004, *No One Gardens Alone*, the first book-length biography of an American garden writer. Elizabeth Lawrence (1904-1985), its subject, was the author of an earlier, landmark work, *A Southern Garden*, a book that rose above regionalism to international acclaim after its publication in 1942.

The appreciation of Elizabeth Lawrence brings me to the subject of my remarks this afternoon. For some years, simmering conversation at the annual meetings of the Southern Garden History Society and at the biennial conferences on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, have circled around the gardens and garden history of a closer time. The question, coined by someone in this room, was simply-put: "How do we pull the society into the 20th century?" It was a matter of increasing interest among many members of the society, and particularly for those who might be said to represent its second generation. Those who followed in the footsteps of Bill Hunt, Flora Ann Bynum, Florence Griffin, St. Clair Wright, and Rudy Favretti, among others. While many, if not most of our meetings, have been focused on 18th- and 19th-century gardens and their history, they were held in venues that often dated to the 20th century. In short, Southern garden history was seemingly confined to the gardens and landscapes of the 18th century and antebellum South.

Yet so much of what we see and savor are really gardens and landscapes restored, recreated, or renewed in the 20th century, largely in the half century from the 1920s into the 1970s. The disconnection between the once lost, or long lost gardens of a celebrated past and those of celebrated people—and the age of their recreation has gone unacknowledged or, at best, under-addressed. The Civil War was all too often seen as the modern book end to the era of our interest. The fact that there was relatively little money in the Reconstruction-era South, and few celebrated gardens of the later 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, re-enforced that definition. Now, returned to Annapolis, one of the nurseries of our organization, we can reflect both on the history of the Southern Garden History Society, twenty-five years old and strong, and the work of that life-span, to-date, whether in research, writing, and publication or garden restoration. Our society is maturing as an organization, and our outlook, as members, has broadened.

I believe we are ready to embrace a larger part of our past, a part of our heritage that is rich with potential. Southerners were not sitting on their hands in the later 19th century. If they were not making gardens, they were doing something arguably more important for

the time. They were improving their farms, building factories, producing textiles, furniture, and a host of other products that came to have an association with the region. They were organizing banks, chambers of commerce, and holding fairs to celebrate Southern agriculture, industry, and history. Fairs in Atlanta, Louisville, and New Orleans in the 1880s, were followed by the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta in 1895. The Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition, held in 1907 at Hampton Roads, proved to be a strong influence on Virginia history and the Commonwealth's celebration of self. It also influenced garden history. This weekend, Queen Elizabeth II visits the successor festival, 100 years later, where celebration is circumscribed by fact and the regrets of history.



Investments of the later-19th and early-20th centuries soon paid handsome profits. The commercial cores of Southern cities were largely rebuilt with multi-story buildings, some of which were called skyscrapers, even if no more than seven or eight stories in height. They took their place in streetscapes lined with shorter, smaller buildings, or they replaced them. The architects and landscape architects who had been hired to lay out exposition grounds and design fair buildings, Frederick Law Olmsted among them, were engaged to design something new for the South—Southern residential parks.

And there begins our engagement with the vast potential of this period, the early-20th century, with opportunities for study and now, with a cry for the preservation of its places. Those who attended the 2003 Conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes at Old Salem, "A Genius & His Legacy: Frederick Law Olmstead in the South," will remember Arleyn Levee's brilliant, encyclopedic accounting of the work of Olmsted, his sons, and the firm's work in the South. The Olmsteds' work initiated a long series of residential developments of appeal, charm, and high quality, which were laid out, planted, and built up in the period from the 1890s through the 1930s. Roland Park in Baltimore, Ginter Park and Windsor Farms in Richmond, Myers Park in Charlotte, Druid Hills in Atlanta, and Belle Meade in Nashville, are but the best known among many. Virtually every town or city of any size in the South, as elsewhere in the United States, was enhanced with these new places. The Olmsted firm produced the plans for some of these New South places, while others were the work of firms and individuals, some of whom had trained in the Olmsteds' Brookline office. Warren Henry Manning (1860-1938), John Nolen (1869-1937), and Earle Sumner

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Draper (1893-1994) were principal among those who worked through the 1930s.

The development of residential parks produced large, new landscaped spaces of many hundreds, if not a thousand or more acres. These places, together with a small group of municipal park systems, survive today as among the most important landscapes of the period in the South. Their character and significance are enhanced by an overlay of private house grounds, designed by these men and other landscape architects for individual homeowners. Bryant Fleming (1877-1946), with offices in Wyoming and Ithaca, New York, was exceptional among those who worked in Tennessee. Charles Freeman Gillette (1886-1969) worked at many places in Virginia, including Virginia House in Windsor Farms, while Thomas Warren Sears (1880-1966) largely confined his work in North Carolina to Winston-Salem, where designs for Reynolda spawned other projects in the city. Reynolda, the residence of R. J. Reynolds and his family, was but one of many important suburban estates designed by these landscape architects, among others. Meadowbrook Manor, in Chesterfield County, Virginia, was the country house of Richmond's Jeffress family. In Nashville, Leslie and Mabel Wood Cheek oversaw the creation of a grand estate they named Cheekwood and occupied in 1932. The house and grounds were the work of Bryant Fleming.



And yet others, in the spirit of the time, looked to old houses, in both town and country, to plantation seats, and to farmhouses. Architects were hired to rebuild, expand, and enhance the historic dwellings, while landscape architects reshaped existing grounds and overlaid gardens, or their fragments, with new plantings and garden features. These places and their gardens form another very significant part of 20th-century garden history in the South.

The Nelson House at Yorktown, Virginia, was acquired by George Preston Blow, an apprentice architect in the office of William Lawrence Bottomley. He refitted the house as a retreat in the 1920s and engaged Charles Gillette for its new Colonial Revival Garden. Chelsea, in King William County, Virginia, was another 18th-century house and garden that were remade in the early-20th century as a country place. The refurbishing included lavish plantings of boxwood and the erection of agricultural outbuildings and a boathouse in the river that encircled the grounds. Oatlands, in Loudon County, Virginia, a seat of the Carter family from about 1804 to 1897, was purchased in 1903 by William Corcoran Eustis. Its existing gardens were overlaid with dense early-20th century plantings. Charles Stone, a horseman, acquired Morven in Albemarle County in 1926. He then engaged

Annette Hoyt Flanders to create gardens that are among the most beautiful in Virginia.

The most conspicuous example, of course, was Montpelier, the home of James and Dolley Madison, which was purchased by William Du Pont. Mr. Du Pont overbuilt Montpelier, greatly remodeled the interior, and clad the old and new elevations in a buttery yellow stucco. The gardens, likewise, reflect an overlay of early-20th century ambition, and the grounds have the appearance of an English country-house park. This practice was not confined to Virginia, but because of the Commonwealth's place in history, its proximity to Washington, and the development of rail lines that could easily transport New Yorkers south for long weekend house parties, old plantations in Virginia had a special appeal, and they were much sought after.



