



# Magnolia

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

Bulletin of the Southern Garden  
History Society

Vol. XIX

No. 1

Winter-Spring 2004

## *Restoration of the Grounds and Gardens at Stratford Hall Plantation*

By Ken McFarland, Stratford Director of Preservation and Education

In April 2005 the Southern Garden History Society will meet in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Participants will explore the landscape and garden history of this Rappahannock River city, as well as that of Virginia's famed Northern Neck to Fredericksburg's southeast. A central feature will be a visit to Stratford Hall Plantation, an internationally recognized home of the Lee family and a 1,700-acre site operated by the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association.<sup>1</sup> This is the first of several projected articles exploring the history and restoration of Stratford's grounds and gardens. It briefly examines Stratford's overall past and then looks in detail at an array of historic documents that refer to the early Stratford landscape, beginning in the 18th century. This material is one of the pillars that supported early grounds and garden restoration endeavors.

### **Beginnings:**

The Great House at Stratford is an American architectural icon dating from the late-1730s. No less significant is its dominant ridge-top location, with a magnificent view over the broad Potomac River one mile to the north. In the 18th and early 19th centuries the combination of structure and site made a powerful statement about the wealth, power, and social position of the Lees of Westmoreland County, Virginia.<sup>2</sup> Constructed under the direction of Stratford's first owners Thomas Lee and his wife Hannah Ludwell Lee, the Great House and its outbuildings were the center of a highly successful tobacco and shipping operation, worked by indentured servants and enslaved Africans and African Americans. After Thomas Lee's death in 1750 his oldest son, Philip Ludwell Lee, inherited Stratford and expanded upon the business endeavors of his father. Under Philip's ownership the Great House and its landscaped setting reached a pinnacle. Stratford became well known for Philip's entertainments, and to enhance the view he may have added a roof walk to the Great House. He apparently made commensurate improvements to the formal east garden and other grounds around the house. Various sources point to an enduring



*Aerial view taken September 7, 1929, from south of Stratford historic complex. The east garden area is to viewer's right just beyond trees. Note section of oval drive still visible in cornfield at viewer's lower right. Stratford Hall Archives.*

interest in botany on Philip's part, and it might be assumed that during his ownership the formal garden assumed the approximate proportions known today.<sup>3</sup>

Despite Philip's importance to Stratford, other children of Thomas and Hannah played more prominent roles than his in the history of Virginia—and America. His younger siblings Richard Henry Lee and Francis Lightfoot Lee were the only brothers to sign the Declaration of Independence. Two other brothers, William and Arthur Lee, played important roles in the diplomatic and political

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# CALENDAR

**April 1-July 15, 2004.** "Plants in Print: The Age of Botanical Discovery," is an exhibition at the United States Botanic Garden in Washington, DC; co-sponsored by the Chicago Botanic Garden. On display are more than 30 rare botanical books such as *Historia plantarum*, written by Theophrastus and printed in 1483 and thought to be the first botanical work published using the printing press. For more information about this and other programs and events, call the garden at (202) 225-8333 or visit their Web site at [www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov).

**April 2-3, 2004.** "Savannah Garden Exposition ... The Flavors of Savannah." Held at Savannah's Roundhouse Railroad Museum, this event will feature garden exhibits, demonstrations, and private garden tours in Savannah's Historic Landmark District. Proceeds benefit Historic Savannah Foundation and the Isaiah Davenport House Museum. For information call (912) 236-4795 or visit Web site at: [www.savannahgardenexpo.com](http://www.savannahgardenexpo.com).

**April 3-5, 2004.** "A Garden Reborn," the Eudora Welty House Garden opening in Jackson, Mississippi. See article below for more details.

**April 4-6, 2004.** 58th Annual Williamsburg Garden Symposium on "Heirloom Gardening." Many notable speakers are on this year's outstanding program including: Dr. William Welch, Kent Whealy, Scott Kunst, Dr. Neil Odenwald, Lawrence Griffith, Dean Norton, and William Woys Weaver, among others. For more information call 1-800-603-0948 or visit their Web site at [www.ColonialWilliamsburg.org](http://www.ColonialWilliamsburg.org).

**April 14-17, 2004.** 57th Annual Meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians in Providence, Rhode Island. The meeting will include an informal discussion and organizational session to consider reinstating a Landscape Chapter of SAH reflecting increased interest among the membership and academic disciplines not actively represented in the Society. For more information: (312) 573-1365. Web site at: [www.sah.org](http://www.sah.org).

**May 6-8, 2004.** "Botanical Progress, Horticultural Innovations and Cultural Changes," Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Landscape Symposium held in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution. This joint symposium will explore how major development in botany and horticulture impacted gardens, gardening, landscaping and science; how these disciplines depended upon ongoing social and cultural changes; and more importantly, how botany and horticulture contributed to larger changes in social and cultural practices. Attendees may register for the Dumbarton Oaks sessions on May 6-7, the Smithsonian sessions, or both. This three-day symposium, in conjunction with the Smithsonian, is an expanded program from the usual format. For further details and registration materials, visit the Web site at: <http://www.doaks.org/GLS2004Sym.html>. If you have questions about the meeting, contact: [landscape@doaks.org](mailto:landscape@doaks.org) or call 202-339-6460.

**May 7-9, 2004.** "Native Plants and Creole Gardens," *The 22nd Annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society*, in New Orleans, Louisiana. The meeting will be headquartered in the Historic French Quarter and the entire St. Marie hotel has been reserved. Programs will be held at the Historic New Orleans Collection facility. Tours are planned for the French Quarter gardens and Uptown in the Garden District. As of this writing, the meeting is completely booked and registration has been closed. For more information, contact Sally K. Reeves at [sakr@cox.net](mailto:sakr@cox.net) or Betsy Crusel at: [hapc@aol.com](mailto:hapc@aol.com).

**May 22, 2004.** Annual Open House at Tufton Farm, Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants. Don Haynie, owner of Buffalo Springs Herb Farm, and rose authority and collector Dennis Whetzel of Harrisonburg, will give presentations at the Monticello Visitors Center in the morning, followed by an open house at the Tufton nursery from noon until 4 p.m. For more information, visit the Monticello Web site at: [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org).

**June 5, 2004.** Annual Georgia Historic House and Garden Pilgrimage, "Sherman's March through Covington & Newton County," co-sponsored by the Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. and the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The tour showcases plantations, homes, and churches of Newton County that played a role in Sherman's 1864 March to the Sea. Included are Covington's Boxwood, Mount Pleasant, First United Methodist Church, and City Cemetery; Mansfield's Sandtown Place and Burge Plantation; and Oxford's High-Point-at-Chestnut-Grove, Kitty's Cottage, and Old Church. For brochures and ticket order forms, go online to [www.oleanderdistrictgc.org/GHH&G-2004.html](http://www.oleanderdistrictgc.org/GHH&G-2004.html).

**June 6-18, 2004.** Historic Landscapes Institute, Preserving Jefferson's Gardens and Landscapes. This two-week course uses the gardens and landscapes at Monticello and the University of Virginia for the study of the theory and practice of historic landscape preservation. For information, call Peter Hatch at (434) 984-9836 or visit the Monticello Web site at [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org).

**June 9-12, 2002.** AABGA Annual Conference in Dallas Fairmont Hotel, in Dallas, Texas. The meeting topic is "How-to Conference" focusing on garden design, master planning, development, attracting visitors, managing design and construction partnerships, and meeting science-based curriculum standards. For information, call (302) 655-7100.

