



Magnolia

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

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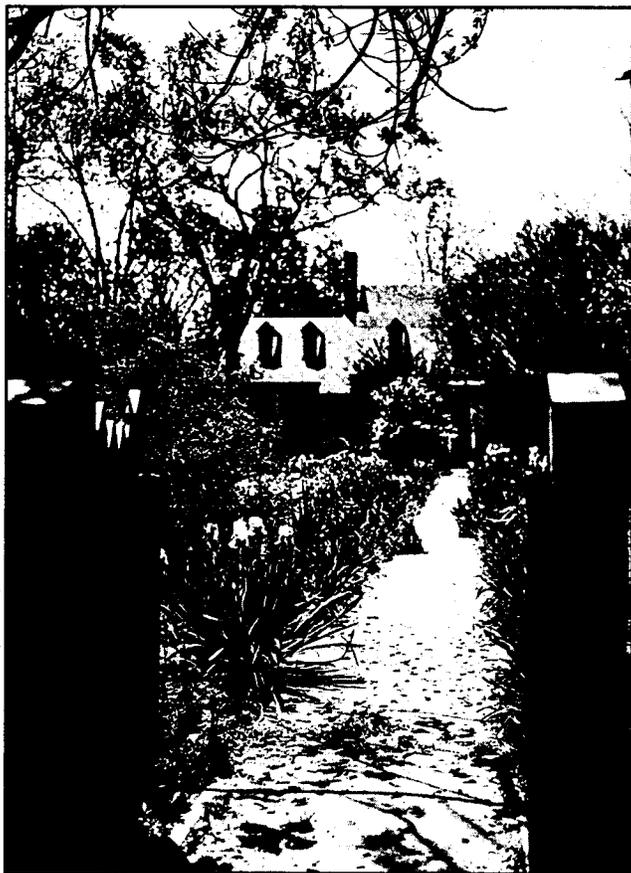
St. George Tucker's Buried Landscape, Rediscovered

— by Kathleen D. Duncan, Hampton Roads, Virginia

Colonial Williamsburg's Tucker-Coleman property, which dates to 1788 when St. George Tucker first purchased the land, is currently under extensive investigation by garden archaeologists and conservators. During the past year efforts have also been made to document and identify the plants currently on the site. Eventually, it is

hoped, enough information will be gathered, using a variety of techniques, to reconstruct the garden to its late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century appearance, in keeping with the present restoration of the home.

The Tucker-Coleman property is just over one and one half acres and stands on the corner of Nicholson and what is now called Palace Street. It is unique in that, since St. George Tucker bought the property, his direct descendants have lived in and maintained the house and grounds. Through the care and diligence of the family, much original correspondence, diaries, almanacs, and other written documents have been preserved and are available for study. From the historical sources, we learn much about St. George Tucker as lawyer, poet, and gardener.



View of Tucker House and Shurcliff Gardens. All photos in this article courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

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Calendar



May 8th–9th, 1996. The Fifth Annual Gillette Forum: "Regional Expression and the Virginia Garden," sponsored by the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, VA. Speakers include Iain Robertson from Seattle, Washington, SGHS member C. Allan Brown, and Brian Katen. Contact the Botanical Garden Registrar at (804) 262-9887, ext. 3022.

May 10th–12th, 1996. Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society — "Tidewater Tapestry: A Continuum of Maryland Landscape Design from 1785–1930," in Easton, Maryland. Speakers include Peter Kurtze and Orlando Ridout, V of the Maryland Historical Society, Barbara Sarudy from the Maryland Humanities Commission, Michael Trostel, and SGHS board member Dean Norton of Mount Vernon. Contact: M. Edward Shull, SGHS Annual Meeting, P. O. Box 21262, Catonsville, MD 21228-4905; (410) 744-2681.

May 16th–18th, 1996. "Southern Landscapes: Past, Present, Future," sponsored by the University of Mississippi's Center for the Study of Southern Culture and the Natchez Trace Parkway and funded, in part, through the National Park Service. Speakers include Roger Kennedy (NPS) and James Deetz (University of Virginia) as well as SGHS members Richard Westmacott, Felder Rushing, and Lucy Lawliss. Contact Jennifer Bryant at (601) 232-5993 or Sara Amy Leach at (601) 680-4024.

May 17th–18th, 1996. Dumbarton Oaks Studies in Landscape Architecture Symposium, "The Landscape of Theme Parks and Their Antecedents." (202) 339-6460.

May 18th–19th, 1996. The Hermitage Spring Garden Fair. Vendors from across Tennessee to sell heirloom seeds and plants. Tours of the gardens and archaeological sites conducted hourly at the home of President Andrew Jackson. Write: The Hermitage, 4580 Rachel's Lane, Hermitage, TN 37076; or call (615) 889-2941 for more information.

May 19th–23rd, 1996. ALHFAM Annual Meeting (the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums). The agrarian south meets the wild west in Houston, Texas when this conference convenes to examine "Common Frontiers." For membership and registration information contact: ALHFAM Local Arrangements, George Ranch Historical Park, P. O. Box 1248, Richmond, TX 77406-1248.

June 12th–16th, 1996. Annual meeting of the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation, to be held in Charlotte, VT. Includes tours of the John Hay Estate, Saint Gaudens National Historic Site, Billings Farm and Museum, and Marsh-Billings National Historical Park. Contact Shary Berg, 11 Petty St., Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 491-3727 ♣

St. George Tucker's Landscape continued from page one

Tucker was born in 1751 or 52, the youngest son of six children, near Port Royal, Bermuda. He was educated by family and friends on the island but, like his two elder brothers, was sent away to college. Tucker left Bermuda in 1771 to attend the College of William and Mary. Letters from his family indicate that Tucker showed an early and informed interest in his parent's garden. His mother, who missed him terribly, wrote "I sometimes walk out or look into the garden, as if I was to see you, According to your usual ways, busying over some

plant, and then from one, to another, to see which thrives best" His father kept him informed about the garden in Bermuda and asked that Tucker send him any seeds. Likewise, in August of 1772 and August 1775, Tucker received plants from Bermuda. These plants must have been obtained for friends since Tucker had no garden yet in which to plant them.

Tucker studied a broad range of subjects at William and Mary for one year and then settled down to study law under George Wythe. He passed

the bar on April 4, 1774, but prior to the Revolution, Virginia was in such turmoil that the courts did not function. Tucker returned to Bermuda to help with his father's shipping interests.

Ever fond of Williamsburg and the friends he made there, Tucker returned in 1777. In 1778 he married Frances Bland Randolph, a widow with three sons. They lived at Matoax, a Randolph family plantation in Chesterfield County. Tucker maintained extensive gardens there, planting hundreds of fruit trees. In March 1786 Tucker purchased six varieties of apples from Thomas Sorsby, a Surry County, Virginia nurseryman. His almanac entry for February 1787 notes that he set out 211 stones of peaches and plums and seeds from a beautiful shrub from his friend, Mr. Apthorpe's garden in New York. He also grafted several cherries. On March 17, 1787, Tucker wrote that he "planted one hundred and twenty choice fruit trees, bought of William Prince on Long Island, in the garden and yard." He listed a number of varieties each of apples, cherries, apricots, pears, peaches, nectarines, and plums. Unfortunately most of these died, but he transplanted the survivors along several cross-walks in the garden. Tucker listed in his almanac more fruit planting and grafting done at Matoax. Fruit trees were a primary interest of Tucker's throughout his life.

In 1788, Frances died, leaving her three sons from her previous marriage along with five more children from her marriage to Tucker. Shortly after, Tucker accepted a position as Circuit Judge, which involved much travel, so he decided to move the family to Williamsburg.

He bought three colonial lots numbered 163, 164, and 169, on the corner of Nicholson Street and Palace Green, across the green from the home of his old mentor, George Wythe. When the property was advertised for sale in 1782, it had a smokehouse, dairy, kitchen, "a good garden well paled in" and a situation that was "pleasant and healthy." Tucker had a small, one-and-one-half story frame house that faced Palace Green, the central portion of the current one, moved so that it fronted Nicholson Street. This allowed a better



view across the open area of Courthouse Green. The house would also help shield the gardens from the noise and public nature of the large green. Soon after acquiring the property, Tucker ordered several hundred pales, evidently to further fence the property. From the time the house was moved until 1789, it went through several renovations and enlargements to hold Tucker's ever-increasing family.

In the midst of setting up a new home and travelling with his new job, Tucker still found time to garden. His almanac records that he helped Mr. Buchanan, a friend, set out fruit trees on March 16, 1789. He also continued to assist with the administration of the Matoax plantation and with its gardens, which supplied him with plants for his new Williamsburg garden. He transplanted a number of fruit trees from Matoax including apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, and cherries. Tucker



Flowers in the garden of St. George Tucker's home, a Shurcliff Garden, circa 1934.

wrote "planted the above in my garden in Williamsburg, February 1790."

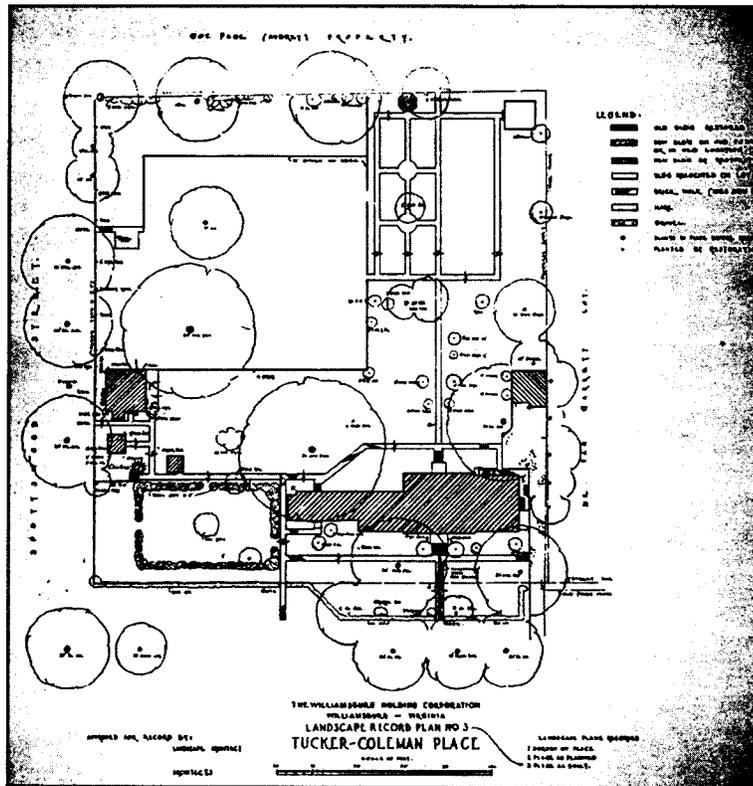
Tucker succeeded George Wythe as professor of law at William and Mary in 1790 and the following year he remarried. His second wife, also a widow, had two children. Her name was Lelia Skipwith Carter. At this time Tucker focused his attentions on his Williamsburg property.