Old places, enhanced, remade, and renewed, and others planned and planted entirely anew, soon appeared in a landmark series of garden histories. *Historic Gardens of Virginia*, edited by Edith Tunis Sale and published in 1923, owes its genesis to the James River Garden Club and Mrs. Malvern Courtney Patterson, its president. *Historic Gardens* contained garden accounts illustrated with black and white photographs, some few color plates, and the first extensive set of garden plans in American garden history. The book was substantially revised for a reprint in 1930. But meantime, in 1929, the Garden Club of Virginia had launched a statewide tour of historic gardens. Defined as Historic Garden Week, the tour was mounted to raise funds to recreate the garden at Kenmore, the home of George Washington's sister Betty Lewis, in Fredericksburg. Historic Garden Week remains a unique enterprise to the present, having spawned a number of short-lived imitators, and it can be seen as one ancestor of The Garden Conservancy's Open Days Program.

Historic Gardens of Virginia had featured mostly old places, of 18th- and 19th-century origins, many of which had long remained in the descent of a single family. The garden histories of Georgia and Tennessee, published in 1933 and 1936, respectively, gave over nearly one-half of their pages to gardens created in the 20th century. A strength of the *Garden History of Georgia* was the inclusion of early-20th-century gardens of the winter colony in Augusta, including Morningside, designed for the Bournes by Rose Standish Nichols, and Green Court. The book also provided lavish coverage of suburban Atlanta estate gardens such as Mrs. Inman's Swan House. P. Thornton Marye produced a series of specially commissioned plans of old gardens. The Georgia book also featured plates of original drawings from the 1920s, including the 1923 presentation drawing of the grounds and gardens of Mrs.



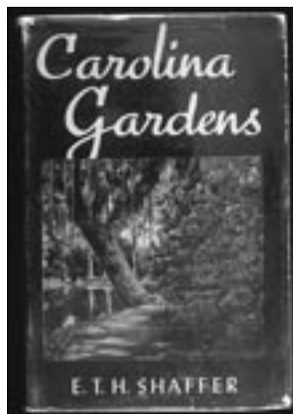
Lavishly-planted estate gardens in Nashville were prominently featured in *History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee*. The splendid *Spirea allée* at Hillcrest (above); the terrace at Cheekwood (below) was one of its gardens designed by Bryant Fleming.



James J. Goodrum of Atlanta, designed by Hentz, Adler, and Shutze.

History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee followed a similar format. Early Tennessee gardens, such as the Clifton Place, Giles County, with its lavish boxwood plantings, and the grounds of Belmont in Nashville, appeared together with the modern gardens at Cheekwood and Hillcrest, also in Nashville. Plans for both historic and modern gardens were featured.

In 1939, at the near end of the interwar period, three books were published that addressed the gardens of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Kentucky. *Carolina Gardens* had been published in a limited edition in 1937. However, it is the garden club edition of 1939 that is held by most people. E. T. H. Shaffer was a journalist, not a garden historian. But that out-of-field perspective in no way diminishes its value. His book is a narrative illustrated by photographs of gardens and estates in the two Carolinas, but principally in South Carolina. Its publisher, the University of North Carolina Press, also issued *Old Homes and Gardens of North Carolina* in 1939.



Archibald Henderson, an historian and mathematician, prepared short sketches about old North Carolina places, which are often perfunctory in tone. The merit of the book lies in the evocative photography by Bayard Wootten.

Old Homes and Gardens of Kentucky followed the format of the Georgia and Tennessee books, but it was slim in its representation of gardens. The antebellum houses of Kentucky, including Castlewood in Madison County, figured large in its pages. The history and presentation of Oxmoor, at St. Matthews, reflected patterns we have seen earlier in Virginia. In about 1909, William Marshall Bullitt returned to his ancestral plantation near Louisville. He repaired and enlarged the family seat, with new wings and other enhancements. And he engaged Marian Cruger Coffin (1876-1957) to design the gardens.



In other instances individual Southern gardeners wrote memoirs of their gardening experiences. The best known of these, of course, is Elizabeth Lawrence's *A Southern Garden*. As a garden writer and journalist she followed a literary path that dates well back into the 19th century. Helen Ashe Hays relocated from California to Maryland around the turn of the century. Here she began writing "Garden Letters" for the *New York Evening Post*, recounting her experiences making a new garden in a new place. These sketches were reworked, expanded, and republished in 1909 as *A Little Maryland Garden*. The next year *Country Life in America* published Mrs. Hays' article on the antebellum Hampton-Preston Garden in Columbia, South Carolina.

Margaret Winston Caldwell (1862-1933) was another notable gardening voice in the early-20th-century South. Her *Your Garden and Mine* was privately published in Nashville in 1914. The cover photograph features a garden gate at the Caldwell family's Longview. Mrs. Caldwell's articles first appeared in the *Southern Woman's Magazine*, a now little-known periodical of the era. The garden at Longview, however, was well-known, and it was published in 1915 in Louise Shelton's *Beautiful Gardens in America*.

Another important Southern garden voice of the early-20th century is that of Julia Lester Dillion. Her book, *The Blossom Circle of the Year in Southern Gardens*, was published in 1922. It featured mostly gardens in Georgia and the two Carolinas.

A distinctly different voice in Southern garden literature of the interwar period was that of Julian Rutherford Meade, a native of Danville. Mr. Meade launched his literary career in 1935 at the age of 26 with a memoir, *I Live in Virginia*. He recounted the experiences of his youth in Danville, his days at the University of Virginia, and his work as a teacher, a newspaper writer,

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and on other pursuits. Mr. Meade was precocious, and the satire exhibited in his memoir, mixed with humor, was apparent in *Adam's Profession*, the first of his two gardening titles. His second work, *Bouquets and Bitters*, dealt with gardening in a swath across the United States as well as his own experiences. John O'Hara Cosgrave provided its elegant aqua-tinted illustrations. Fans of the English gardening writer Beverley Nichols will intuit Mr. Meade as a man following in Nichols' footsteps. And indeed he was, branded with a small-town Southern voice and a cosmopolitan outlook. But unlike Nichols, Meade's was a sophisticated voice cut short by a brief illness and death at the age of 31 in 1940.



The revival of Southern agriculture in the post Civil War period also owed in part to the number of new seed houses that sprang up in the South, in the shadow of the antebellum Fruitlands and Pomaria nurseries. They and their catalogues are also important parts of our 19th- and early-20th-century garden history. Little examined to date, they offer important documentation in the history of both Southern agriculture and horticulture, and evidences of the evolving tastes of Southern gardeners. Four catalogues represent their range.

This catalogue for the Slate Seed Company in South Boston, Virginia, dates to Spring 1948. But the company had been founded in 1866 and remained in the ownership of the Slate family until closing in the mid-20th century. The Slate Seed Company marketed seeds for farm and garden, as well as bulbs, plants, and small farm and garden supplies. In time it became chiefly known as a supplier of tobacco seed, and it has been described as one of the largest suppliers, if not the largest supplier of tobacco seed in the nation to tobacco growers. T. W. Wood & Sons, which opened in Richmond in 1879, was a second major Virginia-based Southern seed house. The George W. Park Seed Company, in Greenwood, South Carolina, is another of these important family-owned Southern firms.

The railroad lines that carried Southern crops to market and facilitated the region's industrial expansion also quickly brought tourists and winter residents to Florida. A nursery trade developed to serve this new market as well as the state's permanent residents. The Jessamine Gardens in Pasco County, Florida, issued its first catalogue in 1889, and this one of "Rare Florida Flowers and Fruits" in 1899.

The N. L. Willet Seed Company of Augusta was another full-service seed company that offered "Sound Seeds for the South" in its Fall 1920 catalogue. The Willet

Company also served the dairy and poultry industry as well as cotton growers, offering seeds, plants, young chicks, machinery, and a wide range of insecticides and germicides for farm and garden.