**August 27-28, 2004.** "Early American Nurseries and Nurserymen," Historic Plants Symposium at Monticello. This biennial event, sponsored by the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, features some of the most prominent and influential plant and seed distributors in America, including Bernard McMahon, John and William Bartram, William Prince and the Prince Family Nurseries, Andre Parmentier, David Landreth and others. This year's meeting takes place at the Monticello's new Jefferson Library. For information, contact Peggy Cornett, [pcornett@monticello.org](mailto:pcornett@monticello.org) or visit the Web site at: [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org). Registration forms (including an online version) will be available in late May.

# Stratford Hall Plantation...

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Stratford Hall Archives



Pre-restoration photograph of east garden area.

activities of the Revolution, at home and abroad. Their widowed sister Hannah Lee, moreover, is known as an early voice for women's rights.

Hannah's niece Matilda Lee, who inherited Stratford from her father Philip Ludwell, led Stratford to another important phase through marriage to her cousin, Revolutionary hero Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, who was a governor of Virginia and a close associate of George Washington. This Lee knew great fame, but he also knew great failure, mainly caused by bad investments. His poverty forced him and his family to leave Stratford in 1810, three years after his second wife, Ann Hill Carter Lee, had given birth there to Robert Edward Lee.<sup>4</sup> Henry Lee IV, son of Harry and Matilda, was able to hold onto Stratford only until 1822, after which in succession the Somerville, Storke, and Stuart families owned it through the 1800s into the 1920s.

It was the memory of Henry IV's half brother Robert that was to spark the 1929 purchase of Stratford by the new Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, a group patterned after the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. Their ownership breathed new life into the property. Under the leadership of President Mrs. May Field Lanier and her tremendously dedicated executive secretary, historian Ethel Armes, they hired the most prominent professionals of the era to begin the restoration process.<sup>5</sup> The Foundation's commitment to excellence was personified in Arthur Shurcliff, Morley Jeffers Williams, and Fiske Kimball, as the Stratford ladies brought these leading garden archaeologists, landscape architects, and architects to the task.

Along with their keen interest in restoring Stratford's Great House and other historic buildings, there was from the earliest moment a similar excitement about the grounds, and especially the east garden. In an inspection report dated February 17, 1929, for example, architect William Lawrence Bottomley discussed structural issues at length, but he also

devoted five paragraphs to gardens. He believed it possible that when surviving features were properly explored "the restoration of the gardens with their pleached walks, cedar hedges, fig trees and roses could be established."<sup>6</sup>

Though some visible evidence remained, it was obvious that every research avenue had to be followed if a proper restoration was to be achieved. Written documents and early illustrations were, of course, one important part of this picture, and indeed the effort to unearth such material has continued to this day. Unfortunately, limited reference has been found to gardens and gardening at 18th-century Stratford. Little, for example, links Stratford's first owner Thomas Lee to the topic, though given his position in society it may be assumed he shared the gardening interests of his peers. Such interests are evident in May 21, 1745 correspondence from Lancelot Lee of Coton in Shropshire to Thomas saying that "at present I live in the country, entirely taken up with the diversions my gardens and fields afford me...." Referring to plants in America, he continued, "Your fruits and shades are indeed delightful." He wished to possess such materials, and thus he requested of Thomas Lee to "give me leave to beg a small favor of you—the following trees are, I believe, native of Virginia, which I have endeavored to procure seeds of, but have hitherto been unsuccessful—the Virginia Cypress...the scarlet oak and the paria, or scarlet flowering horse chestnut."<sup>7</sup> The "small favor" was that his

Stratford Hall Archives



Pre-restoration photograph of east garden area, as viewed west towards the Great House.

colonial cousin should forward such seeds at his earliest convenience.

More directly helpful is a line surviving in the estate records of Philip Ludwell Lee referring to "Job. Wigley's accot for Brick laying on the...Garden walls & house in 1776..77 & 78."<sup>8</sup> During an October 3, 1787 visit, Thomas and Hannah Ludwell Lee's granddaughter, Lucinda Lee, would have seen the "garden walls and house." She wrote in

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# Stratford Hall Plantation...

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her journal "...Cousin Nancy and myself have just returned from taking an airing in the chariot. We went to Stratford: walked in the Garden, sat about two hours under a butiful shade tree, and eat as many figs as we could."<sup>9</sup> More



Stratford Hall Archives

June 14, 1908 view of early beech tree in east garden showing members of the Stuart family, then owners of Stratford.

informative yet is a September 20, 1790 letter to his father from Thomas Lee Shippen, another grandchild of Thomas and Hannah. Writing from Menokin, home of his uncle Francis Lightfoot Lee, he recalled a recent, happy visit to "Stratford, the seat of my forefathers...of which too much cannot be said..." He continued by noting the "happy disposition of its grounds...delightful shades..." and the "gardens, vineyards, orangeries and lawns which surround the house."<sup>10</sup> Nine years later Stratford's new mistress (m.1793), Ann Carter Lee, reveals some of her activities in a February 18, 1799 letter to her sister-in-law Eliza Lee, the wife of Light Horse Harry's brother Richard Bland Lee. Ann reported to Eliza, who lived at Sully Plantation in Fairfax County, Virginia, that "... I have done myself the pleasure of procuring the grafts Mr. R. Lee wrote for. You will receive three kinds of Plums, they are remarkable fine, particularly the red plum..."<sup>11</sup>

In the 19th century, Ann Lee's son Charles Carter Lee, born at Stratford in 1798 (d.1871) recorded some of the most detailed early observations of Stratford's grounds and gardens yet discovered. Second in his class at Harvard and recognized for his classical learning, he put some of this in verse, such as

Tall Lombardy poplars, in lengthened row  
Far o'er the woods a dwelling's signal show,-

He continued

I think there was a mile of solid wall  
Surrounding offices, garden, stables, and all;  
And on the eastern side of the garden one/  
Pomegranates ripened in the morning sun;  
And further off, yet sheltered by it, grew  
Figs, such as those Alcinous' garden knew...<sup>12</sup>

Writing in 1817 while at Harvard, Charles Carter Lee spoke of "...the plains / Where Stratford's mansion stands..." along with its "...flower-enameled lands." He also addresses one of Stratford's most striking landscape features, the Potomac river cliffs in highly romantic verse, rhapsodizing that "... on the brow/Of some tall clift we stand, / And see the dark waves rolling slow..."<sup>13</sup>

Charles Carter Lee apparently referred to Stratford's ha-ha walls in undated writings describing "long walls, reaching only to the top & well turfed edge of the narrow artificial vallies in which those sold supports, with the light, and scarcely visible railings upon them...[which] enclosed the Southern part of the yard, & divided it more conspicuously on the East, from the garden, —& the higher walls, enclosing the stable yard on one side, & the hotbed department of the garden on the other..." Gravel walks led from "each end of the dwelling house, to the gates in front..." and there was a "green grass plot...exactly in front of the house, with nothing in it but the sun-dial in the centre..." He recalled, too, the "comely, substantial" brick "Offices" standing "on each side of the gravel walks, —& the long rows of Lombardy poplars, forming screens between them & their Northern ends, & the walls stretching to the stables on the West, & the garden on the East, —& its rows of pomegranates, & its cluster of fig-bushes, & its



Stratford Hall Archives

John Filmer 1871 engraving of Stratford structural complex. Note the post-and-board fence at location of current restored ha-ha, and what is believed to be a Lombardy poplar to viewer's right.

ornamental horsechesnuts, & more useful English walnuts, —& the row of aspens with their white trunks & silvered & trembling foliage between the Seed house near the garden, & Office, in harmony in shape & location, on the river front of the house—all these attractions & many more..."<sup>14</sup> (Lee almost certainly was recalling Stratford's beech trees in his reference to "aspins.")

