



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

Magnolia

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Pharsalia: A Former Virginia Plantation now a Horticultural Paradise

The following article was compiled by family and friends of the Morgan's, owners of Pharsalia, drawing on journals, family documents, and memories. Pharsalia is a Virginia Historic Landmark on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built in 1814-15, Pharsalia, a nineteenth-century working plantation, is the fifth generation home of the Massie family. The original main house and outbuildings of the site provide a framework in which the current owners, Florence (Foxye) and Richard (Dick) Morgan, showcase their passion for gardening and their devotion to flowers. This hardworking couple are personally responsible for rehabilitating the structures on the property as well as enhancing and maintaining the extensive gardens and grounds. A combination of mixed shrub borders, formal and informal perennial beds, three board and wattle fencing for support and background, stone walls for terracing and delineation, and fields of cut flowers and peonies abound. All are set against breathtaking views of apple orchards in the valley below, winding streams, farm ponds, and meandering roads nearby, and the Blue Ridge Mountains beyond. Gentle horses, chickens, and other farm animals join the owners to provide a warm welcome to Pharsalia.

History of Pharsalia

In the late eighteenth century, Major Thomas Massie (1747-1834), a distinguished veteran of the American Revolution, settled in southern Nelson County (then Amherst County) with his wife, Sarah "Sally" Cocke, and three sons. On his 3000-acre plantation he built his home called *Level Green*, which still exists today. When William, his youngest son, married, Major Massie built Pharsalia for his son and his new bride as a wedding gift. The magnificent house sits at the foot of dePriest Mountain in

the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. The property was named for the epic poem, "Pharsalia," written by Roman poet Lucan in AD 65 regarding the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great, who was defeated at the battle in Pharsalus, Thessaly, in northern Greece, in 48 BC.

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Photo by Nancy Marion, The Design Group

The front view of the main house at Pharsalia (built 1814-1815) is nestled at the base of The dePriest Mountain. The asymmetrical roof line reveals a rear addition by William's fourth wife, Maria, which incorporated a favorite view from her bedroom.

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CALENDAR

Please visit the SGHS Web site, www.southerngardenhistory.org, for a complete and more detailed calendar with the latest updates and links to individual Web sites.

February 23-June 2, 2013. "Seeking the Unknown: Natural History Observations in Louisiana, 1698-1840," Historic New Orleans Collection. Exhibition comprises selections from THNOC's holdings plus loaned items from Louisiana institutions and four French archives; spotlighting particular individuals whose work was influential in recording the natural history of Louisiana. Visit: <http://www.hnoc.org/naturalhistory/>

March 20-23, 2013. "Resilience, Renewal and Renaissance: Keeping Cultural Landscapes Relevant," the Annual Meeting of the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation (AHLP), in Lynchburg, VA. Meeting explores regional landscapes and includes visits to Poplar Forest, Lynchburg Community Market, Old City Cemetery, Anne Spencer House, and University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Visit: www.ahlp.org

April 12-13, 2013. PLANTASIA, Charleston, SC. A plant sale extravaganza featuring workshops every hour, a "Real Yard Sale" of choice gardening items, and a wide selection of "Member's Favorite" plants grown and donated by Charleston Horticultural Society members. Visit: www.chashortsoc.org; call (843) 579-9922.

April 14-15, 2013. "More Than a Garden: Creative Ideas to Enhance Your Life," 67th Colonial Williamsburg Garden Symposium. Featured speakers include David Culp, P. Allen Smith, Kerry Mendez, Evelyn J. Hadden, and Tara Dillard. Visit: www.history.org/history/institute/

April 20-27, 2013. Historic Garden Week in Virginia. Called "America's Largest Open House," this event provides a unique opportunity to see unforgettable gardens at the peak of Virginia's springtime, as well as beautiful houses with over 2,000 flower arrangements created by Garden Club of Virginia members. Visit: www.vagardenweek.org

May 3-5, 2013. "Someone's Been Digging in the Dirt," 31st Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, Lynchburg, VA. Highlights include diverse speakers and visits to Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, Pharsalia, the Anne Spencer Museum and Gardens, and the Old City Cemetery. Meeting extension will tour eight private gardens with lunch at Lynchburg Grows, an award-winning Urban Farm. Visit: www.southerngardenhistory.org; Jane White: janebaberwhite@gmail.com

May 25, 2013. Open Days Garden Tours in Charleston, SC, hosted by the Charleston Horticultural Society in partnership with the Garden Conservancy and the Spoleto Festival USA. Thirteen private gardens featured. For tickets: Spoleto Box

Office, (843) 579-3100, visit: <http://spoletousa.org/events/behind-the-garden-gate/>