In Williamsburg, Tucker gardened for thirty years in addition to the ten previous years



course of the last week peaches, nectarines, cherries and plums bloom. Blossoms of apples and pears appear. Leaves of the locust appear. Lombardy poplar beginning to show its leaf. Ashen buds swelled — green willows partly — yellow willows more generally and weeping willow in full leaf. Flowering almond blooms. 24th Double blossom peach beginning to bloom."

Tucker sometimes also recorded what he planted and where. In November 1791 he noted planting peach stones "near the stable door." According to an 1815 insurance policy, the stable stood due west of the house along Palace Green. Willow trees stood at the south and east sides of the stable. Tucker wrote that on March 12, 1807 raisin stones and Malapa grapes "were sown in a box and under the willow tree and at the east end of the stables." Several times Tucker wrote that he planted seeds and plants under a willow, probably for the protection it provided. An almanac entry from October 1792 mentioned eight peach stones, including six lemon peach stones planted "near the nursery," however, the location of the nursery remains unknown. Large white pears were planted "near the east pales" and four other peach stones were planted "at the corner of the lawn on the south side of the pales, east end." The location and length of fencing on the property is also currently unknown. Comments such as these are valuable for determining garden layout. Unfortunately, no maps or sketches of Tucker's garden have been discovered, leading us to speculate as to



Shurcliff's 1931 plan of Tucker House.

experience at Matoax. His almanacs describe the grounds and gardening activities sporadically, probably because of his busy lifestyle. From written records we know that he maintained a kitchen garden, a pleasure garden, and an orchard. An inventory of Tucker's library taken several years after his death lists two important gardening books: Philip Miller's *The Gardener's Kalendar, directing what works are necessary to be performed in the kitchen, fruit and pleasure gardens, as also in the conservatory or nursery* (1769), and William Forsythe's *Treatise on the Culture and Management of Fruit Trees*. Both works were probably indispensable in Tucker's gardening efforts. Tucker's detailed descriptions of his garden provide us with a list of plants from which to draw when replanting it. For example, a 1794 almanac entry stated that on "16 March Apricots beginning to bloom. 22nd In the

its layout and style, which could have changed over time.

In 1804, Tucker resigned as Professor of Law at William and Mary to become Judge of the Court of High Appeals, which often took him away on business. Tucker's daughter, Fanny, wrote to her husband in 1810 of her father's reluctance to leave his garden in April. "It seems hard at his time of life to leave such a home as this and at this season too, when spring is putting forth all her charms. The double blossoms are beginning to look beautiful and the garden will soon exhibit many sweet and ornamental shrubs in perfection." Dr. Barraud, who often looked after Tucker's house while he was away, praised the back garden in May 1814, saying, "I am now beholding the lawn from your door, so beautiful green and so richly spangled with the yellow flower — it is beautiful and serene."

In 1810, shortly before his retirement, Tucker wrote to his children: "Your mama is in the garden planting, laying out, etc., etc., and even I have been trying my hand at grafting and making an espalier of a peach tree. Next year perhaps may afford me no other employment so i may as well take a lesson or two beforehand." Celia, his wife, was also a gardener, inspired perhaps by her aunt and stepmother, Lady Jean Skipwith, probably the best known and most respected woman gardener in the eighteenth century. Tucker referred to Celia as "Matron of the green." She was as passionate as her father about "the sweet appearance of our house and everything around me."

After Tucker's retirement in 1811, he was encouraged to accept another appointment but declined. Tucker's son-in-law, John Coalter, wrote that when people ask him about Tucker "I am obliged to confess that he is gardening, scraping his fruit trees, nursing his flowers, etc." Tucker's family and garden were two treasured and stabilizing influences in his life that continued in importance until his death November 10, 1827, at around age seventy-five.

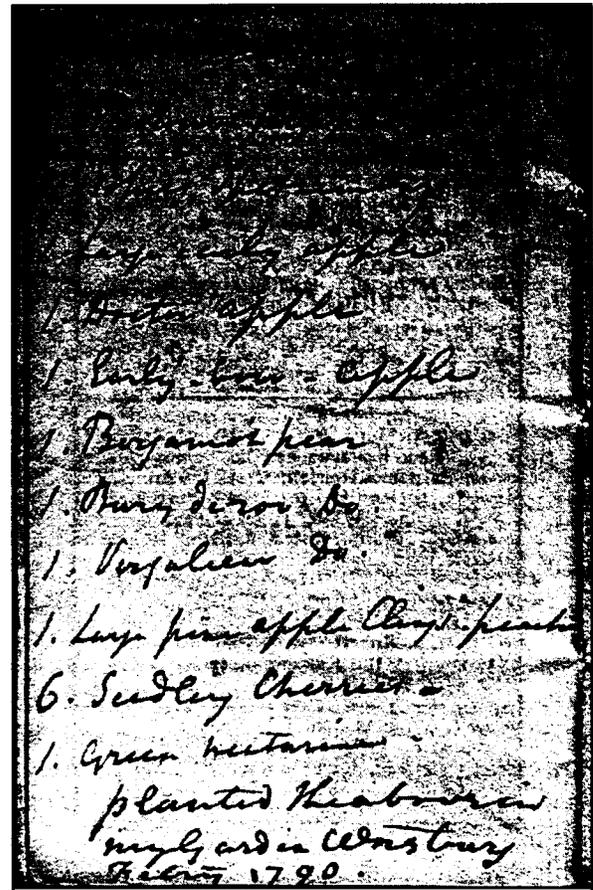
Little is known about the landscape changes after Tucker's death, which is perhaps an area for further exploration. Documentation of the landscape began again during the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg under John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In 1928, Landscape Architect Arthur A. Shurcliff surveyed the Tucker-Coleman property and documented the existing landscape features. Two surveys exist showing significant remnants of old paths, roses, fruit trees, bulbs, and other planting beds. The areas north of and to the west of the house are of particular interest. One prominent feature is a path extending from the back door with planting beds flanking it. The rectangular beds suggest a formal layout so a general size of the garden can be ascertained.

In 1929-30, the owners at the time, Mr. and Mrs. George P. Coleman, agreed to the sale/transfer of the property to Colonial Williamsburg in return for life tenancy rights. The two-story Victorian additions to the house were removed and, when completed, the kitchen was restored to the original one-story, eighteenth-century appearance. A previously existing chimney was rebuilt on its original footings as well. A bulb pattern in the rear of the house, not noted on either of Shurcliff's surveys, was evident in pre-restoration photographs, but no trace of them remains today. A well, dairy, and smokehouse were also restored. Shurcliff prepared a landscape design



for the property in conjunction with the Colemans. The length of the garden Shurcliff designed was similar to that on the survey but the planting beds were more compact, creating a garden of about half the size.

Shurcliff's original design was more ornate than the design finally installed. He intended to incorporate some of the areas marked on the 1928 survey into his new design. Paths were also installed, and remnants of some of these remain as low ridges on the property today. Bulbs indicated



A page from St. George Tucker's almanac from 1790. Tucker-Coleman Papers, Swem Library, College of William & Mary.

on the pre-existing survey were seen forming a cross-path that was not part of Shurcliff's later design. Shurcliff also designed a summerhouse built to the north of the western path. A small nineteenth-century office building was moved from the front yard to the northwest corner of the garden. This building no longer stands and the summerhouse was moved to the Benjamin Waller garden, where it remains today.

The design also included a large bowling green surrounded by a one-foot-high wooden board

edge. Several years later, flowers were planted along the edge. By 1952, Colonial Williamsburg correspondence indicated that maintaining and painting the boards was deemed too time-consuming, so the boards were removed November 28, 1956.

To the west of the house a boxwood garden was planted using mature English boxwood obtained from various locations in the South. One of the early surveys indicated plantings in this area but, with the exception of a few roses, no plants were identified. A letter from Shurcliff on October



noting "Mr. Coleman was an ardent gardener and he had a marvelous backyard full of tulips and daffodils and narcissus." An interesting glimpse of the property was recently given by a thirty-year veteran of the

landscape staff for Colonial Williamsburg, Albert Cowles. He said that the work crews would come onto the property several times a year to maintain the walks, the boxwood, mow large grassy areas and weed a large planting of hollyhocks that stood where Shurcliff placed the bowling green. He said that Dr. Janet Kimbrough, the current tenant and

daughter of the Coleman's, was very protective of her plants and that bulbs were everywhere. He recalled that the front yard was speckled with daffodils and spider lilies and that Dr. Kimbrough loved to use them as cut flowers. She had her own maintenance person to tend the areas around the house. Gradually, the property became more and more overgrown and it was in that state in 1992 when Dr. Kimbrough died and Colonial Williamsburg once more was in charge of maintaining the site. Some clearing was done, such as of the *Ailanthus* seedlings (that are again taking over), which covered the former bowling green.



St. George Tucker House, pre-reconstruction.

12, 1930 discussing planting the boxwood stated that Mr. Coleman wanted to meet with Shurcliff's gardener "so he could show the gardener exactly where certain of the treasured plants should be placed temporarily." A similar letter one month later also emphasized working with Mr. Coleman so that his valuable bulbs and plants were not damaged. Unfortunately, no record was made regarding the plants, or to where they were moved. Many plants have disappeared over the years either through human intervention or their natural decline.

Colonial Williamsburg agreed to maintain the boxwood and perform other selective maintenance on the property but the majority of the garden was the Coleman's responsibility. By the early 1950s the family was doing less maintenance either because they were unable or unwilling to maintain such a large area. By the 1960s, Colonial Williamsburg did little maintenance at the request of the life tenants. The written records also dwindle at this time. Singleton Moorehead, architect for Colonial Williamsburg at the time, reminisced in his oral history about his time spent with the Foundation,

The hedge that blocked the house from view along the front fence was removed also.

In November 1993, Colonial Williamsburg Landscape Architect Kent Brinkley wrote a proposal for the recreation of the garden. The drought that summer clearly revealed many previous paths. Grass dies and turns brown more quickly over buried features due to poor root penetration. The former paths were also slightly raised and former planting beds appeared sunken in many areas. These path patterns together with surviving plants such as peonies and daffodils, revealed the dimensions and geometric shapes of the former garden.

Part of Brinkley's proposal included archaeological investigations of the site conducted by Colonial Williamsburg's Department of Archaeological Research. Excavations opened a small area in 1994 that was much expanded in the 1995 field session. The plants surveyed have little context without this corresponding archaeological data to interpret their placement in the larger garden plan.