By 1840 a gloomier depiction appeared in the

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# Stratford Hall Plantation...

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Stratford Hall Archives

Ca. 1929 unmarked photograph of what is believed to be an obviously weakened, but surviving, horse chestnut tree planted by Ann Carter Lee, mother of Robert E. Lee.

December issue of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. The author, self described as “but a youth” and using the pen name “Umbra,” wrote of a picnic at the former Lee home. Umbra recalled, “The walls that enclosed the grounds were prostrate....” Continuing, it was noted, “We walked to the garden, but there was little to tempt us to enter it. It was a wilderness—the walks no longer distinguishable from the rank vegetables of the once cultivated lawns, and terraces choked with unchecked shrubberies.” While the house was “firm and unshaken...everything in the way of improvement or ornament—every little monument of pride or affection—the woodbine bower—the shady grove—the blooming flower-bed had all sunk to ruin....” Only the “old mansion stood, like a venerable parent amid the graves of his children....”<sup>15</sup>

In 1861 Robert E. Lee wrote of Stratford to two of his daughters following their recent visit to his birthplace. He recalled, “The horsechestnut you mention in the garden was planted by my mother.” Reminiscing about Stratford, he added that it had always been “a great desire of my life to be able to purchase it.”<sup>16</sup> After the war Lee again briefly described the property in a short biography of his father prefacing a new edition of Light Horse Harry’s recollections of the American Revolution, initially published in 1812. He recalled, “The approach to the house is on the south, along the side of a lawn, several hundred acres in extend, adorned with cedars, oaks, and forest poplars. On ascending a hill not

far from the gate, the traveler comes in full view of the mansion; when the road turns to the right and leads straight to a grove of sugar maples, around which it sweeps to the house.”<sup>17</sup>

In 1871 journalist George W. Beale wrote articles that echoed Robert E. Lee’s comments on the curving drive and the maples, but he also noted the presence of “several English hickory and venerable beech trees.” He added that a “wall, breast high, extends from the kitchen on the right around the garden.” Several rose bushes survived, along with “the remains of arbors and borders in front...” and “the scattered relics of fruit trees and shrubs....”<sup>18</sup> In another piece, Beale said, “To the right of the mansion...are the kitchen and several small buildings, with the garden



Stratford Hall Archives

Pre-restoration view taken from south side of Great House showing wire fence at location of ha-ha.

beyond....”<sup>19</sup>

This was the type of primary source information available as the Foundation began its work. From such descriptions, and from features that survived on site, much could be determined about the basic layout and configuration of the grounds, including information on the east garden; the approach drive; certain buildings, paths, and walls; and various types of plants, fruit trees, and other trees that had been planted. Additional information also began to be gathered via interviews with older individuals who had long known the Stratford site. The most dramatic manifestation of early research efforts, however, was to be seen in the garden archaeology project that began in 1930 under the leadership of Boston landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff. Already well known for his work in Williamsburg, Shurcliff would unearth the information most crucial for a restoration. The next article in this series will examine this phase of the project, along with the central role played by The Garden Club of Virginia in making Stratford’s grounds, and especially the east garden, the ideal setting for the Great House of the Lees of Virginia.

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# Stratford Hall Plantation...

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## End Notes

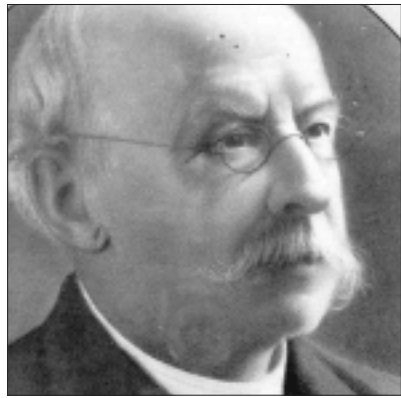
- <sup>1</sup> The organization is now officially termed “The Robert E. Lee Memorial *Association*, Inc.” The original designation, however, was “The Robert E. Lee Memorial *Foundation*, Inc.” Italics added.
- <sup>2</sup> For their full story, see Paul C. Nagel, *The Lees of Virginia: Seven Generations of an American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- <sup>3</sup> Jeanne A. Calhoun, “A Virginia Gentleman on the Eve of the Revolution: Philip Ludwell Lee of Stratford,” *Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine*, (December 1996), no. 1, 5365-5366.
- <sup>4</sup> Matilda Lee had died in 1790.
- <sup>5</sup> For an early synopsis of their work, see Ethel Armes, *Stratford Hall: The Great House of the Lees* (Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1937); for reference specifically to “Gardens, Grounds and Orchards, see 495-512.
- <sup>6</sup> Stratford Archives, “Report of Inspection by Mr. Bottomley at Stratford, Sunday, February 17th, 1929, Folder A2-2a/196, “House Restoration,” Correspondence and reports of William Lawrence Bottomley, Architect, 1929, 2-3.
- <sup>7</sup> Stratford Archives, quoted from Ethel Armes, “Notes on Grounds and Gardens of Stratford Hall,” (First Installment), February 1933, #1. “1745 – Extract from Letter from Lancelot Lee of England to the Honorable Thomas Lee, dated Coton, Shropshire, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1745,” 1.
- <sup>8</sup> Westmoreland County, Virginia, Records, “Inventories and Accounts,” Book 6, “Estate of Honorable Philip Ludwell Lee, 1780,” 179. Transcript on file, Stratford Archives.
- <sup>9</sup> Lucinda Lee, *Journal of a Young Lady of Virginia, 1787* (Stratford, VA: Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, Inc., 1976), 25.
- <sup>10</sup> Edmund Jennings Lee, *Lee of Virginia, 1642-1892, Biographical and Genealogical Sketches of the Descendants of Colonel Richard Lee* (Philadelphia: Published by Author, 1895; Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1983), 119-120.
- <sup>11</sup> Armes, “Notes on Grounds and Gardens,” 1933, #5. “1799 – Quotation from Letter from Ann Carter Lee to Mrs. Richard Bland Lee” (Richard Bland Lee Papers, 1700-1825. Library of Congress), 2.
- <sup>12</sup> Armes, “Notes on Grounds and Gardens,” 1933, #6. “1800 – Reminiscent Verse about Stratford by Charles Carter Lee” (Source: “Virginia Georgics,” p. 41), 3. For a facsimile reproduction, see Armes, *Stratford Hall*, 498-499.
- <sup>13</sup> Armes, “Notes on Grounds and Gardens,” 1933, #7. “1817 – Unpublished Verse about Stratford by Charles Carter Lee Written at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the Year 1817,” 4.
- <sup>14</sup> Stratford Archives, folder containing “Historic References to Stratford’s Landscape,” quoted material attributed to “Charles Carter Lee Papers, Box 9, 2<sup>nd</sup> folder after Tibbs vs Hardy; sheet 12.”
- <sup>15</sup> Umbra, “A Visit to Stratford Hall,” *Southern Literary Messenger*, (December 1840), Vol.VI (Richmond, VA), 801, 803.
- <sup>16</sup> Captain Robert E. Lee, *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1909), 56.
- <sup>17</sup> Henry Lee, *Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States* (New York: University Publishing Co., 1870), 41.
- <sup>18</sup> Armes, “Notes on Grounds and Gardens,” 1933, #11, “1871 – Extracts from Magazine and Newspaper Articles by George W. Beale,” (“Stratford, The Birth-Place of General Lee” by George W. Beale. *The Old Dominion*. Richmond, Va., January 15, 1871. Vol. V. No. 1, pages 31-34), 7-8.
- <sup>19</sup> Armes, “Notes on Grounds and Gardens,” 1933, #11, “1871 – Extracts from Beale,” (“Stratford Hall” by George W. Beale – Newspaper Clipping – Heathsville, Va., Feb. 25.), 8-9.