The fourth example is the Spring 1927 catalogue of the Continental Plant Company, which had opened in Kittrell, North Carolina, in about 1883. As the cover indicates, the company specialized in fruit trees for the farm and commercial orchard. It also dealt in grape vines, berries, and nuts, together with ornamental shrubbery, trees, and roses. The Continental company also offered the "Glorious Queen of Sheba" violet for the important violet trade of the period.



Another little recognized part of early-20th century Southern garden history is pottery production. Numerous potteries produced flower pots by the hundreds, if not thousands, for home gardeners in a local market and for shipment. Pots representative of the craft were made in the early part of the century by a member of the Ritchie family of Lincoln County, North Carolina. Burlon Craig (1914-), the celebrated Catawba Valley, North Carolina, folk potter, continued to produce flower pots into the 1960s. The Felstone Company at Biltmore, North Carolina, manufactured a wide range of classical pots, boxes, urns, and seating, as well as bird baths and pedestals for sundials. According to its 1925 catalogue, Felstone was "A combination of crushed marble, black crystals, and white cement, compressed into weather-resisting, age-enduring garden furniture, of a beauty and grace heretofore unknown in Synthetic stone."



But back into the turn-of-the-century garden, the later-19th and early-20th centuries also saw the enrichment of a series of public and private garden cemeteries in the South that have too long languished outside our purview. Many in this room will have heard Jane White's account of the Old City Cemetery, in Lynchburg, and some of you will know Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, which is also an important Civil War burying ground. It abounds with important funerary monuments embellished with carved stone flowers, significant historic rose cultivars, planted urns, and garden benches in both cast iron and stone.

Hollywood Cemetery is handsome, but perhaps the most beautiful garden cemetery in Virginia, if not also the South, is Thornrose Cemetery in Staunton. Its expansive park-like grounds, the setting for mausolea and



The gently-rolling topography of Thornrose Cemetery, Staunton, Virginia, provided beautifully-realized opportunities for picturesque stone-work and mixed plantings.

gravestones of both classical and romantic styles, include important architectural features, a balustraded terrace overlook, stone retaining walls and plot enclosures, as well as rich plantings of heirloom roses, flowering, evergreen, and deciduous trees and shrubs. The plantings in these cemeteries and others occurred over many years; however, much of the material dates to the first decades of the 20th century. The altogether more critical factor at Thornrose is that it has always enjoyed a remarkable degree of skilled, sympathetic stewardship.

There are, finally, three other 20th-century Southern gardens, that rise above the region to national if not also international acclaim. Brookgreen Gardens, at Murrell's Inlet, South Carolina, had its origins in a series of rice plantations. Anna Hyatt Huntington and her husband joined their fields to create a personal retreat, largely in the 1930s, which soon became a vast outdoor sculpture garden. On the coast of North Carolina, at Manteo, The Garden Club of North Carolina developed an elaborate memorial garden, the Elizabethan Gardens. It honors the first English settlement in America, the "Lost Colony" of fact and dramatic fame. Umberto Innocenti designed the gardens, with his partner Richard Webel, incorporating garden furnishings from the Whitney estate at Thomasville, Georgia.

One of the most extraordinary gardens in the American South, and one that dates to the 1930s, is the Ladew Garden at Pleasant Valley Farm, Monkton, Maryland. Harvey Ladew (1887-1976), a New York-born bachelor, came south to the Maryland hunt country, where he overbuilt an existing farmhouse, with a certain stylish flair, as his residence. But it was in the gardens, occupying some 22 acres, where he lavished time, effort, and money. The Great Bowl garden, the focus of his efforts, is enclosed and ornamented with every form of topiary known. The Southern Garden History Society has visited Maryland three times; however, on none of the trips, to my memory, have the Ladew Gardens been acknowledged or visited.

But they have their champion in Christopher Weeks, who wrote *"Perfectly Delightful": The Life and Gardens of Harvey Ladew*, published in 1999.



As you have seen, there are many, many reasons to embrace the gardens and landscapes of the early-20th-century South, and to celebrate the wealth of the period, in place and in literature. While much of the landscape of Middleton Place, outside Charleston, indeed dates to the 18th and early 19th century, the gardens of Colonial Williamsburg and Tryon's Palace are the products of a later age. And, so, too, is much of what we take to be antebellum. A case in point is found in the handsome allées of boxwood leading from a trio of porches at the front of Elgin, in Warren County, North Carolina. A documentary photography of the house, taken in about 1904, reflects the appearance of the grounds soon after the boxwood was planted—at the turn of the century. A landscape of apparent antebellum grandeur is actually a Colonial Revival enhancement.

So much of the landscape of our lives dates not from the 18th century or even the first three-quarters of the 19th century, but from the later-19th and early 20th century and more particularly from the 1920s. Except for Mount Vernon virtually every restoration or recreation of a Colonial, Federal or early Republic site, including the William Paca Garden, dates to the 20th century. And, however much many of these sites would have us think we are in the landscapes of a long-ago time, we are really in the gardens of the Colonial Revival.

Again, I believe it is time to embrace this larger part of garden history that comprises so much of our heritage. But we need scholars and scholarship to address the breadth of its richness. I will continue to walk happily along antebellum paths, but it is time to enter other gardens. Please join me.

[Davyd Foard Hood's paper was presented as the keynote address on May 4, 2007 for the annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society in Annapolis, Maryland.]



Harvey Ladew's Great Bowl at Pleasant Valley Farm, Harford County, Maryland, incorporates the most extensive use of topiary and clipped hedges in the 20th-century South.

“Beyond the Garden Wall:” SGHS Annual Meeting Review

Staci Catron-Sullivan, Atlanta, Georgia

The Southern Garden History Society celebrated its 25th annual meeting in Annapolis, Maryland, May 4-6, 2007. Annapolis native Mollie Ridout, Director of Horticulture for Historic Annapolis Foundation, hosted the meeting with the support of staff and volunteers from Historic Annapolis Foundation and other colleagues from the community. The meeting cradled participants in sequestered spaces, such as the 18th-century William Paca Garden, yet challenged them to look “beyond the garden wall” by considering broader time frames in garden history and the challenge of timely preservation work.

May 4, 2007

Architectural and landscape historian Davyd Foard Hood presented the keynote address [see lead article of this issue], focusing on the significance of preserving 20th-century Southern landscapes. In the early years of the Society, Hood stated that the focus of the Society remained primarily on 18th- and early 19th-century gardens. Today, the Society and its members have a broader view, including the study of Country Place Era estates; residential parks developed by firms such as the Olmsted Brothers; Colonial Revival gardens; post-bellum nurseries such as Slate’s (Virginia), Geo. W. Park (South Carolina), and Continental Plant Co. (North Carolina); and the garden literature of the early 20th century. Hood encouraged attendees to “look anew” at these 20th-century treasures and to commit to their preservation.

