



# Magnolia

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

Bulletin of the  
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History Society

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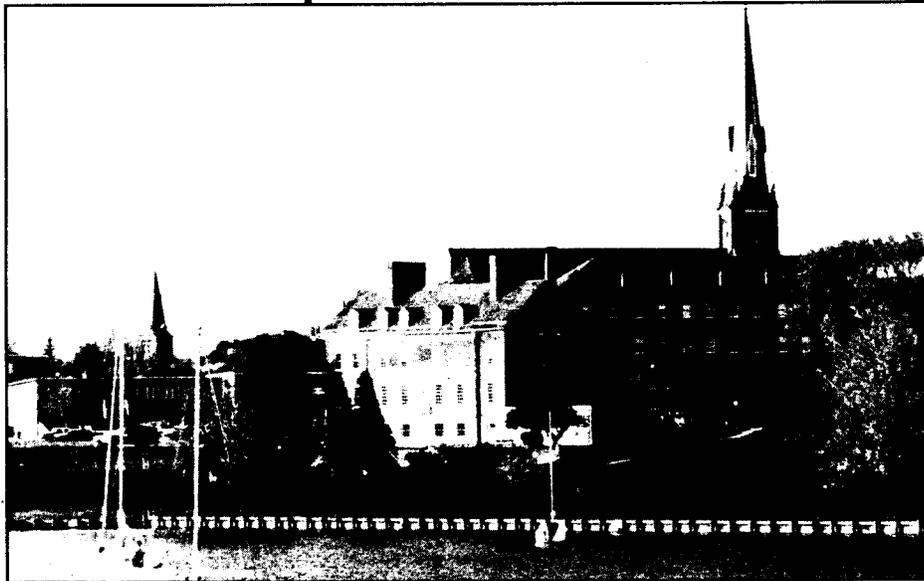
Winter 1993

## *The Gardens at the Charles Carroll House of Annapolis*

by Robert L. Worden, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>, Annapolis, Maryland

Extensive architectural, archaeological, and archival research since 1985 has brought together diverse information about the Carroll House and Gardens. Construction of the oldest part of the house — the birthplace of Charles Carroll of Carrollton (1737-1832), a signer of the Declaration of Independence — was started in 1721/22. A two-story east wing was added in 1772/73, the same

period during which the three acres of terraced gardens were built, and the house and east wing each had an additional story and new roofs added in 1793/94. The west wing was added in 1855/56 and the west porch in 1910. The garden developed in conjunction with each of these periods of construction.



*The Charles Carroll House and Gardens on Spa Creek. Courtesy Charles Carroll House.*

### *Design and Interpretation*

The garden is a triangle bounded by the street, the waterfront, and the house. Four terraces descend to the water and, except for

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## Calendar

**March 20th-22nd, 1993:** The 25th Annual Tryon Palace Decorative Arts Symposium will have as its theme "Stimulating the Mind's Eye: Design Sources in the Eighteenth-Century British World." Speakers include Wendell Garrett, vice president of Americana for Sotheby's New York and editor at large of *The Magazine Antiques*; Mr. Carl Lounsbury of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; and Mr. Peter Martin of New England College in Surrey England. The Tryon Palace Decorative Arts Symposium is cosponsored by the Continuing Education Division of East Carolina University in Greenville. For registration information, contact the Continuing Education Division, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina 27858-43534 or call (919) 757-6143.



**March 22nd-23rd, 1993:** A symposium on John Clayton will be held at the James Madison University Arboretum in Harrisonburg, Virginia. An exhibit featuring thirty of Clayton's botanical specimens from London will be displayed, and Dr. Charles Jarvis of London will speak. Contact Julie Stickley at (703) 433-0163 for more information.

**April 16th-18th, 1993:** SGHS Annual Meeting. (See "Southern Gardens Go West," page 14).

**June 19th-24th, 1993:** The 1993 Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums Annual Meeting and Conference at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul will explore the application of a variety of media to the teaching of rural history, including - and beyond - living history.

## *The Gardens at the Charles Carroll House of Annapolis*

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the insertion in 1948 of a small cemetery near its east point, the garden to the east and south of the house is largely intact. The garden in front of the house was obliterated with the construction of St. Mary's Church and Rectory in 1858-62. The west end of the garden also was altered with the 1948 construction of an athletic field near the west edge of the garden.

The foremost expert on the Carroll Gardens is Dr. Elizabeth Kryder-Reid whose research provides most of the interpretive data concerning the gardens and their relationship to the Carroll House and its occupants. Dr. Kryder-Reid explains: "The garden was designed as a right triangle in plan view, with sides in 3-4-5 proportions. Its shape stands in contrast with the more common rectangle shape of other [Annapolis] gardens .... The garden is formed by terraces and falls descending to the creek. The terraces, of varying widths and degrees of preservation are intersected by four turfed ramps spaced at regular 90 foot intervals.

In plan view these terraces and ramps form the outline of smaller 3-4-5 right triangles within the garden." Furthermore, her analysis of the geometry of the garden indicates that Carroll's design was based on the dimensions of his house. "Specifically, the distances between ramps and terraces were based on the 45 foot measurement of the front facade of the core of the brick house.... Carroll's design manipulated lines of sight — literally created illusions — to enhance the vistas of the landscape...." <sup>2</sup> One illusion, apparent at the water's edge, is that the house "appear[s] higher, more distant, and therefore



*The Carroll House from the north. Detail from Sachse's Bird's Eye View of Annapolis, ca. 1858. Courtesy Maryland State Archives.*

more distinguished.” A second illusion of depth is apparent from the top of the garden. The creek seems to be closer than it actually is; exactly the opposite illusion as is seen at the bottom of the garden.<sup>3</sup> Nature is brought closer to the viewer. There is a possible third illusion created by the intersection of the terraces at an approximate 84° angle by the ramps. The effect is that with the falls, or downslopes, and terraces not being parallel, the intentionally converging or diverging lines enhance the illusion of distance.<sup>4</sup> There also is a relationship between the garden wall and the falls. Where each terrace slopes down the brick wall, which meets the end of the slope at roughly a 45° angle, also angles down.

### *Constructing a Garden*

During his schooling in England, Charles Carroll of Carrollton studied surveying and bought a theodolite, which he believed with “a little more practice will make me quite master of the business” of surveying that would be necessary in laying out his garden.<sup>5</sup> His interest in gardens developed soon after he returned from abroad, and once married and settled into his father’s Annapolis home, he began making improvements, some of which were based on information gleaned from Colen Campbell’s *Vitruvius Britannicus*, or *The British Architect*, which he owned. He also had access to his father’s books on gardening such as *New Improvement on Planting and Gardening* (1719-20) by Richard Bradley, *The Gardener’s Dictionary: Containing the Methods of Cultivating and Improving the Kitchen, Fruit and Flower Garden* by Philip Miller (1731), and *The Vineyard* (1732) by “A Gentlemen in His Travels.”<sup>6</sup> Work on the garden had begun in earnest in 1770 with the construction of a stone seawall that extended 400 feet along the waterfront.<sup>7</sup> Carroll built his wall approximately fifty feet into the creek thus significantly enlarging his property. He also built a stone-topped brick wall around his garden to gain privacy from the street to the north and the domestic work areas on his property west of the house.<sup>8</sup> Work on the seawall was slow and was finally completed in 1775.<sup>9</sup>

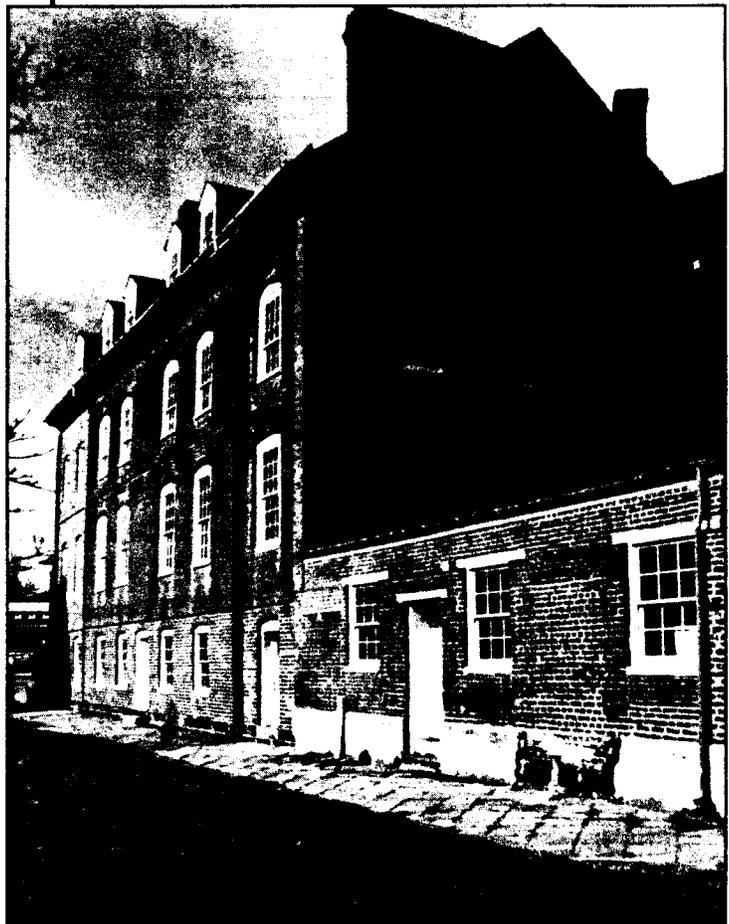
While building the garden itself, great concern was paid to terracing the land and controlling rainwater runoff. Carroll’s father admonished him in 1772 that, “If you make a continuous slope



from the gate to the wash house, I apprehend the quantity of water in great rains the way may prove very inconvenient. I think you should make as much of the Road’s as you can with a fall to the Street.”<sup>10</sup>

In 1775 landscaping in the north or front yard was still an issue as it was noted that earth had to be removed; it probably was reused to fill in the new terraces and behind the seawall.

With the seawall and garden largely complete, Carroll turned his attention in 1776 to erecting two brick pavilions on either end.<sup>12</sup> The pavilions were finished in 1778, but there is little extant



*Southwest view of the Charles Carroll House. Courtesy Charles Carroll House.*

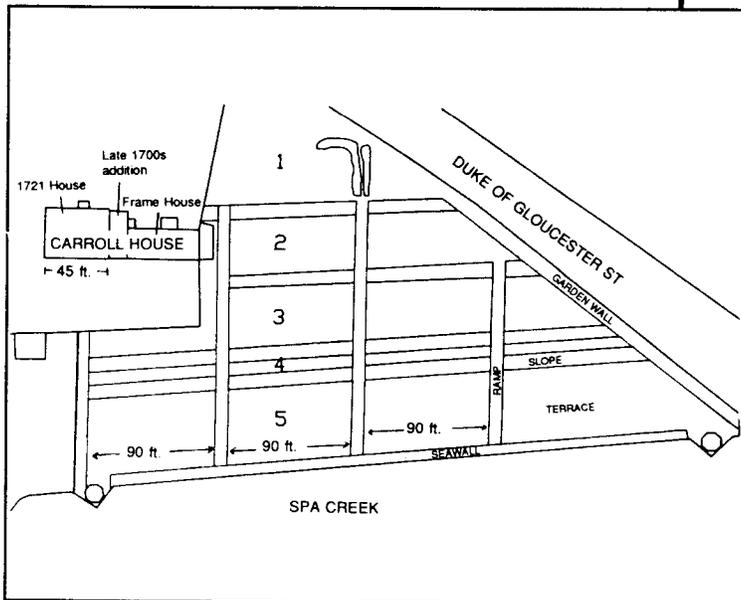
information about them. The best description was given by the well-known painter Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) who was visiting his hometown in 1804: “at each end of the wall is an octagon Building projecting beyond it, one is a Summer House & probably the other is a Temple, it is locked up, at the first sight they might thought to be intended for such purposes but on finding that one has no holes, People are naturally led to

believe that the internal structure is similar, since the outsides are perfectly so.”<sup>13</sup>

By 1832 the east pavilion was in danger of falling down<sup>14</sup>, and by 1850 only the west pavilion was extant.<sup>15</sup> By 1864, the date of the earliest photograph of the Carroll House, there was no trace of either pavilion. Archaeology has provided some evidence of their locations.

## Gardeners

By 1772 there were at least two gardeners at the Carroll House, one of whom belonged to Mrs. Mary (Molly Darnall) Carroll (1749-82), the other a young indentured servant bought in 1772 who “understands a Kitchen garden pretty well.”<sup>16</sup> The indentured gardener worked in the pleasure



A reconstructed plan of Charles Carroll's 1770s garden. Courtesy Elizabeth Kryder-Reid.

garden under construction and at the supply plantation, Annapolis Quarter, outside of town, where he trimmed trees. He was sent at least once to Whitehall, the estate of former Maryland governor Horatio Sharpe outside Annapolis, where he was directed “to spare 100 to 150 Plumb suckers for stocks to graft on.”<sup>17</sup>

Still other gardeners were mentioned in succeeding years. A slave gardener, Harry, “who work[ed] in the garden with Turnbull” as of December 1773, was punished in 1774 for neglecting his work. Complained Carroll, “he has been exceedingly idle; never was a garden in worse shape than mine....”<sup>18</sup> A new indentured-servant gardener was mentioned in 1775 when Carroll of Annapolis instructed his son to:



“Examine the Gardener strictly viz How long He served, in what place, in what Places & Gardens He has worked since He was out of his apprenticeship, in what Branch He has been chiefly employed, the Kitchen or flower

Garden or Nursery, whether He understands Grafting, Inoculating & Trimming, whether He ever layed out a garden, whether He is expert at Levelling, making grass Plots & Bowling Greens slope & turfing them well &c. &c.”<sup>19</sup> The new gardener, however, needed careful supervision. Carroll wrote that he “understands as little of his business & seems to be of lazy disposition. However under my direction, I believe he will be able to lay out my garden & work it agreeable to my desires.”<sup>20</sup> In 1778, Carroll directed his business manager “to engage the gardener at £60 per annum wages. He is a sober & industrious fellow & considering the little value of the month & the dearness of cloathes, I do not think that sum much out of the way.”<sup>21</sup> A slave gardener, Jack, aged twenty-four, was noted as working at the Carroll House in 1781-82.<sup>22</sup>

## Celebration and Change

The completed gardens were the location of a major celebration of peace in April 1783. “Tomorrow we celebrate Peace,” wrote Annapolitan Mary Dulany. “I hear there is to be a grand dinner on Squire Carroll’s Point, a whole ox to be roasted &c. I can’t tell how many sheep & calves besides a world of other things. Liquor in proportion. The whole to conclude with illuminations & squibs &c.”<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Dulany’s report was confirmed in the *Maryland Gazette* which gave a long report on “the day of public Rejoicings.” “A convenient, extensive, and occasional Building, was erected on Carroll’s Green, sufficient for the Accommodation of many Hundreds. Thirteen Pieces of Artillery were planted opposite, and an elegant and plentiful Dinner provided.”<sup>24</sup>

By 1853, after the property had been sold to a Catholic congregation of priests and brothers, the Redemptorists, for use as a seminary, it was reported that “The garden, terraces, grove, and paths were overgrown with weeds and brushwood .... Work was at once begun to reclaim house and land from the hand of devastation .... The terraces were restored, the gardens bloomed once more, and the surroundings, in general, soon presented a new appearance.”<sup>25</sup> Additional

renovation of the garden was forthcoming and by 1857, it was said by a saintly novice master that the property was: "... truly one of the most beautiful places that can be imagined not only on account of the situation of the garden that descends in terraces to the Bay.... in the fruitfulness of the garden, the lilies are especially present in such grandeur and luxuriance, as I have never before seen."<sup>26</sup>

During the early years of Redemptorist occupation and up to the early part of the twentieth century, Carroll's pleasure garden and adjacent parcels were turned into a working farm with livestock and vineyards. By 1910, after those agricultural uses had ceased, the rector ordered the property to be cleaned up and the land restored to a garden setting.

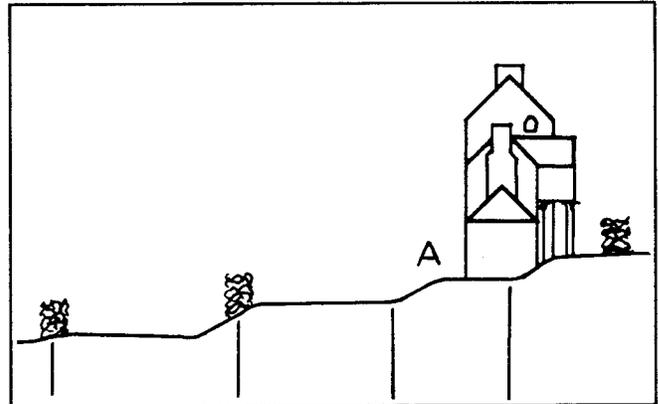
### Plantings

The modern Carroll Gardens have an eclectic collection of plantings. Long boxwood hedges line the edge of each terrace, but only those on the upper terrace are thought to date from the eighteenth century. The Anne Arundel County 1992 championship American holly tree (and seventh in Maryland) also is located on the upper terrace northeast of the house and may date to Carroll's days.<sup>27</sup> The holly is not far from where a large English walnut tree — known as the "Washington Tree," because under it George Washington is said to have frequently taken tea



their real glory. The box hedges, however, retain their pristine glory."<sup>29</sup> The same visitor offered this observation: "They are far and way the best remaining samples of the many box hedges originally in Annapolis. Here this old walnut tree has still remained, a beautiful box hedge, the most gargantuan in Annapolis, and by far the most beautiful. It is certainly nine feet high...."<sup>30</sup>

A Maryland White Oak raised from a Wye Oak

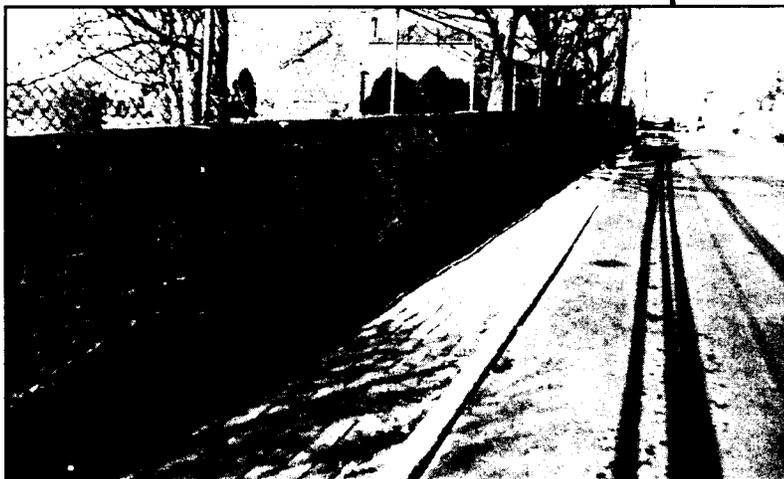


*Cross section of the Carroll garden looking west. Courtesy of Carroll of Carrollton 250th Anniversary Committee.*

seedling was planted in 1987 by the Four Rivers Garden Club, of Anne Arundel County, on the west side of the garden. Other plantings in the garden, including most of the boxwood and some twenty-five other species, date from throughout the twentieth century.