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# Francis Porcher: Surgeon, Medical Botanist, Herbal Specialist, Author

By Chad Carlson, Atlanta, Georgia

Francis Peyre Porcher, born at Orphir Plantation, St. John's Parish, Berkeley County, South Carolina, December



Francis Porcher - 1824-1895

14, 1825, was the great grandson of Thomas Walter (1740-1789), a pioneer South Carolina botanist who established a private herbarium at his plantation on the Santee River (Townsend 178). Walter's *Flora Caroliniana*, published in London in 1788 through the efforts of the English plant collector John Fraser, has been cited by

Sanders and Anderson in *Natural History Investigations in South Carolina*, as "the most extensive work on South Carolina botany produced in the eighteenth century and...also the first regional botanical work in North America to use the Linnaean system." Francis' father was a doctor, his mother a botanist; and Porcher would adopt both fields in his profession.

In 1844, at age nineteen, Francis Porcher received his A.B. degree from South Carolina College (University of South Carolina), where he studied Latin and Greek. To these, he later added French, and while teaching English in Italy, it was said that he gained a voice in Italian much more rapidly than his pupils learned English. Dr. Porcher's linguistic ability greatly broadened his education and enriched his professional training. At the time of his graduation from the Medical College of South Carolina in 1847 (taking honors in a class of 76 [Townsend 178], he chose a botanical subject for his thesis: "A Medico-Botanical Catalogue of the Plants and Ferns of St. Johns, Berkeley," which was afterwards published in Charleston by order of the faculty of the college (Wickham 456). After graduating from medical school he spent two years continuing his medical education in Paris (South Carolina Historical Society).

In 1854, he was asked by the *American Medical Association* to report on the indigenous medicinal plants of South Carolina. In his report, "The Medicinal, Poisonous and Dietetic Properties of the Cryptogamic Plants of the United States," published in New York by Baker, Godwin & Company in 1854, Dr. Porcher showed his artistic abilities by illustrating the text with delicate and exquisite pen and ink drawings (Townsend 179).

Realizing the lack of medical accommodations for thousands of African-American slaves in the Charleston area, Dr. Porcher and Dr. J. J. Chisolm, opened a hospital for them in 1855. It was during this time that he probably learned of many natural remedies that would later appear in his *The Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests* (Townsend 181).

During the Civil War (1861-1865) the Union army imposed a blockade of the South, eventually forcing the Confederacy to develop innovative modes of drug acquisition. Confederate forces sometimes captured medical supplies from the Union forces, but such means were an unreliable supply method (Hasegawa 478). Home manufacturing and blockade running were the only source of supply during nearly four years of war for six million people (Jacobs 165). Throughout the Confederacy, druggists manufactured roots, herbs, and bark, and other such medical plants as they could secure (Jacobs 166). Hunter McGuire, a Confederate surgeon, remembered that "the Confederate surgeon's scanty supply of medicines made him fertile in expedients of every kind. I have seen him search field and forest for plants and flower" (McGuire 7).

Jacob Jacobs, a pharmacist from Atlanta, Georgia, recalled the difficulties of obtaining proper medical supplies during the war:

My mind was severely taxed in order to supply the remedies and substitutes to meet the demands of such varied practice. I perused my dispensary and called into requisition an old botanical practice, which had been handed down as a relic of the past, but from which I confess to have received valuable aid in regard to the medical virtues of our native plants.... red oak in water as disinfectant and promotion of the healing process. In case of great pain I employed poppy heads, night shade [*Solanum* sp.] and [*Datura*] stramonium. Nausea or sick stomach, a handful of peach leaves steeped in water and drank will settle it. I believe that an all-wide Providence has especially provided the best antidotes in creation on the hills and dales of our own Southland (Jacobs 167-168).

The South sought species whose value was not then appreciated by mainstream physicians. Folk, slave, and Native American traditions supported the use of indigenous plants, and there was a popular belief that ailments common to an area could be remedied by preparations of local plants (Hasegawa 478).

Dr. Porcher, serving as a surgeon in the Confederacy in March 1862, in Norfolk, Virginia, was detailed by Samuel

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## Francis Porcher...

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Moore, Surgeon General of the Confederacy, to write a medical botany in order that the people of the Confederacy might learn the useful properties of the plants growing all about them in their woods and fields, so as to supply themselves with medicines which, owing to the war, they could no longer import from outside. So important was the task of developing indigenous botanical substitutes for drugs and medicines that Dr. Moore temporarily relieved Dr. Porcher of his duties as surgeon. Dr. Porcher was the obvious choice for the task, having already written the two published medico-botanical texts cited above, and *A Sketch of Medical Botany of South Carolina* (1849), (Koznarsky 2).

Dr. Moore urged citizens to gather medicinal plants and sell them to the medical department. Furthermore, the Surgeon General instructed medical purveyors to “make endeavors to induce the ladies throughout the South to interest themselves in the culture of garden poppy...” (Two samples of poppy prepared late in the war were assayed and contained 4% morphine—good opium contained 10-14% [Hasegawa 479].)

Dr. Porcher returned to Charleston, where he produced his remarkable 700-page book, *The Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests* (Wickham 456). Of 3,500 plants catalogued, he found 410 specimens for medicinal or economic value (Townsend 181). In a letter to a relative, Dr. Porcher stated: “In the state of New York, of 1450 species, but 50 are of medicinal value, while in South Carolina, a much smaller area, of 3,500 species, 410 are of medical value...the Southern States were therefore plenteous with potent drugs waiting to have their names announced” (Townsend 183). *The Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests* was published in Charleston in 1863 and again in revised form in 1869.

African-American slaves had traditionally used much of the botanical lore found in Dr. Porcher’s book, as modern black historian, Martia Goodson, points out. She notes that “used extensively by the Negroes” was a commonly recurring phrase. Ms. Goodson claims that nearly a third of the plants described had been taken from the slaves’ pharmacopoeia (Charles 35).

Southern newspapers, at Samuel Moore’s suggestion, published extracts from the book to encourage the collection of plants and the preparation of remedies there from (Cunningham 149). (Since the South was cut off from imported South American cinchona bark [quinine] for treating malaria, for instance, *Resources* recommended snake-root and dogwood as alternatives [Charles 35].) Moore called upon medical officers to cast aside any prejudices they might have against these remedies and give them a fair opportunity (Cunningham 149).

Reactions to Dr. Porcher’s book were positive although Surgeon General Moore was dismayed at the failure of some officers on the regimental level to fully utilize the information. Dr. Burke Haywood, head of the General Hospital No. 7, Raleigh, North Carolina, references Dr. Porcher’s work in the use of *Sarracenia purpurea* (“Side Saddle of Fly Trap”) in the treatment of small pox. Dr. Haywood notes that several praised its effects, writing, “the unmistakable evidence of the efficacy of this remedy in arresting the progress of small pox has been conspicuously manifested in many cases (Koznarsky 3).”

Major Porcher’s efforts were applauded in the July 1864, issue of *The Confederate States Medical and Surgical Journal*. The editorial wrote: “we should not fail to notice the useful and laborious effort of Surgeon Porcher, in bringing before the public in his work on *The Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests* the amount of useful material at hand” (Koznarsky 3). Colonel John Thomas wrote of Dr. Porcher’s book: “It is no exaggeration to say that he ranks with those who best served the South in her hour of trial and suffering (Wickham 457).”