Following the keynote speech, Orlando Ridout V of the Maryland Historical Trust discussed Annapolis in the context of the Chesapeake landscape. Through the middle years of the 18th century, Annapolis was the hub of political and social life in the Maryland Chesapeake as well as a major port in the export trade to Western Europe and the West Indies. With humble beginnings, the Tidewater Chesapeake evolved into a prosperous agricultural economy based on tobacco and dependant on indentured servants and later slave labor. At the height of its success in the 18th century, Annapolis was transformed from a small village of wood-frame houses into a vibrant port town with a wide spectrum of buildings set around a baroque street plan (two circles with radiating streets). Like architecture and decorative arts, the establishment of elaborate gardens was part and parcel of the consumer revolution occurring in mid-18th-century Annapolis. Those of means moved into the center of the landscape by building their Georgian-style houses on the historic terraces of the land, making them highly visible to the traffic on the Severn River. A house’s major public rooms

and garden faced the river side not the city street. Ridout illustrated his point with specific examples of Ogle Hall (now home to the United States Naval Academy Alumni Association) and the William Paca House and Garden, among others. A unique architectural feature in Annapolis is the “jib” door. A “jib” door appears as a large window flanked by columns yet the lower section opens out like a Dutch door and the sash is raised into the upper frame to give headroom for the doorway. Many of the 18th-century grand houses have “jib” doors. Ridout concluded his overview by highlighting the economic change and the rise of Baltimore and Norfolk in the post-Revolutionary period that relegated Annapolis to lesser significance—a change that helped to preserve much of the city’s 18th-century landscape into the present times.

Preparing for our visit to the site that evening, Roger Galvin of the Historic Annapolis Foundation gave the closing lecture on the meeting’s first day on the William Paca Garden, a large two-acre pleasure garden located directly behind the restored William Paca House at 186 Prince George Street in Annapolis. Galvin outlined the archaeological, artistic, and archival research that was essential to “resurrecting” the garden of William Paca, laid out in 1764-1765. Due to a fire in the 1870s that destroyed significant archival documents, little is known about William Paca (1740-1799), prominent lawyer, Revolutionary-era Governor of Maryland, and signer of the Declaration of Independence. Historic Annapolis Foundation relied primarily on archaeology and Charles Willson Peale’s 1772 portrait of William Paca to restore elements of the garden. Fortunately, the archaeological work confirmed much of the infrastructure and hardscape depicted in the portrait of Paca. Researchers also used garden manuals and plant lists from Paca’s day to understand how he might have designed, planted, and enjoyed his grand garden.

Galvin provided the history of the property as well. Paca sold the property in 1780 to attorney Thomas Jenings who died in 1796. A Belgian refugee from the French Revolution, Henri Stier, rented the house for several years. The site then had a succession of private owners throughout the 19th century. In 1901, real estate developer William A. Larned bought the property and converted it to a hotel named Carvel Hall. Paca’s house survived as the hotel’s main entrance, but the landscape vanished under a large guest room addition and parking lot. In 1965, Historic Annapolis Foundation and local preservationists launched a successful national campaign to raise funds to purchase and restore the William Paca House, acquiring both the historic house and the upper terrace. As research revealed elements of Paca’s lost garden, Historic Annapolis Foundation convinced the State of

Maryland to acquire the remainder of the two lots and fund garden restoration.

Following Galvin's presentation regarding the history and restoration of the William Paca Garden, participants enjoyed a leisurely evening stroll in the restored Paca Garden, dined on the Paca House terrace, and celebrated some of the memorable moments in the Society's 25-year history.

May 5, 2007

The second day of the meeting began with a talk regarding the historical impacts on woodlands by Dennis F. Whigham, Senior Scientist and Deputy Director of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) in Edgewater, Maryland. Whigham stated that in the pre-colonial era most forests in the Annapolis area would have probably contained a high diversity of understory herbs. As land was cleared and used for farming and other

human activities, the understory herbs of the forests were reduced significantly. Current research in Europe suggests that it may take centuries for understory herbs to return to forests areas after abandonment from cultivation. In the Annapolis area, a reversion of deserted lands back to forests has occurred. SERC forests represent the effects of land use patterns both past and present. SERC forests embody different ages, including mature forests that are more than 150 years of age, young forests that are about 50 to 70 years old, and even small forests areas that were never transformed by other land uses. Ultimately, the work at SERC has shown that the majority of forests have a low diversity of woodland herbs due to human activities affecting land use over time. With conscientious management, Whigham hopes that the original plant diversity of the forest will one day return.

The next speaker, Mark B. Letzter, provided insight into the life of 18th-century Annapolis gardener,

(continued on page 10)



Jim Cotbran and Louise Gunn with others in the garden at the Paca House



Peggy Cornett taking photos



Bob Pickens at the Paca Garden fête

SGHS Annual Meeting Review.....(continued from page 9)

William Faris (1728-1804). A prominent silversmith and clockmaker of his day, Faris began his garden in 1769 and tended his plot until his death in 1804. The only surviving late 18th-century diary from Annapolis is that of William Faris. This 700-page handwritten document details Faris's daily gardening activities from 1792 to 1804. Using a grid-like pattern for his garden design, the pathways were lined with crushed oyster shells. Faris grew a wide variety of plants in his garden that came to him through an extensive plant exchange system in Annapolis. Faris notes over 200 plant exchanges in his diary. Although the William Faris garden is no longer extant, his diary provides a unique view into the life of an early American port town and the gardening community within it. Letzer, a direct descendant of William Faris, is co-editor of *The Diary of William Faris, The Daily Life of an Annapolis Silversmith*. Following Letzer's lecture, participants had another opportunity to enjoy the Paca Garden at lunchtime.

The closing lecture featured Mollie Ridout's overview

of Annapolis's 18th-century gardens. In the 1760s, Annapolis ushered in a Golden Age as wealthy and powerful residents constructed brick Georgian mansions with facades that signified symmetry, order, and, affluence. Many of these grand residences had significant gardens that also symbolized the owner's influence and status in the Annapolis community. The signature of the colonial garden in the region was the "Chesapeake falling garden." Falls link a series of terraces that made up the garden and defined the overall property. While the falling garden lends itself to sociopolitical analyses of wealth and power in Annapolis, Ridout set forth that the form of the "falling garden" probably began early in the settlement history of the region as a method to adapt to the natural topography of the Chesapeake Bay. During this period, transportation occurred primarily on the estuaries or creeks from the bay. Houses were oriented to their boat landings and the water, not the city street. Thus, gardens were located behind the houses too.

Ridout examined six gardens in Annapolis using the

(continued on page 13)



Ken McFarland, Davyd Hood, Betsy and Hap Crusel onboard the Harbor Queen for Saturday's picnic dinner cruise



Ben Page, Peggy Cornett, and Gail Griffin planting bulbs beside headstone



Visiting the Elizabeth Lawrence gravesite at St. James Church with Lindie Wilson, Elizabeth Rogers (Miss Lawrence's niece), Bill Welch, Mary Anne Pickens, and Patti McGee

*Dinner at Paca Garden
featuring fern fiddleheads*



Thursday night reception in the William Paca Garden, supervised by Jefferson, the Paca Garden cat



'Old Blush' China Rose



*Penny Heavner, Susan Hitchcock, Gail Griffin, Gordon and Sherrie Chappell,
Bill Welch*



Annual Meeting coordinator Mollie Ridout and Mary Alves, director of landscaping, Historic St. Mary's City



London Town kitchen garden, during the optional tour on Sunday



Visit to the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center with Dennis Whigham, senior scientist

View of the terraced gardens at Tulip Hill, a magnificent 18th-century Georgian style home built by Samuel Galloway. SGHS members were allowed to enjoy the breathtaking views from the roof.