Brinkley drew up several hypothetical

eighteenth-century layouts based on all sources available and from a knowledge of eighteenth-century garden design. Brinkley believes that the few surviving portions of the original layout that are still visible most likely indicate an eighteenth-century rectilinear garden style. The interior layout of this space is still open to debate, however, the planting beds fit precisely into a sixty-foot by thirty-foot block with a ten-foot-wide, unknown area between the first and third blocks. Because the property remained in the hands of Tucker's descendants until recently, and Shurcliff's existing conditions map of 1928 shows the site one-hundred and one years after the death of Tucker, Brinkley and I feel it is possible that some of the planting beds shown on the map were survivals from Tucker's original garden continuously maintained by his descendants. A number of examples of plants support this hypothesis.

Brent Heath, a noted bulb expert from Gloucester, Virginia, identified the bulbs photographed on the site during the spring of 1994 and April through September 1995. Narcissus varieties and cultivars include: 'Red Guard' (1923), the species *Narcissus poeticus radiiflorus*, 'Orange Cockade' (1938), 'Avtaea' (pre-1927), 'Sempre Avanti' (1938), 'Emperor' (1890), and 'White Lady' (1898). These cultivars were likely planted prior to 1928 because they correspond directly to the planting beds noted on Shurcliff's survey of existing conditions. They are probably also the ones that mark visible borders and cross-paths in the photographs. Several other old narcissus appear very near or just outside the areas planted prior to 1928. These are a *Narcissus poeticus cv.* (possibly 'Ace of Diamonds', introduced in 1923), more 'Orange Cockade', one identified as 'L'Innocence' or 'Laurens Koster' (1923), and 'Limerick' (which is known to date prior to 1938 and is no longer in commerce.)

Other old narcissus remain in the back garden but do not appear to be related to earlier planting beds. These could have been planted later or moved from another location on the property. They include more 'Orange Cockade' as well as 'Empress' (from 1890 and no longer in commerce), 'White Lady', 'Aflame' (1938), 'Elvira' (1904), 'Damson' (1925), and 'Emperor' (1890).

Tulipa sylvestris, a species tulip, appeared under the crape myrtle west of the central path and could relate to an earlier planting bed. The *Leucojum* and *Ornithogalum nutans* could also remain from an

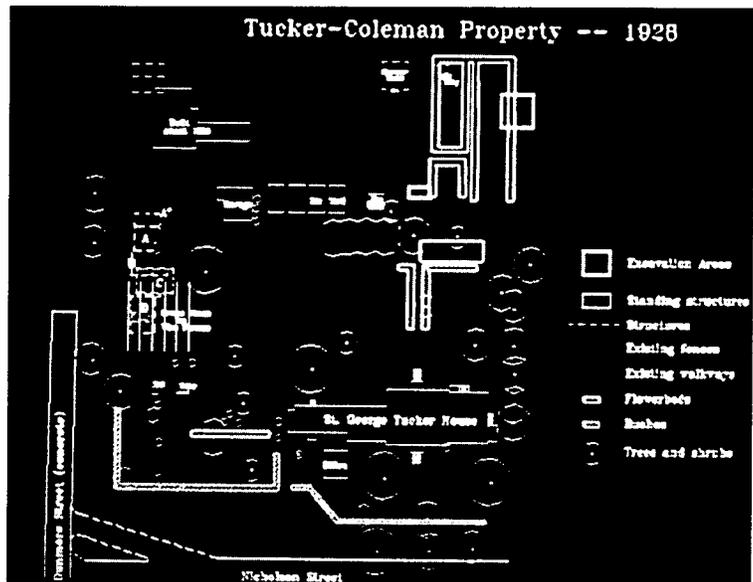


earlier planting since both were recorded in England in 1594. However, they were popular for a number of centuries so they may relate to a later planting. *Leucojum* appeared in one of the photographs from the 1930s,

immediately after the house was renovated, so it would have been on the site prior to Shurcliff's plantings.

Sterile bulb cultivars, such as the Narcissus, will perennialize and slowly form a larger clump whereas plants that set seed can naturalize and will eventually cover areas much larger than the intended planting. The species tulips that have not bloomed have spread in this manner.

Closer to the house, an area indicated on the 1928 existing conditions survey currently contains a white peony and an as yet unidentified plant. These two plants need further study to determine if they



Computerized version of Arthur Shurcliff's on-site survey of existing conditions in 1928.

could have existed during the years Tucker gardened. I believe it is critical to preserve these plants for further study because of their location and possible antiquity. Many clumps of bulb foliage never bloomed, while others may have bloomed in May prior to our photographs. Brent Heath suggested that the site be heavily fertilized in the fall to encourage the blooming of bulbs that may not have done so in decades.

A number of plants on Shurcliff's survey need further research. A climbing rose and mock orange appear in a clump that is now overgrown with Japanese honeysuckle. The rose was indicated on the map and mock orange was grown in America in

the eighteenth-century. A crape myrtle was also recorded. Crape myrtle was introduced into Europe in 1759 and grown by George Washington by 1799 [as well as by Lady Jean Skipwith]. Another important plant is a crabapple, which needs further identification and research.

Some plants on site, although appropriate to the eighteenth century, were planted more recently, such as the Rose of Sharon along the north fence. Albert Cowles remembers when it was small and newly planted. Other plants raise questions. The large stand of *Phragmites communis*, also called *Arundo donax*, in the back of the garden is an ornamental grass often found on nineteenth-century sites. It was introduced from the Caribbean, however, and with Tucker's ties to Bermuda, speculation was raised whether he brought the plant into the area. Unfortunately, to date no information has been found to confirm this theory. Shurcliff also failed to note anything other than a border bed in that area.

Research continues on several other plants to determine their importance in the landscape north of the house. Several iris species occur there, for example. *Iris germanica* grows under a large pecan, *I. anglica* [*I. xiphiodes*] or *I. spuria* follow the west side of the main central path and a tentatively identified *I. camphori* rings a fish pond or catch basin. An unidentified Allium, which is not the Yorktown onion (*Allium ampeloprasum*), follows the east side of the central path near the hollyhock. A viburnum and a hawthorne dot the lawn behind the kitchen. In what appears to be an overgrown planting bed next to a walkway, two rudbeckias and an number of Jamestown lilies (*Zephyranthes atamasco*) remain.

Some plants that still remain on the property can definitely be linked to Shurcliff's plans and plantings. The peonies occur at the intersections of the cross-paths on the western half of the formal garden. Some were removed in 1992-93. The hollyhock showed up in a photograph of new plantings in the 1930s. Three colors exist side by side: a dark rose, a lavender, and a white one. A clump of 'Daisy Schaffer' daffodils (1927) fits exactly at the corner of Shurcliff's western geometric plan and is not related to any noted previous plantings. It was probably planted by Shurcliff or moved from another area of the garden in the 1930s. Several narcissus have newer dates of introduction, which eliminate them as candidates for extensive study



relating to Tucker's garden but do document continuing gardening activity on the property. 'Trousseau' dates to 1934, 'Yellow Cheerfulness' to 1938, and 'Flower Drift', a double-flowering sport of 'Flower Record' that occurred in 1966.

The front yard contains some plants that are appropriate for an eighteenth-century landscape such as the pyracantha and Spanish bluebells at the base of the chimney, the lilac and pussy willow and *Vinca minor* in front of the kitchen, and the star-of-Bethlehem near the front steps. Coral vine (*Lonicera sempervirens*) and autumn crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*) run along the front fence. Because this area is more public, it seems to have had the most recent gardening activity. Therefore, it is uncertain at this time whether any of these plants, including those appropriate to the eighteenth century, are much older than a few decades. Several clumps of narcissus suggest older plantings such as along the front fence where 'Dick Wellband' (1929) and 'Mary Copeland' (1914) bloomed. Along the front entrance walk, clumps of 'Twink' (1927) and 'Empress' (1890) blossomed, both of which are no longer in commerce. It must be stressed, however, that all of these flowers could also have been moved. The forsythia north of the garage and the one on the northwest corner of the kitchen could not have been planted before the mid-nineteenth century. Likewise, the double azalea and the modern daylily cultivars, both single and double, suggest a continued interest in gardening by the family, perhaps passed down through the generations. When the enlarged parking area was installed for Dr. Kimbrough, hostas were planted around the perimeter. Maintaining an attractive landscape seems to have been a priority for Tucker and his descendants. Whether or not they shared his enthusiasm for gardening we may never know but hopefully with more research, we can understand the numerous changes of the landscape since 1788.

Because the older bulb varieties demonstrate the gardening history of the property in ways nothing else can, it is hoped they will remain on the site and be incorporated into the new garden plans if possible. Many of these early cultivars are no longer available commercially, and therefore are themselves of historical importance. At the very least, their yearly re-emergence from where they were buried long ago serves to remind us of the numerous changes a landscape undergoes through time, whether by nature or design ♣

Book Review

GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN The Old-Fashioned American Garden

1865-1915. by May Brawley Hill. Bibliography, notes, index. 159 illustrations, including 75 full color, 240 pp. hardcover. \$45.00. ISBN: 0-8109-3389-6

Handsomely produced, Grandmother's Garden is a particular blending of garden and art history by May Brawley Hill, an art historian and a speaker at the recent Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference on "The Influence of Women on the Southern Landscape." (see *Magnolia*, Vol. XII, No. 1, Fall 1995) Those who attended her presentation at Salem College (her alma mater) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, will recall the dazzling series of slides she used as illustrations during her remarks. Many of those images — mostly reproductions of late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century paintings, watercolors, and photographs of flowers, gardens, and garden scenes — form the core illustrations of this book, subtitled "The Old-Fashioned American Garden, 1865-1915." While the flower paintings of artists including Childe Hassam, Abbott Fuller Graves, Maria Oakley Dewing, and John Leslie Breck have been widely appreciated,



one of Hill's real accomplishments in this work is to introduce readers to a much larger group of painters whose reputations as artists — and flower and garden painters — have remained largely regional until now.

A second chief merit of the book is the extraordinary group of black and white photographs she has assembled and reproduced here: often they speak to the subject of the book in a more pertinent and enlightening way. Some of these remarkably beautiful pictures were made as illustrations for turn-of-the-century garden books such as Alice Morse Earle's *Old Time Gardens*, 1901, and Mary E. Wilkins' *Evelina's Garden of 1898*. It is in these photographs that many of the largely little-known gardeners of the period stand proudly in their pleasantries, by their garden gates, or with flowers gathered from their borders and beds. They represent a now-lost, turn-of-the-century world and manner of gardening that the color images and explication are, at times, less successful in evoking. Valuable in their own right — and justification alone for acquiring this book, they are particularly instructive when seen with companion paintings. A photograph of Thomas Moran in his garden at East Hampton is paired with Theodore Wores's painting of Moran's house and garden; Jessie Tarbox Beale's 1908 photograph of Edward Lamson Henry painting his wife on the porch of their vine-covered cottage is paired with

one of Henry's own paintings of their garden at Cragmoor in New York. Robert Vonnoh was also photographed painting in the garden. These photographs, together with those of the gardens of artists Fidelia Bridges and Blondelle Malone in Connecticut and South Carolina, respectively, convey important relationships between painters and their gardens, and between painting and gardening. Those relationships are, in fact, so predominant a theme in this book that they encourage the reader to hope a separate work on that topic is in the offing. If not, it should be, and perhaps, it will include reproductions of Blondelle Malone's paintings of her own gardens in Columbia and Aiken, South Carolina, which are missing in *Grandmother's Garden*.