During the latter part of the war, Dr. Porcher was in charge of the South Carolina Hospital in Petersburg, Virginia, but when peace came he returned to his old home in Charleston to resume his medical practice. He became one of the beloved physicians of the town, and for many years, he and his old horse, “Hilda,” and his faithful driver, “Daddy Charles,” were among the familiar sights of the town as he went about his errands (Wickham 457).

In 1853-58 and again in 1873-76 he was editor of the *Charleston Medical Journal and Review*. He taught at the Medical College of South Carolina from 1872 to 1891 (“Never let yourself get into a rut,” he would constantly tell his students), was in charge of the Marine Hospital in Charleston, filled the chair of Clinical Medicine at the Medical College of South Carolina from 1872-1874, and served as president of the South Carolina Medical Association in 1872. He also worked in cardiology, publishing an article on heart disease in 1886 (Charles 35). Dr. Porcher was not limited to medical texts; he was part of the “Saturday Night Club,” a literary club in Charleston, where he wrote many articles of non-medical nature, which were published in non-medical papers (Townsend 186).

Francis Porcher died at his home, 38 Meeting Street, Charleston, South Carolina, on November 19, 1895 (Townsend 178).

[The previous article was prepared as a graduate paper under the direction of Jim Cothran, adjunct professor, in



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## Dan Franklin Dies

Daniel Berry Franklin, a charter member of the Southern Garden History Society, died March 7 at the age of 87 at Hospice Atlanta. After serving as Master Sergeant in World War II and working for Royal Crown Cola for 26 years, Dan returned to the University of Georgia in 1963 and received a degree in landscape architecture. His legacy as a landscape architect spans over forty years and includes over 2,000 individual projects located in ten states. His body of work has been recognized and honored in dozens of books, magazines, and newspapers, appearing on the cover of Southern Living Magazine six times. The College of Environmental design at the University of Georgia is cataloging a complete archive of his work. Dan received numerous awards during his illustrious career including a Distinguished Alumni Medal from the School of Environmental Design, University of Georgia; the Southern Living Award, "Above and Beyond the Call;" the Lifetime Achievement Award, Georgia Chapter of ASLA and many others. He was inducted into the Heritage Society of the University of Georgia Foundation and Who's Who in America for distinction as a landscape architect. For over 20 years, Dan was a member of the American Society of

Landscape Architects and in 2001, at the age of 85, received its highest honor, being inducted as Fellow. Dan also was a member of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, the Georgia Conservancy, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Atlanta History Center, and was a visiting professor at the University of Georgia, the University of Arkansas, and the University of Oklahoma. For many years, Dan's garden has been listed in The Garden Conservancy's Open Days Directory and his gardens also was on the Atlanta Botanical Garden's Garden for Connoisseur's Tour in 1986 and 1996 and, fittingly, again this upcoming May 2004.

As a devoted member of the Southern Garden History Society, Dan attended countless annual meetings across the South and his lively personality was infectious. He remained an active contributor to the Society and its mission through our most recent meeting in Atlanta in 2003. Dan's lighthearted wit can be summed up best in his motto for garden maintenance, "A garden should not take more time to maintain than two cups of coffee in the morning and two martinis in the evening."

## *Eudora Welty House Garden Opens to Public*

The garden at the home of legendary southern writer Eudora Welty opens in April for public tours. The garden opening was celebrated with an opening, “A Garden Reborn,” on April 3-5, which included tours of the garden, and talks by experts on Eudora Welty’s writing, her house, and her garden. Speakers included Welty scholar Suzanne Marrs on “The Art of Gardening: Chestina and Eudora Welty, 1925-45,” preservation architect Robert Parker Adams on preservation of the house, and Susan Haltom, historical garden consultant and SGHS board member, on “Curtains of Green: Restoring the Welty Garden.”

The garden stretches over a lot of about three-quarters of an acre in the historic Jackson, Mississippi neighborhood of Belhaven, where Welty and her family were early residents. Eudora Welty’s mother, Chestina, designed the garden in 1925, when the house was being constructed. Eudora Welty helped her mother layout and plant the garden before leaving that same year for college. At the death of her father in 1931 Welty returned home, and she and her mother collaborated on the garden until her mother’s death in 1966. Although Eudora Welty herself cared for the garden well into her old age, she always referred to it as “Mother’s garden.”

The garden is being restored to the period of 1925-45, the time it best manifested the early vision the two women shared for it. The accuracy of the restoration project has been made possible in large part by the extensive documentation of the garden by Welty and her mother. Chestina Welty kept garden diaries noting the layout of beds and bloom schedules, while Eudora took photographs of the garden from the roof of the family’s house.

The garden of Chestina and Eudora Welty was typical of the regional style. Southern gardens of that era differed markedly from those of today. The Welyts created their garden almost exclusively with plants available locally. After World War II, improved transportation systems allowed for the shipping of mass-produced flowers throughout the U.S. With the development of new chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and insecticides and techniques of plant hybridization, the choice of plants that could be grown in the area expanded greatly. The garden comprises distinct smaller areas, including the front yard, the camellia garden, the upper garden, the lower garden, and the

woodland garden, and contains more than forty camellia shrubs, some grafted by Eudora herself and others purchased from nurseries in Mississippi and around Mobile, Alabama. Camellia expert Bobby Green of Fairhope, Alabama, and associates of the American Camellia Society have worked closely with Susan Haltom, the garden restoration consultant overseeing the project for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, in identifying the more-than thirty varieties of *Camellia japonicas* in the garden.

In addition to Susan Haltom, many other Southern Garden History Society Members have been involved with this project. Historic plant experts Greg Grant and Bill Welch, both from Texas, helped identify and provide appropriate perennials for the upper garden. Although the original daylilies remain, most of the perennials grown by the Welyts in the 1930s have disappeared. The Historic Iris Preservation Society, with the help of Anner Whitehead of Virginia, contributed almost fifty varieties of tall bearded irises for the perennial border. The upper garden is also filled with bulbs—jonquils, ornithogalum, ipheion, oxalis, surprise lilies, rain lilies, milk-and-wine lilies, spider lilies, oxblood lilies, and Eudora Welty’s favorite, French Roman hyacinths. Scott Kunst of Ann Arbor, Michigan, considered the only retail historic bulb specialist in the country, and Celia Jones, Louisiana bulb expert, provided many hard-to-find varieties for the restoration project.

A fifty-foot-wide trellis separates the upper and lower gardens. The lower garden contains the rose beds and cold frame as well as the cut-flower garden behind the garage. Stretching from the edge of the lower garden to the back of the property is the woodland garden, with mature pines and hardwoods towering over still more camellias, spider lilies, and oxblood lilies. The back border of the garden is a thick canebrake planted by Chestina Welty.

The Eudora Welty House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The two-story Tudor Revival-style residence was built in 1924-25. In 1986 Welty made the decision that the state should have her house at her death, and the Department of Archives and History is now working, with the financial support of the Eudora Welty Foundation, to establish the property as a literary house museum to interpret Welty’s life and work to visitors.

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### *Correction:*

The fall 2003 issue of *Magnolia*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, incorrectly identified Anne Abbott as president of the Herb Society of America. Ms. Abbott formerly served as a board member of the Herb Society of America.

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## INTERNATIONAL EVENTS OF NOTE

### *RHS Bicentenary: The Year of Gardening*

The Royal Horticultural Society was founded on March 7, 1804, at the London bookshop of James Hatchard in Piccadilly by John Wedgwood and six other gentlemen, who met to form a new society for the improvement and practice of horticulture. Two hundred years later, the aims of the RHS remain much the same while broadening to reflect social development and changes in gardening tastes.