Eighteenth-century plantings are known only through archival sources. They included catalpa and poplar (1770); camomile flowers (ordered in 1771); unidentified flowers from "Gardenseeds" (ordered in 1773); privet planted in quincunxes along the bottom of a hedge and not exceeding 12 inches in width (1777); white clover and English grass for the front yard and tuberose roots (1777); French beans (1779); more unspecified flowers from "Garden Seeds" (ordered in 1784); "Rooted plants of the medoe, Black Morillen and Auvernat Vines 6 of each sort... Grafted Pears" (also ordered in 1784); and plants from seeds of unknown

kind and beans "Bearing a red flower" (1792). In 1804 Peale observed that Carroll's garden "contain[ed] a variety of excellent fruit and the flats are a kitchen Garden."<sup>32</sup>



*The garden wall showing the pattern of brick where it is intersected by the down slope of a terrace. Courtesy Charles Carroll House.*

with Charles Carroll of Carrollton his host — once was located.<sup>28</sup> The "Washington Tree" was noted as still existing around 1908 when a visitor to the gardens proclaimed them "undoubtedly the finest remaining in Annapolis, though they show little of

## Restoration

Most attention and funding in recent years has gone toward the restoration of the Carroll House itself. With the research done to date on the gardens, including an inventory conducted in 1991 of all plantings, restoration planning is scheduled to get underway in 1993. Interested persons may contact the author or Ms. Sandria Ross, Administrator, Charles Carroll House, 109 Duke of Gloucester St., Annapolis, MD 21401 or call 410/263-2969 ♦

### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Worden is the president and resident historian of the nonprofit Charles Carroll House of Annapolis, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Bradner Kryder-Reid, "Landscape as Myth: The Contextual Archaeology of an Annapolis Landscape." Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, May 1991, 172. Also see Elizabeth Reid, "Preliminary Report: St. Mary's Site (18AP45), 1987 Excavation Season" (draft), December 18, 1987. Copies of both are on file at the Carroll House.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Leone, Elizabeth Reid, Parker B. Potter, and Barbara J. Little, untitled tour script for Carroll Gardens, July 1987, copy on file at the Charles Carroll House.

<sup>4</sup> Kryder-Reid, "Landscape at Myth," 85.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Carroll of Carrollton (hereinafter CCC). London, to Charles Carroll of Annapolis (hereinafter CCA), July 2, 1763; M1492-296; CCC, London, March 21, 1764; M-4192-324-The Charles Carroll of Carrollton Family Papers, Microfilm Edition, 1989.

<sup>6</sup> See list of CCA's English books filed with CCA, Annapolis, to CCC, London, June 26, 1759; M-4191-161.

<sup>7</sup> CCA, Doughoregan Manor, to CCC, Annapolis, August 12, 1770.

<sup>8</sup> CCA, Doughoregan Manor, to CCC, Annapolis, August 17, 1770; M4193-434.

<sup>9</sup> CCC to CCA, September 29-30, 1774; M4193-599; and CCC to CCA, October 26, 1774; M4193-435.

<sup>10</sup> CCA to CCC, September 17, 1772; M4193-527.

<sup>11</sup> CCA to CCC, May 17, 1775; M4194-633.

<sup>12</sup> CCC, Philadelphia, to CCA, March 8-9, 1776; M4194-666.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Wilson Peale, "A Journal to Washington, D.C., and Return Including Baltimore and Annapolis, Maryland, May 29-June 21, 1804," Diary 20, Part 1, June 12, 1804 in Lillian B. Miller (ed.), *The Selected Papers of Charles Wilson Peale and His Family* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 704. Charles Wallace was a friend of Peale's who accompanied him on his perambulation around Annapolis.

<sup>14</sup> John Randall, Annapolis, to CCC, Baltimore, May 25, 1832; M4205-2878.

<sup>15</sup> Baltimore City Superior Court, Plat AA, 1850, Maryland Hall of Record 199959-249-2.

<sup>16</sup> CCC to CCA, May 27, 1772; M4193-507. Also see Barbara Wells Sarudy, "Eighteenth-Century Gardens of the Chesapeake," *Journal of Garden History*, 9, No. 3, July-September 1989, 103-59.

<sup>17</sup> CCA to CCC, November 19, 1772; M4193-535.



<sup>18</sup> CCA's and CCC's Ledger X (1715-1823), M4216-4383; and CCC to CCA, September 29-30, 1774; M4193-599.

<sup>19</sup> CCA to CCC, April 10, 1775 with April 12, 1775 P.S.; <4194-628.

<sup>20</sup> CCC to CCA, August 18, 1775; M4194-648.

<sup>21</sup> CCC, York, to CCA, Doughoregan Manor, May 24, 1778; M4195-843.

<sup>22</sup> Ledger X (1715-1823), M4216-4383.

<sup>23</sup> M. [Mary Grafton] Dulany, Annapolis, to My dear Wat [Captain Walter Dulany], New York, April 23, 1783, as quoted in Elizabeth Hesselius Murray, *One Hundred Years Ago or the Life and Times of Rev. Walter Dulany Addison, 1769-1848* (Philadelphia: Geo. W. Jacobs & Co., 1895), pp. 67-68.

<sup>24</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, May 1, 1783, pp. 2-3. Quoted nearly verbatim in David Ridgely, *Annals of Annapolis, Comprising Sundry Notices of that Old City from the period of the First Settlements in its Vicinity in the Year 1649; Until the War of 1812* (Baltimore: Cushing & Brother, 1841), pp. 204-6. Edward Papenfuse and Jane McWilliams, *Annapolis Lot Histories and Maps*, vol. 2, p. 549 Appendix F of NEH Grant No. H69-0-178, 1971, expresses the opinion that the event was held on "Carroll's Green" - "probably on this section," a reference to Lot 10 of James Stoddert's Plan for Annapolis, 1718, property own in 1783 by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, now the area known as St. Mary's Parish "Lower Parking Lot," south of St. Mary's High School and east of St. Mary's Convent, on the north side of Shipwright Street.

<sup>25</sup> Henry Borgmann, C.Ss.R., *History of The Redeptorist at Annapolis, Md., from 1853 to 1903* (Ilchester, Md.: College Press, 1904), 19-20.

<sup>26</sup> Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R., Annapolis, to his sister, n.d. 1857; cited in Rev. Peter Zimmer, *Leben und Wirten des Hochwürdigten P. Franz Xaver Seelos aud der Congregation des Allerheil* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1887), 123-24.

<sup>27</sup> Letter of Robert S. Prenger, Jr., Maryland State Regional Urban Forester, Bel Air, Maryland, to Robert L. Worden, Carroll House, Annapolis, February 20, 1992.

<sup>28</sup> George Forbes, *Notes for Slide Lectures*, "Annapolis in Colonial and Revolutionary Days," delivered January 12, 1908 - August 31, 1937. Maryland State Archives, G182 (3). Slide 529 shows tall boxwood hedges. A copy is on file at the Carroll House. Slide 424 shows the "Washington Tree" behind a telegraph pole. See "Illustrated Lecture on 'Ancient Annapolis'" delivered January 19, 1909-March 30, 1937, Baltimore and Annapolis.

<sup>29</sup> Forbes, *Notes for Slide Lectures*.

<sup>30</sup> Forbes, "Illustrated Lecture on 'Ancient Annapolis'" Slide 717, which shows boxwood hedges.

<sup>31</sup> CCA to CCC, November 30, 1770; M4193-454; William Deards, for CCC, Annapolis, to West & Hobson, London, November 16, 1771, CCC Letter Book, Arents Collection, New York Public Library; CCC, Annapolis, to Joshua Johnson, London, October 21, 1773, Arents Collection; CCA to CCC, March 27, 1777, M4194-736; CCA, Doughoregan Manor, to CCC, Annapolis, to Wallace, Johnson, & Muir, London, November 18, 1784, Arents Collection; CCC, Annapolis, to Thomas Ridout, November 24, 1784, Arents Collection; and CCC, Philadelphia, to Mary Carroll Caton, Annapolis, April 12, 1792; M4196-1164.

<sup>32</sup> Peale, "A Journey to Washington, D.C. . . ."

# Duke Acquires a Treasure: The Origins of The Sarah P. Duke Gardens



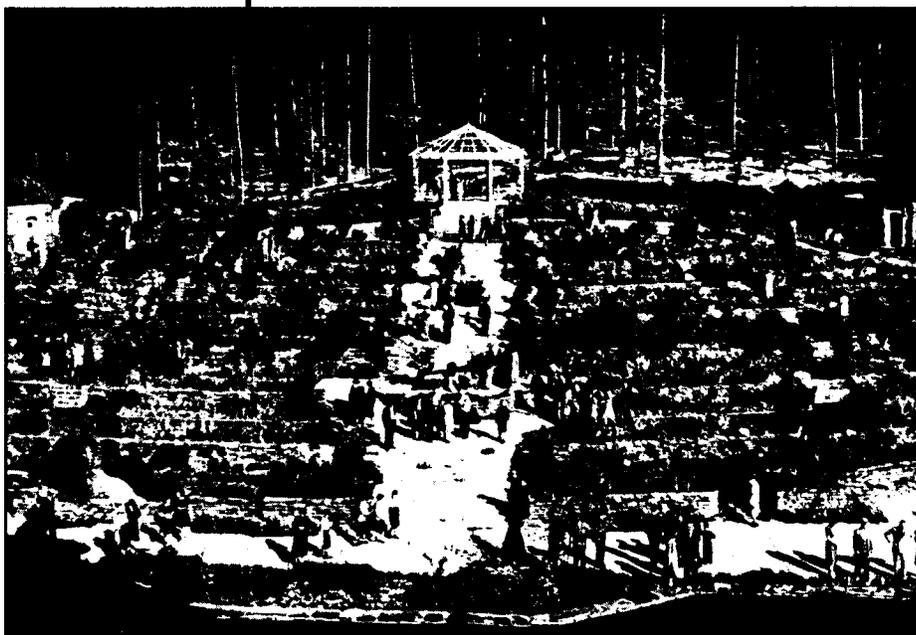
**(Editor's Note:** The following article is reprinted from the Spring 1991 issue of *Flora*, the Friends of Duke Gardens newsletter published at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. The editors wish to thank its author, Dr. Robert F. Durden. The article is, in turn, an outgrowth of a larger work being undertaken by Dr. Durden entitled *The Launching of Duke University, 1924-1949*. The editors would like also to express their appreciation to Dr. William L. Culberson, Director of the Sarah P. Duke Gardens, and to Dr. William E. King, University Archivist at Duke.

Space limitations allow for the inclusion of only a portion of the second part of the original article as published in *Flora*. This nonetheless relates not only to the work at the Duke Gardens which is still largely visible today, but it also recounts the contributions of Ellen Shipman, a landscape architect whose work is receiving attention from garden historians. Southern Garden History Society members, for example, will recall her work in this region ranging from the Ralph Hanes garden in Winston-Salem to Longue Vue in New Orleans.)

*[Part I of this article in the Fall 1990 issue described how Dr. Frederick M. Hanes, a leading figure in Duke's Medical Center, persuaded Sarah P. Duke, widow of Ben Duke, to join him in paying for the creation of a garden that prominently featured irises. Located in a forested area quite near the center of Duke's West Campus, the garden, which was begun in 1934, suffered various unforeseen problems, particularly a disease common to iris and the frequent flooding of a stream that ran through the site.]*

Having decided to more or less start over with his cherished garden project, Hanes acted soon after the death of Sarah P. Duke in September, 1936. When he sought to interest her daughter, Mrs. Mary Duke Biddle, in doing something for the garden that was named for her mother, he was armed with an intriguing plan. He had asked a prominent woman landscape architect, Ellen Shipman, to design a formal garden that would be quite different from the one which existed. Mary Duke Biddle, a Trinity alumna who faithfully honored her family's tradition of supporting the institution, liked Shipman's plan and agreed to pay for it as a more fitting memorial to her mother.

Born into a prominent Philadelphia family in



*The newly designed Terraces in the Sarah P. Duke Gardens, ca. 1939. Courtesy Duke University Archives.*

1870, Shipman graduated from Radcliffe College but acquired her extensive knowledge about plants and horticulture largely on her own. With the major university programs in landscape architecture not open to women at that time and despite her family's opposition to her choice of a career, Shipman stuck to her guns in her determination to break into what was largely a male-dominated profession. She found encouragement from Charles A. Platt, whose book *Italian Gardens* (1894) introduced to American architecture and landscape architecture the concept of the house and garden designed, in the style of the Italian villa, as a whole. One of the leading designers of country houses and gardens

for wealthy Americans in the early decades of the twentieth century, Platt became both mentor of and collaborator with Ellen Shipman.

Teaching for many years in a school of landscape architecture and horticulture for women, Shipman made it a practice to employ women

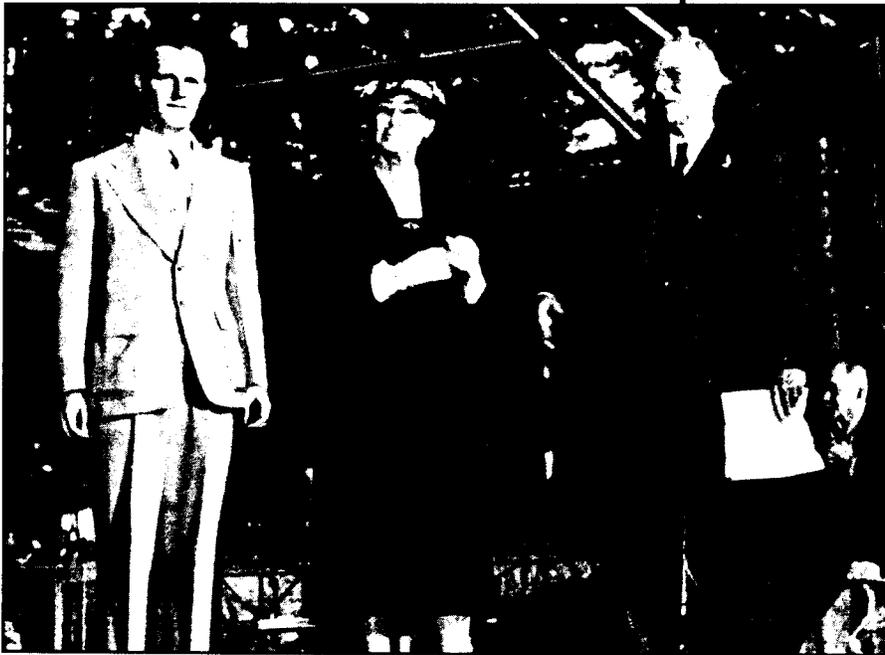


students and visitors," Few noted, "and a fitting memorial to your mother."

President Few may have been pleased by the prospect but Norfleet Webb, the superintendent of the garden, certainly was not. Disappointed at the prospective downplaying of his beloved irises, he sadly reported to a friend

and fellow iris-fancier that "Mrs. Shipman has pushed her plans through" and a "formal garden" loomed on the horizon. "I have been sick over the thing," Webb added, "but am about to stop worrying over it as there is nothing that I can do about it." Whether the friend should send any more irises, he did not know, for with "that woman" nobody knew what was going to happen. Webb no doubt gradually overcame his initial hostility to the new plan, for he remained on as superintendent until 1945 and lovingly tended his own iris beds at his home in nearby Hillsborough.

Shipman, probably accustomed to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of some of her male co-workers, proceeded undaunted. The twenty acres that Hanes and she chose for the new garden were just to the



*Sarah P. Duke Garden dedication April 21, 1939. Standing left to right: Norfleet Webb (director), Ellen Shipman (architect), R. L. Flowers (Vice President Duke University); and John F. Bruton (chair, Board of Trustees). Photo courtesy Duke University Archives.*

landscape architects and draftswomen in her offices in New York and Cornish, New Hampshire. Since women landscape architects obtained few public commissions in that era, Shipman did much of her best work on the estates of wealthy families in the vicinity of New York as well as in various other parts of the nation. Whether Mary Duke Biddle, who shared the Duke family's strong predilection for flowers and gardens, had ever seen one of Shipman's gardens is not known. But in selecting her to design what would become the oldest and best-known feature of the Duke Gardens, Hanes and Mary Duke Biddle made a splendid choice.

As Shipman set about her task in Durham in the summer of 1937, William F. Few, president of Duke University, reported to Mrs. Biddle that the landscape architect had spent a day going over her plans on the ground. While the plans were still incomplete, Few added, he thought they looked good and that a beautiful garden would soon take shape. "It will be of great interest and value to the

north of the first one. Surrounded by tall pines on all sides, the Italianate garden she envisioned would make extensive use of stone from Duke's quarry in low containing walls for a series of terraces that would descend from a large ironwork pergola or summer house at the top of the slope (a pergola that would soon become covered with fast-growing and fragrant Chinese wisteria) to a small pond at the bottom. Two small round buildings made of the Duke stone would stand on the right and left of the pergola at either end of the first terrace and would serve as an office, toolhouse, and restrooms. Bisecting the terraces, a rose-colored flagstone walk would lead downward from pergola to pond and would feature on two different levels small, raised, circular pools with cherubic fountains in the middle of them. On both sides of the terraces, curved walkways would lead downwards from the first, grass-planted terrace; it would have boxwood hedges flanking the pergola and would eventually become the scene of countless weddings. On the northern and southern



yielded a greater dividend," Flowers avowed. "The garden has given pleasure to thousands of people, and I think it has had a splendid influence on the students."

Many years later when Duke's perennial nemesis loomed again on the horizon — the attempt, with limited resources, to do well too many things — a courageous chancellor, A. Kenneth Pye, would lead in a process known as "retrenchment," which was in reality a reallocation of resources. When someone suggested that the



Gardens might well be targeted for cutting or elimination, Pye promptly pointed out the unwisdom, indeed the unthinkability, of such an action. Why? Because, he argued, the Gardens, like the Chapel, played too large a role in making Duke a special place in the minds of too many people. During lean years the Gardens would take their share of belt-tightening along with other components of the university, but they would never be regarded as a mere "frill." ♦

## Move Over Michaux: America's Earliest Tea Cultivation Challenged

by Flora Ann Bynum, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Where was tea first grown in America? This question has long intrigued me. Records in the Moravian Archives in Winston-Salem note that tea was grown in 1760 in the vegetable garden at Bethabara, the first Moravian settlement now in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and I have wondered if this was the first recorded planting of the true tea, *Camellia sinensis*, in America. When I recently read an article in *Southern Living* (July 1992) which credited the French botanist Andre Michaux with planting "this country's first tea at South Carolina's Middleton Place around 1800," I was inspired to resolve this question.

I called Middleton Place, and staff members said they were aware of the Michaux tradition but had no precise documentation to prove it. When I called the Charleston Tea Plantation in Charleston, Sarah Fleming reported that she had six fat folders containing materials on tea cultivation in America. Many articles cited Michaux as planter of the first tea plants at Middleton Barony near Charleston around 1800. However, none gave the original source of the Michaux tea-planting tradition.

The oldest account is by Dr. Charles U. Sheperd of Summerville, South Carolina, in an 1892 report for the United States Department of Agriculture. He stated: "The first tea plant in this section was set out by the French botanist Michaux in 1804, at Middleton Barony, on the Ashley River, and distant some 15 miles from Charleston; with it was planted out the first representative of its cousin, the *Camelia japonica*. As I saw the former a few years ago, it had grown into a small tree about 15 feet in height, while of the latter there were many specimens fully twice as tall." In 1907 Dr. Sheperd noted that

Middleton's tea plant was "nearly twenty feet in height."

Documents at Middleton Place tell of a ten-foot high tea plant growing there in 1869 (*Rural Carolinian*, November issue). Although the article does not credit Michaux, it does mention, "We have seen it [tea] growing in Georgia and South Carolina in almost every soil and situation, and always thriving as luxurantly as any native shrub."



*Camellia sinensis* - tea plant.

Tea plants exist at Middleton Place today, but none are believed to be original.