Malone garden, Columbia, South Carolina. Photograph c. 1910 from Grandmother's Garden: The Old-Fashioned American Garden 1865-1915.

The primary theme carrying through this volume is Hill's discussion of the phenomenon known as "grandmother's garden," a manner of gardening and the favored use of old-fashioned flowers espoused by mostly New England garden writers at the turn of the century. Again, with few exceptions, this examination is focused on New England, however, certain gardens in Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and other southern states garnered Hill's attention. The term "grandmother's garden" is used to describe and define a particular form of gardening in America in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the opening of the twentieth. Through the subtitle, Hill also suggests "grandmother's garden" to be a sort of all-encompassing umbrella under which a very wide range of gardens, gardening, and garden traditions, from 1865 to 1915, might be assembled.

"Grandmother's gardens," as discussed by Hill and the turn-of-the-century writers whose works she has collected and studied, are places that many members of the Southern Garden History Society know well. They are "old-time gardens," and the title of Alice Morse Earle's book, a



landmark in turn-of-the-century garden history, seems to describe them more correctly and more comfortably. An example is the garden my own grandmother made about the house in which I now live and another is the garden that my father's cousins, the Misses Hood, planted and tended about their own white frame, turn-of-the-century cottage and lifelong home. These gardens may be "grandmother's gardens," however, they are much more important and less self-conscious as examples of traditional garden making in the South, which has persisted from the eighteenth century well into the inter-war period, and even, in certain instances, to the present. Here, they remained a part of the common experience in the rural landscape, in the region's villages and small towns, and at those old places around and near which the large cities of the South developed in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They are often the first gardens we remember and the ones we wish we could remake as our own today +

— *Davyd Foard Hood, book review editor*
Isinglass, NC



The Southern Heirloom Garden, by William C. Welch and Greg Grant. Taylor Publishing Co., Dallas, Texas. 1995. 190 pages, hardback. \$29.95

William C. Welch and Greg Grant and their collaborators are wonderful storytellers with a deep love of Southern gardening traditions and a vast knowledge of the plants that define our gardens. Their treasury of horticulture begins by placing the Southern landscape and Southern gardens in cultural context. The ten chapters that make up the first half of the book examine our relationship to the land, our horticultural traditions, and the place of gardens in the lives of native American, Spanish, French, African-American, English, and German gardeners in the South.

Welch's graceful opening chapter, "Restoring Southern gardens," elevates gardening to the status of folk art and describes gardens and landscapes as vital but overlooked historical artifacts. Important gardens deserve careful preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or re-creation, Welch says, and explains what is meant by each. Modern gardens can be full

of history, too, he says, encouraging gardeners everywhere to explore the heritage in their own back yards, and to pull the threads of history into new creations.

Welch, Grant, and contributors Nancy Volkman, Hilary Somerville Irvin, James R. Cothran, Richard Westmacott, Rudy J. Favretti, and Flora Ann Bynum distill the history and heritage of Southern gardens into ninety pages. Welch traces the Spanish influence through 400 years, quoting from sixteenth-century texts and twentieth-century newspaper articles. The paintings and plans that illustrate Irvin's chapter, "Through the allées," and Bynum's "Gardens of Old Salem" hint at the wealth of primary research material available on Southern gardens. Westmacott's thorough introduction to African-American "Gardens of welcome" reveals the richness of oral histories. Grant draws on extensive reading and long observation in his chapter on German garden traditions. A chapter on "The Southern cemetery as a garden of culture" indicates that the study of these important sites and the traditions associated with them is far from exhausted.

The second half of the book is a historical encyclopedia of sixty-seven annual and perennial plants, bulbs, trees, shrubs, and vines. This section, by Welch and Grant, contains a great deal of rich research along with practical horticultural advice, and many fine stories. Welch's account of his own experience of the resilience of four o'clocks after a hot, dry Texas



they love ♣

summer proves that we have a great deal to learn from our own gardens. Grant's unselfconscious comments on his family's traditions should inspire readers to take plenty of notes on the people and the plants

— Marty Ross
Kansas City, MO

Members in the News

Historic Preservation, the magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, features **Marguerite Williams** in its March/April 1996 issue. Mrs. Williams is a founding chairman of the National Trust as well as the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, and she is also a sustainer member of SGHS.

The March 1996 issue of *Horticulture* magazine featured a six-page cover story on The Paca House garden in Annapolis, Maryland entitled "Revolutionary Roots, a founding

father's garden flourishes in downtown Annapolis."

The January/February issue of *Southern Accents* profiled South Carolina's Brookgreen Gardens in "Carved from the Land – Brookgreen Gardens provides an inspiring backdrop for American representational sculpture." **Lawrence Henry**, president of Brookgreen, also serves as a board member for SGHS ♣

Southern Garden History Society – Membership Form

Annual Dues (Check One):

_____	Student	\$	5.
_____	Individual		20.
_____	Joint (husband-wife)		30.
_____	Institution or business		30.
_____	Sustainer		75.
_____	Patron		150.
_____	Benefactor		250.
_____	Life Membership		1000.

Name _____

Institution/business (if not individual) _____

Address _____

Return with check to Southern Garden History Society, Old Salem Inc., Drawer F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108.

The membership year runs from May 1st to April 30th. Members who join after January 1st will be credited for the coming year beginning May 1st. Contributions to the society are tax deductible. Two people may attend an annual meeting on one institutional or business membership.

SGHS 1996 Meeting — Tidewater Tapestry



the over two-hundred year old Third Haven Meeting House — where conference participants will enjoy a picnic on Saturday. Plan to attend +

Our fourteenth-annual meeting will explore the designed landscape of Maryland's Eastern Shore from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The conference offers an insider's look into the unique treasures of Maryland design, centering on the Lloyd family, founders of Maryland and leaders in the agricultural movement. Noted for their cutting edge use of fertilizer, contour plowing, crop rotation, and cultivation of exotics, the Lloyd family today maintains the only extant eighteenth-century orangery in America on the property of their landmark home, Wye House. Other highlights of the meeting will include period meals and side tours of nearby tidewater towns. The colonial town of Easton, established in 1710, features an extensive residential and commercial historic district, including the country's oldest wooden structure —

Of Note: Antebellum Gardens Photo Search

A search is underway to locate old photographs of Southern Antebellum gardens/landscapes. Of particular interest are photographs showing parterre gardens, tree-lined avenues, fences, and gates. Information as to available sources (museums, historical societies, private collections, individuals, etc.) would be greatly appreciated and should be directed to: Jim Cothran, Landscape Architect, c/o Robert and Company, 96 Poplar Street, Atlanta, Georgia 30335. (404) 557-4000 +

Deadline for submission of articles for the Spring Issue of Magnolia is May 31st.

Ben G. Page, Jr., President

Dr. William C. Welch, Vice-President

Flora Ann Bynum, Secretary-Treasurer

William Lanier Hunt, Honorary President

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Catesby's *Natural History*, 1743

Bulletin of the
Southern Garden
History Society

Vol. XII

No. 3

Spring/Summer 1996

The Maryland Orangeries

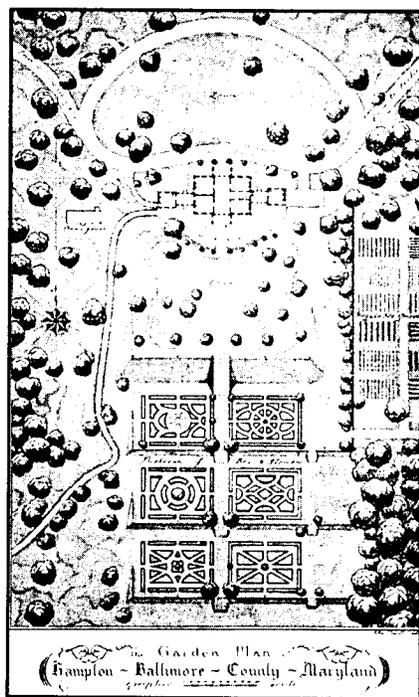
by Michael T. Trostel, Baltimore, Maryland

Serious interest in protecting tender or exotic (i.e. non-indigenous) plants began in the early seventeenth century, with Holland taking the lead. Their gardening books, translated into German, French, and English with "how-to" illustrations, helped spread the development of orangeries. Orangeries were called "greenhouses" until the middle of the nineteenth century because they were used to keep plants green, such as orange and lemon trees, that would otherwise die if left out of doors all year.

The Whole Art of Husbandry, published in London in 1631 by Gervase Markham, described an embryo form of an orangery. In 1649, Queen Henrietta Maria's orangery at Wimbleton was listed in a Parliamentary Survey of the manor as containing forty-two orange trees that were valued at ten pounds each — a huge sum in 1649.

In the late seventeenth century numerous orangeries were constructed throughout England. These early examples were tall, relatively narrow buildings with large windows on their south elevations. The usual heat source was charcoal placed in a pit in the floor or in a brazier or an iron stove. In the 1690s, a much improved heating system was developed for the orangery at the Chelsea Physic Garden. A below-grade-level stove supplied heat to underfloor ducts. This basic system continued in use for the next century. In some examples, the heat ducts were also built into the north wall of the orangery.

Continued on page 2 . . .



Great Georgian
Houses of
America,
Vol. 1, Kalkhoff
Press, New York,
1933, p. 173

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Calendar

October 3rd-5th, 1996.

"Early Domestic Skills," an educational conference on historical domestic crafts and foodways, including herbal folklore, flax processing, and agricultural rhythms. Sponsored by Old Salem, P. O. Box F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108. Phone: (910) 721-7300.

October 4th-6th, 1996. "Plant Collecting Around the World," The Charleston Garden Festival features a City Market with display gardens, vendors, mini-lectures and workshops with Ken Druse, John Fairey of Yucca Do Nurseries in Texas, Steven Sponberg of the Arnold Arboretum, and Don Shadow from Winchester, TN. Activities include tours of 18th-century plantations. Contact the Florence Crittenton Programs, 19 Saint Margaret St., Charleston, SC 29403. Phone: (803) 722-0661.