To recognize this anniversary year, The Tate Britain has mounted a spectacular exhibition, "Art of the Garden," in the original Tate gallery at Millbank. The exhibition examines the garden in art over the last 200 years and includes work by artists such as John Constable, JMW Turner, Ford Madox Brown, Gertrude Jekyll, Stanley

Spencer and Lucian Freud. For information visit their Web site at: [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk).

The RHS is further commemorating this special year with the publication of *The Royal Horticultural Society: A History 1804-2004*, by Brent Elliott. This detailed and perceptive book with over 400 pages of text and illustrations reflects the changing faces of shows, floral arrangements and gardens, the architecturally innovative halls and library, plants introduced through RHS sponsorship, and the many personalities that have helped the Society reach its Bicentenary in such fine form. For information about the availability of this book, e-mail: [mailorder@rhs.org.uk](mailto:mailorder@rhs.org.uk) or call 01 483 211320.

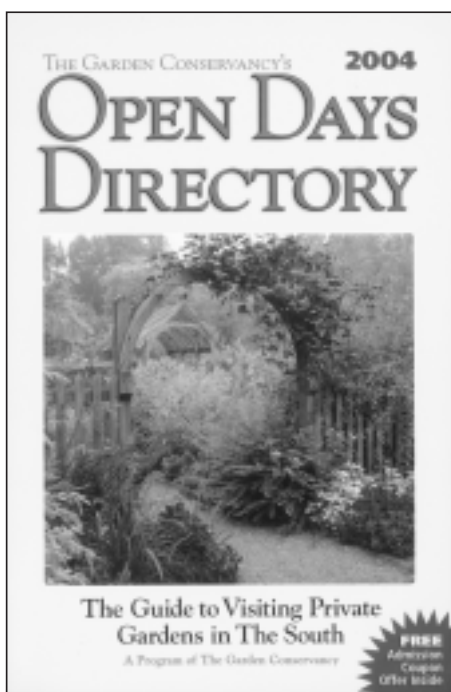
### *Tours of Gardens in Europe*

The 2004 schedule of Jeff Sainsbury Tours is offering "A Summer Sojourn in Scandinavia: the Gardens and Castles of Sweden and Denmark" (June 30-July 10), hosted by Georgia native Edward C. Martin, Jr. and with Gordon Chappell and

Jim Cothran, SGHS president and vice-president respectively, attending. Full details of these and other tours can be found at: [www.jeffsainsburytours.com](http://www.jeffsainsburytours.com)

### *The Garden Conservancy's Open Days*

The Garden Conservancy's 2004 **Open Days Directory**, the guide to visiting private gardens in the South is now available. The Conservancy's Open Days Program is the only



national program that invites the public to visit America's very best private gardens. Modeled after similar programs abroad, including England's popular *Yellow Book* and Australia's Open Garden Scheme, the Open Days Program began in 1995 with 110 gardens in New York and Connecticut. Since then the program has grown to include nearly 450 private gardens nationwide in 2004.

The Garden Conservancy's program is designed to introduce the public to gardens, provide easy access to outstanding examples of design and horticultural practice, and prove that extraordinary American gardens are still being created. By inviting people into America's private gardens, the Conservancy emphasized the importance of preserving fine gardens for future generations and building a constituency of committed individuals willing to act on behalf of gardens. Notable Southern gardens in this year's program include Chip Callaway's garden in Greensboro, North Carolina and, in Charlotte, the garden of Lindie Wilson and of Wing Haven.

For more information on ordering the Directory or joining The Garden Conservancy, call toll free: (888) 842-2442 or visit [www.gardenconservancy.org](http://www.gardenconservancy.org).

## Members in the News

The Garden History Society in Scotland (GHSS) and the Royal Horticultural Society welcomed **Peter Hatch**, Monticello's director of gardens and grounds, to its lecture series at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on March 13th. Peter also was featured in the March 18th edition of the *New York Times* in an article by garden editor Anne Raver, "Thomas Jefferson Weeded Here." The article includes photos of Peter in the Monticello gardens and a

mention of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants. The Home Section of The Washington Post for March 11 features **Beate Jensen**, head gardener at Belmont, the Gari Melcher Estate and Memorial Gallery, in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The article, "Pruning: Tough Love for Plants," by veteran garden writer Adrian Higgins, includes an action photo of Beate with Berrie, her black Labrador, cutting back a quince bush.

## Saving George Washington's Trees

While the tale of George Washington cutting down the cherry tree remains an indelible part of the myth that clings to his name, in truth, he was "one of our nation's most unabashed tree-huggers," who planted hundreds of common and exotic trees at his Mount Vernon estate. The February 12th Washington Post features an article on efforts now being made to preserve and clone the thirteen remaining trees on or near the estate's landscaped lawn known as the Bowling Green. These survivors, which have seen almost nine generations of humans come and go, are old, frail and reaching the end of their natural lives. Last September Hurricane Isabel blew through the estate on the Potomac River and removed one of the two trunks of a 145-foot-tall white ash tree. The ash is the widest of the 13 trees, with a 15-foot circumference. The other surviving originals are two tulip poplars, a white mulberry, an eastern hemlock and seven American holly trees.

In the 1920s, arborists from Harvard visiting the estate counted approximately 70 survivors from Washington's era. The most recent loss of an original tree occurred in 1996, when another white ash was taken down because it was literally falling apart. In recent years, Mount Vernon's horticulturist, Dean Norton, who is an active member of the Southern Garden History Society and recently served on the board, has been working with other horticulturists to save, if not the original trees, at least their genetic duplicates. With the help of Michigan nurseryman David Milarch, founder in 1996 of the Champion Tree Project, attempts are underway to clone and replace Washington's trees. Through bud grafting techniques made in the summer of 2001, two dozen offspring of the two surviving Mount Vernon ashes were

produced. Within the first year, the saplings' height reached six or seven feet, slightly shorter than the tree that Norton speculated Washington transplanted from the edge of his field to the green.

One sapling was planted last spring on the grounds of the U. S. Capitol, a location known to Washington in the days after the Revolution as Jenkins' Hill. The remaining trees are growing at nurseries in Alabama and Oregon, and those not planted immediately to permanent sites will be raised at the Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories in Charlotte, North Carolina. Eventually, there will be a decent selection of large trees to plant near the aged parents as replacements. Efforts are underway to propagate the other Mount Vernon trees as well. Traditional rooted cuttings of the holly and mulberry trees are growing now and the hemlock has been propagated. The poplars have been bud-grafted, but the success of these grafts won't be known until this spring.

Dean Norton understands how vital these trees were to the 18th-century landscape at Mount Vernon. At the same time, he fully realizes their vulnerability at this

late stage of their lives. "These trees have a hard time making it because of their height. They are so tall and catch so much wind and constant movement. This has got to be a factor that might eventually cause problems for them—stress fractures. The biggest fear of any senior citizen is that they fall."

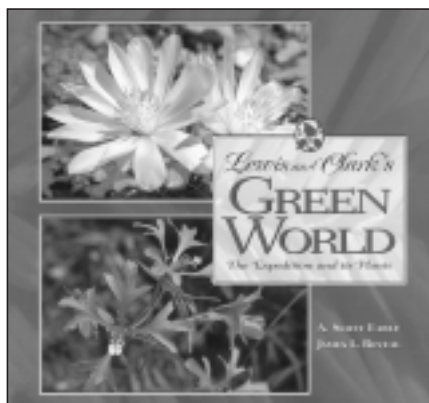
[From "A Race to Save George Washington's Trees: Thirteen Original Remain but for How Long? Cloning to the Rescue," Henry Heilbrunn, Washington Post, February 12, 2004.]