I then contacted Elizabeth J. Savage of Camden, South Carolina, co-author with her husband Henry Savage, Jr., of *André and Francois André Michaux* (1987), the first full-length biography of

the two men, father and son. According to Mrs. Savage, it is a general, widely-accepted belief that André Michaux planted tea at Middleton Place, thus introducing tea to America, but there is no exact date or concrete reference. Michaux came to Charleston in 1786, left for France in 1796, and died in 1802. His son, Francois, was primarily interested in forest trees, not nursery shrubs, and it is unlikely



tea at Middleton Place, America's earliest successful cultivation of tea that we now have record of was in the 1760 vegetable garden of Bethabara. The following excerpt from Moravian records dated 1764 gives additional evidence: "From Maryland or Virginia we have received the necessary seed with the assurance that this would grow to be the actual Chinese tea, if only we prepare it in the right way.

The leaves do resemble that of the authentic tea plant, however, all experiments made so far failed, and were finally given up entirely. Now it is growing wild here and there with nice yellow flowers in fall. The plant itself looks rather like that of the bilberry. The sheep like to nibble of it."

Although it appears that America's first tea plants grew in North Carolina, South Carolina is the undisputed first in commercial cultivation of tea and home of America's only successful tea plantation today. In 1848, Dr. Junius Smith, a retired London physician, started producing tea commercially at his Golden Grove Plantation in Greenville, South Carolina. His daughter had observed the similarity of the climate

and flora of South Carolina with the tea-producing region of British India and convinced her father to undertake this venture. His efforts, though successful, were discontinued after his death in 1853. A few years later, James E. Calhoun took up this enterprise in 1859 at his Millwood Plantation in Piedmont, South Carolina from six plants he received from China. While Millwood did not develop into a successful plantation, tea was grown there for many years.

Just prior to the Civil War, the United States government introduced considerable quantities of tea seed and plants into the southern coastal states, giving rise to many small domestic gardens, later destroyed by the ravages of war (Sheperd, 1907). In the 1870s, the United States Department of Agriculture shipped hundreds of thousands of tea plants across the country in an effort to develop the tea industry. In 1880, the department started a tea experimental station on a part of Newington Plantation, which was owned by Henry Middleton and located about ten miles north of Middleton Place, but it was soon abandoned.

In 1888 Dr. Sheperd, a chemist, established Pinehurst Tea Farm (or Gardens) near Summer-ville on some six hundred acres he had purchased of the Newington Plantation. Until Shepard's



*Tea bush in flower. From: The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture. Vol. III. Editor L.H. Bailey. NY: MacMillan Co., 1935.*

he would have been the planter of tea.

To add to the confusion, my file contained another article from *Southern Living* (September, 1979) which stated, "Even though the first tea plants in America were brought to Williamsburg in 1770, the plant has not been used enough in Southern gardens." However, Rollin Woolley of Colonial Williamsburg's landscape department denies that Williamsburg has ever made such a claim and their archives contain no record of early tea cultivation there.

Finally, *Agricultural Resources of Georgia*, a pamphlet recently acquired by the Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center, contains an "Address before the Cotton Planters Convension of Georgia at Macon, December 13, 1860" with a 1736 description of the Trustees Garden in Savannah which includes the following: "There is a plant of Bamboo Cane brought from the East Indies and sent over by Mr. Towers, which thrives well. There were also some Tea-seeds, which came from the same place; but the latter, though great care was taken, did not grow." This description, attributed to "A voyage to Georgia begun in the year 1735, &c., by Francis Moore — London 1744," indicates an even earlier, though unsuccessful attempt to cultivate tea.

In any case, whether or not Michaux planted

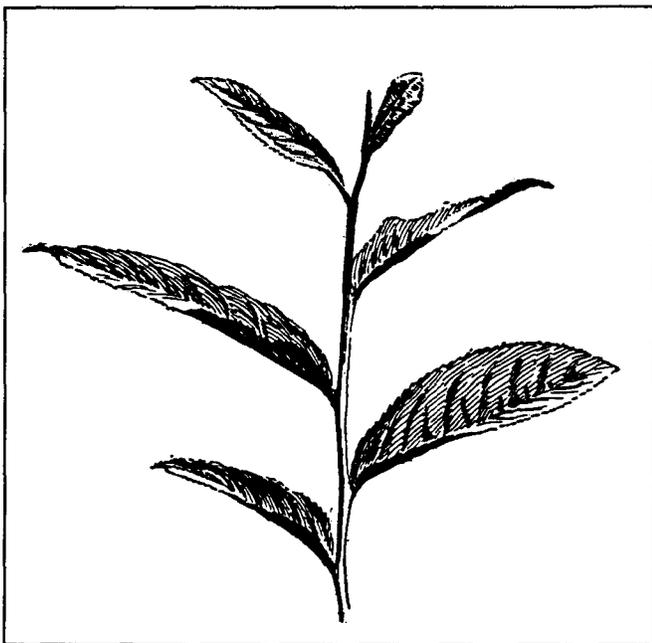
death in 1915, his tea farm successfully produced tea that was sold throughout the country. Pinehurst's oolong tea won first prize at the 1905 World's Fair in St. Louis. His heirs sold the plantation, and it was subdivided for homesites. Some of the shrubs were retained as ornamental plantings and others naturalized in the area. Even today, horticulturists



all tea came from the indigenous stock of Assam, a state of India, and that special characteristics have developed in other countries due to changes in climate and cultivation. He stated that all varieties except

those from tropical climates will flourish in the southern seaboard states. The tea that has acclimated in South Carolina is called 'Assam-hybrid.' 'Darjieling', from the slopes of the Himalayan mountains, is an example of tea from another area. Tea plants can be very long-lived; Dr. Sheperd mentioned one Japanese tea garden where the same plants had yielded high-grade leaves for two-hundred years.

Today the leading tea-producing country is India, followed by Sri Lanka (Ceylon), China, Japan, Russia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Taiwan. Too numerous to mention here are the Chinese legends of its early history and the various accounts of tea's coming to the Western World



*Pinehurst tea-shoot from the vigorous and productive type know as 'Assam-hybrid'.*

gather seeds and seedlings from the semi-wild bushes in Summerville (*Carolina Gardener*, April 1990).

No other commercial plantations developed until recently, in spite of the USDA's many early attempts. The key problem was labor costs. Although tea grew successfully here, American farmers could not economically compete with Asia in handpicking the delicate leaves. It was not until 1963 that the story continued, when Thomas J. Lipton Tea Company began an experimental farm on Wadmalaw Island near Charleston with plants from Dr. Sheperd's farm. Lipton and the farm manager, Mack Fleming, designed and built a mechanical harvester that could replace 500 workers and thus solved the labor costs problem. In 1987 Fleming and his partner, William Hall, a third-generation English-trained tea taster, purchased the thirty-acre Lipton farm and started the only tea plantation in America today, Charleston Tea Plantation, producing American Classic Tea.

There are many varieties of the tea plant. According to Dr. Sheperd, some botanists believe

#### **Sources:**

Dr. Shepherd's article on tea appears in L. H. Bailey's *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture*, Vol. II, 1907, reprinted in 1912. The information on Millwood Plantation is from *The Material Basis of the Postbellum Tenant Plantation*, Carles E. Orser, Jr., 1988. [In addition to those mentioned in this article, I am extremely grateful to SGHS members Florence Griffin of Atlanta, Mary Helen Ray of Savannah, Dr. David Rembert of Columbia, SC and to Dr. Joseph Ewan of St. Louis, Missouri for their help with my research.]



*Tea flower, Thea viridis, [now Camelia sinensis]*

# Symposium Celebrates Elizabeth Lawrence

by Flora Ann Bynum, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

A shared love of southern gardening drew 250 people from throughout the region to a symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina, September 25-27th, sponsored by the North Carolina State University Arboretum. "A Southern Garden: Past-



voice, and her strong sense of plants and their connections with people and history that made her unique. Lacy, who edited the posthumous publication of *Gardening for Love* for Duke University Press in 1987,

traced the story of the book's publication from the time he was first asked to go through a box of Miss Lawrence's papers containing several manuscripts of what she called her "market bulletins book."

Lacy described Elizabeth Lawrence (1904-1985) as "the best garden writer we've ever had." She lived and gardened first in Raleigh and later in Charlotte, North Carolina, and was a garden columnist for the *Charlotte Observer* for fourteen years. She was the only woman in the first

graduating class of landscape architects at North Carolina State University in 1930. In addition to *A Southern Garden*, first published in 1942 and now in its fourth edition, she wrote the *Little Bulbs* (1957), and *Gardening in Winter* (1961). Three other books of her writings have been edited and published since her death, *Gardening for Love* (noted above), *A Rock Garden in the South* (Duke University Press, 1990), and *Through the Garden Gate* (University of North Carolina Press, 1990).



Elizabeth Lawrence Garden at NC State Arboretum. Photo by J.C. Raulston.

Present-Future" commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Elizabeth Lawrence's *A Southern Garden* and celebrated her contributions to gardening and gardening literature. A highlight of the event was the dedication of the arboretum's perennial border to Miss Lawrence by her long-time friend William Lanier Hunt of Chapel Hill, honorary president of SGHS.

The keynote speaker, *New York Times* garden columnist Allen Lacy, concluded the symposium by asking, "Is there any other garden writer who brought people together the way Elizabeth Lawrence did?" It was her sense of story and

The symposium also included garden writers Pamela Harper and Felder Rushing; Nancy Goodwin, owner, and Douglas Ruhren, nursery manager of Montrose Nursery in Hillsborough, North Carolina; and garden designer and writer Edith Eddleman of Durham, who is also co-curator with Douglas Ruhren of the perennial border at the arboretum. J. C. Raulston, director of the arboretum, presented the opening address.

Elizabeth Lawrence's personal library is housed in the Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center in Atlanta, Georgia ♦

## *Southern Gardens Go West*

Gardens in Texas have their origin in the minds and memories of settlers that came by boat, covered wagon, or horseback to Texas from the American East Coast, South, and Midwest. Immigrants brought garden images with them from Europe, Spain and Mexico. Members of the Southern Garden History Society will learn about these settlers, their gardens and the plants they chose to create the environment that became home.

The program begins at 1 pm on Friday, April 16th and concludes at 5 pm on Sunday, April 18th. Most of the symposium and tours will be in informal country settings in and near the village of Round Top, Texas (population 81), a beloved setting for restorations by internationally known Texas philanthropists, Ima Hogg and Faith Bybee. The area is also well known for its natural displays of wildflowers which should be at their peak for the meeting.

Symposium topics will focus on German, Spanish, and other cultural influences on Texas gardens, early grape and wine production in Washington and Fayette counties, the architecture of early Texas, and noted horticulturists of the period. Tours will feature "Henkel Square," a recreated German village operated by the Texas Historical Arts Foundation; "Winedale," a restored stagecoach station settlement operated by the University of Texas; Festival Hill Institute, an international center for the study of classical music, and the Antique Rose Emporium, a nationally recognized garden center for historic roses and companion plants. Private country homes and gardens selected for tours date from the mid-1800s to the "turn of the century."

The Preference Inn in Brenham, Texas (about 75 miles northwest of Houston) will serve as conference headquarters, but participants will want to wait to make reservations until the registration packet arrives as it will contain information on the special conference rates. For participants choosing to fly to Texas, Austin and Houston airports are about equal distances from Brenham. Both offer car rental facilities. Allow approximately 1 hour driving time. Registration and detailed information will be sent to the membership in January. Attendance will be limited to 150 members ♣



## *Garden Restoration Committee Formed At North Carolina's Somerset Place*

At the direction of site manager Dorothy Spruill Redford, a committee has been created to undertake the restoration of the mansion house garden at Somerset Place, once the home of the Collins family and one of antebellum North Carolina's largest plantations. Local horticulturist Clay Carter will chair the committee and will be joined in the work by Frances Inglis, Kenneth McFarland and Sylvia Whitford. The committee's first priority will be to undertake an extensive analysis of the site. Their work will also include detailed research in Collins family papers, as well as other horticulturally-related material of the period. Limited archaeological work will probably take place as well.

Somerset Place, a state historic site, has received national attention in recent years for Ms. Redford's highly-successful homecoming's of descendants of the plantation's slave community. As part of her continuing interest in improving this already remarkable property, she envisions a project that will involve the slave quarter as well as the area immediately adjacent to the "big house." Thus, when work is completed, Somerset Place will present to the visitor one of the most complete plantation landscape restorations in the South ♣



*View across the garden at Somerset Place. Photo by Ken McFarland.*

## Members In The News



## Ronald Wade Retires

SGHS members **Hugh** and **Mary Palmer Dargan** were featured in the November/December 1992 issue of *Carolina Gardener*. The article, "Southern Garden Restoration: Charleston Style," concerns some of their recent restoration efforts.

**Peter Loewer's** *The Wild Gardener* (Stackpole 1991) won three awards at the Garden Writers Association of America and his new book, *The Evening Garden*, will be published in February of 1993 by Macmillan. It will be a dual selection of The Garden Book Club and the featured selection of The Rodale Book Club.

The October 25th, 1992 issue of *New York Times* contains an article by Anne Raver on SGHS member **G. Michael Shoup** and his methods of propagating antique varieties of roses.

Last June, **James C. Jordan III** (Jai) became curator of decorative arts for the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte, North Carolina. Jai was formerly administrator/curator of Historic Hope Plantation in Windsor, where he had established a Federal period garden. Jai writes that as his first project at the Mint Museum he is developing an exhibit on 18th-century flower containers which will open in June 1993. He is also working with the gardens at Rosedale, a Federal period house in downtown Charlotte.

**Barbara Wells Sarudy** of Monkton, Maryland, has taken a new job as executive director of the Maryland Humanities Council in Baltimore. *Magnolia* readers will remember that Barbara did an article on South Carolina seed merchants and nurserymen for the Winter, 1992 issue. She was formerly administrative director of the Maryland Historical Society. Barbara is author of "Eighteenth-Century Gardens of the Chesapeake," published as a volume of the *Journal of Garden History* ♦

**R**onald Wade, superintendent of gardens and grounds at Stratford Hall, near Montrose, Virginia, will retire this spring after eleven years at the eighteenth-century plantation home and birthsite of Robert E. Lee. Ron, who has contributed to *Magnolia* in the past, is known to many of us for his practical advice and colorful interpretations of historic horticulture. Stratford is actively seeking his replacement at this time ♦

## Fall Board Meeting

At its fall meeting October 24th, the SGHS board of directors approved new by-laws. These will be mailed to the membership in the next edition of *Magnolia*, and will be voted on at the annual business meeting of the Society in Texas next April.

Also discussed were potential publications in addition to *Magnolia*. Plans were reviewed for the 11th-annual meeting (see Calendar), the 12th-annual meeting to be held May 5th-8th, 1994 in Williamsburg, Virginia, and the 13th-annual meeting being planned for the spring of 1995 in Mobile, Alabama. A report was given on the Society's archives, now housed in the Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center in Atlanta. The board plans to add photographs to its archival collections when possible.

Dr. and Mrs. Edgar G. Givhan were hosts for the meeting which was held at Lime Arm, Dallas County, Alabama ♦

## Dues Notice

Second notices for annual dues were mailed in October to those members who did not respond to the notice sent in July. Members who have not paid their current dues will soon be notified that they are being removed from the mailing list, but are invited to rejoin. Members who have questions about their dues status are asked to write the Society Headquarters in Winston-Salem, North Carolina ♦

Dear Magnolia Readership,

This past September, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation announced I would succeed John T. Fitzpatrick as director of the Center for Historic Plants (CHP) at Monticello. I officially assumed my duties as director November 2nd. Although the demands of this transition from my former position as Monticello's assistant director of gardens and grounds has delayed the publication of this issue of Magnolia, I hope to continue as your editor in the future.

Concurrently, I am now editor of *Twinleaf*, the annual newsletter/seedlist of CHP which many Southern Garden History Society members receive. My thanks to all who have offered me support and encouragement in my new role.

Peggy C. Newcomb,  
Editor



## Of Interest

**The American Conifer Society Bulletin** is looking for articles, especially on the use of conifers in perennial gardens. Any SGHS member interested should contact Peter Loewer, P.O. Box 5039, Biltmore Station, Asheville, NC 28801.

A study course consisting of six lectures and four field study sessions on **The Art of Garden Design** will be held in Charleston, SC on the following dates: January 28th-31st; March 11th-14th; and June 24th-27th. Garden design ideas pertinent to homeowners, landscape contractors and horticulturists will be discussed. Contact Peggy Ledford, registrar, at (803) 766-8218 ♦

Deadline for submission of articles for the Spring Issue of *Magnolia* is February 1st.

Florence P. Griffin, *President*

Ben G. Page, Jr., *Vice-President*

Flora Ann Bynum, *Secretary-Treasurer*

William Lanier Hunt, *Honorary President*

*Magnolia grandiflora* reproduced by courtesy of Rare Book Division, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library.

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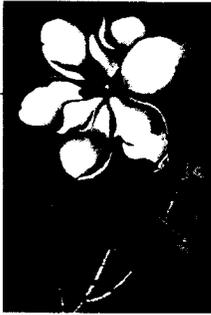
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# Magnolia

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

Bulletin of the  
Southern Garden  
History Society

Vol. IX

No. 3

Spring 1993

## Rosemont Plantation Laurens County, South Carolina

*The Upcountry Home and Garden of the  
Cunningham Family*

by Christy Snipes, Columbia, South Carolina

“M other insists when you cheer Rosemonte again, you must choose a time when her garden will do her some credit - a little piece of vanity - that, eh? Yet, I must confess that winter and spring present a greater contrast here than

anywhere else - the beautifying influence of the latter setting off our old, low house most wonderfully.”<sup>1</sup>



*Rosemont Manor House  
(20th century photo)*

Ann Pamela Cunningham penned these winter-time reflections about the garden at her ancestral home in a letter of January 1847. Rosemont Plantation, located in Laurens County, is probably one of the best known of the upper

country plantations because of its association with the remarkable Ann Pamela Cunningham (1816-1875). This visionary South Carolina lady founded the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, which spearheaded the effort in the 1850s to purchase George Washington's home in Virginia and to preserve it for

*Continued on page 2 . . .*

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Page 9 Southern Garden History Society Proposed Bylaws  
Page 16 Magnolia Essays Launched

## Calendar

**March 6th-14th, 1993:** New England Spring Flower Show. Massachusetts Horticultural Society at the Bayside Exposition Center, Boston. (617) 536-9280.

**March 7th-14th, 1993:** Philadelphia Flower Show. "Preserving the Past, Presenting the Future" at the Philadelphia Civic Center. (215) 625-8250.

**March 18th-30th, 1993:** "Classic Quest: Antebellum Sojourn." A garden and history tour from New Orleans to Charlottesville, VA. Rail Travel Center, St. Albans, VT. 1(800) 458-5319.

**March 20th, 1993:** Huntington Botanical Gardens hosts "Preserving a Heritage of Horticultural Diversity" from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. The conference will feature SGHS members Philip G. Correll and Dr. Arthur O. Tucker as speakers. Registration is \$65. Contact Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA 91108. (818) 405-2160.

**March 23rd-26th, 1993:** A symposium on "John Clayton, Botanist" will be held at the James Madison University Arboretum. Contact Julie Stickley (703) 433-0163.

**April 1st-4th, 1993:** The National Association for Olmsted Parks annual meeting will be held in Atlanta at the Fernbank Museum of Natural History. This year's conference will focus on Olmsted's 1893 Druid Hills plan. For more information, contact Patricia White, Conference Steering Committee (404) 876-7508 or Beth Nathan, Conference Coordinator (404) 881-0279.

**April 14th-18th, 1993:** The Annual Meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians will be held in Charleston, SC.