May 30, 2013. Gardening with History: Planning and Practice, seminar at Morris Arboretum in Philadelphia. Program includes Peter Hatch; Charles Birnbaum (Cultural Landscape Foundation); and Lauren Otten (LaSalle University). Visit: www.morrisarboretum.org

June 2, 2013. Annual Bellefield Design Lecture, Hyde Park, NY. The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association and the Landscape and Arboretum Program (Bard) present author and photographer Rick Darke on his recently expanded edition of William Robinson's *The Wild Garden* (1870). Visit: www.beatrixfarrandgarden.org/events

June 7, 2013. Garden Club of Georgia Historic House and Garden Pilgrimage, Macon, GA. Visit: www.gardenclub.uga.edu

June 16-21, 2013. Preserving Jefferson's Gardens and Landscape, the 17th annual Historic Landscape Institute. Course uses the gardens and landscapes of Monticello and UVA in Charlottesville as outdoor classrooms for the study of historic landscape preservation, garden restoration, and historical horticulture. Visit: www.monticello.org/hli

July 27, 2013. "Restoring Beatrix Farrand's Gardens," a seminar organized by The Beatrix Farrand Society, Bar Harbor, ME. Speakers include Gail Griffin (Dumbarton Oaks); Rebecca Trafton (Dumbarton Oaks Park); Carole Plenty (Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden); Kate Kerin (Bellefield); Sue Sturtevant (Hill-Stead); and others. Co-sponsored by the Garden Conservancy. Visit: www.beatrixfarrandsociety.org

September 6-7, 2013. 7th Annual Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello. Educational, family-friendly event, held in the gardens of Monticello, celebrating Jefferson's gardening legacy and featuring heirloom fruits and vegetables, organic gardening, and seed-saving; sponsored by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and Southern Exposure Seed Exchange. Visit: www.heritageharvestfestival.com

September 26-28, 2013. "To Everything a Season," 19th Conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, Winston-Salem, NC; biennial conference, at Old Salem Museum & Gardens and Reynolda House Museum of American Art; co-sponsored by SGHS, explores historic methods and resources in cultivating, preserving, and preparing heritage foods and livestock in the American South. Visit: www.oldsalem.org or Sally Gant: sgant@oldsalem.org; (336) 721-7361.

February 28-March 2, 2014. SGHS Annual meeting in Savannah, GA. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details.

Pharsalia: A Former.....(continued from page 1)

In the summer of 1814, William Massie, at 19, married Sarah Tate “Sallie” Steptoe at her parent’s home, Federal Hill, in nearby Bedford County. Her father, James Steptoe, was a life-long friend of Thomas Jefferson at neighboring Poplar Forest. The couple stayed with the Steptoes until the summer of 1815, when they moved in with William’s parents.

In 1814 Major Thomas contracted George Williams, who built Level Green, to also build Pharsalia and Blue Rock, the home of William’s brother, Dr. Thomas Massie. William and Sallie moved into their new home in early October 1815. William spent the next few years working beside his father, buying and selling land, growing crops for European markets, and learning about his 1400 acres of mountainous land. At one point in his life, William owned over 10,000 acres in Nelson County and had up to 170 enslaved African Americans.

After twelve years of marriage, William’s first wife passed away and, shortly thereafter, he lost two subsequent wives to illness. William’s fourth marriage to Maria Effinger of Harrisonburg, however, proved long and happy. Maria raised William’s son from his first marriage and daughter from his second marriage, together with four children of her own: Martha Virginia, Hope, Florence, and Bland.

When Major Massie retired from full-time farming, William took over running four plantations including his own Pharsalia, and three others – Level Green, Tyro, and Montebello (which had been owned and maintained by his father). Less than half of his lands

were cleared when he acquired them. His soil was light, thin and eroded easily, and much of his unimproved land was virgin forest. He used stones from the rocky soil to build stone walls and barriers to keep the streams from further eroding the land in his lower fields, some of which

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Photo by Nancy Marion, The Design Group

One of the original remaining outbuildings at Pharsalia is this two story brick house, which was used as a kitchen (lower right side), laundry (bottom left side), and slave infirmary (divided for men and women) on the upstairs level. William Massie, whose brother was a doctor, had his own pharmacy secured in the big house nearby.



Photo by Nancy Marion, The Design Group

This ancient Winesap apple tree is one of a few that remain from the early orchards developed by Dr. Parsons, who owned Pharsalia from the late 1800s to 1950.

Pharsalia: A Former. (continued from page 3)

were kept in permanent pasture. The existence of hills and gullies made the areas of rich soil difficult to farm, but he was very creative and efficient in the development of the extensive holdings.