October 11th-12th, 1996. "Exploring Southern Gardens," Southern Garden Symposium & Workshops. Speakers include Dr. Steven M. Still of Ohio State University; Scott Ogden, author of *Garden Bulbs for the South*; Katie Moss Warner, director of horticulture at Disney World Resort; and William E. Brumback, director of conservation, New England Wild Flower Society. Contact the Symposium at P. O. Box 2075, St. Francisville, LA 70775, or call (504) 635-4220.



October 20th, 1996. Tour of Sudbrook Park, a Baltimore County community designed by Frederick Law Olmsted (which will preview the November 10th symposium).

November 10th, 1996. Symposium on Sudbrook Park, followed by reception and book signing at the Maryland Historical Society. Presentations on Olmsted's design of suburban landscapes by Dr. Charles Beveridge, SGHS member M. Edward Shull, Catherine Mahan, and Beryl Frank, co-author with Melanie Anson of a new book on the Sudbrook Park neighborhood, which will be available at the symposium. For more information about the tour, symposium, and book, contact the Baltimore County Historical Trust, P. O. Box 10067, Towson, MD 21285. Phone: (410) 832-1812.

February 21st-23rd, 1997. "Tools of the Trade," Southeast Regional Meeting of the Association for Living Historical Farms & Agricultural Museums. Held at Colonial Williamsburg. Presentation proposals should be submitted by July 31st. Contact John A. Caramia, Jr., Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, P. O. Box 1776, Williamsburg, VA 23187-1776. Phone: (804) 220-2473; Fax: (804) 220-7357.

continued on page 11...

The Maryland Orangeries... *continued from page one*

By the early eighteenth century, orangeries were a necessary adjunct to any fashionable garden. Royalty led the way with orangeries at Hampton Court, Kensington Palace, and Kew. Those at Kensington Palace and Kew were important architectural compositions placed in highly visible locations in the gardens.

The Gardener's Dictionary by Philip Miller, first published in 1731, was a basic guide for all gardeners in Great Britain and the American colonies. Miller recommended a depth of sixteen to eighteen feet for "small or middling Houses" and a depth of twenty to twenty-four feet for larger orangeries. The piers between the tall windows should be as narrow as possible with

folding shutters at the windows. He suggested also a "House for Tools, and many other Purposes" be built against the north wall with the fireplace or grate (for the heat ducts located under the floor of the orangery in the tool house). The walls and ceiling of the orangery should be plastered and whitewashed — white being the only color to be used inside. A room over the orangery was recommended to help keep out the frost in a hard winter.

In 1819 *The Practical American Gardener* was published in Baltimore. The author was given as "An Old Gardener." Repeating most of Philip Miller's recommendations for orangeries of the previous century, *The Old Gardener* warned that heat should be used with great caution and only in severe frost or moist weather "in order to dispel the damps." The heat should never be

above 45 to 46 degrees farenheit. The windows of orangeries should be five- to six-foot wide. Since some circulation of fresh air was needed every day, he recommended that the windows have triple sashes so that both the upper and lower sashes could be opened. The plants should not be crowded and those farther from the windows should be raised for more air and sun. There should be tressels with planks upon them for the plants to be "neatly and judiciously disposed." The Old Gardener listed "the more hardy kinds of green house plants, such as the oleander, hydrangea, myrtles, pomegranates, oranges, lemons, etc. ." Other plants he listed for growing in orangeries were geraniums, jasmines, myrtles, and China and Othaheite roses.

The most important eighteenth-century orangery in Maryland was the Lloyds' at Wye House, which today has the distinctions of being the only eighteenth-century orangery to survive in the United States. The original portion, constructed some time between 1750 and 1770, was twenty by thirty-three feet. It was two stories tall with a billiard room above the orangery. There were one-story extensions at each end, about nine by nineteen feet, and the gardener's quarters were built against the back wall. This orangery was enlarged in 1779 to its present length of eighty-five feet with a work room built behind the east addition adjacent to the gardener's quarters.

The orangery was located at the north end of the bowling green. The stables were at the opposite end where the present Wye House, built between 1785 and 1792, stands. To the east of the bowling green were the formal gardens with a central axis from the bowling green to the house. The earlier Wye House is gone but its office wing still stands just beyond the garden.



The orangery at Mount Clare was probably completed by the fall of 1760 when Charles Carroll, Barrister ordered a thermometer for it. The Barrister (there were four Charles Carrolls in colonial

Annapolis and each had to add a "distinction" with his name to avoid confusion) completed his summer residence overlooking the Patapsco River in 1760. His orangery was twenty-eight feet square with the south half the orangery, and his gardener's quarters and, perhaps, a work room in the north half.

Mount Clare presented a balanced composition overlooking a series of four terraces or "falls" as they are called in the Chesapeake region. Beyond the orangery was a greenhouse twenty-four by thirty-nine feet, probably constructed between 1775 and 1790. On the opposite side of the house was a twenty-eight feet square laundry balancing the orangery beyond, which was a "shed" the same dimensions as the greenhouse. All these buildings were connected

by screen walls giving a total length of 360 feet — an impressive sight when seen from the Potapsco River.

When George Washington was considering building an orangery at Mount Vernon, he asked Tench Tilghman, his former military aide and Mrs. Carroll's brother-in-law, for information about the one at



Hampton Mansion, South or garden façade. View by Robert Cary Long circa 1838. The orangery is to the extreme left. Great Georgian Houses of America, Vol. 1. 1933.

Mount Clare. In a letter from Mount Vernon, dating August 11, 1784, Washington wrote:

"Dear Sir: I shall essay the finishing of my green house this fall, but find that neither myself, nor any person about me is so well skilled in the internal construction as to proceed without a probability at least of running into errors.

"Shall I for this reason, ask the favor of you to give me a short description of the Green-House at Mrs. Carrolls? I am persuaded, now that I

planned mine upon too contracted a scale. My house is (of Brick) 40 feet by 24, in the outer dimensions, and half the width disposed of for two rooms, back of the part designed for the green house; leaving the latter in the clear not more than about 37 by 10. As there is no cover on the walls yet, I can raise them to any height, the information I wish to obtain is,

“The dimensions of Mrs. Carroll’s Green-house. what kind of floor is to it. how high from the top to the ceiling of the house, whether those



means kept warm at the Roots — She does not seem to think there is any occasion for the Heat to be conveyed all around the Walls by means of small Vacancies left in them She has always found the Flues mark’d in the plan sufficient for her House —

“She recommends it to you to have the upper parts of your Window sashes to pull down, as well as the lower ones to rise — you then Give Air to the Tops of your Trees —

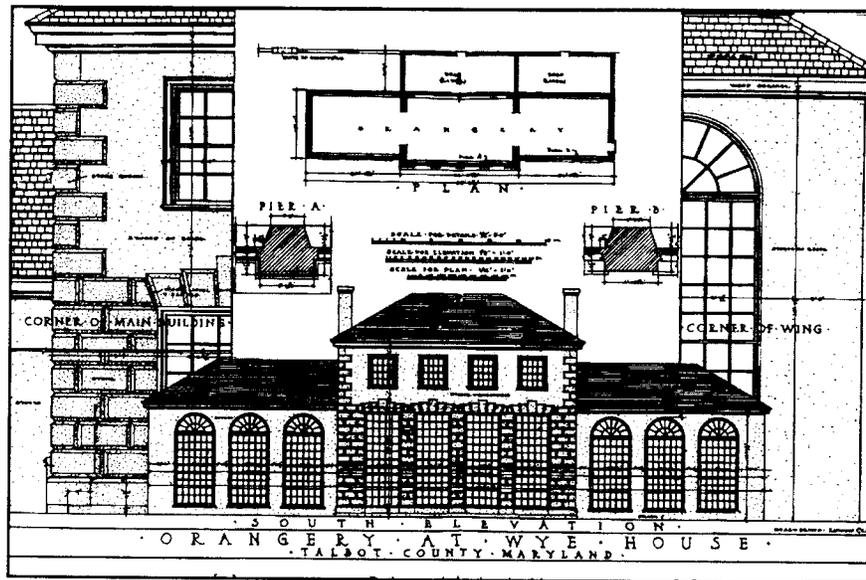
“Your Ceiling she thinks ought to be Arched and at least 15 feet high — She has found the lowness of hers which is but 12 very inconvenient —

“Smooth Stucco she thinks preferable to common Plaster because drier —

“The Door of the House to be as large as you can conveniently make it — otherwise when the Trees come to any size, the limbs are broken and the Fruit torn off by moving in and out

“It is the Custom in many Green Houses to set the Boxes upon Benches — But Mrs Carroll says they do better upon the Floor, because they then receive the Heat from the Flues below to more advantage . . .”

Recent archaeology confirms the information in Tilghman’s letter of reply and his



Wye House orangery elevation and plan. Endpaper from Old Buildings, Gardens and Furniture in Tidewater Maryland, by Henry Chanlee Forman, Tidewater Publishers Cambridge, Maryland, 1967.

flues run all around the House, the size of them without, and in the clear. Whether they join the wall, or are separate and distinct from it, if the latter, how far they are apart, with any other suggestions you may conceive necessary.”

Tilghman’s reply, on April 18, 1784, and accompanying sketch are considered prime documents in the history of the development of orangeries in America:

“Inclosed you will find answers to your Several Queries respecting the Green House including the order in which they were put, and that you may the better understand the Construction of Mrs Carroll’s, I have made a rough Plan of the Manner of conducting the Flues — Your Floor being 40 feet long Mrs Carroll recommends two Flues to run up the Back Wall, because you may then increase the number of Flues which run under the Floor, and which she looks upon as essential — The trees are by that

accompanying sketch of the heating system — a series of underfloor ducts running along the south wall and back to a central chimney.

In October 1789, when the orangery at Mount Vernon was completed, Mrs. Carroll sent President Washington “five boxes, and twenty small pots of trees, and young plants; among which were two Shaddocks — One Lemon and One Orange, of from three to five feet in length; Nine small orange trees; Nine Lemon; One fine balm sented Shrub; two Potts of Alloes, and some tufts of knotted Marjoram” from her orangery.

Governor Horatio Sharpe maintained an orangery at his Annapolis residence. Sharpe arrived in Maryland in 1753 and rented Edmund Jennings house on the edge of Annapolis with four acres of gardens running down to the Severn River. The orangery may have been built by the Jennings family. We know Sharpe was using it by 1764 when Henry Callister of Talbot County tried

to sell the governor a thermometer for it. This orangery was eighteen by eighteen feet and, like Mount Clare's, in the form of a pavilion with a hip roof and the chimney in the center.

As at Mount Clare, the governor's house and garden was a balanced composition. The house was fifty-two feet long with the orangery fifty-two feet to one side and a balancing eighteen-foot square building to the other. There were two shallow falls. It was fifty-two feet from the house to the first fall and twenty-six to the next where the orangery was located. There also was a mound on axis with the house by the river's edge.