**April 16th-18th, 1993:** *SGHS Annual Meeting* in Brenham, Texas. (See article on p. 6)



**April 23rd, 1993:** Wave Hill in the Bronx will hold a conference on "The Landscape Universe." SGHS serves on the advisory council for the Catalog of Landscape Records in the United States at Wave Hill. Call (718) 549-3200 for more information.

**May 6th-9th, 1993:** The Antique Rose Emporium announces the Heritage Rose Foundation 1993 Conference to be held in Old Natchez, Mississippi. Guest speakers include Susan Haltom, Richard Westmacott, Ruth Knopf, and Liz Druitt – all SGHS Members. Contact Charles A. Walker, Jr., 1512 Gorman Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27606, (919) 834-2591 or call Carol Cook Henry at (409) 836-5548. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) for a registration package. Registration deadline is April 23, 1993.

**May 14th-15th, 1993:** The Garden Conservancy conference, "John Evelyn's 'Elysium Britannicum' and European Gardening," will be held at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC. For information, (914) 265-2029.

**May 20th, 1993:** "Adapting English Garden Style to the Carolinas," a symposium featuring John Brookes, renowned author and English Landscape designer. Private garden tours 10-5 pm. Registration \$65. Information: Capital Area Preservation, One Mimosa St., Raleigh, NC 27604. (919) 834-4844.

**June 11th-13th, 1993:** "Preservation and Renewal: Looking Beyond 2001," a gardening conference, will be held in Rome, GA and feature SGHS member Bill Welch and *Magnolia* editor Peggy Newcomb as well as other speakers. For a detailed brochure, write Julianne Martin, 7 McCrary Dr., Rome GA 30161.

## Rosemont Plantation Continued from page 1

generations to come. Miss Cunningham is often referred to as the "First Lady of American Historic Preservation."<sup>2</sup>

Rosemont Plantation is significant, not only for its link with Miss Cunningham, but because it carries great importance on its own merits. It tells the exciting story of the development of an upcountry South Carolina plantation landscape, from its inception in colonial days by Ann

Pamela's grandfather, Patrick Cunningham (ca.1742-1796), to its present state today.

It also excellently portrays the theme of landscape gardening in the South during the nineteenth century. Rosemont represents a plantation of the era, one with an active mistress, Mrs. Robert Cunningham (1794-1873), who was interested in flowers and shrubbery, improving her grounds, and possibly in making a statement of taste and wealth to her neighbors and friends. Descriptions of the beauty and charm of the gardens at Rosemont abound over the years.

Daughter, Ann Pamela, certainly must have been influenced by the tradition and importance of landscape gardening at her home in South Carolina, for during her days as regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, she promised not only the care of George Washington's mansion, but also his gardens.<sup>3</sup>

Rosemont Plantation and its landscape reached a zenith during Robert Cunningham (1786-1859) and Louisa's tenure. Robert Cunningham inherited the manor house and land from his father, Patrick. In the late 1760s Patrick Cunningham had ventured from Augusta County, Virginia and settled on the banks of the Saluda River in South Carolina. Appointed Deputy Surveyor General for the Ninety-Six District, he became a noted loyalist in the Revolution and prospered in the region after the war.<sup>4</sup> Louisa Bird Cunningham possessed as distinguished a family background as her husband. She could claim ties with the patriot Bird family of Birdsboro, Pennsylvania and the prominent Dalton family of Alexandria, Virginia. Louisa grew up on her father Col. William Bird, Jr.'s plantation at Shoals of the Ogeechee in Warren County, Georgia.<sup>5</sup> With her marriage to Robert in 1814, she came to live at Rosemont and began to make the plantation a reflection of her skill and interest in gardening. Former Governor Benjamin Perry wrote in 1874 that Louise Cunningham "had the honor and great pleasure of receiving a collection of rare flowers from Mount Vernon, sent by Judge Bushrod Washington."<sup>6</sup> (Bushrod, nephew of George Washington, inherited the estate after Martha's death in 1802 and, as his ancestor before him, was quite an avid plantsman.)<sup>7</sup> At least one family account documents a visit to Mount Vernon, probably taken around 1819, by Mrs. Cunningham and her two small children, Ann Pamela and John.<sup>8</sup> She may have brought home to Rosemont some of Judge Washington's rare and unusual plants, or, at the least, gleaned design ideas from Mount Vernon for her landscape on the great Saluda River.

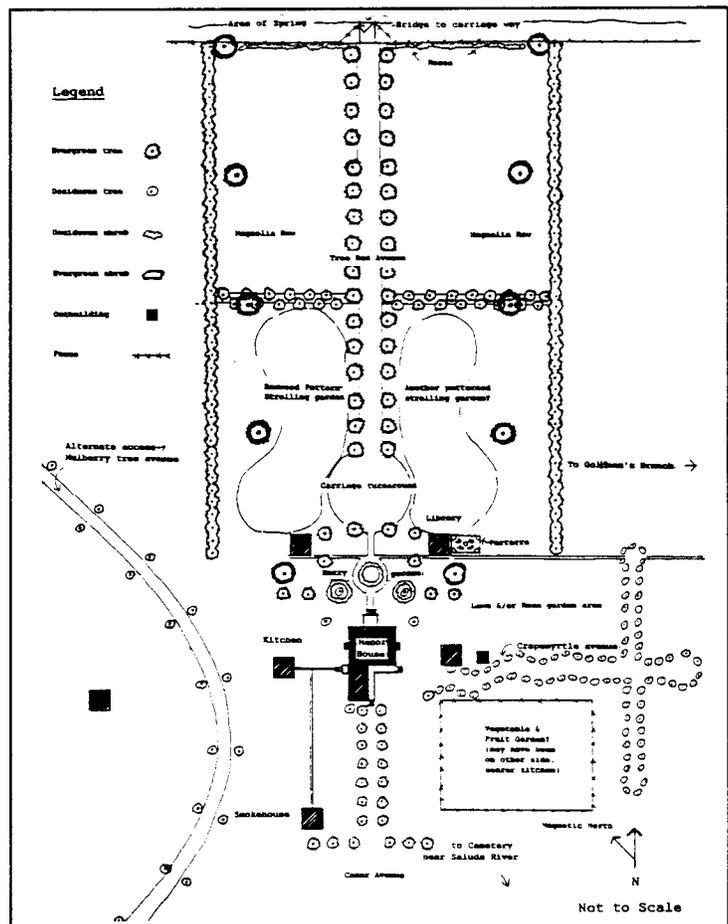
Louisa Cunningham was also aptly named by Benjamin Perry "the pioneer florist in the upcountry." He described her landscape efforts as a work of a master gardener:

Her passion for flowers was unsurpassed: she collected them from all parts of the world. Her flowers and shrubbery covered acres of ground around "Rose Mont."



which she watched over and cultivated with the care of a mother for her infant children. Years afterwards, when I saw her pioneer garden and shrubbery they were surpassingly beautiful, and laid off with great taste and artistic skill. She was most generous, too, in the distribution of her rare and beautiful flowers and plants amongst her friends and acquaintances."

Recent historical research on the Cunningham family has proved Perry's stunning tribute to be



*Conjectural drawing of the layout of the grounds around the manor house at Rosemont Plantation. Sketch based on primary resource materials, and survey and preliminary archaeological investigation by Chicora Foundation, Inc.*

true. Louisa Cunningham, the lady of the plantation, created ornamental and practical gardens at Rosemont, a setting for the manor house and its complex of outbuildings. During the 1830s and 40s she was particularly active in improving her formal gardens. She rearranged plants and changed the layout, added new vegetation and paling, and designed new areas,

such as a flower parterre garden.<sup>10</sup>

During this period, Louisa Cunningham also exchanged plants with relatives and friends. For example, in 1837 she made a trip to visit Mrs. Seabrook on Edisto Island especially to collect flowers from this low country garden.<sup>11</sup> (The Seabrook family's "Oak Island" plantation was occupied by federal troops during the Civil War. There exists a photograph of Mrs. Seabrook's garden, complete with soldiers, which shows the layout of the landscaped grounds.)<sup>12</sup> Likewise, in 1842, Mrs. Cunningham received



how to cultivate certain plants. One example is shown in a letter written by Ann Pamela to Mrs. Benjamin Perry in March of 1847 with instructions on "how to plant orange seeds successfully," prefaced several times throughout by "Mother says."<sup>15</sup> Louisa even sought direction in 1847 from family friend and notable horticulturist Joel Poinsett on the building of a greenhouse at Rosemont. Poinsett sent instructions on where to procure the materials and suggested contacting "Buist the gardener" in Philadelphia for a more detailed plan.<sup>16</sup>

The ornamental gardens at Rosemont certainly seem to have held the focus of the lady of the plantation; however, in researching the historical record, we see that the practical landscape plays an equally important role. Often mentioned in letters of the time are the fortunes of the plantation crops along with the products of the vegetable/fruit garden and orchards at Rosemont. In one case, Louise Cunningham wrote in the summer of 1838 that it had been "a delightful fruit year" with plentiful apricots, nectarines, figs, grapes, and raspberries grown at Rosemont.<sup>17</sup> In 1842 Ann Pamela sent the tasty products of the plantation to relatives: "a jar of pickles ..., 2 bottles of Tomato catsup - a jar of fig preserves, some peach marmalade, & some fat ...."<sup>18</sup> In the 1860s Louisa Cunningham not only ordered ornamental plants but also food producing vegetation from nurseryman William Summer's Pomaria Nurseries in nearby Pomaria, South Carolina. The list of ornamentals she selected include "Dioclea glycinoides," golden-edged euonymus, thrift, spirea, "Pompone" chrysanthemum, and the rose. Practical plants ordered are the peach, apple, cherry, apricot, pear, plum and pomegranate trees, the strawberry plant, and the grape vine.<sup>19</sup>

With Captain Robert Cunningham's death in 1859 and the ensuing Civil War, Rosemont Plantation began a spiral downwards. Ann Pamela and her mother Louisa struggled to keep the plantation operating during the difficult war years and Reconstruction. The gardens at Rosemont suffered much decline during this period. Finally, Louisa Cunningham died in 1873, with Ann Pamela following shortly after in 1875.

Another generation of Cunninghams would be left to live, farm, and garden at Rosemont into the twentieth century and a new order. However, as early as the 1890s, the Rosemont homesite and gardens became a remembrance of the past. Both are well documented in family correspondence,



*Ann Pamela Cunningham, First Regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union. (Portrait owned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cuningham, Florida.)*

"rare French roses" from Mr. Gourdine of Charleston in exchange for the "yellow rose trees" she gave to him. Mrs. Crawford of the same city lamented that she could not get the "trees for your lawn" from Mr. Bull's "place" since he had gone to Columbia, but she presently sent "single oleanders," "some roots of the Live Oak and Palmetto," and a "cluster of sour oranges" in a box to Mrs. Cunningham.<sup>13</sup> During a visit to Rosemont by the Benjamin Yancey family in April of 1852, Louisa Cunningham generously shared "a bundle" of "bright & beautiful flowers" with Mrs. Benjamin Yancey.<sup>14</sup>

The mistress of Rosemont also provided horticultural advice to friends and relations on

newspaper articles, and photographs of the period. One writing, "The Story of Rosemont" printed in 1904, provides an account of the garden which is repeated in years to come:



Seven acres of flowers and 30 acres in a park surrounding the flowers! Beautiful avenues, making a cross, led from the front of the house into the park. Remains of the great park are seen today in a few gigantic magnolias, rare trees and a wilderness of shrubbery.<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately, in August of 1930, the manor house was destroyed and its owner, Hugh Banks Cunningham, perished in the terrible fire. Afterwards, Rosemont Plantation still survived, with some of the land farmed, almost up until its sale out of the family in 1947.

Amazingly, a part of Rosemont still exists. Although the Piedmont forest in succession has almost closed up around it, the garden area (consisting of about six acres near the old homesite) still exhibits considerable integrity after

remain on the site - some original specimens, some descendants of these. Notable examples include the Japanese cryptomeria, Japanese varnish tree, Osage-orange, empress tree, white mulberry,

English boxwood, tree boxwood, crape-myrtle, sweet mock orange, sweet shrub, periwinkle, and English ivy.

It is truly fortunate that Rosemont's ornamental landscape above ground and the archaeological treasure below has avoided destruction over time. Perhaps this site was spared because of Ann Pamela Cunningham's tremendous feat in saving George Washington's home. The memory of her work has never completely died in Laurens County. Likewise, there are more than a few individuals who have assumed stewardship of the land over time. The list includes past and present members of the Cunningham family and two generations of the present owners, the Niles Clark family. It also comprises the imaginative members of the Laurens County Historical Society who sponsored a study of Rosemont Plantation beginning in 1990.

The Rosemont Plantation Project has just concluded with four primary accomplishments to note: 1. A factual and documented history of the Cunningham family and its life on the land; 2. An introductory examination of the existing historic landscape; 3. A preliminary archaeological investigation of Rosemont; and 4. The nomination of Rosemont to the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the Rosemont Plantation Project has heightened public awareness of this significant historic and archaeological resource and has emphasized the need to preserve Rosemont for the future. (Rosemont resides precipitously near Lake Greenwood, a rapidly developing recreational area.)

In the scholarly realm, valuable information has been produced by this study on plantation life of nineteenth-century upper South Carolina, especially on landscapes of the period. From examining the landscape gardening tradition at Rosemont, we have expanded our body of knowledge in the fledgling field of landscape gardening research. The elements of the "cultural landscape" have come to light: styles of gardens during the period; gardening techniques of the era; ornamental and exotic plants that were grown; vegetables and fruits that were cultivated; traditions of the period, such as



*Family portrait (ca. 1823) Louisa Cunningham and children Ann Pamela, John, and Ben Yancey— sitting and receiving flowers from his mother. (This painting is displayed in a historic house owned by Historic Waco, Waco, Texas.)*

more than 160 years. There are elements of Louisa Cunningham's design intact: huge American tree boxwood avenues lead up to the front of the former house, towering magnolias loom in the forest, and tremendous crape-myrtle trees stand in an avenue to the east of the home. Many non-indigenous trees, shrubs, and ground covers

trading plants among friends; and the participants in gardening at Rosemont, not only the main players but other vital workers, such as Sam and Austin, slave gardeners.

With Rosemont's potential virtually untapped, the challenge of the 1990s will be the preservation and protection of this noteworthy historic resource. It is hoped that as the visionary Ann Pamela Cunningham attained success with George Washington's Mount Vernon, the future will hold a similar vibrant response and fortunate conclusion for her Rosemont Plantation †



<sup>9</sup> Perry, *Reminiscences of Mrs. Louisa Cunningham*, 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> John Cunningham, letter to Benjamin Cudworth Yancey, February 24, 1839, Benjamin Church Yancey Papers (Yancey Papers), Southern Historical Collection (S.H.C.), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Louisa Cunningham, letter to Benjamin C. Yancey, April 8, 1839, Yancey Papers, S.H.C.; and Ann Pamela Cunningham, letter to Benjamin F. Perry, n.d. April 1843, Perry Papers, A.D.A.H.

<sup>11</sup> Louisa Cunningham, letter to Benjamin C. Yancey, May 15, 1838, Yancey Papers, S.H.C. \*The Yancey brothers: William Lowndes Yancey (1814-1863), statesman and great successionist orator; and Benjamin Cudworth Yancey (1817-1891), lawyer and statesman, were wards of the Cunningham family during the late 1820s and 30s. Their mother, Caroline Bird Yancey, sister to Louisa B. Cunningham, was left a widow when Benjamin Cudworth Yancey (the senior) died in 1817.

<sup>12</sup> Mac Griswold and Eleanor Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens: Proud Owners, Private Estates 1890-1940* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. in association with The Garden Club of America, 1991), 159.

<sup>13</sup> Margaret Crawford, letter to Louisa Cunningham, December 10, 1842, typed copy of original letter, Cunningham Family Records, Mrs. Thomas Smith, Texas.

<sup>14</sup> Charlotte Percival, letter to Mrs. Benjamin Yancey, April 14-15, 1852, Yancey Papers, S.H.C.

<sup>15</sup> Ann Pamela Cunningham, letter to Mrs. Benjamin F. Perry, March 31, 1847, Perry Papers, A.D.A.H.

<sup>16</sup> Ann Pamela Cunningham, letter to Mrs. Benjamin F. Perry, November 18, 1846, Perry Papers, A.D.A.H. and Joel Poinsett, letter to Robert Cunningham, January 6, 1847, Louisa Cunningham file, S.H.C.

<sup>17</sup> Louisa Cunningham, letter to Benjamin C. Yancey, August 30, 1838, Yancey Papers, S.H.C.

<sup>18</sup> Ann Pamela Cunningham, letter to Mrs. Benjamin C. Yancey, December 13, 1842, Yancey Papers, S.H.C.

<sup>19</sup> Order for plants by Louisa Cunningham, January 16, 1860; February 23, 1860; and February and March 3, 1863, Account Books of Pomaria Nurseries, 1859-1861 and 1861-1866, Summer Family Papers, South Carolina Library, Manuscript Collections, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina.

<sup>20</sup> H.L. Watson, "The Story of Rosemont," *The State*, July 12, 1904, Columbia, South Carolina.

<sup>1</sup> Ann Pamela Cunningham, letter to Mrs. Benjamin Perry, January 13th, 1847, Benjamin Franklin Perry Papers (Perry Papers), Alabama Department of Archives and History (A.D.A.H.), Montgomery, Alabama.

<sup>2</sup> Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past, A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons 1965), 47-51.

<sup>3</sup> \*For the story of Ann Pamela Cunningham and her efforts for Mount Vernon see: Grace King, *Mount Vernon on the Potomac: History of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929) and Elswyth Thane, *Mount Vernon is Ours* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1966).

<sup>4</sup> Ann Pamela Cunningham, *Untitled History of the Cunningham Family*, (circa 1843-1844), Perry Papers, A.D.A.H.

<sup>5</sup> Lucy Henderson Horton, *Family History* (Franklin, Tennessee: Press of the News, 1922), 79-82 and Grace Gillan Davidson, "Colonel William Bird of the Shoals of the Ogeechee," fragment of a newspaper article, no date (circa 1936).

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Franklin Perry, *Reminiscence of Mrs. Louisa Cunningham* (Greenville, South Carolina: J.C. Bailey's Book and Job Press, 1874), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Kellam deForest, *The Gardens and Grounds at Mount Vernon: How George Washington Planned and Planted Them* (Mount Vernon, Virginia: The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, 1982), 6.

<sup>8</sup> Floride Cunningham, letter to Mrs. Nancy Halsted, February 20, 1874, Mount Vernon Archives, Mount Vernon, Virginia.

## *Blumen Auf Dem Grab (Flowers on the Grave) Round Top Cemetery*

by William C. Welch and D. Greg Grant, Texas

Old cemeteries have always had an appeal to garden historians. Those that have somehow avoided the modern practice of "perpetual care" and applications of glyphosate herbicide often contain plant collections that are not only reflections of a past era, but are "time tested." The old custom of placing favorite ornamental plants on the grave sites of loved ones provides a link to earlier plant usage that is difficult to find in today's gardens. Because of our nation's migration from

rural areas to cities, most families have left behind their ties to cemeteries whose care was once an important part of their culture.

Participants in the eleventh annual SGHS meeting will spend some time in a community that has one of Texas' numerous and fascinating old cemeteries. Although Bethlehem Lutheran Church and its adjacent cemetery will not actually be a tour stop, they are a short walk from Henkel Square in Round Top where we will be visiting an

authentic restoration of 19th-century Anglo-American and German-American culture.