The level ground around Pharsalia, the center ring, was planted in two orchards and an extensive garden. Outside the orchard, garden, and manor house area was another ring of small pastures and holding lots for his animals. Beyond that, radiating like the spokes of a wheel, were fields averaging about one hundred acres each. William embraced the latest theories of crop rotation and kept accurate accounting by numbering his fields. His annual record of farming operations included weather memoranda from year to year. To this he added a yearly summary that became an analysis of profit and loss for each of the four plantations.

William Massie raised wheat, hops, tobacco, and apples. He exported flour from his mill at Tyro, which still stands today, and he built a smaller personal mill just past the location of the present-day front gates. He was famous for his bacon and ham and he distilled whiskey and made apple brandy as well. The produce was transported by bateaux to Richmond from Massie's warehouse at Newmarket, located where the Tye River flows into the James River.

Besides his experimentation with crop rotation, William used plaster and guano to improve the soil. He built a wooden "pipe" from a mountain spring flowing

by gravity by a circuitous route to his home. Along the way the water ran through a shallow, man-made lake that froze during the winter months and supplied ice to fill his eighteen-foot-deep ice house. The water then passed on to the dairy house to circulate in the cooling troughs, and out the opposite side to then be used for household water and irrigation of the house gardens. This was a new practice of controlling spring water for multiple uses and eliminating the use of his enslaved work force for these chores. Today, Pharsalia's water comes down the mountain from that same spring.

Surrounding the main house were many outbuildings, including a weaving house, several lumber or storage buildings, the ice house, barns, stables, carriage houses, the necessary, and two smoke houses, one for the commercial smoking of hams and one for his personal use. There was a one-and-one-half story log structure for the enslaved African Americans who worked in the main house of the planter, as well as a two-story brick building that consisted of a laundry room and kitchen downstairs and a hospital upstairs. Remarkably, many of these buildings still stand today.

William subscribed to and advertised in several gardening magazines, including the *Southern Planter*, *The Rural Register*, *The Horticulturist*, and *American Farmer*. He advertised his Poland rye in the *Southern Planter* and received a large response for orders and



William Massie (1795-1862) [Courtesy of Foxie Morgan]



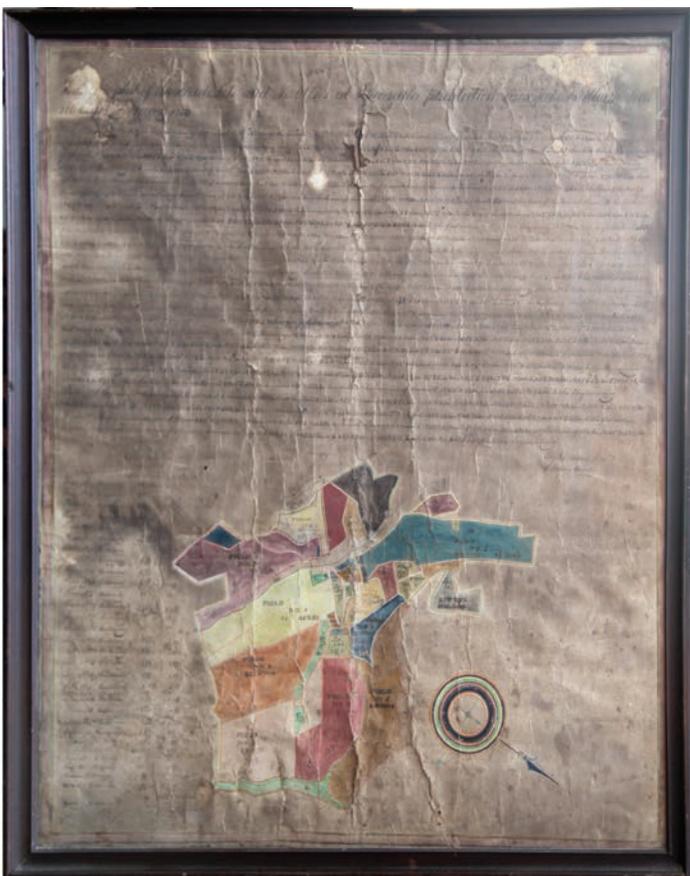
Maria Massie (1814-1889) [Courtesy of Foxie Morgan]

further information on this, and other, successful farming ventures.