Photos of Annual Meeting by Beate Jensen, Ken McFarland, and Peggy Cornett

SGHS Annual Meeting Review.....(continued from page 10)

Paca Garden and its Chesapeake “falls” as a template for understanding Chesapeake garden heritage. The handsome Georgian mansion of John Ridout was constructed about 1765 at 120 Duke of Gloucester Street. John Ridout came to Maryland as secretary to Governor Horatio Sharpe. The property still has five terraces with a central pathway aligned with the main door of the grand house. Like other grand homes of the time, the public rooms and the garden faces the Spa Creek side not the city street. The garden survives in its original earth form and still has grass ramps and remnants of geometric beds. Archeological research is needed to uncover details about its design. Interestingly, Rose Greely later designed a plan for a portion of the property giving the property significance for not only its 18th-century heritage but its early 20th-century garden elements as well.

Ridout also highlighted the Upton Scott House, located one block south of the Ridout property with the garden remnants facing Spa Creek. Dr. Upton Scott served as Horatio Sharpe’s personal physician. His property originally occupied four acres and had a fifteen by thirty foot greenhouse. Unusual for 21st-century Annapolis, the Scott home still retains its 18th-century dependencies—one used for a stable and the other as a detached kitchen. Both the Ridout and Scott houses are privately owned and not open to the public.

Next, Ridout provided details about the Charles Carroll House located at 107 Duke of Gloucester Street. Charles Carroll, one of the wealthiest men in the colonies, was the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence. Originally a two-story Georgian house with end chimneys, the Carroll House has been expanded substantially over the years. Another “falling” garden, the property was on a triangular lot that held an orchard as well as two pavilions—a summerhouse and a temple—located at either end of a 400-foot sea wall.

Ridout also highlighted the Chase-Lloyd House (1769) at 22 Maryland Avenue, one of the first three-story Georgian townhouses in the colonies, and the Hammond-Harwood House (1773) at 19 Maryland Avenue. Although the William Paca Garden is the only one that has had extensive archaeology and research leading to a restoration, Ridout’s dialogue about the “clues” of other properties helped us to envision the pleasure gardens of 18th-century Annapolis.

Prepared by Ridout’s lecture, participants enjoyed an afternoon tour of the gardens of the Hammond-Harwood House, Chase-Lloyd House, Ridout House, and Charles Carroll House. Knowledgeable docents awaited us in each garden to answer our myriad questions after an inspiring day. The evening concluded with a picnic supper served while cruising on board the Harbor Queen.

New Education and Visitors Center for Welty House

The Eudora Welty House in Jackson, Mississippi purchased the adjacent property at 1109 Pinehurst Street in July 2007 to become the Education and Visitors Center (EVC). Visitors will be welcomed here and will also be able to see a permanent exhibit and rotating temporary exhibits. The orientation film will be shown at the EVC before the tour of the Welty House and garden. Once offices for the staff are relocated to the EVC, the rooms currently used at the Welty House for staff can be returned to their 1986 use and become part of the tour.

The Tudor Cottage style home that will be the EVC was built in 1931 by T.D. Davis. The home was purchased in 1934 by E.R. and Cora Little Owen. Cora and Chestina Welty, Eudora’s mother, became friends and shared a common interest in gardening with both women serving as President of the Belhaven Garden Club.



In 1973, Cora’s great-nephew and his wife moved into the home, and they in turn sold it to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

The house comes with an original one-car garage that had been converted to a screened porch complete with swing; this porch will be used for garden talks, and the storage area at the rear will provide much-needed garden storage. (Interestingly, this garage, located at the end of a narrow driveway, once had a turntable

inside so drivers would never have to back out of the driveway!) The EVC site will showcase plants mentioned in Welty’s prose that were not included in Chestina’s garden designs. The generous donation of SGHS members Michael and Evelyn Jefcoat of Laurel, Mississippi, are making these site developments possible.

—Susan Haltom, Ridgeland, Mississippi

Spring Board Meeting, 2007

The spring board meeting of the Southern Garden History Society was held on May 4, 2007 at the Governor Calvert House, Historic Inns of Annapolis in Annapolis, Maryland. Minutes from the fall board meeting at Wing Haven were approved. Gail Griffin gave the financial report and discussed covering expenses for the new brochure and the website as one time expenses rather than including them in the annual budget.

The board was treated to a preview of the new website by Ken McFarland. He worked closely with webmaster Virginia Hart to improve the Web site and make it more attractive and useful.

In Jeff Lewis' absence, Ken McFarland gave the Nominating Committee report, recommending Staci Catron-Sullivan, Dean Norton, and Anne Legett. Ms. Catron-Sullivan is Director of the Cherokee Garden Library in Atlanta; Dean Norton is the Director of Horticulture for the Mount Vernon Ladies Association;

Anne Legett is a recent MLA graduate from Baton Rouge. The board approved the proposed nominees.

Susan Haltom, Membership Committee chair,

shared the newly published brochure with the board and recommended methods of getting the brochures out to prospective members.

Future annual meetings were discussed. Jim Cothran reported on the plans for the Athens meeting to be held April 11-13, 2008. The title for the meeting is "High Cotton, Tall Columns." Davyd Hood reported that the



SGHS board members at dinner party hosted by Annetta Kushner. (Photo by Bill Welch)



Photo by Bill Welch

SGHS board: (back row) Ken McFarland, Wayne Amos, Mollie Ridout (middle) Davyd Hood, Mary Anne Pickens, Gail Griffin, Susan Haltom; (front) Susan Urshel, Jim Cothran, Sally Reeves, Betsy Crusel, Marion Drummond, Sherry Hollingsworth, Peggy Cornett.

Camden, South Carolina meeting has been scheduled for April 2-5, 2009. Dean Norton has offered to host the 2010 meeting, but a date has not been selected.

Davyd Hood provided the board with details of the Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference, which will be held September 27-29 at Old Salem. The title for the conference is "Lost Landscapes/Preserved Prospects Confronting Natural and Human Threats to the Historic Southern Landscape."

Marion Drummond offered to host the fall 2008 board meeting in Mobile. The board voted to accept her offer.

Davyd Hood reported that the Belk Foundation had awarded Wing Haven a \$500,000 grant to purchase Elizabeth Lawrence's house and garden from Lindie Wilson. Former SGHS board member Patti McGee will continue as a member of the Friends of the Elizabeth Lawrence Garden.

Mary Anne Pickens thanked Betsy Crusel and Sally Reeves for their many contributions to the society. Their term of office concluded at the end of the Annapolis meeting.

Annual Business Meeting, 2007

The Southern Garden History Society's annual business meeting was held on May 5, 2007, also at the Governor Calvert House. President Mary Anne Pickens presided. She introduced Mollie Ridout, chair of the Annapolis meeting, and other members of the planning committee: Gail Griffin, Wayne Amos, Melissa Brizer, and Ed and Nan Shull.

Pickens reviewed the work that the board had accomplished this past year, primarily the new Web site and the new brochure. She thanked Ken McFarland and

Susan Haltom, respectively, for chairing the committees for these projects.

Ken McFarland presented the Nominating Committee's recommendation for new board members. The slate was moved by Jayme Ponder and seconded by Marion Drummond. Board members are elected for 3 year terms.

Again, Mary Anne Pickens thanked Betsy Crusel and Sally Reeves for serving on the board.