Actually, most everything in Round Top is within walking distance, it being a town with a current population of eighty-one. The community predates its name and was first known as Townsend and later as Jones Post Office, after



*Bethlehem Lutheran Church, built in 1866. Photo by Greg Grant.*

the first postmaster for the Republic of Texas. (The Republic Period in Texas spanned the years 1836-1845.) The town sits on a hill that rises prominently when approached from the southwest, but the name Round Top refers to an octagonal structure that became a widely visible landmark in the late 1840s.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church was built and consecrated in 1866 of local cedar and sandstone under the supervision of Carl Siegismund Bauer who had immigrated from Germany several years earlier. It is a good example of German architectural style and houses a native red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) pipe organ built in 1867 by Traugott



Wandke. The church and the organ have received historical plaques, and the building is thought to be the oldest Lutheran church in the state of Texas in which services are held regularly. The building has recently

been carefully restored both inside and out and is used regularly for church services by a surprisingly large and active congregation. Red cedar was also used for flooring and pews in the sanctuary that seats approximately one-hundred worshippers. Recent interior work includes beautifully refinished altar furnishings with faux marble accents by an area craftsman.

Although in somewhat disrepair, the walls and grounds of the cemetery have a pleasant aura of "benign neglect." In addition to the wonderful native stone walls, many individual grave sites are enclosed with native stone curbing, a traditional German practice. Plants are rather sparse, but a close look reveals some interesting choices that are obvious links to earlier times.

A spring visitor is most likely to notice immediately a sprinkling of Texas bluebonnets (*Lupinus texensis*), the state flower, throughout the cemetery. And although a number of them have died, native red cedars are present in orderly rows along now crumbling stone wall terraces. There are also pecan trees (*Carya illinoensis*), the state tree, scattered throughout the modest grounds. *Vinca major* has naturalized beneath the live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) on the property. Shrubs are

*Continued on page 8 . . .*



*Round Top Cemetery. Photo by Greg Grant.*

# Book Review



## **Keeping Eden: A History of Gardening in America.**

Massachusetts Historical Society - Walter T. Punch, General Editor. Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1992. Bibliography, index. ix, 277 pp. Illustrations. Hardback. ISBN 0-8212-1818-2.

For all too many writers of garden history, the Claude glass remains an essential tool. They lock each garden in its own frame, label it with creator, date, and style, and proceed to identify its aesthetic attributes, design precedents, and influential properties. Their efforts are not without interest or value, but such writers invariably fail to ask the very questions that would enhance their investigations so profoundly, questions about the peculiar economic conditions or social dictates shaping each gardening venture. Call it connoisseurship or what you will, the Claudian approach falls short of substantive history. Walter T. Punch and his colleagues at the Massachusetts Historical Society saw the glint of the glass and recognized its limitations. They also realized just how scarce are well-founded general studies of American garden history. Their observations led to the production of *Keeping Eden*, a handsomely illustrated and designed collection of sixteen essays addressing various aspects of gardening in

America over four centuries. The book's collaborators successfully portray the garden not as an isolated artistic phenomenon, but as an integral element of a greater world. Perhaps most significantly, they eschew the

traditional pursuit of European precedent and influence by concentrating instead on indigenous requirements, choices, and achievements. As the editor promises in his introduction, *Keeping Eden* fosters a new awareness of the American garden.

Like any collection of essays, even one that is purpose-written to express a single issue or theme, *Keeping Eden* is a considerably variegated work. Some essays are essentially annotated or descriptive lists. Specifically, Elisabeth Woodburn's "American Horticultural Books" and Walter Punch's "The Garden Organized" offer no real historical arguments, but do serve as useful references to publications, botanical gardens, and horticultural and garden history societies. The papers by D. Keith Crotz and Peggy Cornett Newcomb might be categorized as catalogic, except that each author artfully discusses the circumstances and ramifications of, respectively, technological change and plant selection for American gardens. Keith N. Morgan's "Garden and Forest - Nineteenth-Century Developments in Landscape Architecture" is a straightforward, well-integrated and clearly documented overview of a complicated era. Similarly broad in scope is

*Continued on page 12 . . .*

## *Round Top Cemetery Continued from Page 7*

not common in this particular cemetery, although one can't help but notice the usual representation of roses, in this case, several European types (*Rosa sp.*) and several red China roses (*Rosa chinensis*).

As with most limited-maintenance old cemeteries throughout the South, bulbs make up the predominant surviving palate of flowering plants. Most numerous perhaps is the starch or musk hyacinth (*Muscari racemosum*) whose fragrant spring blossoms are often mistaken for bluebonnets from a distance. Several narcissus are present, including the Chinese sacred lily (*Narcissus tazetta orientalis*) and *Narcissus tazetta italicus*. A number of amaryllids are at home in the cemetery. One of these is the autumn daffodil (*Sternbergia lutea*), a mediterranean relation of daffodils.

Another interesting member of the amaryllis family present is the oxblood lily, *Rhodophiala bifida* [*Hippeastrum bifidum*]. This fall-blooming

beauty was supposedly introduced by Peter Oberwetter, botanist, who came to Texas from Germany around 1848. There are probably more oxblood lilies in central Texas than its native Argentina. Also to be noted are the tropical white spider lily (*Hymenocallis caribaea*), summer snowflakes (*Leucojum aestivum*), and hybrids of *Crinum bubispermum*. Appropriately, "German" iris is a common sight, most likely *Iris x albicans*, which was historically grown in Mohammedan graveyards as well.

Old cemeteries like Round Top are an excellent library of hardy, historical plants. It is most unfortunate that these priceless collections of both human culture and horticulture are vanishing. Participants in the meeting and others who may be interested in a more in-depth look at cemeteries in Texas will enjoy Terry Jordan's book, *Texas Graveyards, A Cultural Legacy* published in 1982 by the University of Texas Press ♣

# Proposed Bylaws of The Southern Garden History Society

by Jane C. Symmes  
Chair of the By-Laws Committee

As the Southern Garden History Society approached its tenth anniversary, the board in its planning for the next decade decided the original by-laws should be reviewed. A committee was appointed for this purpose. One special concern was the need for larger board representation considering the society's wide geographic range and increasing membership.

After long discussions and study, the revised by-laws were approved at the October board meeting. They are to be voted on by the membership at the annual meeting in April.

## ARTICLE I

### **NAME AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**

The name of this organization shall be the Southern Garden History Society. The Society will function in the District of Columbia and in the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

## ARTICLE II

### **PURPOSE**

The Southern Garden History Society (hereinafter, the Society) is organized as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of North Carolina. The purpose of the Society shall be the gathering and dissemination of knowledge of Southern garden history through forums and publications.

## ARTICLE III

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Any person, corporation, or other legal entity interested in the purpose of the Society shall be eligible for membership in the Society upon application and payment of dues for the class of membership sought. The classes of membership and dues shall be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors.

## ARTICLE IV

### **OFFICES**

The principal office of the Society shall be located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, or in such other location as the Board of Directors may determine. Other offices may be established by resolution of the Board of Directors.

## ARTICLE V

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Section 1. Management Powers, Number, and Qualifications. The property, affairs, and business of the Society shall be governed and managed by the



Board of Directors. The Board of Directors, excluding Honorary and ex-officio Directors, shall number not more than twenty (20) nor less than five (5) persons. The exact number shall be fixed by a resolution of the Board of

Directors from time to time. Directors shall be members of the Society, of the age of twenty-one (21) years or over, and residents of one of the states of the United States of America listed in Article I or the District of Columbia. Each Director (other than Directors elected to fill vacancies as hereinafter provided for in Section 7 of Article V) shall be elected by a plurality vote of members present at the business session of an annual meeting of members of the Society.

Section 2. Nomination of Directors. Any member of the Southern Garden History Society may present a nomination for Director or Directors to the Nominating Committee, provided the nomination is presented in writing at least one month prior to the annual meeting of members at which the Directors are elected. From the nominations for Directors made by the members and from other nominations made by members of the Nominating Committee, the Nominating Committee shall select a slate to be approved by the existing Board of Directors and voted on at the annual meeting of members.

Section 3. Term of Office and Succession. At the annual meeting of members of the Society in 1994, the existing Board of Directors shall be divided into three groups, as nearly equal in numbers as possible, the first group to serve an additional one-year term, the second group to serve an additional two-year term, and the third group to serve an additional three-year term, so that after the annual meeting of members in 1994, the terms of approximately one-third of the Directors will expire each year. Following the expiration of the terms of office of the Directors elected at the 1994 annual meeting, the term of office of each Director shall be three years. The term of office of each Director shall begin upon adjournment of the annual meeting of members at which such Director is elected and continue until adjournment of the third annual meeting of members thereafter. If the Board of Directors, by resolution, increases the number of Directors and additional Directors are elected at the 1993 annual meeting, the terms of the added Directors will expire at the end of the annual meeting of members in 1994. After 1994, whenever the Board of Directors shall increase or decrease the number of Directors constituting the Board, such increases or decreases and lengths of terms shall be made so that, as nearly as possible, the terms of office of one-third of the total Board shall continue to expire each year thereafter. After the annual meeting of members in 1994, no Director, other than a Director filling an unexpired term, shall be eligible for re-election to succeed himself or herself until a period of one year has elapsed following the expiration of his or her term as Director. After the elapse of one year, that person shall be eligible for re-election to the Board of

Directors. Any Director filling an unexpired term under the provisions of Article V, Section 7, of these Bylaws shall be eligible for re-election to the Board of Directors without an intervening year.

Section 4. Removal from Office. A Director may be removed from office, with or without cause, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Board of Directors.

Section 5. Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held semi-annually within the geographical area described in Article I at locations selected by the Board. One of the semi-annual meetings shall be held immediately preceding the annual meeting of members of the Society. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at any time upon the call of the President or the Secretary duly served on or sent or mailed to each Director not less than fourteen (14) days before the special meeting.

Section 6. Quorum. A majority of the number of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority of such Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors except as may be otherwise specifically provided by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws.

Section 7. Vacancies. In case one or more vacancies shall occur on the Board of Directors by reason of death, incapacity, resignation, removal from office under Section 4 of this Article V, removal of residency outside the geographical area described in Article I, or any other reason, the remaining Directors shall continue to act and such vacancy may be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Directors then in office.

Section 8. Liability. In the absence of fraud or bad faith, the Directors shall not be personally liable for the debts, obligations, or liabilities of the Society.

Section 9. Ex-officio Directors. The immediate past President and the Editor of *Magnolia*, the official bulletin of the Society, shall be ex-officio Directors. Officers of the Society whose terms as Directors expire during their terms as Officers also shall be ex-officio Directors during the remainder of their terms as Officers. Ex-officio Directors shall have the same rights, privileges and powers as other Directors, including the power to vote. They shall be counted for the purpose of determining a quorum or vote.

#### ARTICLE VI HONORARY DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors shall have the power to appoint such honorary members to the Board as it may by resolution determine. Such honorary members may attend meetings of the Board of Directors and may make recommendations to the Board, but shall not have the power to vote nor shall they be counted for the purpose of determining a quorum.



#### ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES

Section 1. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Society plus one other Director appointed by the President to serve during the term of that President. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once in each quarter of the year in person or by telephone conference call. Subject to the supervision and control of the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee shall have the power to direct the business and other affairs of the Society in accordance with these Bylaws and in keeping with policies adopted by the Board of Directors from time to time.

Section 2. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three (3) Directors appointed by the President to serve for the duration of that President's term of office. The President shall name and appoint one of the three to be Chairperson. The Nominating Committee shall select by simple majority vote nominees for Directors and Officers of the Society. A written report of nominations shall be presented to each Director at least three (3) days prior to a meeting of the Board of Directors at which approval or election is to take place.

Section 3. Other Committees. Other committees, both standing and temporary, may be established by Resolution of the Board of Directors. These committees shall have such powers of the Board as are delegated by the Board and not in conflict with any statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws. The Chairpersons and members of these committees shall be appointed by the President for the balance of that President's term of office or, if authorized by the Board of Directors, for longer periods.

Section 4. Committee Records and Reports. Each committee shall keep records of all of its transactions, which records shall be presented to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have the power to disapprove, rescind, and nullify any acts or transactions of such committees, and all acts and transactions of the committees not disapproved, rescinded, or nullified shall be held and taken to be approved and confirmed by the Board of Directors.

Section 5. Committee Rules. A majority of the members of a committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a committee meeting, and the act of a majority of those members at that meeting is the act of the committee.

#### ARTICLE VIII OFFICERS

Section 6. In General. The officers of the Society shall consist of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer elected by the Board of Directors at two-year intervals at the scheduled meeting immediately



preceding the annual meeting of the members. These officers must be members of the Board of Directors at the time of taking office. Any officer may succeed himself or herself if duly re-elected. Officers shall take office and serve from the conclusion of the annual meeting of the members at which they were elected until and through the conclusion of the second annual meeting of the members thereafter. Any officer may be removed from office, either with or without cause, at any time by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Directors then in office. Any two or more offices may be held by the same person, except that the same person shall not be both President and Secretary.

Section 2. Powers and duties. The officers of the Society shall each have such powers and duties as generally pertain to their respective offices, as well as such powers and duties as from time to time may be conferred upon them by the Board of Directors.

Without limiting the foregoing:

(a) President. The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Society and shall give general supervision and direction to the affairs of the Society, subject to the direction of the Board of Directors. The President shall preside at the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors and at the annual meetings of members of the Society.

(b) Vice President. The Vice President shall act in the case of the absence or disability of the President and shall have other duties as may be assigned by the President or the Board of Directors.

(c) Secretary. The Secretary shall give notice of all meetings of the Board of Directors for which notice is required, shall keep the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, and shall maintain the general records of the Society.

(d) Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all receipts and monies of the Society, shall deposit them in the name of the Society in a bank or financial institution approved by the Executive Committee, and shall disburse funds as authorized by the Executive Committee. The Treasurer and President, individually or together, shall sign all checks and withdrawal slips on behalf of the Society upon any and all of its bank accounts. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the timely filing of all forms required by law for the Society to retain its tax exempt status. The Treasurer shall keep regular accounts of receipts and disbursements and of the properties and business transactions, if any, of the Society. He/she shall submit financial reports when requested and shall present an itemized financial statement at each regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society. The Treasurer shall also file any quarterly or annual forms required by the Federal Government or any State or local government.

## ARTICLE IX ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

Section 1. Place, Date, and Functions. The Society shall hold an annual meeting of members in the spring of each year at a time and place to be determined by the Board of Directors. If

possible, the annual meeting will be held each year in a different part of the geographical area defined in Article I. At the annual meeting of members, in addition to a business session devoted exclusively to the operational and financial affairs of the Society, educational programs consistent with the purpose of the society are to be conducted. The Board of Directors shall decide upon the dates and place of meeting of the annual meeting at least one year in advance of the meeting if possible. Invitations to attend must be sent to all members in good standing in advance of the annual meeting. If capacity is limited for any reason, reservations and attendance may be limited to those members who first accept.

Section 2. Quorum. The members present at the business session of an annual meeting of members shall constitute a quorum.

## ARTICLE X GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Assets on Dissolution. Upon the termination or dissolution of the Society in any manner or for any reason, its assets, if any, remaining after payment or provision for payment of all liabilities of the Society shall be disposed of as provided in the Articles of Incorporation.

Section 2. Gifts. The Board of Directors on behalf of the Society and the President on behalf of the Board of Directors may accept any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the purposes of the Society.

Section 3. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Society shall be such period as the Board of Directors shall determine, and unless otherwise so determined, shall begin on the first day of May of each year and end on the last day of April of the following year.

Section 4. Corporate Seal. The seal of the Society shall consist of an impression bearing the name of the Society around the perimeter and the word "Seal" or "Corporate Seal" and such other information, including the year of incorporation, in the center thereof as is desired. In lieu thereof, the Society may use an impression or writing bearing the words "Corporate Seal" enclosed in parentheses, which may also be deemed the seal of the Society.

Section 5. Amendments. The Bylaws of the Society shall be subject to alteration, amendment, or repeal, and new Bylaws not inconsistent with any statutory provisions or with any provision of the Articles of Incorporation shall be made by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all Directors then holding office at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors.

## Book Review

*Continued from page 8*

Mac Griswold's "American Artists, American Gardens." While primarily concerned with its representations of gardens in the graphic arts, this nicely crafted essay also provides an excellent short account of the historical functions and meanings of gardens in America. Tamara Plakins Thornton offers a lively and scrupulously observed account of how horticulture has been employed as a moral agent since the early nineteenth-

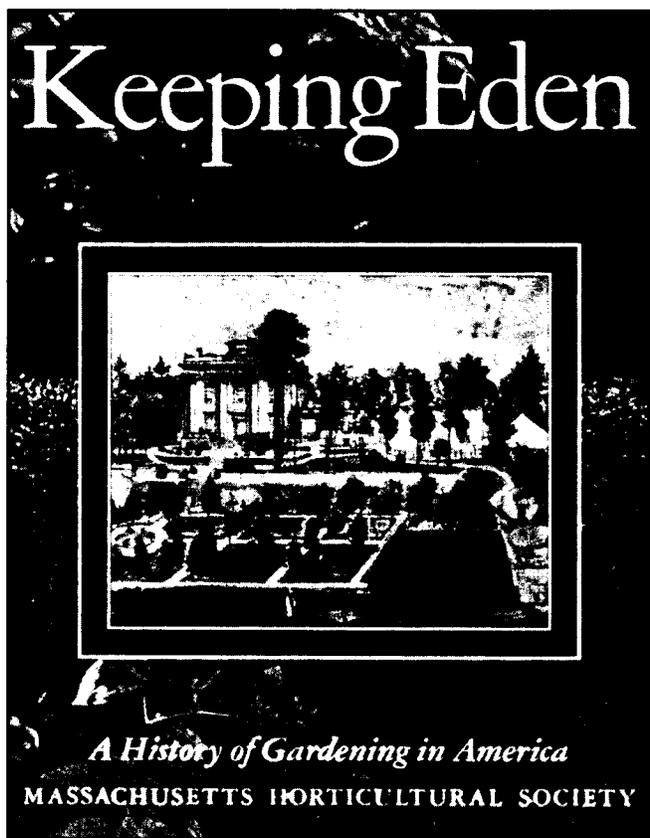


century. Regional developments constitute a strong subtheme in the book and are most effectively identified and analyzed in the pieces about the West, such as David Streatfield's treatment of gardening in Arizona, California, and the Pacific Northwest from the late nineteenth-century to the present day. The selection of essays reveals an understanding of the geographical and chronological diversity, as well as the inherent complexity of American garden history, and qualifies the Massachusetts Horticultural Society's publication as an important addition to the subject literature.

century. Regional developments constitute a strong subtheme in the book and are most effectively identified and analyzed in the pieces about the West, such as David Streatfield's treatment of gardening in Arizona, California, and the Pacific Northwest from the late nineteenth-century to the present day. The selection of essays reveals an understanding of the geographical and chronological diversity, as well as the inherent complexity of American garden history, and qualifies the Massachusetts Horticultural Society's publication as an important addition to the subject literature.

*Keeping Eden* is divided into two sections, the first composed of broadly-drawn essays arranged chronologically and the second, those of a thematic nature. Contributors to the second part of the book, many of whom have already been mentioned, generally are the more successful in presenting rigorous and intriguing observations about American gardens. A number of these writers are virtually alone in pursuing certain issues central to American cultural history that should have received greater attention throughout the book. For example, Phyllis Andersen in "The City and the Garden" is one of surprisingly few authors in *Keeping Eden* to consider the classic dichotomy of city versus country, civilization versus nature. Andersen, Mac Griswold, Catherine Howett, and Michael Pollan, in his clever and thoughtful afterword about the future of American gardening, are the only writers to address more or less directly the concept expressed in the title of the book. The familiar equation of Eden and America is not really explored in any of the essays, suggesting that the title may have been applied only after they had been written and assembled. Like the title, the short introductions provided for each essay fail to explain how each might relate to this implied theme of the natural or ideal garden.