Sharpe brought Dr. Upton Scott with him as his personal physician. In 1762, after Scott's marriage to an heiress, he built a grand house on two acres. Dr. Scott was noted as one of the foremost gardeners in colonial Annapolis. Sometime between 1762 and 1775, he built a fourteen by thirty-foot orangery in his garden. There are numerous contemporary references about Dr. Scott's garden and the plants it contained.

Belair, in Prince George's County, was built for another governor, Samuel Ogle, in the mid-1740s. The next generation of the family added a fifteen by twenty-eight foot orangery to the east end of the house. Archaeology has unearthed the heating duct that ran along its long south wall.

In some respects, Belair's original plan was more English than American. Although a plantation house, it had a basement kitchen.

When the son of the builder built a forty-foot square kitchen and laundry building away from the house, he was able to utilize the flue of the former basement kitchen to heat the new orangery. Belair also sat above a series of broad falls with a wide lawn by the house. The house and lawn survive, but the falls and great avenue of tulip poplars leading down to the old highway are now enveloped by a housing development.

There also was an orangery at Richard Lee's plantation, Blenheim,



overlooking the Potomac River in Charles County. Blenheim, built circa 1756, had the greatest value of any private house in that county in the Federal Direct Tax of 1798, but little is known of this important house that burned in the late nineteenth century. The

garden was described in the 1780s as "walled with brick (except about two hundred feet which has fallen down two years ago)." Clearly a prime site for garden archaeology.

The last of the Maryland orangeries was the one at Hampton in Baltimore County. It was built by Charles Carnan Ridgely in the middle 1820s, or by his son in the early 1830s. It may have been designed by Robert Cary Long, a prominent architect at the time in Baltimore. The orangery was added to an existing garden and appeared, if one squinted enough, as a Greek temple set against a backdrop of trees. This orangery had a wood floor above a crawl space. The underfloor duct, running along the south and east sides, also heated the crawl space, thus giving a more even heat to the entire floor than in the earlier orangeries. There was a low shed at the west end, out of sight from the mansion, for the furnace and fuel storage. Against the north wall was a small vestibule so one could enter or leave the orangery with a minimum of heat loss.

When Hampton was completed in 1790 it was the largest house in Maryland and its gardens were intended to be equally impressive. There is some evidence that William Birch may have been partially responsible for the design of the falling garden. When the orangery was constructed, it cut



Mount Clare — detail of Charles Willson Peale painting. Orangery to the left — Ice House to the right. Private collection.

through one of the lead, underground watering pipes dating from the original garden layout.

In the summer, the plants were taken out of the orangery and set along serpentine gravel paths in the gardens. Mr. Stewart Ridgely, who grew up at Hampton in the late nineteenth century, said that on rainy summer days the children would be sent out from the house to roller skate on the wood floor of the empty orangery.

The Hampton orangery burned in 1928 and was rebuilt in 1976. At its completion, Mrs. Morgan Shiller, then owner of Wye House, gave her last two orange trees to Hampton, thus completing the circle of the history of orangeries in Maryland. †

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[This article is an expanded version of Michael Trostel's lecture, "The Conservatory at Wye," published in Tidewater Tapestry: the SGHS fourteenth-annual conference proceedings.]

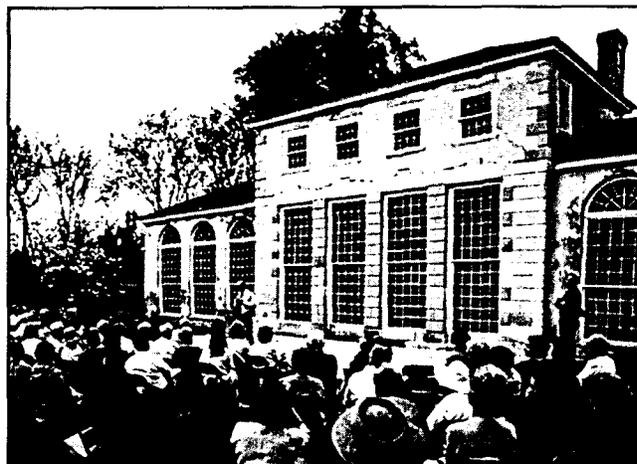


photo by Ken McFarland

Mount Vernon's Dean Norton addressing SGHS members in front of the orangery at Wye House.

Annual Spring SGHS Board Meeting

At the spring meeting held May 10th, immediately preceding the annual meeting in Easton, Maryland, plans were reviewed for the fifteenth-annual meeting to be held in Tallahassee, Florida, March 21st-23rd, 1997, with Mrs. Edwin W. Broderson (Weej) as chair and the Margaret E. Wilson Foundation as host at Goodwin Plantation. It was noted also that the 1998 annual meeting will be in Asheville, North Carolina, with Biltmore Estate as host. The date has yet to be set.

Dr. William C. Welch, chair of the publications committee, reported on the status of the translation and research background for *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane*, an 1838 book on Louisiana gardening written in French by J. F. Lelievre of New Orleans.

It was reported that, at the request of the publications committee, SGHS member Isabel Bartenstein of Mendham, New Jersey, has been promoting the sales of *Magnolia Essays Number One*, by writing departments of landscape architecture at various schools throughout the country.

The fall board meeting is scheduled for November 1st-3rd at Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet, South Carolina, with board member Lawrence Henry and his wife as hosts. †

Society Visits Maryland's Eastern Shore for Annual Meeting

by Kenneth M. McFarland, Hillsborough, North Carolina

A magnificent eighteenth-century green house (orangery), houses redolent of English Palladianism, and breathtaking Eastern Shore landscapes were but some of the features attracting members of the Southern Garden History Society to Maryland for our fourteenth-annual meeting. Ed and Nan Shull, with the invaluable assistance of such knowledgeable local residents as Georgia Adler, worked literally for years to organize the event, but their efforts more than paid off in a function that maintained in every way the reputation for excellence that hallmarks the Society's yearly gatherings. (Society members who attended the 1985 Annapolis meeting may recall the exhibit set up in Easton by Ms. Adler, then director of the Historical Society of Talbot County, called "The Art of Gardening: Maryland Landscapes and the American Garden Aesthetic, 1730-1930.") Lending aid at every point too were members of the Historical Society of Talbot County whose offices and buildings in Easton provided both meeting spaces and a staging point for the meeting activities.



Ed Shull—the everhelpful conference coordinator—protects Dean Norton from the impending storm.

As has become the norm for our annual meeting, those activities included an array of formal presentations, tours, meals, and social



functions. In the first category, members attended sessions led by highly-respected garden historians, as well as leading authorities on the historic architecture and landscapes of Maryland. Keynoting the event

Friday afternoon was Baltimore native Eleanor Weller, whose slides from the Archive of American Gardens reminded members both of the wealth of visual material available at the Smithsonian and of Ms. Weller's and Mac Griswold's seminal book *The Golden Age of American Gardens*. While Ms. Weller's talk was geographically wide ranging in its review of gardens and garden styles, the next speaker, Pete Leshner of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, reminded us of the wealth of history to be studied right in Easton and Talbot County — a point that subsequent tours more than supported.

The evenings formal annual dinner at the Tidewater Inn included recognition of Flora Ann Bynum, whose years of tireless work as secretary-treasurer continues to be the backbone of our Society. Conference coordinator Ed Shull then made a toast to honor the memory of St. Claire Wright of Annapolis. In his tribute to her major work in the restoration of the William Paca Gardens, Mr. Shull dedicated the entire annual meeting to "the wit and grit" of this outstanding lady.

Friday's presentations, in turn, set the stage for the next morning when a battery of speakers, impressive by any standard, examined in detail the buildings and their settings that comprise Maryland's historic cultural landscape. Gathering now in Easton's restored Avalon Theatre, members heard first from Orlando Rideout of the Maryland Historic Trust. Beginning with pre-contact Native American habitation practices and continuing on into the railroad age, Mr. Rideout scrutinized the interaction between peoples and landscapes that had shaped the appearance of first the Maryland countryside and later the region's towns and cities. Peter Kurtze, also of the Maryland Historical Trust, then narrowed the discussion to examine the range of buildings, small and large, that typify Maryland's vernacular and high-style architecture — and indeed setting the stage for several of the sites to be toured later in the program. Fittingly, the morning's presentations then concluded with Barbara Wells

Sarudy of the Maryland Humanities Council, who examined area gardening practices. Her audience was treated to a series of stunning garden/landscape scenes, many of which appear in regional furniture decorative schemes.

Despite such an excellent introduction, however, neither lectures nor slides could do full justice to the gardens and houses scheduled for afternoon visits. Following lunch at Third Haven Meeting House — including a gracious introduction to both the structure and the history of local Friends' meetings — Society members toured a series of sites long connected to the Tilghman and Lloyd families. At Hope, a house of the late eighteenth century built by Peregrine Tilghman with early twentieth-century gardens established by William and Ida Starr, we were hosted by current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Stifel. Next, Wye Heights, with its early ha-ha and magnificent array of garden rooms, offered a look at the combination of gardens and waterscapes that make this area of Maryland so interesting.



For those fond of Palladian architectural forms as well as early garden sites and structures, Wye House then presented a perfect location to conclude the day. Here Society members not only visited the circa

1784 dwelling of Edward Lloyd IV, with its awe-inspiring temple form center block and early library that included such works as Philip Miller's *The Gardener's Dictionary*, but they also were treated to a close examination of the only eighteenth-century orangery extant in the country. Confronting truly ominous weather, Baltimore architect Michael Trostel and Mount Vernon horticulturist Dean Norton then nonetheless braved the elements to examine both the Wye orangery specifically and early green house operations in general. [see Michael Trostel's article "The Maryland Orangeries" in this issue.]

Sunday's optional tours treated participants to Harleigh, Wye Hall, and Wye Plantation (presently the location of the Aspen Institute, a non-profit educational organization). +

A Plant List for the South

by Flora Ann L. Bynum, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

"We need a list of heirloom plants for the South," Peter commented to me this past March as we traveled together to an herb symposium in Greensboro, North Carolina, where Peter was to speak.

"Peter," I said, "that's something I have always wanted to do. We need such a list so badly. I get constant inquiries in the SGHS headquarters asking about appropriate plants for garden restorations."

Thus began a discussion on how to go about achieving such a list. We know that many people throughout the South are working on heirloom plant lists currently. A compilation of these various lists would be a good first step. The person sending in a list should be responsible for the correct botanical names and for supplying background data, such as where

and when the plant was first noted in a Southern garden, Southern nursery, or other reference. The lists sent in should be primary listing of plants documented for that particular area or site.

A major decision would be how to divide the various climatic regions of the South, which range from the upper Southern states, to tropical regions of Florida, to the deep South, and to the western areas of Texas.