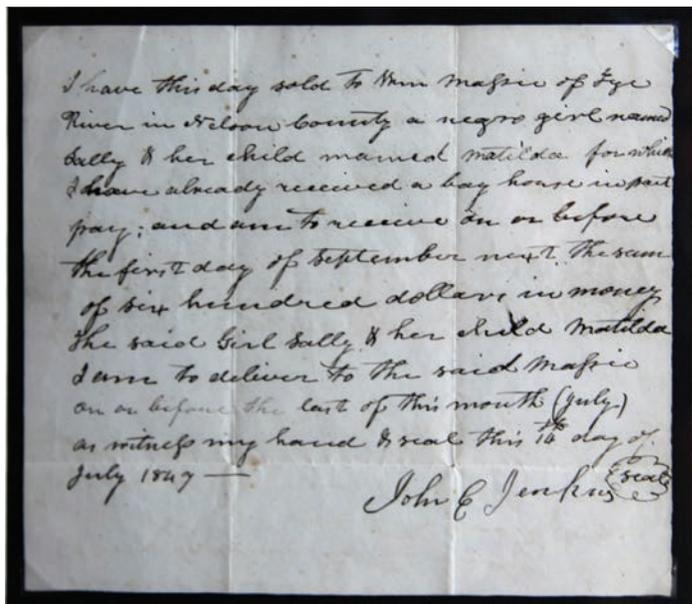
One of William's most valuable implements was one of his own inventions. It was described in his 1851 farm journal as having "three cylinders, each 30 inches in diameter and 18 inches long, set in a jointed frame on wheels rolling a width of five feet. Though it weighed three thousand pounds, it can be pulled with six head of oxen with ease," and because of its disjointed design, "corners tolerably well." For those who wanted to duplicate this implement, William would let them use his pattern at a local foundry in Lynchburg. Each cylinder, without the frame, weighed about eight-hundred pounds and cost four cents a pound to reproduce. The implement paid for itself over and over as it yielded light soil and thus increased crop production. With a good driver, seven acres of land could be rolled in one day. On his farm in 1851, using this implement at planting time, one-hundred-twenty acres produced 1,200 barrels of corn, which was a far better yield than that of most of his neighbors.

In their farm operations, Major Massie and William also contracted with Robert McCormick, an outstanding blacksmith in the neighboring valley, for the more sophisticated work that their blacksmiths could not handle. Robert's son, Cyrus McCormick, was perfecting

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The inscription on this family document reads: "This is a plat of the Fields, Lots and Meadows at Pharsalia plantation surveyed for William Massie Esqr. February 1850" [Courtesy of Foxie Morgan]



Courtesy of Foxie Morgan

This is the hand-written sale record of William Massie's purchase of a "main house slave," known as Aunt Sally. The document was only recently discovered and purchased by the family. At one time, William Massie owned up to 170 slaves.

Early Goodrich Potatoes.

Very early, large, white skin, smooth eyes, white flesh and of the first quality, perfectly sound, solid to the core, keeps well and is highly productive. Average yield on good rich soil,

THREE HUNDRED BUSHELS PER ACRE.

This highly valuable new seedling Potato described as above, was raised by the late REV. CHAUNCEY E. GOODRICH, Chaplain to the New York State Lunatic Asylum at Utica. He spent fifteen years in experimenting upon the production of new varieties, and raised over

Sixteen Thousand Seedlings,

Of which he esteemed the Goodrich as the

Very Best Early Variety.

THE EARLY GOODRICH is very early, prolific, and of the highest table quality. It was offered for sale in limited quantities last year. The demand was beyond all precedent, and hundreds of planters were unable to procure a supply.

**Price 75 cents per Peck, \$3.00 per Bushel,
\$8.00 per Barrel.**

POTATOES BY MAIL.

Advertisement for Goodrich Potatoes.

Courtesy of Foxie Morgan

Pharsalia: A Former..... (continued from page 5)

a previously invented reaper that was more efficient to operate, could be used on the hillsides of William's property, and took fewer man hours to harvest wheat. When Cyrus could not find people to invest in the production of his invention, it was William Massie who supported his endeavors. Later, after the McCormick brothers moved their manufacturing and sales office to Chicago, their local state agent contacted William as requested by the McCormicks and sold these new, perfected and patented farm implements to William at cost, in exchange for his valued endorsement.

William was constantly experimenting with new produce in hopes of making a profit. In 1850, he ordered 1,250 cranberry plants and for the next five years had a field of cranberries. Ship captains used cranberries against scurvy on long voyages, so there was a demand for them. Their natural waxy coating prevented early spoiling, and winter availability kept William's farm hands occupied. Cranberries were harvested with a comb-like scoop, but it was back-breaking work. Not understanding the finicky plant's growing preferences or how the fruits were harvested, the cranberry money-making scheme was not profitable, and by 1855, William abandoned this business.