*A print of George Washington's leafy estate, created in the 1830s by Karl Bodmer*

## In Print

*Lewis and Clark's Green World, the Expedition and its Plants*, by A. Scott Earle and James L. Reveal. Far Country Press, 2003, 1-56037-250-8, hardcover, \$34.95



Everyone interested in the Lewis and Clark Expedition or the plants they collected for scientific study will welcome this book that combines the day-by-day story with illustrated botanical descriptions. Following the journals chronologically, and having examined the original specimens

that Meriwether Lewis collected, the authors take readers into the field to see and learn about flowers, grasses, trees, medicinal and food uses, and more. Drs. Reveal and Earle focus on the plants new to science in 1804-1806 and include plants that were probably collected, but failed to survive the trip's rigors. Each species appears in sequence of its first appearance, with color photographs, botanical description, and cultural information about how Indian nations or the expedition used it.

*The Diary of William Faris: The Daily Life of an Annapolis Silversmith*, edited by Mark B. Letzer and Jean B. Russo and published by the press at the Maryland Historical Society, 2003, 0-938420-80-1, hardcover, 496 pages, \$55. Available at the society's Web site: [www.mdhs.org](http://www.mdhs.org); or through Alan C. Hood & Company (1-717-267-0867).

Readers of *Magnolia* will recognize William Faris, the diarist and subject of this new book, from Barbary Sarudy's *Eighteenth-Century Gardens of the Chesapeake*, published by the Maryland Historical Society in 1990. Here we have Faris's diary accounts in full, beginning in January 1792 and continuing for the next 12 years. According to James H. Brady, writer for the Baltimore Sun, "Mark Letzer, an expert on old silver and a Faris descendant, and Jean B. Russo of the Historic Annapolis Foundation, profiting from Barbara Wells Sarudy's garden studies, have de-tarnished and un-mulched an authentic early bright light. Other period diaries, since published, are less vivid."

In his preface to *The Diary of William Faris: The Daily Life of an Annapolis Silversmith*, Mark B. Letzer points out that most of us are fascinated by the private diaries of others. We enter the world of the writer, living his life as he experienced it, meeting his friends, satisfying our curiosity about his world. In the process, we may learn something about ourselves.

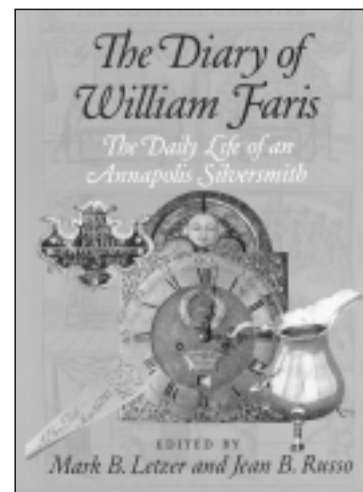
William Faris wrote a diary with depth and candor. He was himself a man of many talents: a silversmith, clock

maker, designer, portrait painter, cabinet maker, tavern keeper, dentist, horticulturist, inventor and experimenter, scientist, social observer, genealogist, and gossip. Eighteenth-century Annapolis, too, was a world at once varied, vibrant, and absorbing. Faris recorded meaningful events—births, marriages, deaths—but also family quarrels, affairs of his neighbors, and the blooming of his tulips.

A treasury of information, the *Diary* includes an appendix listing and describing plants Faris grew in his well-known garden and an inventory of his "goods and chattels" with their value at that time. A complete and detailed index simplifies research on the book's many subjects of interest.

Born in London, William Faris arrived in Annapolis from Philadelphia when in his mid-50s on the eve of the port city's "golden age" before the American Revolution. Tobacco and wheat translated into good living for many Annapolitans: elegant mansions, clothing of silk and velvet—and silver household utensils, beautiful clocks, and intricate watches. The city enjoyed and appreciated the accoutrements of the good life, and the skill and knowledge required to make them.

*The Diary of William Faris* is a book of remarkable depth and variety. It is a rich resource for silver collectors, a reference for students of the period, a fascination for gardeners, and a good read for generalists. It is elegantly designed and impeccably researched. Editors Mark B. Letzer and Jean B. Russo spent several years compiling information for the book. Mr. Letzer is a historian specializing in the study of 18th-century silver. Dr. Russo, an accomplished scholar in the field of colonial history, is a historian for Historic Annapolis Foundation.



### DSU Herbarium Exhibit Booklet

A 53-page exhibition booklet for "The Botany of the Shroud of Turin: A Floral Crime Scene Investigation," an exhibit at the Claude E. Phillips Herbarium at Delaware State University, is available for \$12 (\$10 plus \$2 for shipping and handling). Checks should be made payable to "Delaware State University/Herbarium." The booklet sifts through the published information and gleans out the botanical science. Send orders to: Dr. Arthur O. Tucker, Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Delaware State University, Dover, Delaware 19901-2277. For more information, visit the Web site at: <http://herbarium.desu.edu> or contact Dr. Tucker at: [atucker@desu.edu](mailto:atucker@desu.edu).

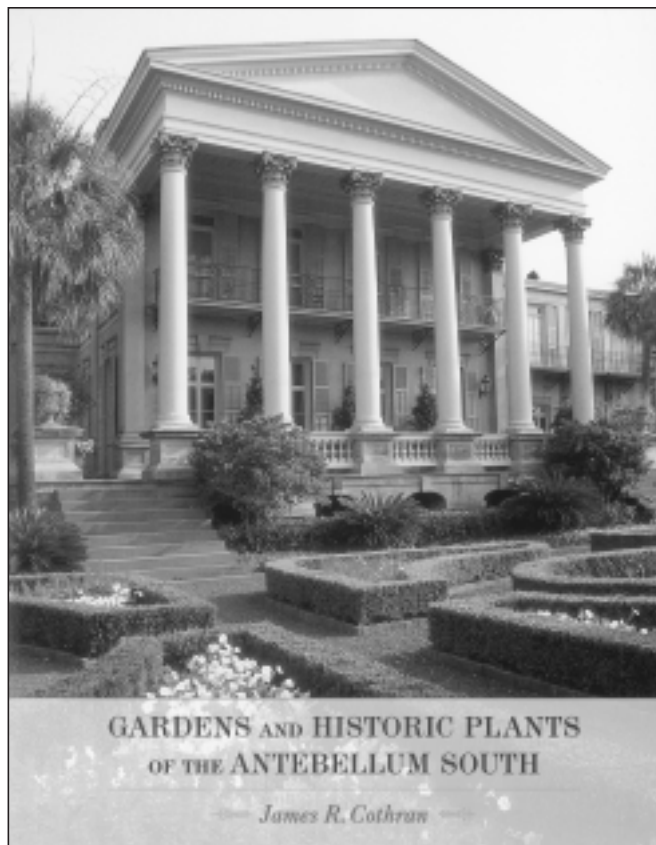
## Book Reviews

*Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South*, by James R. Cothran. University of South Carolina Press, 2003. Hardcover, 344 pages, 142 color illustrations, 21 halftones, 27 line art, ISBN 1-57003-501-6, \$49.95

James Cothran's long interest in the gardens and plants of his native South have been brought to a certain fruition with the publication of *Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South*. A personal interest in the subject happily coincided with his professional work as a landscape architect, urban planner and adjunct professor in Georgia schools. As a result he has had the good fortune to be able to pursue research in tandem with design projects, gaining insight and knowledge about the southern landscape that he shares with colleagues, clients, students, and now us, his readers. The road, of course is not one-way, and he, too, has appreciated the cooperation of many friends and associates, their encouragement, and support. This breadth of effort and interest is evident in a book whose secondary goal, he notes, "is to stimulate and encourage greater interest in southern garden history." His hope is sure to meet with success.