Book Reviews

The Garden at Hidcote, by Fred Whitsey, photographs by Tony Lord. Frances Lincoln Limited, 2007; 160 pages, 150 color photographs; hardcover, \$45.00; ISBN: 9780711225312

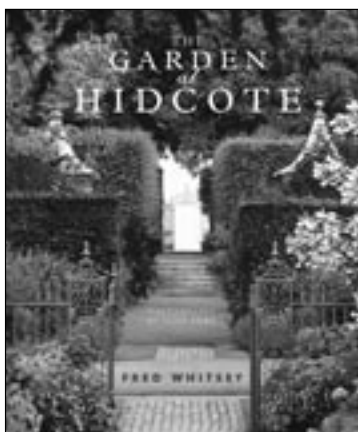
A Year in the Life of an English Meadow, by Andy Garnett and Polly Devlin. Frances Lincoln Limited, 2007; 128 pages, 180 color photographs; hardcover, \$35.00; ISBN: 9780711227224

The Garden at Bomarzo: A Renaissance Riddle, by Jessie Sheeler, photographs by Mark Edward Smith. Frances Lincoln Limited, 2007. 128 pages, 80 color photographs, 20 black and white archival illustrations; hardcover, \$45.00; ISBN: 9780711226739

Frances Lincoln, the English publishing house, has three newly-issued books on widely differing subjects of great appeal, and yet others, principally a biography of garden designer Norah Lindsay (1873-1948), scheduled to appear this fall. Now, writing this review at the end of a week in which our thermometer registered a mid-afternoon temperature of 106 degrees Fahrenheit—the highest temperature ever know in Vale—I am happy to find refuge in the gardens of Hidcote, an English meadow in Somerset, and in the garden at Bomarzo, which I visited in the company of Flora Ann Bynum and Ginny Weiler, the garden photographer, in summer 1994. And, I look forward to the life of Norah Lindsay—and a cool autumn.



The purchase of Hidcote Manor in 1907 by Mrs. Gertrude Waterbury Johnston Winthrop is being celebrated this year as the centennial of the garden acknowledged as one of England's finest and most influential, not just of the century of its making but in the longer history of English gardening. In truth the gardens at Hidcote



date not to 1907, but largely to the following decade, and into the 1920s, by which time their character and extent were established. The iconic gardens were made not by Mrs. Winthrop, a wealthy New York-born heiress who married very well, twice, but by her bachelor son Lawrence Waterbury Johnston (1871-1958). Elliott Johnston, Lawrence Johnston's father, is described as a member of a Baltimore banking family, and that is the extent of any connection with the South. Lawrence Johnston, born in Paris, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, took up British citizenship in 1900. He also developed a passion for gardening and found inspiration in Thomas H.

Mawson's *The Art and Craft of Garden Making*, published in 1900.

The Garden at Hidcote by Fred Whitsey, with photographs by Tony Lord, is one of two books published in 2007 on the garden. Mr. Whitsey is a widely-published garden writer, a contributor to *Country Life* and *The Garden*, and a long-time gardening correspondent for the *Sunday Telegraph* and the *Daily Telegraph*. Graham S. Pearson, a veteran volunteer gardener at Hidcote, is the author of *Hidcote: The Garden and Lawrence Johnston*, which is published by National Trust Books. Hidcote holds a special place in the National Trust, being the first of its many properties accepted under a joint venture of the Trust and the Royal Horticultural Society, and the first accepted for the importance of its garden alone, distinct from the merit of the house.

Much has been written about Hidcote, by many, since at least 1930 when two extensively illustrated articles appeared in the pages of *Country Life*. They introduced the garden to a much wider audience, beyond the aristocratic friends, including Vita Sackville-West, who "Lawrie" Johnston welcomed to the manor and its gardens. Fred Whitsey's book is a valuable addition to its garden literature. He begins his account with an overview of the garden, with its equally strong design features and plants, and provides a brief biographical sketch of Mr. Johnston. In 1907 when he and his mother came to occupy Hidcote, the imposing stone manor house stood in a simple landscape with a farmyard that was soon fashioned into an elegant court, a quadrangular garden enclosed by a brick wall, and a towering cedar. The enclosed garden, known today as the Old Garden and planted with wide perennial borders flanking a grass panel, is the principal point of access into a series of garden spaces, arranged in enfilade fashion, forming the Great Alley.

The heart of *The Garden at Hidcote* is a narrative tour, illustrated by color photographs. Mr. Whitsey begins in the courtyard and then guides the reader through the Old Garden, shaded by the patriarchal cedar, and out into the sequence of aligned gardens. Along the way we see the gardens in spring, summer, autumn, and winter, wet in the morning dew, bright in the mid-day sun, or at dusk, and sometimes enjoying a view from the same vantage point at different seasons. Johnston's genius in fashioning a garden, in large part out of "rooms" on a series of terraces, linked by stone steps, piers, and gates of wood or iron, enclosed by tall hedges, and planted with a broad richly-colored palette of plants, had few equals in his time. The collaborations of Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll come immediately to mind as does the garden made by Vita Sackville-West at Sissinghurst. She was an ardent champion of the Hidcote gardens, and

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Book Reviews.....(continued from page 15)

visited Lawrence Johnston in August 1947 in the company of James Lees-Milne, who would shepherd Hidcote into the National Trust in 1948. In his diary Mr. Lees-Milne recorded the visit and noted “Vita was given innumerable cuttings.” Two years later she returned the favor when her article on Hidcote was published in the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, forty-five years after Lawrence Johnston’s election as a fellow of the Society in 1904.



A Year in the Life of an English Meadow is an elegy for a vanishing English landscape and its lush tapestry of farm fields, woods, meadows and villages—the countryside Lawrence Johnston knew as a student at Cambridge and one which survived through his life at Hidcote.



It was a landscape that, like so much of rural life in the United Kingdom, fell victim to the automobile and intensive, destructive agricultural practices in the second half of the 20th century. The book is also something of an apology, an act of penance, if you will, for a decision by the authors that had immediate and forever regrettable consequences.

The year recorded in this book is 2005, twenty-two years after Andy Garnett and Polly Devlin, his wife, bought Cannwood Meadow in July 1983. But the story begins earlier, by a year or more, when an isolated farm of 134 acres in rural Somerset was divided into lots and put up for sale. Mr. Garnett and Ms. Devlin decided to purchase only Lot #1, comprising the farm house and nine acres, assuming, against the odds, that the remaining acreage would remain largely as it was, in the hands of local landowners and in traditional agricultural production. That was not to be. Ms. Devlin describes the scene:

“When we returned to move in, such a short time later, only half a year, we came into a desert; except for our immediate acreage and a nearby field bought by a disorganized farmer called Stellar, the rest of the place was ruined. Hedges had been scoured out, the land ploughed and drained and fertilized, oak trees chopped, footpaths ploughed over, dew ponds filled with concrete and rubbish. It was hard to credit. The tractors worked with full headlights until late in the night rooting out all natural growth. It was like a miniature version of the devastation of the redwood forests or the rainforests; or rather it was as though what had happened in England in fifty years

had been miniaturized and compacted into a tumbling six months. It was done without a thought for the land or for beauty or the future or the past. It was done for profit and for nothing else.”

The “nearby field” that had escaped the destruction was an open pasture of nine acres surrounded on three sides by dense traditional hedgerows, one of which paralleled the farm lane, and on its fourth side by an oak forest. It was then owned by a Mr. Stellar, who is condescendingly dismissed as “a disorganized farmer.” The injustice of this description is all the more ironic because it was Mr. Stellar’s acquisition and holding of that pasture, whatever his motives, that effectively preserved it for its celebrated, published life as Cannwood Meadow. At the time of the sale by Mr. Stellar to the authors, they found “88 species at the first quick count” of wildflowers, grasses, and rushes.