Members of the Garden History Society of Williamsburg and the Southern Garden History Society will be interested in the six essays that consider eighteenth-century gardens in some depth. Andersen and Griswold again offer perceptive and virtually solo observations on gardening in towns, utilitarian gardens, landscape archaeology, and the gardens of African-American slaves. Peggy Cornett Newcomb builds a strong case for the historical study of individual plant varieties and pointedly advocates close attention to documentary sources. References to historical source materials, as well as current material culture studies, is not apparent in Gordon de Wolf's account of the earliest colonial developments. His essay suffers from an outmoded bias towards New England and a poorly substantiated narrative. Diane Kostial McGuire in "Early Gardens Along the Atlantic Coast" falls into another venerable, but erroneous assumption, the characterization of colonial New England gardens as utilitarian and southern gardens as ornamental. Her essay too seems rather insecurely grounded in the literature. For example, the gardening efforts of Washington and Jefferson are discussed at length without benefit of their own readily available words, and their influence is accepted rather than critically tested. When John Custis is



century. Regional developments constitute a strong subtheme in the book and are most effectively identified and analyzed in the pieces about the West, such as David Streatfield's treatment of gardening in Arizona, California, and the Pacific Northwest from the late nineteenth-century to the present day. The selection of essays reveals an understanding of the geographical and chronological diversity, as well as the inherent complexity of American garden history, and qualifies the Massachusetts Horticultural Society's publication as an important addition to the subject literature.

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mentioned, but his truly exceptional garden is not and the expertise of professional and slave gardeners goes unnoticed, credibility is strained. By contrast, Catherine M. Howett's study of landscape and garden in the South combines an intelligent reading of the historical evidence with a well-defended delineation of regional identity.

In addition to the instructive essays of diverse topic, time, and place, *Keeping Eden* includes a selection of nicely reproduced plates and drawings. A greater use of plans, both original and reconstructed, would have clarified the composition of many examples and perhaps opened up new lines of inquiry. Most of the bibliographies provided with the essays are quite extensive and representative of current garden history scholarship. As editor Walter Punch admits, *Keeping Eden* is not a comprehensive history of American gardening. A tendency to focus on large, formally designed gardens, evident particularly in those essays about the colonial era and the South, clearly illustrates his point. Nevertheless, the book confirms the tremendous potential of thoughtfully structured research and identifies many of the major issues that will be absolutely essential to composing such a work †

*Review by Vanessa E. Patrick, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for the Garden History Society of Williamsburg.*

**The Garden Tourist 1993: A Guide to Garden Tours, Garden Days, Shows, and Special Events.** Lois G. Rosenfield. Portland, OR: Timber Press. \$9.95. (available at bookstores or directly from Timber Press, 9999 S.W. Wilshire, Portland, OR 97225 (800) 327-5680; add \$3.75 for shipping.)

This 160-page guide lists by states and cities garden tours, garden days, shows, and special events sponsored mainly by nonprofit organizations, including several who are SGHS members. There is a listing of a number of major regional flower shows and some international events †

[Correction: The Winter 1993 issue was mistakenly numbered Vol. X No. 1, please note that it should be Vol. IX No. 2.]



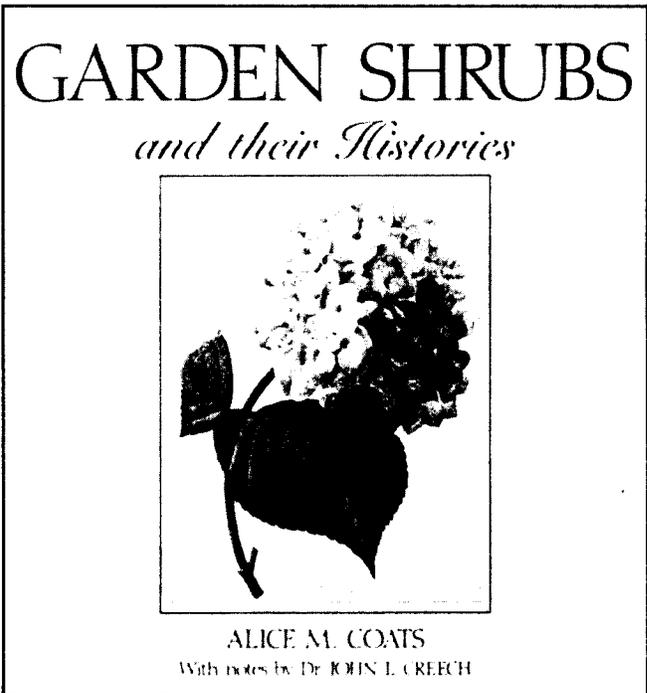
**Garden Shrubs and Their Histories.** Alice M. Coats. New York: Simon & Schuster. \$40.00 cloth.

Walking into a garden and not knowing the history of the plants you see is like going to a party of complete strangers with nobody to introduce you. All you can do is look and speculate. We can add substantially to our knowledge of shrubs with this reprint of Coats's book. An added bonus are the notes, following each plant entry, by John L. Creech, former director of the National Arboretum, which specifically address American gardeners and bring this classic up to date.

The plants are listed in alphabetical order from Abelia to Yucca. The entries are full of fascinating stories behind the discovery and introduction of our most familiar garden shrubs. The rose, one of the oldest cultivated shrubs, has new hybrids being developed into the present while the ubiquitous forsythias go back only a century.

This new edition is also illustrated with 112 classic paintings by some of the most renowned botanical artists of the 18th and 19th centuries. Coats, who lived from 1905-1978, published her first book, *Flowers and Their Histories*, in 1956. *Garden Shrubs* followed in 1963, and *Quest for Plants* in 1969 †

*Review by Susan Stahl, gardener at the Hermitage.*

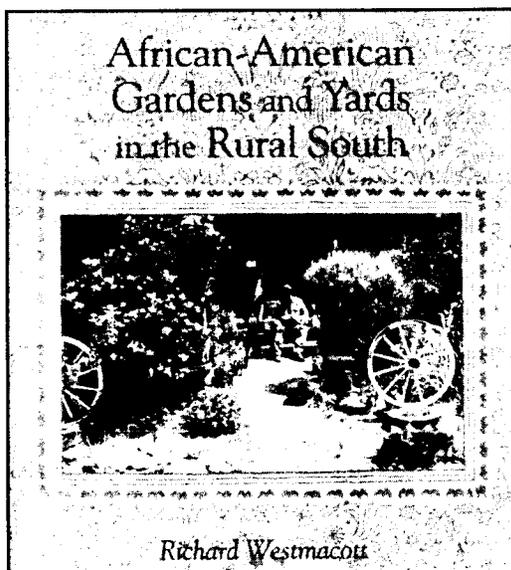


## In Print

**The Formal Garden: The Tradition of Art and Nature** by Mark Laird has recently been published by Thames & Hudson of New York.

**Heritage Gardens** is available for \$10.00 from Dr. Ed Givhan's Lime Ridge Flower Farm, P.O. Box 11516, Montgomery, AL 36111. 1(800) 332-GROW.

**African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South** by Richard Westmacott. Published in December 1992 by The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville 37996-0325. Available for \$24.95 in paper and \$39.95 in cloth. Many Southern Garden History members will recall Mr. Westmacott's discussion of his research during the October 1991 Old Salem "Restoring Southern



Gardens and Landscapes" conference. (He will be a featured speaker at the 1993 conference.) Readers are also referred back to the Spring 1992 *Magnolia* for an article by Mr. Westmacott based on this book. In addition to a broad selection of black-and-white illustrations, this study contains a section of striking color photographs, as well as numerous garden survey plans and plant lists.

**Genius in the Garden: Charles F. Gillette and Landscape Architecture in Virginia** by George C. Longest has recently been published by the Virginia State Library and Archives.

**The Brandywine Valley: An Introduction to its Cultural Treasures** by James S. Wamsley (Harry N. Abrams & Co.) is a tour of Wilmington, DE and environs with photographs of Nemours ♦



## The Moravians, Still Earliest American Tea Planters

by Flora Ann Bynum, Winston-Salem, NC

In the last *Magnolia*, I set out to disprove the legend, much quoted in various forms, that the French botanist André Michaux grew the first tea plants in America around 1800 at Middleton Plantation near Charleston, South Carolina. The Moravian Archives here record that the Moravians successfully grew tea in 1760 in what is now Winston-Salem, North Carolina. So "move over, Michaux," said I.

Thanks to fellow SGHS members, we now have references to two other pre-Michaux planters of tea in America. Larry Gulley, manuscript librarian of the University of Georgia in Athens, sent a photocopy of a book, *The Natural History of the Tea-Tree*, by John Coakley Lettsom, M.D., London, 1799. The book states that tea "was introduced into Georgia about the year 1770." Mr. Gulley went on to report that there were numerous tea plantings in Athens from the 1850s when a newspaper gave out seedlings, and that last year he himself had started over two hundred plants from seed.

Dr. Arthur O. Tucker, research professor of Delaware State College in Dover, sent material also, including a reference from *Green Immigrants: The Plants That Transformed America* by Claire Shaver Haughton, 1978. Mrs. Haughton states: "America appeared to be ideal for growing tea, and on December 12, 1760, the Society for the Encouragement of Art and Commerce in the American colonies met in London to lay out plans for establishing tea plantations here...

"The society ordered that huge balls of wax embedded with tea seed be sent to each colonial governor, and to outstanding statesmen and gardeners... After many months of delay, experimental plantations were started in South Carolina, which had the proper climate and a surplus of slave labor. Seed was planted, young trees were set out, and the plantations thrived. But before they became commercially profitable the American Revolution broke out, and England was forced to abandon the venture."

Because these plantations could not have been planted until 1761 or 1762, the North Carolina Moravians are still ahead ♦

## Members In The News



## Ninth Conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes

The September/October 1992 issue of *Southern Accents* "The Southern Gardener" column featured new SGHS member **Jim Kibler's** work on the records of an upcountry South Carolina antebellum nursery known as Pomaria and mentioned the use **Christy Snipes** has made of these in her work on Rosemont Plantation.

The **Southern Garden History Society** itself received mention in the January 1993 issue of *Southern Accents* with an announcement of the upcoming eleventh annual meeting.

*Fine Gardening's* "Public Gardens" column in the March/April issue was devoted to SGHS institutional member **Atlanta Botanical Garden** and that same magazine's "Gleanings" column mentioned both the **Southern Garden History Society**, and recently founded sister institution **New England Garden History Society**, as well as the **Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants** and **Old Salem** as resources for information and, in the case of the latter two, seeds.

Back in July 1992 *Smithsonian* magazine contained an article, "Rose Rustlers Are Giving 'Antique' Varieties New Life," by Bruce Fellman which described the work of SGHS members **Pam Puryear**, **G. Michael Shoup**, and **William C. Welch** in preserving these older varieties. Note that all three will be at this year's annual meeting †

The March/April issue of *Southern Accents* carried stories on three SGHS members. **Peter Patout**, owner of Patout Antiques in New Orleans, was featured in "Courtyard Repast, Peter Patout Refines the Art of Creole Entertaining." "The Adaptable Garden" featured the Charleston courtyard garden of **Patti McGee**, which was visited by SGHS members who attended the society's annual meeting in Charleston last March. "Tryon's Gardens" showed the recently discovered eighteenth-century plan for the garden of Tryon Palace, New Bern, NC, and told the story of the drawing's discovery in Venezuela. The article discussed the dilemma now facing the palace garden curators - to go back to the original plan, or to retain the current Colonial Revival garden, now a "magnificent American landscape." †

Readers are again encouraged to mark their calendars for the October 7th-9th, 1993 dates of this biennial event. As always an exciting array of speakers is on tap for the Old Salem program, speakers who this year will address the impact of both native and immigrant groups on the Southern landscape. SGHS board member Bill Welch will offer the opening address for the conference which will include presentations on the influence of Native American, African-American, Spanish, French, English and German peoples. Bill will be joined by speakers such as anthropologist Richard Yarnell of the University of North

*Continued on page 16 . . .*

## Of Interest

**Allen Lacy's Homeground** is a new publication, a quarterly newsletter for American gardeners who enjoy reading about gardens as well as working in them.

*Homeground* will include a lively mix of essays on practical subjects like plant combinations, groundcovers and vines, and other topics as well as taking a more meditative and, at times, humorous look at what lies behind the passion for gardening. Allen Lacy has been writing gardening columns for over a decade, currently for *The New York Times* and is the author of several highly praised books. Subscriptions are \$38 per year and can be obtained by contacting **Allen Lacy's Homeground**, Box 271, Linwood, NJ, 08221.

**The Garden History Society of Williamsburg** is an organization attempting to bring together from various disciplines those in the Williamsburg area who share overlapping interest in garden history. The purpose of this society is the scholarly examination of facets of garden history with primary scrutiny devoted to the landscape of the mid-Atlantic region before the Civil War. For more information, contact **Terry Yemm**, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia 23187 †

# Magnolia Essays *Launched*



The first *Magnolia Essays, Occasional Papers of the Southern Garden History Society* will be published this spring on the subject "Residential Work of the Olmsted Firm in Georgia, 1893-1937." The paper is by Lucy Lawliss, a landscape architect with the National Park Service in Atlanta.

Catherine Howett, now serving as editor for *Magnolia Essays*, is a SGHS board member and professor of landscape architecture at the University of Georgia. Mrs. Howett also served as president of the Society in 1986-1988 and has received much support from current president Florence Griffin in this project.

This essay will be dedicated to William Lanier Hunt of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, who first urged the formation of the society and who now serves as honorary president. Foreword is by Dr.

*Deadline for submission of articles for the Summer Issue of Magnolia is May 1st, 1993.*

Rick Beard, an Olmsted scholar who is executive director of the Atlanta Historical Society.

A copy of the first *Magnolia Essay* will be mailed to each member of the society on the membership list as of the date of publication. Additional copies will be available for sale through the SGHS headquarters.

Members of the society's publication committee are Dr. William C. Welch, Flora Ann Bynum, Judith Flowers, Catherine Howett, Kenneth M. McFarland, and Peggy C. Newcomb ♣

## *Continued from Ninth Conference*

Carolina at Chapel Hill, historian Susan Parker of the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, restoration landscape architect Rudy Favretti, and environmental design professor Richard Westmancott of the University of Georgia. Greg Grant and Scott Kunst, each a skilled horticulturist as well as a garden historian, will offer practical workshop sessions and formal presentations. Look for further details in upcoming issues of *Magnolia* and in the conference flyers all SGHS members will receive ♣

**Florence P. Griffin, *President***

**Ben G. Page, Jr., *Vice-President***

**Flora Ann Bynum, *Secretary-Treasurer***

**William Lanier Hunt, *Honorary President***

*Magnolia grandiflora* reproduced by courtesy of Rare Book Division, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library.

***Editor:***

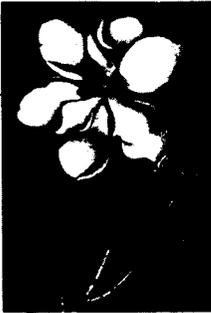
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Winston-Salem, NC 27108





# Magnolia

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

Bulletin of the  
Southern Garden  
History Society

Vol. IX

No. 4

Summer 1993

## The Country Place Era in Houston

by Sadie Gwin Blackburn, Houston, Texas

**T**he Country Place Era in the United States lasted approximately fifty years from 1890 to 1940. It was a period in landscape architecture arising out of specific historical conditions

and exhibited definitive characteristics. It was essentially a residential landscape development since its basic rationale was escape from the city. There were traces of Victorian horticultural traditions in the beginning of the period and harbingers of the post World War II gardens at the end of the period. I believe, however, that it is easier to understand the qualities of a general trend of thought or a design principle by examining specific examples in a specific place than in trying to isolate descriptive intellectual characterizations. It is my hope that by describing what

happened in domestic landscape design in Houston during that time span we will better understand our history, our ideals, and how we lived in our homes and gardens during that period.

*Continued on page 2 . . .*



*Home of John Henry Kirby, 1901-2*

*The remodeled house included a conservatory, the newest fashion of uniting house and garden by bringing garden plants inside the living area. The greenhouse remained from the Victorian garden but the pergola extending from house to the natatorium was a major feature of the new "Italian gardens." Photo courtesy Junior League Collection Houston Public Library Archives.*

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Issue**

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Page 13 The Trees at Somerset Place: Living Artifacts

## Calendar

**June 19th-June 24th, 1993:** "Of Media and Messages," the 1993 Annual Conference of the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums will be hosted by the Minnesota Historical Society at the new Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. The conference theme will explore the application of a variety of media to the teaching of rural history, including - and beyond - living history. Sessions and hands-on workshops will help us gain expertise and skill in many fields of interest in the interpretation of agriculture and rural life. For registration materials contact Gail Ede, Historic Sites Department, MHS, 345 Kellogg Blvd. West, St. Paul, MN, 55102.

**June 25th, 1993:** Symposium, "New England Garden Restoration: Visions and Reality, the Transition from Private to Public Use" to be hosted by the New England Garden History Society and Blithewold Mansion in Bristol, Rhode Island. For more information, call Walter T. Punch at (617) 536-9280 or Mark Zelonis at (401) 253-2707.

**Until September 12th, 1993:** Exhibit, "Longue Vue and the Classical Tradition: A Legacy of Charles Platt and Ellen Shipman" at Longue Vue House and Gardens in New Orleans, Louisiana.



**October 2nd-4th, 1993:** Maymont Centennial Weekend. Please contact The Maymont Foundation, 1700 Hampton St., Richmond, VA 23220, for more information.

**October 7th-9th, 1993:** "Many Peoples, Many Cultures: The Shaping of the Southern Landscape," the Ninth Biennial Conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. All Southern Garden History Society members are being mailed brochures and registration materials. For further information, contact Mrs. Jackie Beck, Registrar, Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, Old Salem, Inc., P.O. Box F, Winston-Salem, NC 27108. Telephone (919) 721-7352, or FAX (919) 721-7335.

**October 15th-16th, 1993:** This year's Southern Garden Symposium will include several workshops, demonstrations, lectures and tours. Pre-registration is required. Contact The Southern Garden Symposium, P.O. Box 2075, St. Francisville, LA, 70775 for more information.

**May 6th-8th, 1994:** Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia \*

## Country Place Era Continued from page 1

At the turn of the century, three major trends of thought began to influence the design of residential gardens in the United States and in Houston: the idea of the integration of house and garden into a unit for domestic living; the idea of using a particular historical style as a point of departure in architecture and landscape design; and the idea of the superior value of country living over life in the city.

Charles Platt provided the initial impetus to the idea of regarding house and garden as a single unit. His tour of Italy in 1893 resulted in a book, *Italian Gardens*, illustrated with photographs he had taken of Italian Renaissance villas and their gardens. He wrote:

The evident harmony of arrangement between the house and surrounding

landscape is what first strikes one in Italian landscape architecture - the design as a whole, including gardens, terraces, groves . . . not one of these component parts was ever considered independently, the architect of the house being also the architect of the garden. . . the architect proceeded with the idea that not only was the house to be lived in, but that one still wished to be at home while out-of-doors; so the garden was designed as another apartment. . . where one might walk about and find a place suitable to the hour of the day and feeling of the moment, and still be in that sacred portion of the globe dedicated to one's Self.<sup>1</sup>

Platt's book and his later activity as a landscape designer and architect initiated a considerable vogue for the "Italian garden" during the early part of the twentieth century and

contributed to the idea that house and garden were equally important in domestic life. Early examples of the "Italian garden" in Houston were John Henry Kirby, 2006 Smith Street, in 1901-2 and Robert Crews Duff, 803 McGowan in 1910.