The organization of the book reflects the duality of its title. The first half of *Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South* and seven of its eight chapters provide the framework for his perspective on the southern landscape, its agricultural traditions, gardening practices, the fixtures and furnishings of gardens and house grounds, and an overview of an era brought to an end with the Civil War. He concludes this section with essays on the nursery seed catalogues, garden books, and agricultural journals available to southern gardeners in the early 19th century and antebellum period. While one section is set apart specifically for a series of travel accounts that appeared in contemporary books, journals, and newspapers, he also uses such records of the southern landscape, whether factual or laden with boosterism, to elucidate points and themes throughout the book. Nineteenth-century paintings, prints, drawings, documentary photographs, his personal photographs and those of others illustrate these short thematic sketches in southern garden history. Mr. Cothran and the book's designers also make frequent use of the collection of often idealized garden plans, drawn by Atlanta architect Philip Thornton Marye (1872-1935) with an unwavering emphasis on symmetry, which were prepared for *Garden History of Georgia*, published in 1933.

The second half of the book consists of a series of profiles of plants that were either native to the South or introduced in the 18th and 19th centuries. Ranging from *Ailanthus altissima* to *Yucca filamentosa*, both of which are here at Isinglass, this roster includes many of the mainstays of



southern house grounds but omits others such as *Poncirus trifoliata*, which was used both for hedges and as a prized, exotic ornamental in the center of beds. The chief appeal of these accounts is his frequent use of contemporary descriptions of plants from period garden literature. One, among many that gained our interest, first appeared in 1852 in *The Soil of the South*, a monthly agricultural journal:

But of all God's beautiful trees, there is nothing more exquisite than the Mimosa, now in bloom. How graceful it rears its feather-tufted blooms—how delicately it blends the rainbow—how sweetly it exhales its scented breath, and yet how humbly closes its myriad leaves at evening! If, as Downing [Andrew Jackson] says, it is worth a trip to England to look upon one of her velvet lawns, it is richly worth a trip to the South to look upon a full-grown Mimosa tree in bloom. They are easily propagated by seed, and flourish like the China Tree amongst any kind of soil.

Davyd Foard Hood, Book Review Editor  
Isinglass, Vale, North Carolina

# Restoring American Gardens: An Encyclopedia of Heirloom Ornamental Plants 1640-1940

by Denise Wiles Adams, Timber Press, Inc., 2004, 420 pages, 155 color photos, 37 b/w photos, 154 line drawings, hardcover, 0-88192-619-1, \$39.95

Ambitious in scope and beautifully produced by Timber Press, Denise Wiles Adams' book on heirloom ornamental plants is, by all accounts, a singular achievement. Garden historians have not received such a significant and comprehensive resource since the books of Rudy and Joy Favretti and the Anne Leighton trilogy, published nearly 30 years ago, during the early days of the landscape restoration movement in America. By using period books, journals, paintings, illustrations, and photographs as her primary research material, Ms. Adams has methodically assembled an impressive database of more than 25,000 plants and hundreds of antique nursery and seed catalogs.

The book begins with a general overview of historic American garden design, exploring a continuum of garden traditions and styles from Maine to Oregon. In this introductory section, Ms. Adams attempts also to distill and describe modern methods of historic garden research now used by the U. S. National Park Service and other organizations. While this section sets the context and makes the argument for the necessity of her research, the author herself admits that the wide-ranging aspiration of her work should be combined with regional research, and she encourages the reader to visit local libraries, public record depositories, and even "old-timers in your neighborhood," in order to achieve the fullest picture of the historic garden and its contents.

Participation in garden history organizations, including the Southern Garden History Society, is encouraged throughout and, it is important to mention that many members of our society were key players in the conceptual development, direction, and content of her publication. Footnotes and other citations are noticeably lacking in the opening chapters, which is a noteworthy omission, although the appendices and extensive bibliography found at the end of the book will prove quite useful for the serious researcher.

The meat of the book comes with her "catalog chapters," beginning with heirloom trees in chapter 5. Here we discover that, even though the book's title suggests a three-hundred year historical overview, Ms. Adams is most

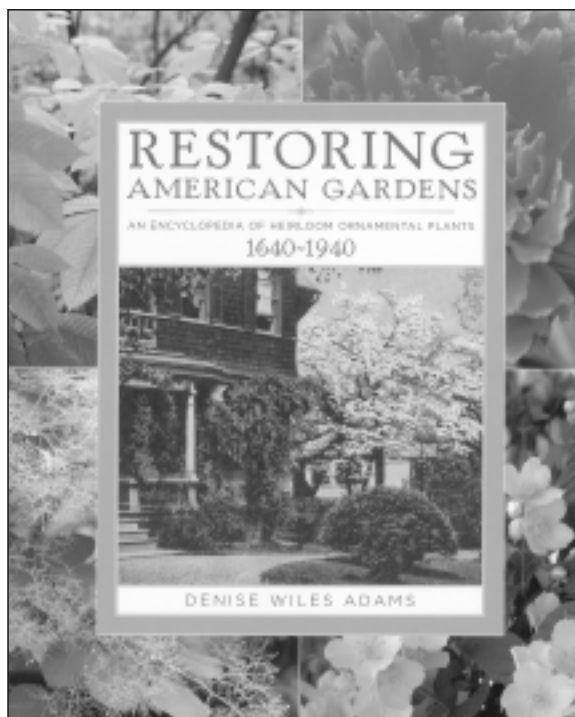
comfortable and thorough in her analysis of the 19th- and early 20th-centuries. This, in itself, is no small feat, and from this point forward, the book proves it is truly a significant contribution to the historic landscape professional. Each variety is chosen with respect to its importance and prominence in the literature, in the trade, and in actual gardens, and each thumbnail sketch is infinitely fascinating. Through their own words, Ms. Adams introduces us to the key players spanning the centuries of American garden history: Bernard McMahon, Mrs. Francis King, Thomas Jefferson, Louise B. Wilder, Liberty Hyde Bailey, John Custis, Robert Buist, Charles Hovey, Andrew Jackson

Downing, and countless others. We also become acquainted with period nursery establishments across the continent—Good & Rees, James Vick, Storrs & Harrison, Peter Henderson—many of which no longer exist. And finally, we meet such curious cultivars as 'Lady Grisel Hamilton' sweet pea, 'Bloody Warrior' wallflower, 'Van der Neer' tulip, 'Daylight' hyacinth bean, and 'Thomas Hogg' hydrangea. Some are still with us, while many more are lost forever, existing solely in the ephemeral literature of the times, which, itself, is rapidly vanishing.

Despite the extensiveness of her study, Denise Adams makes clear that this book should not be considered the definitive work but rather an inspiration and a launching point for future study,

further analysis, and endless debate and discussion, with the ultimate goal of precise documentation and accurate interpretation. In this regard, Ms. Adams raises the bar and puts the challenge to us all. I am certain I am not alone in recognizing the tremendous value of this book. It has already found its place at the foot my desk among my most essential and well-worn references, resting next to *Jefferson's Garden Book*, McMahon's *American Gardener's Calendar*, and *Hortus Third*. Indeed, it is in good and honorable company.

Peggy Cornett, editor  
Charlottesville, Virginia



## Publications Available Through SGHS

**The New Louisiana Gardener - *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane*, 1838**  
publication by Jacques-Felix Lelièvre and translated into English by Sally Kittredge Reeves. Published by LSU press in cooperation with SGHS. Hardcover. 186 pages with color photographs and halftones. Specially priced for SGHS members at \$25 (plus \$3.95 postage). *NC orders add 7% sales tax.*

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