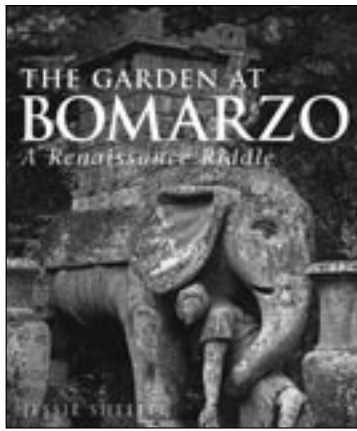
They soon set about the study of this remarkable meadow and its preservation. Representatives of the Nature Conservancy Council (now Natural England) were called in to evaluate the property in 1984, and they found even more species flourishing. Now Cannwood Meadow has 130 species of mosses, ferns and horsetails, grasses, rushes, sedges, wildflowers, including orchids, and tree/shrub seedlings. In May 1987 Cannwood Meadow was nominated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

An opening account of Cannwood Meadow, and its history since 1983, but providing no accounting for its name, is followed by a record of the plants in the meadow. This comprehensive inventory is presented in three forms. First to appear is a beautiful series of photographs made between February 7 and December 10, 2005, which represent the plants and the meadow in every season of its botanical dress, except in the cloak of snow. The centerpiece of the book, occupying more than one-half of its pages, is an album of 114 pressed flowers and plants gathered in the meadow between March 23 and September 29. Last is the list of plants in the meadow. The butterflies, moths, fritillaries, and insects that make their home in the former pasture are also pictured, however, the larger members of the meadow’s animal world, deer, hares, and birds, among them, are curiously absent in the photographs.

As admirable as the preservation of Cannwood Meadow is, and as appealing as its representation appears in these pages, the reader, like the owner/authors, is haunted by the greater opportunity that was lost. Early in *A Year in the Life of an English Meadow* we learned that an official of the Nature Conservancy Council had held the view “that the whole farm would probably have been a potential SSSI before it was sold.”



In *The Garden at Bomarzo* classicist Jessie Sheeler becomes the latest in a series of scholars, landscape architects, and historians who have sought to puzzle out the truly unique garden created by Pier Francesco Orsini (1523-1584) near Viterbo. Unlike the other great, nearby Renaissance gardens in the Lazio, that of the



Villa Lante, originally created for Cardinal Gambara, and the garden of the Villa Farnese, executed for Count Orsini's friend Alessandro Farnese, the garden at Bomarzo is in the form of a "Sacro Bosco," a sacred wood recalling the Roman precincts of pagan gods.

Count Orsini, known through history as Vicino, undertook the creation of his garden sometime after 1542 when his ownership of the property was confirmed by Alessandro Farnese, the Vice Chancellor of the Papal Court, who was also the grandson of his namesake, Pope Paul III. The Orsini family had given the church three popes, but by the mid-16th century, the family's social and political prestige was being eclipsed by that of the Farnese. The fortunes of the two families were entwined in 1541 when Vicino Orsini married Giulia Farnese. Her death in 1560 is associated with the construction of the temple, whose dome could be seen from the windows of the Orsini palace at Bomarzo. The death of their son Orazio in 1571 during the Battle of Lepanto is memorialized in the fantastic figure of an elephant carrying a wounded soldier in the curving embrace of his trunk. The elephant is also a reference to those that carried Hannibal's army through the region.

Orsini's Sacro Bosco is difficult to describe. And for convenience, I quote the wonderfully succinct sentence in Elizabeth Barlow Rogers' *Landscape Design* (2001).

"The epic poem *Orlando Furioso*, completed in 1532 by Ludovico Ariosto (1473-1533), as well as Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Inferno*, and probably the writings of Petrarch, provided inspiration for this enigmatic landscape in which Court Orsini manipulated scale and perspective to create an itinerary of unusual scenes studded with bizarre sculpture and architectural monuments forming a series of tableaux, each serving as a riddle to be decoded by his guests."

Today, the temple and the elephant, overlooking a broad vase-lined terrace, together with the rectangular hippodrome encircled by huge stone acorns on pedestals, a theatre, and a leaning tower house, are among the colossal, monumental features in a wooded park. Ms. Sheeler focuses on the iconography of these over-scaled carvings and

their placement in the wood, their inscriptions, and the seemingly labyrinthine path by which one was to enter the Sacro Bosco and to make his progress through its grounds.

Every writer's conjectures and any easy answer to the complex, complicated questions posed by the garden are confounded by the subsequent history of the Bomarzo Sacro Bosco. Vicino Orsini died in 1584. It is unclear what degree of stewardship his heirs practiced before the sale of the property in 1645 into the Lante Della Rovere family. In the event it passed out of notice and into obscurity and remained virtually unknown until 1949. In that year it was rediscovered by the renowned Italian antiquarian Mario Praz and Salvador Dali, the Spanish surrealist. In the intervening centuries, the character of the Orsini garden was compromised. The now unknown, original plantings of the Sacro Bosco have been lost and replaced in successive generations by volunteer trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and so forth. Surely, Vicino Orsini had exercised the same degree of care in the plantings and refinements of the wooded grounds of his bosco as he had in its sculpture. And they, too, carried their own language and classical references. Likewise, his impoundment of waterways to supply the fountains and jets in the park, as well as the oft-mentioned lake and pools, are lost in history. Water was a critical feature of the Sacro Bosco, as of life itself, and a likely integral part of the sculptural compositions at Bomarzo as in other Italian gardens. Might not the orc, "a sharp-toothed, whale-like sea monster," which "pushes up from the ground as if rising from the sea" have originally been rising from a pool to confront the approaching stone tortoise carrying the female figure of fame on its back?

Here, at Bomarzo, is an unparalleled opportunity for garden archaeology. But in the meantime, this book should have included a topographical plat of the garden reflecting the location and physical relationships of its many sculptural features. Having walked in its grounds I am all the more aware of its complexity. It is one measure of Vicino Orsini's genius that (apparently) so much of his Sacro Bosco survives through the passage of some 420 years after his death. Another is that scholars since 1949 have struggled to understand his unique achievement and the brilliant garden conceit that was admired—and, no doubt, envied—by its cultivated visitors in his lifetime. The admonition inscribed below a sphinx marking the assumed entrance to the garden can be answered.

*You who enter here put your mind to it part by part
and tell me then if so many wonders
were made as trickery or as art.*

But, so many questions—and the enchantment—remain.

—Davyd Foard Hood, Book Review Editor

Southern Garden History Web Site Steps Boldly into the 21st Century

Ken McFarland, Stratford Hall, Virginia

If you have not yet made the discovery, you are encouraged to have a look at our “new and improved” Web site. Simply go to www.southerngardenhistory.org and explore our many added features. Back issues of *Magnolia* are readily accessible and can be searched by using the index of issues spanning the years 1985 to 1999. Or a visitor to the site can use the Google search tool to seek out topics of interest. As well, the *Southern Plant Lists* is also now accessible via the Web site. If you want to know what Texas nurseryman Thomas Affleck had available in 1860, for example, the information is just a few mouse clicks away via the “Resources” page. The *Southern Plant Lists* represents a joining of talent between the Society and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and we are especially pleased to offer this invaluable research tool to anyone with computer access and an interest in garden history.