The historical influence in garden design had its inception in a controversy that arose in the latter years of the nineteenth century. Landscape designers in England and the United States reacted sharply to the contrived flower bed designs and garish colors of the Victorian garden. A strong difference of opinion existed, however, as to whether landscaping should be primarily architectural or horticultural, that is, whether it should relate primarily to the architecture of the house or to the world of Nature from which the plants came. In England, William Robinson advocated a return to the natural landscape garden of the eighteenth century, using native and hardy plants to recapture the simplicity and fidelity to Nature of that period. As it had been in that century, he felt that the landscape designer should be a horticultural artist who produced a pictorial landscape, using plants instead of paint, to create mass and line, color and texture simulating Nature. Robinson's contemporary, Reginald Blomfield, felt that the Renaissance and Baroque formal gardens provided better examples for landscape design because they complemented and reinforced the architecture.<sup>2</sup> This dichotomy existed also in America; landscape architects and architects designing gardens tended to use formal, historical design, and the landscape gardeners advocated the horticultural, natural approach.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a new awareness of Nature in America greatly influenced landscape design ideas. Although the urban population of the United States did not exceed the rural population until 1920, urban Americans were seized by a great nostalgia for rural living about 1890. By this time the American countryside had been made accessible by a network of railroads, and the wilderness, which had once been an adversary, was now perceived to be one of the nation's greatest assets. Between 1890 and 1915 government action created eleven national parks in addition to Yellowstone, which had been set aside in 1872; these were chosen for their scenic, scientific, or historical values and



were to remain public property in perpetuity.<sup>3</sup> About the same time, many men whose great wealth stemmed from industry and commerce bought properties that exemplified these newfound values in

the beauties of Nature. They built houses and gardens in the country to escape both the pressure of business and the ugliness of unplanned urban development. Middle and lower classes joined in the general movement according to their economic capacity, but it was the country places of the wealthy that created a style of architecture and garden design that became know



*Harris Masterson, 1907*

*A privet hedge maze was the principal garden design feature to complement the 18th-century classical architecture of the Masterson house. Such coordination of house and garden design was new in Houston at this time. Photo courtesy Junior League Collection, Houston Public Library Archives.*

as "Country Place Era" design. Gardening and other outdoor activities played a large role in the leisure hours of American households during the period from about 1890 to 1940. The organization of garden clubs and country clubs were manifestations of this outlook during these years.

The earliest Country Place houses were based on European historical prototypes but were quickly superseded by country places reflecting the simpler architecture of colonial America: Medieval Tudor Colonial, Southern Colonial, New

England farmhouse. It was felt that architecture should mirror the history of the country of its origin, and gardens were to follow the design traditions of the historic period of the architecture. This formal, historical, house-and-garden design principle has been described by the general term "creative eclectic." Houses and gardens of the Country Place era were not necessarily isolated properties



was erected on shore at the foot of a long fishing and boating pier, owned by the Association and available to all families who built bay houses along the high bluff above the water's edge. Bay Ridge, however, was simply part of a movement to enjoy Nature, and preceded the idea of integrated house-and-garden design of the



*Henry Staiti, 1917*

*The cement curbing outlining the rose beds in the open parterre garden between the treillage tea house and the greenhouse provided geometric order for the rose display. Photo courtesy Junior League Collection, Houston Public Library Archives.*

far from the city. They might be a cluster of homes in an enclave in a small community or around a country club, or even a home on a spacious lot in a planned suburb. "[Urban] Americans insisted on defining 'country' living as the highest expression of cultural society. . . ."<sup>4</sup> From this perspective, garden design and gardening became more important than ever in America because gardens symbolically expressed the new ideal of Nature and outdoor living in a context of the established ideals of home and family.

This excerpt from *Houston's Forgotten Heritage* describes the origin of the ideas that produced the Country Place Era.

In Houston the first evidence of the Country Place trend was the Bay Ridge Park Association. In 1890 a group of friends formed an organization to build cottages on a strip of property on the north shore of Galveston Bay.<sup>5</sup> A gazebo

was erected on shore at the foot of a long fishing and boating pier, owned by the Association and available to all families who built bay houses along the high bluff above the water's edge. Bay Ridge, however, was simply part of a movement to enjoy Nature, and preceded the idea of integrated house-and-garden design of the formal Italian garden described by Charles Platt. The earliest attempt to create an "Italian garden" was made by John Henry Kirby and his wife who had bought a house on a whole city block at 2006 Smith Street in 1896. After remodeling in 1901, they christened their home Inglenook. Mr. Kirby often visited Boston, seeking financing for his lumber and oil companies in East Texas, so it is not surprising that

the Kirbys selected John Henry Curtis, a Boston landscape gardener, to design a garden for their new home. It is somewhat remarkable that an "Italian garden" was created in Houston only a few years after Platt designed his first garden in Brookline. Curtis did not come to Houston but made the design from photographs and the property survey. His plan contained a number of features of the Italian garden, such as water parterres and fountains, a pergola, statuary and even a natural area with a lake conforming to the "Bosco" of the classic garden, but there was no perceptible integration with the architecture nor any clearly defined outdoor rooms. The garden had great charm, however, and was notable as the first garden in Houston to be designed by a professional.

The garden of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Crews Duff

reveals, I believe, the educational influence of the presence in Houston of the professionals who built Rice Institute. It is a rather original adaptation of the structural principles of the Italian garden and closely integrated with the architecture of the house. The balustrade around the house terrace was extended across the whole property, dividing front from back garden, an earlier design feature of Victorian gardens arising from practical reasons. Steps led down into the lower back garden which was divided by plantings into three outdoor rooms: the Sundial Garden, the Lawn Garden and the Psyche Parterre Garden. Statuary was carved by Oswald J. Lassig who had come to Houston as a stoneworker on the Rice Institute buildings.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, the city of Houston was growing at an unprecedented rate. The devastation of Galveston by the hurricane of 1900 and the discovery of oil at Spindletop near Beaumont four months later ensured Houston's future as a major trading and business center. Houston's population almost doubled between 1890 and 1900, and doubled again between 1900 and 1910. The business district was expanding into the residential district encircling the downtown area.



landscaping ideals of the "country place." Houston Heights, a separate town built in 1890 northwest of Houston, was instructive regarding the value of comprehensive planning; but Houstonians were also in touch with suburban developments in other cities, most notably St. Louis. The St. Louis "private places" were relatively small, one or two streets a few blocks long, conforming to the city grid pattern but owned and maintained by the property owners; ornamental gates marked the entrances. The layout used landscaping to create a parklike setting within the area and often included a protective strip of green around the outer perimeter. Deed restrictions established high minimum standards in the Places, which were intended as enclaves for the civic mercantile elite in outlying suburban areas.

The "private places" of St. Louis were the prototypes for the earliest Country Place suburbs. Connections with St. Louis were strong through the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad business and personal associations. Westmoreland, organized in 1903, the first "planned" subdivision, was laid out by the prestigious St. Louis engineer Julius Pitzman, but Courtlandt Place in 1906 was



*W. J. Crabb, 1930*

*The series of outdoor rooms, all in the Moorish tradition reflecting the Spanish architecture of the house designed by John Staub, including this traditional octagonal pond flanked by oil jars and, in the distance, an open lawn space with a tiled wall fountain of a Spanish madonna.*

This growth was both rapid and haphazard, cutting into even the wealthiest neighborhoods. New residential areas were needed, and the character of these developments would reflect the

the classic example of a "private place" suburb in Houston, where a group of families and friends formed an ownership association to develop the small 15 acre area. Montrose, developed by J. W. Link was much larger but retained the reputation of a choice neighborhood by its esplanaded streets and building restrictions.<sup>7</sup> Although suburbs were established for working class residential development with advertised public plantings, the country place integrating historical architecture and landscape were not pursued to any great degree. "Country

place" suburbs were said to be, "the exurban retreat of the urban rich."

The historical architectural style of garden design was predominately used in the new,

planned neighborhoods of the city. One fine example was the Harris Masterson house and garden at 3702 Burlington. Finished in 1907, the Masterson house was one of the earliest in Westmoreland. R. D. Steele was the architect. The garden around this Colonial Revival house was probably the result of the architect's suggestion of a design that would be historically appropriate to the architecture. In the Mastersons' garden nothing was allowed to disturb the tranquillity of the front lawn, of course, which was an obligatory part of the neighborhood area park; but the maze at the side of the house formed a decorative area that was also a joy to the Mastersons' grandchildren. The clipped hedges were evergreen native yaupon, and the repeated use of this motif in different geometric shapes for other childhood play areas was a beguiling feature in the back garden. On the opposite side of the house was an arbor with climbing roses over a walk edged with violets and a bench where one might sit and enjoy the fragrance and view of the garden. One of the Masterson grandchildren remembers pansies, geraniums, and amaryllis growing in the garden and moon vines on the trellis near the back door. The Masterson garden is an excellent example of the creative eclectic house and garden of the Country Place era. The premise that the garden should harmonize with the architecture is evident, though the architect probably left the choice of horticulture up to the owners. The Colonial Revival architecture reflected the southern heritage of the Masterson family; the maze was a garden design affiliated with the historical period of the architectural design but completely personalized in the way it was adapted to the use of the garden as a play area for the grandchildren. This kind of overt representation of the personal attributes of the family who occupied the house became a hallmark of early twentieth-century gardens.<sup>8</sup>

The nursery business in Houston became well established in the first years of the twentieth century. The two leading firms were the Teas Nursery and the Japanese Nursery. Edward Teas came from a family of nurserymen in Missouri who were entrusted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture with testing foreign plants for use in this country. He opened his business in Houston in 1910 and became a leading advisor and plantsman in both public and private property



landscaping. The Japanese Nursery was an outgrowth of a Japanese effort to grow satsuma oranges in the area between Houston and Galveston. When a severe freeze brought on bankruptcy, the manager, Saburo Arai, was refinanced by C. E. Schaff

of St. Louis, the president of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad who maintained a second home in Houston. The business thrived with offices both in Galveston and Houston and was a



*J. Robert Neal, 1933*

*Designed by the Olmsted Brothers' Boston firm, this gazebo with gracefully carved columns and a dome of lacy iron filigree was a particularly appropriate accompaniment to the French inspired architecture of the house.*

major source of plants for Houston, particularly Oriental ones.<sup>9</sup>

The only resident landscape architect known to have been active in Houston during these early years was Edward Dewson. He came to Houston in 1910 as editor of the short-lived *Southern Architectural Review* and was particularly interested in the indoor-outdoor relationship of home and garden. In 1912 he designed a plan for the lake house of E. A. Peden and in 1917 for the Westmoreland home of Henry Staiti. His restrained geometric designs indicate a thorough understanding of the principles of country place design as enumerated by Norman Newton: meticulous care for detail, proportion, and scale; space treated as a plastic material; clarity of circulation; relation between form and material to emphasize geometric form; and understatement and reserve rather than exaggeration. The Peden landscaping at Clear Lake is difficult to evaluate, though nothing seems to violate these principles.

An examination of the Staiti garden, however, reveals an adherence to every one of these principles. Indeed, it is the clarity of the engineering eye that underlies the beauty of the planting. There seem to be no echoes of historic landscape styles either in the garden or in its relation to the house; the relationship is pure design. To quote Newton once more: "the power of simple geometry. . . is independent of 'historic' styles."<sup>10</sup>

The principles evident in Edward Dewson's work reflect an influence from new developments in architectural theory. The formal geometric style of garden design had been used principally for houses built in the historical creative eclectic tradition. The use of historical styles in building and garden design was challenged, however, by midwestern progressives such as Louis H. Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, and George W. Maher. This school of thought believed that house and landscape should be based on function and celebrate the artistic characteristics of the geographical region in which it was to be built. The horizontal, spare, flowing lines of the prairie were the dominant feature of the Midwest; therefore, its architecture and landscaping should express that spirit. The historical American Colonial connotations should be left to the eastern seaboard. This independent regional attitude appealed to all areas of the United States that had been part of the westward movement. Two

Houston houses gave evidence of the influence of these progressive ideas: The Oaks, built by Edwin B. Parker, was a direct example of the ideas of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Country Place, owned by Walter B. Sharp, reflected a new movement toward using native plants to blend garden design into the surrounding landscape in the tradition of eighteenth-century English landscape gardening of which Jens Jensen was the foremost advocate in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

The concern with private gardening and landscaping in the first two decades of the twentieth



century was accompanied by a new conceptual sophistication in terms of city beautification and urban planning. Civic and business leaders were firmly committed to making Houston a progressive modern city, a "Greater Houston." The Houston Business League, organized in 1898 by Rienzi Johnson, editor of *The Houston Post*, provided a contact point for the business leaders concerned about the city's future development during rapid growth. A monthly publication entitled *Progressive Houston* was issued by the city from 1909 to 1912 to inform and influence the public regarding the activities and goals of the administration.

In River Oaks the most significant horticultural trend of the time was set - the predominance of azaleas and camellias as landscape plants in Houston gardens. A descendant of John Grant says that he was the first to bring azaleas to



*Will and Miss Ima Hogg, "Bayou Bend," 1927-28*  
*The Latin Colonial architecture of Bayou Bend was given a dramatic emphasis on the north front by the grass terraces and steps in Diana Garden, one of the ten garden rooms in the fourteen acres surrounding the residence.*

Houston after a visit to Charleston in the 1920s. In the early thirties these plants with their spectacular spring bloom began appearing in Houston gardens, particularly on Lazy Lane. It was found that Houston had the ideal climate for these plants - only the soil needed to be acidified periodically for beautiful results. The plants were cold hardy and evergreen; there were numerous cultivars which were well suited to use in parterres of formal historical garden design, or underplanted in the native pine forest. The Indicas which had naturalized in the south after

the first importation from England in the late eighteenth century were favorites. Harry Hanszen boasted a sixty year old azalea brought in from Louisiana. The River Oaks Garden Club began their spring Azalea Trail in 1935.



Camellias, too, received great attention. In Houston they bloomed during winter months and so extended the period of bloom in Houston gardens. An annual camellia show was held at the Forum by the River Oaks Garden Club which greatly increased the interest and use of this plant in gardens, particularly in River Oaks.

The landscape architect who probably designed more gardens in River Oaks than any other was C. C. (Pat) Fleming. He was born in 1909 in Beaumont, and graduated from the University of Texas with a degree in architecture. While still a student he superintended the landscaping of the campus and, immediately after graduation, formed a landscape architecture firm with Albert E. Sheppard headquartered in Austin, Texas. Fleming worked for two years with the National Park system landscaping Palmetto Park at Gonzales with an eye to preserving native plants and natural beauty; as a result of that work he was made a member of the Texas Academy of Science. In 1936, he proceeded to supervise the landscaping of the newly constructed San Jacinto Monument in Houston. There was so much business in the coastal city that the firm relocated in Houston in 1937. Long after the period under discussion, Fleming pursued an illustrious career designing mostly private gardens, but also receiving an award for his landscaping of the Prudential Building in Houston and for the Parker Memorial Garden in San Antonio. His skill in coordinating architecture and garden design, his use of appropriate materials and garden ornament, his close attention to the individuality of his clients as well as his broad knowledge of plants and horticulture, all made Pat Fleming an outstanding landscape architect of creative historical style in Houston. His work at Bayou Bend in creating the Diana Garden and later the natural woodland garden at Dogwoods made his reputation.<sup>12</sup>

The Country Place Era in the two decades between the World Wars had specific characteristics which reached full development in River Oaks: integrated house-and-garden design, usually of formal creative design which included European as well as American historical refer-

ences. These homes were designed by highly trained professional architects and landscape architects to reflect the individual preferences of the family. Most of these homes and gardens were opened to the

public during the Azalea Trail or on a home and garden pilgrimage. This was a time of progressive ideals, of confident belief that a city could design itself, that with the advice of talented professionals, domestic surroundings could be made beautiful and orderly neighborhoods created; and, with thought and determined civic pride, a City Beautiful might be built along the bayou +

<sup>1</sup> Charles Platt, *Italian Gardens* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), 6-72.

<sup>2</sup> William Robinson, *The English Flower Garden* (New York: Amaryllis Press, 1984), 27-28, reprint (London: J. Murray, 1933); Reginald Blomfield, *The Formal Garden in England* (London: Macmillan, 1892), 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard Univ. Press) 521-29. See also Mark A. Hewitt, *The Architect and the American Country House* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), 12.

<sup>4</sup> Hewitt, *American Country House*, 153; quote from Peter Schmitt, *Back to Nature* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969).

<sup>5</sup> Bay Ridge File, JLC/HMRC/HPL.

<sup>6</sup> Sadie Gwin Blackburn, "The Evolution of the Houston Landscape," *Houston's Forgotten Heritage* (Houston: Rice Univ. Press, 1991) 49-50.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>8</sup> Sadie Gwin Blackburn, "The Evolution of the Landscape," *Houston's Forgotten Heritage* (Houston, Texas: Rice University Press, 1991) 50-51.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 52.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 52-54.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 54-56.

<sup>12</sup> Interview, S. G. Blackburn with Pat Fleming, August, 1991; Biography of Pat Fleming in *Kerrville Daily Times*, June 23, 1972.

# "Texas Forever"

Thus were the sentiments of German botanist and naturalist John Meusebach who explored the landscape of his newly adopted home during the mid-nineteenth century. For 120 members of the Southern Garden History Society who attended the 11th annual meeting in Brenham, Texas this past April 16th-18th, the sentiments were the same, thanks to the careful attention of conference coordinators Bill and Diane Welch and their hard-working planning committee.

From the opening remarks by Allen Commander, who described frontier flowers while dressed in full regalia as Sam



Florence & Bill Griffin with Faith Bybee.

Houston, to the final reception in the Welch's garden at Cricket Court, every aspect of this well-conceived meeting worked to enrich our experience, add to our knowledge of historic plants and gardens, and alter our concept and appreciation of the Lone Star State forever.

It is impossible to describe, nor can our photographs do justice to, the breathtaking beauty of the Texas roadsides blanketed with Indian paintbrushes (*Castilleja sp.*) Texas bluebonnets (*Lupinus texensis*) and evening primroses or



The Lewis-Wagner Farmstead at the Winedale Historical Center in Round Top, Texas.



buttercups (*Oenothera speciosa*). The pictures on this page capture but a few of the meeting's many highlights including some of the private and public gardens on the tour.

Hallmarking the meeting were the wide-range of topics and high quality of presentations by a superbly assembled roster of speakers. Lecturers



SGHS Board Members at Festival Hill April 1993.

included long-time SGHS board member Suzanne Turner who gave a stunning portrait of Thomas Affleck as "Renaissance Man of the Southern Soil," and Nancy Volkman and Gordon Echols who addressed "Spanish Influences on Texas Landscapes." Flo Oxley of the National Wildflower Research Center gave conference participants a deeper understanding of the origins of Texas



Ben Page, Bill Welch, and Libby Page.

wildflower lore while George Ray McEachern explored the rich history of the Texas wine-making industry.