We debated whether or not to have a cut-off date of 1820 and if the lists should only include plants in common usage, or if obscure plants should be noted as well. Although we did not resolve these issues on the short ride from my house to Greensboro, we are very excited about the usefulness of this undertaking. Please send your ideas to me at SGHS headquarters. If you have a list for your area to share, please send it along. **Let us hear from you!** +

New SGHS Officers and Board Members



Dr. William C. Welch of College Station, Texas was elected president of the Southern Garden History Society at its annual meeting in May. Peter J. Hatch of Charlottesville, Virginia was elected vice-president, and Flora Ann Bynum of Winston-Salem, North Carolina was re-elected secretary-treasurer. William Lanier Hunt of Chapel Hill, North Carolina continues as honorary president.

Dr. Welch has served on the society's board since 1988 and has been vice-president under Ben Page for the past two years. He is an extension landscape specialist in the department of horticulture at Texas A&M University. The author of *Perennial Garden Color*, *Antique Roses for the South*, and co-author of *The Southern Heirloom Garden*, he is a frequent speaker on heirloom plants and gardens of the South.

Mr. Hatch is director of gardens and grounds at Monticello, a position he has held since 1977. He has overseen the restoration of Thomas Jefferson's grove, vegetable and fruit gardens, vineyards, and north orchard, and the conception and development of the Center for Historic Plants. He lectures nationally and his writings have appeared in numerous periodicals. He has served on the SGHS board since 1986.

The membership elected four new board directors: Elizabeth MacNeil Boggess of Natchez, Mississippi, Dr. Edgar G. Givhan, II of Montgomery, Alabama, Harriet Jansma of Fayetteville, Arkansas, and Barbara Wells Sarudy of Monkton, Maryland.

Dr. Boggess is president and project director of Archaeologists Unlimited, a non-profit corporation with offices in Natchez and Tucson, Arizona. Her personal speciality is historic archaeology, especially landscape archaeology of the plantation South. She is presently engaged in several writing projects, including a history of gardens and gardening in the Natchez District. She has a Ph.D. in classical archaeology.

In addition to an active medical practice in hematology, Dr. Givhan is co-owner of Commercial Garden Design, a firm designing English-style gardens for the deep South, has published two garden books, and lectures on horticulture and garden history. He was chair of two SGHS annual meetings, one in Montgomery and one in Mobile, Alabama, served on the SGHS board from 1984 to 1995, and was president 1988-90.

Mrs. Jansma is communications director, University Relations, of the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. She is a published researcher/writer and she lectures frequently. Most recently she co-wrote with C. Allan Brown, "Landscape Gardening in the South: Changes in Residential Site Design in a Nineteenth-Century Southern Town," which was published in the summer 1996 issue of the *Journal of Garden History*. She served on the SGHS board from 1984 to 1993 and was SGHS president for 1990-92. She also was editor of *Magnolia* from 1984-1990.

Dr. Sarudy is executive director of the Maryland Humanities Council in Baltimore, Maryland and president of the Coalition for Maryland History and Culture, Inc. Her research interests are in American gardens from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. The July-September 1989 issue of the *Journal of Garden History* devoted an entire issue to Dr. Sarudy's essays on "Eighteenth-Century Gardens of the Chesapeake." Dr. Sarudy, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, was a speaker for the annual meeting of SGHS in Easton, Maryland (May 1996).

Under the society's revised bylaws adopted in April 1993, directors serve a three-year term and then rotate off the board, but they can be reelected after a one-year absence. The directors who rotated off this year were Glenn Haltom of Natchez, Catherine Howett of Atlanta, Georgia, and M. Edward Shull of Catonsville, Maryland. Florence Griffin of Atlanta, who was an ex-officio board member as immediate past president, went off the board and Ben G. Page, Jr. of Nashville, Tennessee became ex-officio member as immediate past president.

Directors returning to the board for another term are James I. Borganier of Montgomery; Betsy Crusel of New Orleans, Louisiana; Louise Gunn of Atlanta; Nancy F. Haywood of Houston, Texas;

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In Print

OLD SOUTHERN APPLES

by Creighton Lee Calhoun, Jr. The McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company, 1995. 350 pp. 70 color and black and white drawings. cloth \$49.95; paperback \$39.95. ISBN 0-939923-59-9

Author Lee Calhoun was first introduced to Southern Garden History Society members through his fascinating article on "A History of Southern Apples" published in *Magnolia* (Vol. IX, No. 1, summer/fall 1992). In *Old Southern Apples*, Mr. Calhoun greatly expands his overview of the history and uses of apples in the South from Maryland to Texas and Florida to Arkansas. Although apples became a major commercial crop in parts of the South during the late nineteenth century, southern farmers grew apples as a year-round food source for three centuries. Southerners developed unique apple varieties adapted to the climate and soils of this region through the selection and grafting of wild seedlings. These distinct varieties, numbering more than 1300, were suited to specific uses such as drying, cider, apple butter, and winter keeping. The book begins with the history, culture, and uses of apples in the agrarian South. An exhaustive compilation of apple varieties grown in the South before 1928 follows. The more than 1600 varieties examined are divided into extant and extinct groups, and all known facts concerning the history and descriptions of each apple are given, including a listing of synonyms. The book also includes forty-eight color plates painted by United States Department of Agriculture staff artists between 1880 and 1930, which were selected from the vast archives of the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland. The author pays tribute to the North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX) and their publication, *Pomona*, which served as inspiration for Lee and his wife Edith. (Anyone wishing to join NAFEX can write Jill Vorbeck, Route 1, Box 94, Chapin, Illinois 62628.) Lee and Edith Calhoun presently own and operate a small nursery in Pittsboro, North Carolina, that specializes in old southern apple varieties.



THE GARDENING BOOK of James L. Hunter, A Southern Planter by Catherine Howett. American Botanist, publishers, 1996. 46 pages, paperback. \$18.00. ISBN 0-929332-059

This garden manuscript from antebellum Georgia features the Hunter family, who were influential in raising the educational and social standards of Georgia and Alabama. These gardening records kept by James Hunter, the son of General John L. Hunter, provide a rare glimpse into the types of plants and gardening practices used during this early period. Catherine Howett, professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Georgia, and SGHS board member, has written an in-depth survey of the people, times, and significance of horticulture in the antebellum South. The book, printed on acid-free paper in a numbered, limited edition of 400 copies, can be ordered directly through the American Botanist booksellers, P. O. Box 532, Chillicothe, IL 61523. Please include \$1.25 shipping.

THE ORGANIC ROSE GARDEN by Liz Druitt. Taylor Publishing Company, 1996. Hardcover. 210 pages, 175+ color photographs by Virginia Brown. \$21.00. ISBN 0-87833-906-X.

Liz Druit, formerly of the Antique Rose Emporium and coauthor with its owner, Michael Shoup, of *Landscaping With Antique Roses*, is a familiar figure among the ranks of active SGHS members. She has not only written countless articles on the topic of heirloom roses (including a lead article for *Magnolia*, Vol. X, No. 3, 1994, "Cherchez Le Musk"), but also hosts an environmentally focused PBS garden show, *The New Garden*. Foremost, Ms. Druit is an experienced rose gardener and she writes compellingly from that experience. Throughout *The Organic Rose Garden*, the author breathes new life into the complex histories of roses, revealing their romance and our sheer passion in growing them — "Our species is plain addicted to *their* species." While the book considers many modern types, the old roses comprise the bulk of text, which includes introduction dates and first rate photographs of the blossoms. Curiously, the pages of the "Quick Reference Chart for Garden Form" are not numbered, making the use of this otherwise valuable section a bit of a chore.



New Officers

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Lawrence Henry of Murrells Inlet, South Carolina; Shingo Manard of New Orleans; Kenneth M. McFarland of Hillsborough, North Carolina; J. Dean Norton of Mount Vernon, Virginia; Jane Symmes of Madison, Georgia; and Suzanne L. Turner of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. As editor of *Magnolia*, Peggy C. Newcomb of Charlottesville, Virginia serves also as an ex-officio member. †

— Flora Ann Bynum, secretary-treasurer

Recent Publications of Note from the *Journal of Garden History*

Bartram's Garden Catalogue of North American Plants, 1783. *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. 16, No. 1, January—March 1996. edited by John Dixon Hunt. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 66 pages. paper. ISBN 0144 5170

New Perspectives on Southern Gardens. *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. 16, No. 2, April—June 1996. guest edited by C. Allan Brown. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 152 pages. paper. ISBN 0144 5170

The prestigious international quarterly, *Journal of Garden History*, has just published back-to-back issues of eminent interest to the serious scholar of garden history in America. The first, a detailed annotation and analysis of John Bartram's premier nursery outside Philadelphia during the late eighteenth century, can be purchased directly from Bartram's Gardens by writing: Historic Bartram's Garden, 54th St. and Lindbergh Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19143. The cost is \$19.95 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling. Also available, the "1783 Bartram Broadside" printed on 100% cotton paper in original antique type. The cost is \$15.00, or order both catalogue and broadside for \$30.00 plus s/h. For more information, call (215) 729-5281.

The most recent issue focuses exclusively on garden history of the South. Its four original essays plus introduction (by prominent members of the Southern Garden History Society) are highly researched, meticulously edited, and refreshingly regional in scope. The volume is rich in primary documentation on gardening, from the early Moravian settlement of Bethabara (1753-72) to the early twentieth-century gardening renaissance of the South. Copies will be available through the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants by this fall. For more information, call (804) 984-9816.

Reviews of each of these publications will follow in upcoming issues of *Magnolia*. †



SGHS members stroll towards the mansion at Wye Heights.

photo by Peggy Newcomb

Calendar

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March 21st-23rd, 1997. Fifteenth-annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, in Tallahassee, Florida. For more information, contact conference coordinator Weej Broderson, 2469 B Grassroots Way, Tallahassee, FL 23211. Phone: (904) 656-1163.

October 2nd-4th, 1997. "Expanding and Redefining the Vision," the eleventh conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes at Old Salem. The planning committee is currently soliciting suggestions and proposals for lectures, workshops, and panel discussions pertinent to the theme. Proposals should be submitted to the Landscape Conference, Old Salem, P. O. Box F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108. Deadline for consideration is September 30th, 1996.

Members in the News



Atlanta's **Louise Richardson Allen** was profiled in the Jan./Feb. issue of *Southern Accents*. A longtime SGHS member, Mrs. Allen was cited for her profound influence on the development of the Atlanta History Center's park-like landscape. Since the 1940s, she has made an impact on local attitudes toward native plants and has helped to establish the *Atlanta Botanical Garden and the Southeastern Flower Show*.

American Home Style and Gardening's Feb./March issue includes an article on antique bulb dealer and northern SGHS member **Scott Kunst**, by another member and garden writer, **Marty Ross** of Kansas.