William was the first in Nelson County to bring in Goodrich potatoes from New York. These early potatoes

“were large with white skin, smooth eyes, and white flesh, and were of the highest table quality.” This new breed of potatoes was perfected by Rev. Chauncey Goodrich after fifteen years of experimentation with the latest varieties, and was a staple in William's garden. In 1841, a potato rot affected potatoes in America, which was eventually transmitted to Europe, with the first outbreak in Ireland in 1845, wiping out 80% of their crop during the great potato famine. The new Goodrich potato seemed to be immune to this potato rot. The potatoes of today show the same DNA genetics from Goodrich's experimentations.

Two of the most interesting apples at Pharsalia today are the Albemarle Pippin—a famous early American apple originating in Newtown, New York, and cultivated by both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson—and the Pilot Apple. Major Massie, William's father, was the first to bring the Albemarle Pippin apple to Nelson County. In fact, he was the first to have an apple orchard in the county. The Pippin was a “good keeper” and thus could be carried in barrels by wagons for twenty miles to the James River, transported ninety miles by bateaux to Richmond, then put on ships for England. The other little known apple grown today at Pharsalia—the Pilot—originated in Nelson County in the 1800s and the trees growing at Pharsalia today were grafted from a Pilot tree at “Three Springs,” William's nephew's farm.

After William's death in 1862, his widow, Maria, managed the farms. By the end of the Civil War, she had lost her husband, her money, and the enslaved African Americans that worked the plantations. She continued to do what they had done well, and she took in young girls to teach. She also continued to import salt to sell and cure meats. Shortly after her death in 1889, the house and one-hundred-forty-four acres were sold to a Mr. Bentz for \$4000. Fourteen years later he sold it to his cousin Dr. Parsons for \$10,000. Almost fifty years later, in 1952, William's great granddaughter, Perkins Massie Morton Flippin, a descendant of William and Maria's son, Bland Massie, purchased Pharsalia and twenty-two acres. In



Pharsalia Apple. [Courtesy of Foxie Morgan]



Image of the Albemarle Pippin and Pilot apples, still grown at Pharsalia today. Nelson County is a well-known apple growing area and Colonel Massie, William's father, was the first to have an apple orchard in the county.

Courtesy of Tom Burford

1965, Perkins began a business in Lynchburg called "The Farm Basket" to sell her hail-damaged apples. She also installed a commercial kitchen on the property and hired women to cook the apples into various edible products. She later expanded her apple stand to include vegetables, and was the first to plant Silver Queen corn in Nelson County in the 1970s.

Pharsalia Today

Today, Perkin's daughter Foxie Flippin Morgan and other descendants of Major Massie who own Pharsalia, Tyro, and Silver Creek Orchards, work 300 acres of orchards containing twenty different types of apples, forty acres of grapes that are mostly sold to fourteen local wineries, ten acres of sweet corn, and another ten acres of peaches, nectarines, cherries, and pears. They also run three-hundred head of beef cattle.

Pharsalia's numerous and varied gardens have been expanded from earlier years and are used today for growing pesticide-free cut flowers and a variety of vegetables. The Morgans also grow an impressive collection of peonies as well as annuals, perennials, and shrubs, which, along with the vegetables, are sold to local farmers' markets. They are part of the beautiful setting of

the historic buildings and enhance the site as a popular year-round venue for parties and weddings. Foxie Morgan offers monthly classes on flower growing and arranging, wreath making, and other topics pertaining to floral art and horticulture. The bountiful vegetable garden, time-tested family recipes, and the warm and generous spirit of the owners combine to provide legendary southern hospitality; ensuring that this historic nineteenth-century Virginia plantation is preserved for future generations.

The participants in the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society will enjoy a beautiful evening at Pharsalia as the culmination of the program in Lynchburg, Virginia, May 3- 5, 2013.

In Print

In Greg's Garden: A Pineywoods Perspective on Gardening, Nature and Family by Greg Grant; Texas Gardener Press, 2013; order online at www.TexasGardener.com or call (254) 848-9393.

An intimate and personal exploration of the life of one of Texas' (and our society's) most beloved gardeners, this new publication gathers in a single volume the first ten years of Greg Grant's columns from *Texas Gardener* magazine, all accompanied by Grant's vivid photography. Revised and updated from the original book, these 60 essays reveal the heart and soul of a seventh-generation native Texan who has devoted his entire life to gardening, nature, and family. Grant has successfully introduced dozens of plants to the Texas nursery industry, including the Marie Daly and Nacogdoches (Grandma's Yellow) roses. Presently serving on the board of the Southern Garden History Society, Greg continues to maintain his long-held family property and to restore the homes of his ancestors in Arcadia, Texas. The 2010 edition, containing only the first nine years of Grant's column and no photography, is available for Kindle from Amazon.com.