But most significantly, by assembling the contents of the lectures and events of this conference into a published "Proceedings," Bill Welch has set a precedent it is hoped will be continued with all future annual meetings. The three essays by Greg Grant, Jeff Abt, and Sadie Gwin Blackburn have been excerpted from this publication. Their focus on the German influence in Texas, East Texas lumber towns, and the Country Place movement in Houston represents the broad scope of "Southern Gardens Go West." \*

# The German Influence on the Texas Landscape

by D. Greg Grant, San Antonio, Texas

The influx of German immigrants into Texas is concentrated around the mid and late nineteenth century. Many Germans felt much discontent with the political climate, the lack of a unified country, compulsory military service, and the crowded conditions in their native homeland. Many, including the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas, saw this new land as a golden opportunity to start anew blessed with complete personal freedom, bountiful resources, and limitless potential. The Society was formed in 1842 by a group of German noblemen to purchase



*George Kalteyer House in King William District. 1892.  
Photo by Greg Grant.*

land and promote German settlement in Texas. The society promised land, homes, schools, churches, and more in exchange for settling the foreign land. Unfortunately, because the society was taken advantage of on most of their land purchases, they quickly depleted their finances, and eventually disbanded. Therefore, most of the thousands of German immigrants came to Texas facing extremely hard times, poor living conditions, and a number of deadly diseases.

The heaviest German settlement in Texas centered around two areas. The first was in east-central Texas, beginning with Industry in 1838. Other towns soon followed including Cat Springs, Frelsburg, Shelby, Oldenburg, New Ulm, and



Roundtop. The next major area of settlement was in the hill country of west-central Texas beginning with New Braunfels in 1845 and Fredericksburg in 1846. Others that followed included Sisterdale, Boerne, and Comfort.

The Germans that came to Texas included a large number of hard-working peasants and many highly educated intellectuals. Many were skilled laborers and most well versed in social functions. They cherished knowledge, accomplishment, and cultural entertainment including singing, sports, art, and gardening.

Of course the Germans originally gardened to sustain themselves. In addition, a great number of items were harvested from the wild including grapes, plums, blackberries and anything else deemed edible. One German was quoted as saying, "We ate what we liked, and we ate what we didn't like." Like most early settlers, they primarily grew edible crops including sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, corn, cabbage, etc. It

doesn't appear that the Germans were responsible for introducing any new types of vegetables to Texas but they can be credited with the increased use of white potatoes, cabbage for kraut; wheat for "light bread," and tobacco for cigars. Although they have often been credited with being superior gardeners compared to the Anglos of the time, there is no evidence to prove such. However, they certainly gave the impression of being harder workers, often working in entire family units in the fields and rarely using slave labor. The quality of their dwellings also improved very quickly showing off their skills with wood, stone, and iron

working. This, along with a neat, regimented lifestyle also led to the

impression of their being more cultured than the Anglos and Mexicans alongside them. To this day, many German yards possess a manicured, orderly habit.

One of the most noted examples of skillful German craftsmanship and period architecture is the beautiful King William district of San Antonio. With the first house built in 1867, it became the first prominent residential section in the area. The elegant architecture and gardens of this 35 block neighborhood reflect the hard-earned wealth and refined taste of the city's new elite. It was the first designated historic district in the state.

As many of the German immigrants were college educated and even college professors; a

number of them quickly made impacts in their respective fields. Several German naturalists rose to prominence through their exploration of the previously undescribed flora and fauna of Texas.



Among the most famous was Ferdinand Lindheimer who for fifteen years collected and classified numerous undescribed new plants around Houston, Galveston, San Felipe, New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, and San Antonio. Most of his collecting was done for Asa Gray of Harvard University and fellow German George Englemann of the Missouri Botanical Garden. Often consid-



*Ferdinand Lindheimer immigrated to America in 1833.*

ered "the father of Texas botany," his name has been honored in one genus of Texas wildflowers and twenty different native Texas plant species including *Gaudea lindheimeri*, now a popular garden perennial. He also helped guide Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels and the many new immigrant followers to the sight of present day New Braunfels and served as the editor of the *New Braunfels Zeitung* (a newspaper printed in German) for twenty years.

Also making a name for himself was Friederich Ernst, former head gardener and bookkeeper for the Duke of Oldenburg. Ernst, who is considered "the father of German immigration" in Texas, founded and helped settle the town of Industry in 1838, the first German town in Texas. He is perhaps most famous for his letter to a friend back in Oldenburg, Germany extolling the virtues of his newly beloved country. This letter was published in a number of newspapers throughout Germany. His contagious enthusiasm quickly spread, starting the first steady stream of immigration to Texas. In 1836 the census showed 218 Germans in Texas. By the 1840s there were thousands. Ernst was known as a skilled gardener and is credited for spreading much information on fruit and garden culture. He

is also considered "the father of the Texas cigar industry" and planned to have his own "segar" factory. By 1892 there were cigar factories in 28 towns in Texas, and by 1898 some 1,000 acres in production. Today,

Texas is the only state west of the Mississippi with a cigar factory.

Another skilled gardener was John Meusebach, second commissioner for The Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas and an accomplished student of natural sciences. He is also widely known for founding the town of Fredericksburg, forging a lasting peace treaty with the Comanche Indians of the Texas Hill country, and serving as a state senator. He later moved to Loyal Valley where his farm became a showplace with sixty varieties of roses, forty kinds of peaches, and an avenue of varying shades of crape myrtles leading to the house. His outdoor Roman bath was also quite a novelty.



*John O. Meusebach arrived in Galveston in 1845.*

Ferdinand Von Roemer, a German geologist, was sent to study the limestone areas of west-central Texas and in 1849 published *Texas*, one of the most

valuable early surveys of Texas flora, fauna, and geology, still considered a classic today. In his relatively short stay in the states he was known to have gone on collecting trips and shared libraries with both Lindheimer and Meusebach.

Another influential German immigrant was the highly educated Louis Ervenberg who led a movement to establish a German-English University near Industry, served as a Protestant minister, and built the first church in and helped establish the town of New Braunfels. He also established an orphanage for the many children of those who died during the long hard trek from the coast. He was a prominent supporter of improved agricultural practices and in 1850 secured a charter for a Western Texas University to teach scientific agriculture near New Braunfels. The

Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College in College Station wasn't established until 1876. Unfortunately both of his plans for institutes of higher learning failed.

Another excellent botanist, Peter Henry Oberwetter was a pioneer in the study, culture, and trade of bulbs, particularly amaryllids. He was by trade an importer of rare bulbs, and exporter of native bulbs, and a creator of other



Joseph's Lily (*Hippeastrum x johnsonii*) into the United States.

Several Germans established prominent nurseries in the state including J.J. Locke's Nursery, founded in 1856 at New Braunfels, J.F. Leyendecker's Pearfield Nursery, established in 1876 at Frelsburg, and G.A. Shattenberg's Waldheim Nursery at Boerne. Locke's Nursery is still in operation today run by his 90 year old grandson Otto Locke, Jr.

In addition to the oxblood lily, several other ornamental plants can be linked to the German influence including German or bearded iris (*Iris x germanica*) and a number of early rose cultivars including 'Gruss an Aachen', 'George Arends', 'Skyrocket (Wilhelm)', 'Leverkusen', 'Dortmund', 'Kordes Perfecta', 'Trier', 'Frau Karl Druschi', 'Tausendschon', and 'Veilchenblau' to name a few.

Of course the Germans also brought a number of customs along with them including the Christmas tree. Christmas trees are now a significant horticultural commodity in Texas and the United States.

Travelling the German areas of Texas today, one can't help but notice the skillfully constructed limestone houses, the European fachwork construction techniques, the beautiful ironwork of their fences and gates, the intricate patterns of gingerbread adorning the houses, and the neat appearance of the yards and surrounding landscape, all living legacies to the concepts of German ingenuity, perseverance, and self help.



*Shumacher House.  
San Antonio Botanical Center.  
Photo by Greg Grant.*

new varieties of bulbs by hybridization. He is often credited with the introduction of the oxblood lily (*Rhodophiala bifida*), a fall blooming "miniature amaryllis" from Argentina, which apparently has naturalized throughout the German areas of Texas. Although in question, his offspring related that he was the first to import the St.

## *East Texas Lumber Town Landscapes, Circa 1900*

by Jeffrey Abt, Nagocdoches, Texas

At the turn of the century, the trade magazine *American Lumberman* sent to East Texas a professional writer and photographer to document the lumber empire known as Thompson Lumber Co., marketers of the Lone Star Pine. The photographs taken for this extensive article (in fact the whole issue was devoted to the Thompsons) not only pictured the thriving business of the family, but coincidentally, captured the landscapes in and around East Texas lumber towns.

In 1844, the story begins with the migration of Benjamin Franklin Thompson from Georgia to Rusk County, Texas to the area where Kilgore



*Magnified detail of the Kilgore Homestead.  
Photo by Jeffrey Abt.*

now stands. He and two of his sons, John Martin and William Wirt, purchased 10,000 acres of land. The land was originally to be cleared of the timber, not for the sake of selling timber and lumber but that the land might be used for agricultural purposes. It was soon seen that money was to be made in the lumber business.



*Ben Williams and Jason Hawthorne on stilt in Willard, Texas. circa 1900.*

Mills were built, more lands were purchased, and the Thompsons soon were well on their way to becoming the first to make a fortune in the lumber business in Texas.

This was all history when the *American Lumberman* came to document the Thompson

story. By then the business had moved south to even better timber in Trinity, Tyler, Walker, Polk, Liberty, and Jefferson counties. When the photographers moved through East Texas, they captured on film a great variety of landscapes.

In 1908, Kilgore, the Thompsons' starting place, was still something of a frontier town. The photos there reveal a town that had not progressed far, and it is surprising to find street trees planted around the square. But the photos of public buildings in Kilgore reveal a society not yet willing to spend valuable resources landscaping around schools and churches. (This could be said about all the photographs of public buildings throughout the collection.)

The home photos tell a different story. The B.F. Thompson Homestead is well planted behind the fences. Other "home" photos also reveal this sure sign of domestication. The photos of a black employee's home in Kilgore depict a variety of plants, all in a swept yard.

When the photographers moved south to Willard, Texas, they found a community totally devoted to the Thompson's lumber enterprise. The

company owned almost everything: stores, churches, schools, boarding houses, and hotels. Later in the company's history the town would be moved lock, stock, and barrel to "New Willard." Such moves were needed because the timber in the area

would eventually be cut through. People under these conditions hesitate to put down roots. As a result, the photos of these "lumber towns" often show barren landscapes. Yet, there were exceptions to this general rule. Roses were often planted, if nothing else, to brighten the place. And the home of the mill manager in Willard was the only one photographed that was planted with anything close to a formal style. Two photos of different employees reveal plantings of cannas and an elaborately made stile over a fence. It seems that both photographs were taken in front of the Willard office. And one of the most beautiful pictures taken in the series was of the "negro quarters" in Willard.

At times, the photographers from Chicago could not refrain from taking shots of homes and people unrelated to the lumber business. These photos appear in the magazine labeled "by the wayside." These scenes were too full of interest to pass by. In these "wayside" photos, we find captured some of the oldest structures in the area and the plantings around them. Log and early frame homes have mature plantings very close to the structure. The chinaberry was often found in



*Homes of African-American employees of Willard. Caption for photo reads "Negro quarters."*

these yards, elephant ears, cannas, climbing and shrub roses, crepe myrtles, chinese wisteria, and a variety of pot plants.

The pictures of mill operations in the town of Doucette again show a town clustered around "the mill" with a somewhat barren landscape. And it is again the "wayside" photos that are the most

interesting. The hotel in Doucette was planted in front with something close to a herbaceous border and also sported a large birdfeeder (clearly there for ornament). The picture of the lumber buyer's home near Doucette shows a typical farm of the area. A home planted around with ornamentals and shrubbery all protected by a picket fence.

It is interesting to compare the photos of homes in rural East Texas with the homes of the Thompson family members living in urban Houston. The urban homes have plantings that are pushed back to the foundation of the house.



While in rural areas, the plants are planted about the yard in such a way as to be viewed there in their own right. Also, the lawn in Houston has clearly become important; while in rural areas, it has not. In fact, if one replaced the old garden roses found in the Houston photos with azaleas, one would have a modern Houston landscape.

These contrasting photos of rural and urban homesites taken in 1908 depict planting styles of two different eras. One still contains something of the pioneer spirit while the other shows the emergence of today's modern landscapes ♦

## *The Trees at Somerset Place: Living Artifacts*

by Terry M. Harper, Raleigh, North Carolina

How many times have you thought - if that object could speak, what story it would tell? Now, because of a research project undertaken last fall, the majestic trees at North Carolina's Somerset Place historic site are telling their story. (For more on Somerset Place and its antebellum plantation history, see *Magnolia*, V. X, No. 1, Winter 1993, p. 14.)

In November of 1992, Registered Forester A.C. Barefoot, Jr., under contract with the Historic Sites section of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, aged selected trees on the grounds around the "Big House" and on "The Lawn." Using a borer, 5mm cores were removed from each of the trees. The cores were mounted on slotted wooden slats, sanded to a high polish finish and the rings counted using a 10x hand lens. Many of the trees were hollow because of advanced decay making it necessary to combine the ring count with an estimate of the missing years to determine the year the tree was planted.

Trees representing major periods in Somerset's development were identified, and this information in combination with documentary research is providing new insights into the development of the plantation.

A cypress dating to 1676-1696 was once one of many that stood on the shore of Lake Phelps when, in 1755, a hunting party from Edenton were the first recorded Englishmen to "discover" the lake. Some thirty years later enslaved Africans finished digging a six-mile long canal between the lake and the Scuppernong river. Soon after the canal was completed in 1788, cypress trees were planted along both sides. A line of sycamores planted along the lake drive predate the

construction of the present "Big House."

Mary Riggs Collins was the most ardent gardener at Somerset Place and frequently documented her efforts in letters to friends and family. In a letter to her sister-in-law in 1852 Mary writes,

Our Lawn (as we now respectfully call the place across the canal) was planted in trees a year ago this spring . . . The northern and eastern sides of the Lawn are planted thick with forest and flowering trees so as to form a thicket or copse. There is a hollow circle of chestnut oaks not quite opposite the house et pour le reste & here are clumps of evergreen with conical & flowering trees interspersed. [Mary Riggs Collins to Louisa Collins Harrison, 15 July 1852, from Faunsdale Plantation Papers, Birmingham Public Library.]

A few of these remaining swamp chestnut oaks and a spectacular magnolia in the garden are part of Mary's garden legacy that we enjoy today.

For decades, archaeology, architectural history, and documentary research formed the core of the interdisciplinary approach to historic site interpretation. Now, oral history, horticultural research, and dendochronology have been added in an effort to link all parts of the complex cultural history of Somerset Place.

— From an article contributed to *Somerset News* by Terry M. Harper. Ms. Harper is head of the Archaeology Branch of the Historic Sites Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History ♦

## In Print

**A Passion for Daylilies: The Flowers and the People** by Sydney Eddison has been published by Henry Holt and Company. In this combined portrait, history, and how-to guide to this quintessential American flower - now enthusiastically cultivated in 33,000 varieties - Sydney Eddison shares her passion for daylilies and her thirty years experience growing them.

Alex Pankhurst, in **Who Does Your Garden Grow?**, traces the tales behind the names of more than 100 famous cultivars. The book has been recently issued by Earl's Eye Publishing in hardback and is available in bookstores for \$21.95 or from Capability Books, 2379 Highway 46, Deer Park, WI, 54007. Please add an additional \$2 for shipping.

Abbeville Press has recently released Laura C. Martin's **Southern Gardens: A Gracious History and a Traveler's Guide**, with photographs by David Schilling. The beautifully illustrated volume is arranged chronologically and includes concise biographies of the families who founded the gardens, as well as providing notes on the cultivation of some of the outstanding plants thriving in these gardens and up-to-date travel information. The book is sold for \$45.00.

And SGHS member Penelope Hobhouse has just published another tome. This is entitled **Penelope Hobhouse's Gardening Through the Ages: An Illustrated History of Plants and Their Influences on Garden Styles - from Ancient Egypt to the Present Day**. The publisher is Simon and Schuster and the well-illustrated book is priced at \$50.00 ♦

## Members in the News

The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation recognized SGHS member **Richard Westmacott**, professor of landscape architecture in the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia, for his book *African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South*, which the Trust named Outstanding Publication for 1993. Westmacott's book is the first extensive survey of African-American gardening traditions in the rural South. Through his study in three rural areas in the South, he explores the significance and social functions of African-American "folk" gardens and the origins of their gardening practices. [Note: See

*Continued on page 16 . . .*



## Of Interest

Where can you find cuttings of nineteenth-century coleus, or seeds for seventeenth-century pumpkins? Try a few of the mail-order nurseries listed in the brand new 1993 AHLFAM "Source List for Historic Seeds and Plants." The latest, updated and expanded edition is hot off the press. It lists 100 mail order firms that carry significant numbers of historic seeds and plants. What's more, it lists important groups, publications, and finding aids, and offers guidance for preserving and re-introducing historic plants in museum gardens and grounds. Compiled by Scott Kunst and Charlie Thomforde for the Association for Living History Farms and Agricultural Museums, the list has been published and regularly updated since 1989. For a copy, send \$1 and a long SASE to Scott Kunst, 536 Third St., Ann Arbor, MI 48103-4957. Also, Scott Kunst has issued a catalog of rare antique tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, available from the same address or call (313) 995-1486.

*Allen Lacy's homeground* is a new publication, a quarterly newsletter for American gardeners who enjoy reading about gardens as well as working in them. *homeground* will include a lively mix of essays on practical subjects like plant combinations, groundcovers and vines, and other topics as well as taking a more meditative and at times humorous look at what lies behind the passion for gardening. Allen Lacy has been writing gardening columns for over a decade, currently for *The New York Times* and is the author of several highly praised books. Subscriptions are \$38 per year and can be obtained by contacting *Allen Lacy's homeground*, Box 271, Linwood, NJ, 08221.

Proceedings of the Garden Conservancy conference, "The Hermitage: A Case Study of Restoration Potential," are now available from the Garden Conservancy, Box 219, Albany Post Road, Cold Spring, NY 10516. The cost of the 22-page illustrated publication is \$6 for members and \$8 for non-members (includes postage) and checks should be made to the Garden Conservancy ♦

Continued from page 15

*Magnolia* Spring 1992, Vol. VII, No. 4, for Richard Westmacott's article "The Gardens and Yards of African-Americans in the Rural South."]

*The Greensboro News & Record's* Sunday, April 25th, 1993, issue carried an article on SGHS member **Lee Calhoun's** quest to collect and preserve information on and varieties of Southern apple trees. Of the 1,300 apple varieties developed in the South, many are now extinct. Members interested in aiding Calhoun with information or by growing old Southern varieties can contact him at Route 5, Box 128, Pittsboro, NC, 27312. (919) 542-4480.

*Southern Living's* March 1993 issue contains "Stately Spires" by SGHS member **Linda Askey Weathers**, an article on foxgloves. The article also mentions **Phil Page**, Superintendent of Gardens at Dumbarton Oaks.

SGHS member **Dean Norton**, horticulturist at Mount Vernon, has been asked to serve on the selection committee of the Garden Conservancy ♣

*Deadline for submission of articles for the Fall Issue of Magnolia is August 1st, 1993.*



## First Magnolia Essay Well Received

If there's any truth to the saying, "It's all in the timing," then it was validated by the introduction of the first *Magnolia Essays*. "Residential Work of the Olmsted Firm in Georgia, 1893-1937" was rushed - hot off the presses - to the opening session of the National Association for Olmsted Parks where it was announced as new "Olmsted" research published by the Southern Garden History Society and available for sale at the conference. The NAOP met in Atlanta, Georgia, April 1st-3rd, for the centennial celebration of Druid Hills - Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s 1,400 acre suburban development of linear parks, planted avenues, and landscaped residential lots. This was one of Olmsted's last major achievements, and his only accomplished design work in Georgia. Lucy Lawliss, an Atlanta resident and author of the article, was present at the meeting and had the exciting experience of autographing several copies. For copies send \$10.00 to SGHS Headquarters in Winston-Salem, NC ♣

Florence P. Griffin, *President*

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