As you might expect, the site also provides a basic introduction to the society for new visitors, as well as a list of current officers and board members. Most can be emailed directly from the “About Us” page, while information is also available here about our annual meetings. All information required to become a member is to be found as well, so if you want to encourage friends to be a part of what we do (or give them a gift membership) the “Join Us” page is the place to go.

Though we naturally want to tout our own activities, the Web site also has a “Calendar” page which provides information on a variety of activities of interest. Since we view the Southern Garden History Society’s chief purpose as one of education, moreover, we are especially pleased to provide contact information for a wide array of other Web sites that are sure to be of interest. Via the “Links” page site visitors can gain instant access to a vast body of information about historic gardens across the South. Access to means of gaining knowledge more traditional in format can be had by looking over the listings on the “Publications for Sale” page.

Lastly, while the contents of the new Web site offer a major leap forward, its overall appearance has also been dramatically improved. The design is all new and highly eye-pleasing, thanks to webmaster Virginia Hart, while every page features full-color images of Southern gardens and plants sure to make the site visitor feel welcome and at home. Even with all these improvements, however, we do not see the Web site as a finished product, but instead it will be subject to ongoing upgrades and additions to keep the information fresh and exciting. Of course, your thoughts and suggestions are always welcome, so do not hesitate to contact Web site committee chair, Ken McFarland, or indeed any member of the board to share your thoughts. Above all, however, please use and enjoy the site to the maximum extent possible. Limitless hours of pleasant exploration are yours for the taking.

Members in Print

A new, updated edition of the popular *Antique Roses for the South*, by **Dr. William C. Welch**, has been released in large paperback form, and will be welcomed by rosarians, historians, and gardeners for its wealth of relevant material about old roses and their selection, sources, and care.

Bill Welch’s interest in the surviving old roses, many times unnamed and unattended in cemeteries and old landscapes, was instrumental in creating the present-day demand for these tough and time-tested survivors. He first began by noticing the handsome and lasting qualities of the ‘Old Blush’ China roses that had been part of his own family’s gardening heritage for many years in Central Texas, and took cuttings from the unknown ‘Maggie’ and the double form of *Rosa palustris scandens*, which still grew at the site of his wife Diane’s grandmother’s home in North Louisiana. The unknown rose ‘Natchitoches Noisette’, for instance, was collected from the American cemetery in Natchitoches, La.

At the Southern Garden History Society’s annual meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, Bill, along with Peggy Cornett, discovered a beautiful specimen of ‘Climbing Cramoisi Superieur’ and were able to authenticate its planting date and obtained permission to take cuttings for further distribution.

Chapters include narratives on the searches for forgotten old roses, landscaping with heirloom varieties (including lists of plants by outstanding characteristics such as fragrance, height, color, type, and hip characteristics), and the use of roses in floral arrangements. There are contributions from S.J. Derby and the late Margaret Sharpe, as well as material on rose crafts including potpourri, waxed roses, and dried roses.

Numerous color illustrations make this an excellent reference book to carry in the field or in the nursery for identification purposes. Taylor Trade Publishing: \$24.95.

Cherokee Garden Library Receives Cothran Collection

Atlanta landscape architect, educator, and past president of SGHS James R. Cothran generously donated over 500 volumes from his personal library as well as 6.5 linear feet of research files to the Cherokee Garden Library, one of the special subject libraries of the Kenan Research Center of the Atlanta History Center. The book component of the James R. Cothran Collection at the Library ranges in date from 1851 to 2005. The book collection embraces a plethora of topics, such as gardening, garden design, architectural history, and garden history in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Of particular note are five volumes by Louisa Yeomans King, including *The Well-Considered Garden*, with a preface by Gertrude Jekyll (1915) and *The Little Garden* (1921). Louisa Yeomans King (1863-1948) was one of America's most prominent authors of gardening books in the early 20th century. Another interesting author in the Cothran Collection is Grace Tabor (c. 1873-c. 1973). One of the

first women to identify herself as a landscape architect, Tabor obtained her horticultural training at the Arnold Arboretum. In addition to her design work, Tabor wrote extensively on horticulture and landscape design in the first four decades of the 20th century, contributing articles to *Country Life*, *Garden Magazine*, and *Woman's Home Companion*. She also authored ten books, including *The Landscape Gardening Book* (1911), *Old-Fashioned Gardening* (1913), and *Come into the Garden* (1921).

The Cothran Collection also contains extensive research files on a myriad of topics in southern and American garden history and includes primary documents, articles, and notes regarding research on historic plants, early American botanists, 19th and early 20th-century nurserymen, and antebellum nurseries.

[From the spring 2007 issue of Garden Citings, newsletter of the Cherokee Garden Library, edited by Staci Catron-Sullivan]

The Peggy Martin Survivor Rose Fund—an update

The September 2007 issue of *Southern Living* magazine includes "Hope is Blooming," by Gene R. Russell, a story about the Peggy Martin Rose, which was featured in the Spring 2007 issue of *Magnolia*. This rose, one of 450 old roses in Peggy Martin's garden in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, was the only one to survive Hurricane Katrina's devastation of 2005. This large, 18-year-old thornless Rambler with long arching canes and showy pink flowers came to Peggy as a pass-along cutting from a friend who had received it the same way from a garden in New Orleans. It is a large shrub that blooms heavily in the spring, sporadically during summer, and again in the fall. Neither Peggy nor any other of the members of the New Orleans Old Garden Rose Society could ever determine its identity, but she continued to pass it on to friends. After the storm, SGHS honorary

board member Dr. Bill Welch, a noted rosarian and horticulturist at Texas A&M University, recognized the importance of this survivor and an idea struck him in the middle of the night to use the 'Peggy Martin' rose to raise money to restore gardens and green spaces on the ravaged Gulf Coast. He took his idea to friends at the Greater Houston Community Foundation, which now manages the funds.

The following mail-order nurseries are selling the 'Peggy Martin' rose and are donating \$1 per plant sold to the Peggy Martin Survivor Rose Fund.

Antique Rose Emporium: www.antiqueroseemporium.com or 1-800-441-0002; Chamblee's Rose Nursery: www.chambleerose.com, 1-800-256-7675; and

Petals from the Past: www.petalsfromthepast.com, (205) 646-0069.



Photo by the author, April 1996

Sallie Richardson Purcell's grave in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia, is one of many there marked by handsome Victorian monuments and later-19th-century roses.

Annual Membership Dues

Important Changes

Beginning with Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the society's membership year will change from May 1—April 30 to **August 1—July 31**. This change will allow the budgeting and accounting for annual meetings to be completed within the same fiscal year. To accommodate the change, the Fiscal Year 2006-2007 will extend from May 1, 2006, to July 31, 2007. Paula Chamblee, membership secretary, will send renewal notices to members in the summer of 2007 for the next year's membership, and membership categories and dues will change as follows:

Category	Current	beginning FY 2007-2008
Life Member	\$1000	eliminated
Benefactor	\$ 250	\$ 250
Patron	\$150	\$150
Sustainer	\$ 75	\$ 75
Institution or Business	\$ 30	\$ 50
Joint	\$ 30	\$ 40
Individual	\$ 20	\$ 25
Student	\$ 5	\$ 10

For information about membership contact
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Deadline for the submission of articles for the fall/winter issue of Magnolia is December 15, 2007.

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