In Greg's Garden

A Pineywoods Perspective on Gardening, Nature and Family



Greg Grant

Foreword by Chris S. Corby

Book Review

Gardens for a Beautiful America, 1895-1935:

Photographs by Frances Benjamin Johnston, by Sam Watters, Frances Benjamin Johnston (Photographer); Acanthus Press LLC; hardcover, 400 pages, 250 color, 50 black & white; 2012; ISBN-10: 0926494155 | ISBN-13: 978-0926494152; list price \$79

Many, if not most, members of the Southern Garden History Society, like me, long knew Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864-1952) as an architectural



photographer. Her identity as a photographer held pride of place above that of Thomas Tileston Waterman (1900-1951) on the title page of *The Early Architecture of North Carolina* published in 1941. During the 1930s, with the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Miss Johnston had traveled throughout the South compiling a photographic record of its historic architecture. *The Early Architecture of North Carolina*, with an architectural history by Mr. Waterman, was one of the first important reflections of an extraordinary achievement—in one state. Many of her photographs of historic buildings in other states would eventually find their way to publication. Altogether, her images recorded the architectural legacy of one large part of the United States on the cusp of a change that would be even more dramatic in the years ahead.

But in truth, architectural photography and the Carnegie-funded survey were the capstone to a long,



Irises along the embankment, West Potomac Park, Washington, DC, 1921. [Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC]

distinguished career as a photographer that began in 1888 with the gift of a Kodak camera from George Eastman, a family friend. The greater part of this period was devoted to garden photography and her work as a lecturer on gardens and garden design, which were illustrated with hand-tinted lantern slides of gardens she had photographed. This book, *Gardens for a Beautiful America, 1895-1935*, was published in 2012 in conjunction with the release on-line of some 1,134 color and black-and-white photographs she produced over a near half century held in the collection of the Library of Congress. Both are significant events in American garden history.

Frances Benjamin Johnston was born in Grafton, West Virginia, in 1864 and moved as a young girl with her parents to Washington, DC, where her father had a position in the Treasury Department and her mother was a journalist. They occupied a house on “V” Street built by John Burroughs, the naturalist and biographer of Walt Whitman. His garden became the Johnstons’ and the location of a studio built in 1895 for Frances. Her education at the *Academie Julian* in Paris, from 1883 to 1885, and afterward at the Art Students League in Washington enhanced a possible career as a painter. However, Miss Benjamin saw a larger opportunity and distinction in photography. Through the late 1880s and 1890s she effectively gave up one medium for another, but not the training she had received in color, design, and composition that favored her work to the end of her life.

As Sam Watters writes in “A Garden Photographer,” the first of two essays that introduces this album of garden photographs, her early work as a portrait photographer was “transformative.” It not only provided an easy, comfortable introduction to people whose houses and gardens she would photograph, “but in posing individual



“Belmont,” arbor at the long walk, 1927. Gari Melchers house, Fredericksburg, Virginia. [Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC]

sitters both for news and artistic portraits, Johnston learned the power of photography to present constructed scenes as real.” This ability, seen in 1893 in a photograph of the World’s Columbian Exposition modeled on a Canaletto painting of Venice, remained a hallmark of her garden and landscape photography.

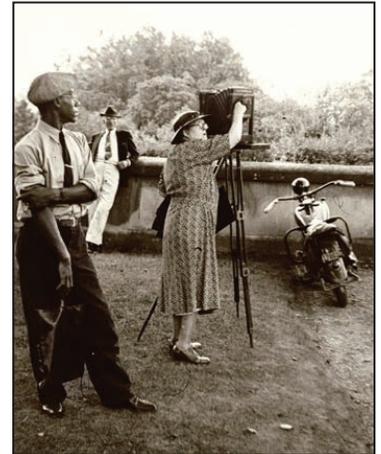
Frances Benjamin Johnston launched her career as a photographer at a fevered point in American social and cultural history. Women were gaining important new positions in society and embracing emerging fields, such as photography and garden design, among others. Women and men both figured in the rising status of landscape architecture as a profession, as competitors and colleagues. Advances in printing and photographic technology allowed for the inexpensive publication of illustrated books and a number of lavishly-illustrated magazines devoted to home and garden. Mr. Watters cites four of the most important that began publication in this golden age: *The House Beautiful* in 1896, *House & Garden* and *Country Life in America* in 1901, and *The Garden Magazine* in 1905. All provided a valuable nexus of exchange and influence among gardeners, home builders, estate makers, architects, landscape architects, photographers, and writers.

In 1909 Miss Johnston moved to New York, where she enjoyed a romantic and highly successful professional relationship with Mattie Edwards Hewitt. By 1913, when the two entered into a formal business partnership, Frances Benjamin Johnston was a leading house and garden photographer. That same year, a group of garden clubs organized as The Garden Club of America. This club, its member clubs, and their members were clients for her photographs of family, home, and garden and, beginning in the mid-1910s, for her garden lectures. The first of these “Our American Gardens” prominently featured the estate gardens of East Hampton and Southampton. In 1915 seventeen of the ladies’ photographs—two autochromes

and fifteen black-and-white prints—appeared in Louise Shelton’s *Beautiful Gardens in America* with the identification of “Miss Johnston—Mrs. Hewitt.” The book was an immediate success and went into a second printing in 1916. (That is the edition I have.)

By 1917 Frances Benjamin Johnston and Mrs. Hewitt had ended their personal and professional relationships. Both continued to work as house and garden photographers to acclaim, with Miss Johnston expanding her lecture schedule to a growing audience of garden club members while increasing her offerings to include “Gardens of the South” among new topics. The art of gardens and, by inference, the art of garden photography were leitmotifs in all her presentations as was her advocacy for beauty and its potential to transform lives. Miss Johnston continued to

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Frances Benjamin Johnston in 1896 (above) seated in her Washington, DC studio, and in the 1930s (below) photographing on site at the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC.



“Middleton Place,” with live oak and Butterfly Lake, spring 1928. Charleston, South Carolina. [Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC]



“Mount Vernon,” George Washington house, George Washington Parkway, Mt. Vernon, Virginia. Privy in lower garden. 1894. [Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC]

Book Review..... (continued from page 9)

photograph gardens into the 1930s when her work, and its patronage, was primarily architectural and associated with the fledgling efforts that would become the national movement for historic preservation. In short, hers was a career that bridged many worlds. In 1945 she retired to New Orleans and a house in the Vieux Carré. Frances Benjamin Johnston died in 1952. Her body was brought back to Washington for burial in Rock Creek Cemetery.

Sam Watters's second essay, "The Garden Photograph," advances the case, held by Frances Benjamin Johnston and many of her contemporaries, that the photographer is an artist in the garden and, by extension, garden photography is fine art. Her photographs and theirs bore the influence of Impressionism, Pictorialism, the color theories advocated by Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson in Britain, and those espoused here by Leicester Bodine Holland in *The Garden Blue Book* of 1915 and by Louise Beebe Wilder in *Colour in My Garden*, 1918. He also identifies the talented colorists who tinted Miss Johnston's photographs (and others) and produced the colored lantern slides she used in her lectures. Grace Adele Smith Anderson (1873-19__) filled this role from the 1910s into the mid-1920s. Edward Cornelius van Altena (1873-1968), colored the photographs shot in Europe in 1925 that formed the core of Miss Johnston's lecture "Gardens of the Old World."

The photographs reproduced in *Gardens for a Beautiful America, 1895-1935*, are grouped under thematic lecture headings; "Gardens of the East," "Gardens of the West," "Gardens for City and Suburb," "Gardens of the Old World," and "Gardens of the South." These images bear simple identification lines and have further, expansive notations in a section of notes at the back of the book. Her beautiful, atmospheric colored photograph of the vegetable garden and outbuildings at Mount Vernon, dated to 1894, appears as the frontispiece.

"Gardens of the South" contains Frances Benjamin Johnston's photographs of the expected gardens and others little known except to the knowing. The boxwood gardens at Tuckahoe and Hampton are featured along with those planted by Ellen Shipman for Mrs. Devore at Chatham and the boxwood-lined Long Walk at Belmont, which is one of Virginia's great early-twentieth century pleasantries and a path whose walk always gives pleasure. The gardens created for Captain Blow at the Nelson House at Yorktown by Charles Freeman Gillette barely survived their day in the sun but appear in these pages in a lush abundance for all time. Magnolia and Middleton Place gardens also appear. There is a garden in Richmond I do not know, that of the Smoot family, and another that I remember well having visited it once some forty-plus years ago. Like others, Frances Benjamin Johnston

did not include people in her garden photographs except when necessary to convey scale. Elise W. B. Wickham appears in her garden at Hickory Hill, near Ashland, standing beside the towering American boxwoods forming a walk. On a spring Saturday evening in about 1968, after the Camptown Races, I walked through these majestic boxwoods. The best garden photographs are indeed fine art—and the carrier of memory.

Davyd Foard Hood,
Isinglass, Vale, North Carolina

[Reviewer's Note: I received a copy of Gardens for a Beautiful America, 1895-1935, in spring 2012 and intended to review it for the summer issue of Magnolia. That did not prove possible. Circumstances and responsibilities have held my arm until recent days, when I could turn again, with concentration, to its pages. Sam Watters, its author, and Acanthus Press have my apologies and my congratulations. DFH]



"Magnolia Plantation," azaleas along pathway, spring 1928. Charleston, South Carolina. [Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC]

Members in the News

Marion Drummond received an Award of Special Recognition for Service to the Profession at the Louisiana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet March 2 in Baton Rouge. She was nominated for her selfless promotion of the appreciation of plants in design, and for building bridges between laymen and landscape architects, nurserymen, landscape contractors, horticulturists, and

educators.

The Winter, 2013 issue of *Flower* magazine features the **Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum** as an internationally known inner-city garden of Eden in Lynchburg, Virginia, celebrating the life and poetry of Anne Spencer. The Spencer Garden is sponsored by Lynchburg's **Hillside Garden Club**.

Mark Your Calendars!

Feeding the American South: Heritage Gardening & Farming

September 26-28, 2013

The nineteenth biennial Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference focuses on the theme of the working, edible landscape from planting and cultivation through harvest to the table. The Flora Ann Bynum Keynote speaker, Barbara B. Millhouse, will present "The Cows Ain't All of It": The Reynolda Dairy and Farm, a Model for Progressive Farmers 1912-30. Featured speakers include Peter Hatch on Thomas Jefferson's kitchen garden; Colonial Williamsburg's Wesley Greene on year-round gardening methods; Tom Burford on fruit gardening; Jo Ann Williford on the Civil War diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmiston; culinary historian Michael Twitty on African American Foodways; ceramics historian Brenda Hornsby-Handl on food preservation; Suzanne Turner on the Garden Diary of Martha Turnbull; and Jeannette Beranger of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy on heritage breeds. Participants will have the opportunity to enjoy several workshop experiences including seed saving, hearth cooking, historic gardening, historic methods of food preservation and cooking, and African Ameri-

can Foodways.

The conference's opening dinner will recall a festive 1916 "Barbecue with All Accessories" at the Reynolda Estate, and the Friday night supper will feature a menu based on the Slow Food and Ark of Taste food movement. The conference will end with a visit to historic Stauber Farm, which specializes in raising heritage breeds of farm animals.

The RSGL Conference, held in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is co-sponsored by Old Salem Museums & Gardens, Reynolda House Museum of American Art, and the Southern Garden History Society.

For information: (336) 721-7361 / sgant@oldsalem.org



"A View of Salem in N. Carolina - 1787" Ludwig Gottfried von Redeken. Salem, North Carolina, 1787. Watercolor on paper. [Courtesy, Old Salem Museums & Gardens]



Southern Garden History Society

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Awards and Scholarships

The **Flora Ann Bynum Award** is the highest award bestowed by the Southern Garden History Society. It is not awarded annually, but only occasionally to recipients who have rendered outstanding service to the society. Nominations may be made at any time by any member. The award will usually be presented at the annual meeting.

The title **Honorary Director** (Board of Directors) may be bestowed on individuals who have rendered exceptional service and made significant contributions to the society. Nominations for Honorary Director are made to the President by current Board members and are approved by the Board of Directors.

The **Certificate of Merit** is presented to a member or non-member, whose work has advanced the mission and goals of the society. Awarding of certificates will be approved by the Board of Directors and will usually be announced at the annual meeting.

Society **Scholarships** assist students in attending the society's annual meeting and are awarded to bona fide students enrolled in college and university majors relevant to the mission and goals of the society. The scholarship provides a waiver of registration fees plus \$500 to assist with travel and lodging.

Details, requirements, and directions for submitting applications are posted on the SGHS Web site: www.southerngardenhistory.org. For those without internet access, a copy of this document can be mailed or faxed. Contact Peggy Cornett, Magnolia editor.

Annual Membership Dues

The society's membership year is from **August 1—July 31**. The membership secretary will mail renewal notices in the summer for the 2010-2011 year. Membership categories:

Benefactor	\$500
Patron	\$250
Sustainer	\$100
Institution or Business	\$75
Joint	\$50
Individual	\$30
Student	\$15

For more membership information, contact:
Virginia Hart, Membership Coordinator
Post Office Box 15752
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Email: membership@southerngardenhistory.org
Memberships can now be made electronically on our Web site!
www.southerngardenhistory.org

Deadline for submitting articles for the Spring issue of Magnolia is May 31, 2013.

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