Ben and Libby Page's Nashville garden was featured in "Garden Retreat," an article by **Linda C. Askey** for the July issue of *Southern Living* magazine. Ben, our most recent past-president, and Libby have been active members of SGHS for many years.

The August issue of *Atlantic Monthly* magazine contains a profile of the life and gardening career of Monticello's **Peter Hatch**, who is our recently elected vice-president of SGHS. †

Dues Notice

Dues notices were mailed in mid-July for the year May 1, 1996 through April 30, 1997. Members who have questions about their dues are asked to write society headquarters (see address below on mailer) or call the membership secretary, Kitty Walker, at (910) 721-7328, or the secretary-treasurer, Flora Ann Bynum, (910) 724-3125.

Deadline for the submission of articles for the fall issue of Magnolia is September 30th.

Dr. William C. Welch, President

Peter J. Hatch, 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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Magnolia

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

Bulletin of the
Southern Garden
History Society

Vol. XII

No. 4

Fall 1996

A Nurseryman Evaluates Southern Gardens of the 1850s

by *George R. Stritikus*, Extension Horticulturist, Auburn University and
Melanie Johns, Plant Taxonomist, the Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Up to this point, we have had to rely on a few specific gardening journals and introduction dates to guide us in selecting appropriate plants when reconstructing a period garden. This proves doubly difficult in gardens between the Civil War and WWI. From looking at old nursery catalogs, they appear to have had all the things we have. We have not really been able to describe with any degree of certainty what a "typical" garden of the period contained.

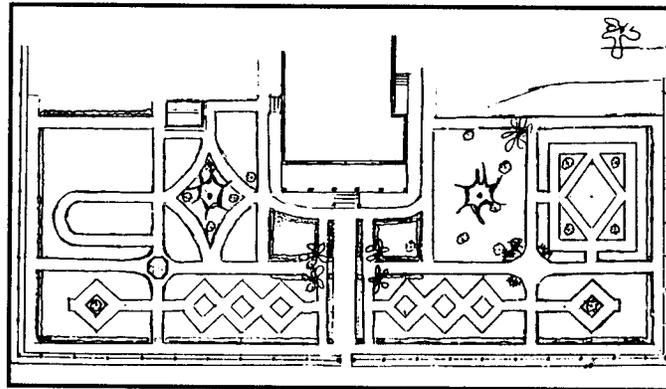
While researching an antebellum monthly agricultural magazine that was published in Montgomery, I came across a letter to the editor of a Natchez newspaper. It proved to be exactly the kind of source document we need to evaluate what plant materials were common, or popular.

The writer was Thomas Affleck. Harvey Cotton, now Director of the Huntsville Botanical Garden, had delivered an address on this very man at the second annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society in Natchez, Mississippi, in

1984. He was a noteworthy Scottish nurseryman who had a nursery in a small town 6 miles from Natchez, Mississippi, named Washington. He later moved his business to Texas and was noteworthy there as well.

It is found in the "American Cotton Planter," Volume 3, 1855, pages 381- 4;

although it was originally for the Natchez Daily Courier and is dated October 24, 1854. The occasion for the correspondence appears to be renewed interest in city beautification and the poor decisions made in the past by the city council. The following is a transcription.



The Battle-Friedman Garden as designed and installed by Lord Ashberton's Gardener in spring of 1843, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

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Southern Gardens of the 1850s... continued from page 1



[From the *Natchez* (Miss.) *Daily Courier*, Oct. 23, 1854]
Washington, Adams County, Miss., October 24, 1854.

Editor Natchez Courier

Dear Sir: -

In common with your many readers, I have had much pleasure in perusing the very interesting and valuable articles on "Fruit-growing in the South" by Rusticus. The information they contain was just of the kind we most needed.

As your "City of the Bluffs" seems to have become greatly alive to improvement, of late years, and many neat and home-like houses have been erected in and around the city, a few hints on planting ornamental trees and shrubs, with short descriptions of some of the less common and rarer sorts, may be apropos and useful.

We lack *variety*, as a general thing, in this class of trees and plants. In a climate in which a greater number of rare and extremely beautiful evergreens are perfectly hardy, than in any other I know of, unless perhaps the Isle of Wight, off the south coast of England - and doubtful if even there - we confine ourselves to some half-dozen kinds. Nothing can be more beautiful than the Laurier Amandier, (*Cerarsus Caroliniensis*) (sic), Cape Jessamine, Arbor Vitae, some of the Viburnums, Pittosporums, Euonymus, and

Myrtles; yet, there is a sameness in our lawns and door-yards, from the general and almost exclusive use of these, that might readily be relieved by the addition of some of the many others which are equally, and in some instances, more beautiful.

So with our shade trees. The perpetually recurring Pride of China tree, beautiful though it be, to the exclusion of the scores of magnificent trees, native and introduced, is, to say the least of it, in very bad taste. It is a filthy tree, too, about the yard, when compared with many others.

As a shade and ornamental tree, there is none will compare with our magnificent Water oak, and Live oak. The latter is more beautiful and permanent; the former is of somewhat more rapid growth.

Suppose that, instead of the China tree, your streets and pleasant Bluff promenade, had been lined and shaded with these oaks! By this time, you would have had ornamental trees such as few cities can boast of. The Mobilians were alive to the beauty of the Live oak as a shade tree for their streets and squares, and see the result now!

The Cork oak, (*Quercus suber*), the Holly-leaved¹ and the Cut-leaved Turkey oak² are all very beautiful, though yet somewhat rare. I have fine young trees of all of them.

The Imperial Paulownia, with its immense leaves and numberless spikes of blue bell-like blossoms, has been introduced some ten or a dozen years, and is quite an acquisition. It blooms here, abundantly, both

continued on page 3...

Calendar

February 21st-23rd, 1997. "Tools of the Trade," Southeast Regional Meeting of the Association for Living Historical Farms & Agricultural Museums. Held at Colonial Williamsburg. Contact John A. Caramia, Jr., Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, P. O. Box 1776, Williamsburg, VA 23187-1776. (804) 220-2473; Fax: (804) 220-7357.

March 21st-23rd, 1997. Fifteenth-annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, in Tallahassee, Florida (see article in this issue). For more information, contact Weej Broderson, 2469 B. Grassroots Way, Tallahassee, FL 32311. (904) 656-1163.

May 24th, 1997. Fifth-annual Open House of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello. Morning lectures will be followed by a visit to the center's private nursery at Tufton Farm where the collections of heirloom roses and dianthus will be in full bloom. Rosarian Douglas Seidel will conduct a workshop on rose propagation and identification. For more information, contact Peggy Newcomb, P. O. Box 316, Charlottesville, VA 22902, (804) 984-9816.

October 2nd-4th, 1997. Eleventh "Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes" conference at Old Salem (see article *this issue*). For more information contact the Landscape Conference, Old Salem Inc., P. O. Box F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108.

Southern Gardens of the 1850s... continued from page 2



spring and fall.

The Varnish tree (*Sterichua platynifolia*)³ (sic) is so called from its beautiful glossy bark, and large rich colored leaves, which seem all to have been recently coated with green varnish. It is, altogether, a pretty and desirable ornamental shade tree.

The Croton tree⁴, and Everblooming China⁵ are both pretty trees, though, in a severe winter, the ends of the branches are sometimes killed by the frost.

The *Acacia julibrissin*⁶, or flowering Acacia, though by no means rare, is yet too-showy, with its myriads of pink and yellow flowers, to be omitted in pleasure grounds, or even small yards.

Several of the Maples are native here, and form, as elsewhere, most beautiful trees. Perhaps the best of these is the Scarlet Maple, so showy in the spring with its bright scarlet blossoms. The ash-leaved Maple (*Negundo*) or Box Elder, cannot be excelled as a shade tree in any country, where it has room to grow and spread. Several of the European Maples do well here, and desirable trees.

The Chestnut is one of the many stately trees of the forest, and desirable not only as a lawn tree, but for its fruit. The large fruited Spanish is the finest⁷.

Our Great Southern Cypress (*Taxodium*) should never be omitted, where the soil is rich and moist. The chief cause of its rarity in lawns, etc., is the difficulty of transplanting young trees from the swamp, to the dry upland of our hills. With trees grown on dry land from seed, there is no such difficulty.

The graceful weeping willow, though so easily grow, is comparatively rare. The *curled-leaved* variety⁸ being quite as *weeping* in its habits as the other, is very curious. Each leaf is curled up like a cork-screw.

The Ginkgo (*Salisbaria*)⁹ or Maiden-hair tree is pretty, and quite ornamental. The leaves are very curious.

The double-flowering Peach is one of the most showy of trees, forming early in the spring, a mass of wreaths of rich and extremely double, rose-like blossoms.

Where there is room for a few large and wide-spreading trees, the Peccan (sic) should not be

overlooked. They afford a fine shade, and come into bearing in eight or ten years.

We know of one gentleman in western Texas, who has some 15 or 20 varieties of this delicious nut, which he has succeeded in multiplying by grafting. Two years ago, he sent the writer a quantity of nuts from each of 8 or 10 of the finest of his selections. These were planted and have produced a fine lot of trees; the trees from each variety of nut show a wonderful family likeness, in foliage, habit of growth, & c; whilst there is a marked difference between the lots. They have been all twice transplanted, and root-pruned each time; thus in a great measure obviating the difficulty in transplanting when the trees are older.

The Mountain Ash, or *Rowan Tree*, dear to every Scotchman's boyish recollections, we have succeeded in acclimating. It is a beautiful tree.

The large-leaved Magnolia (*M. macrophylla*) from that same difficulty of transplanting from the woods, is quite rare in our gardens; where its magnificent foliage and immensely large and showy flowers fully entitle it to a first place. When grown from seed in the nursery-row, there is no difficulty in removing it.

Of evergreen shade trees, the *Magnolia grandiflora* stands first. Like its companion the *Holly*, it is not easily removed from the woods. When quite young this may be effected, by lifting with a ball of earth around the roots, in the spring, and cutting off the leaves, but leaving the leaf-stalks. They well deserve that every available means should be used to secure both – the Magnolia and the *Holly* (*Ilex opaca*) – whenever shade and ornament are

sought for. During the first three or four years from seed, their growth is quite slow; but afterwards they push up rapidly, and soon form handsome trees.

There is another *Holly*, a native to the South, and an evergreen, that is very generally overlooked. It is more commonly planted about Mobile than anywhere else. This is *Ilex Vomitaria* (sic). The growth is slender, leaves small and numerous, and in winter the plant is covered with bright scarlet berries.

Of the various *Coniferae*, it is rare to find a plant in a lawn in all this region; unless perhaps, an occasional Long-leaved or Old-field Pine¹⁰ – both most noble and beautiful trees, and not planted one for a thousand that should be. There are many other Pines, from all parts of the world, now to be found in nurseries, and all



Harper's Weekly, 1887, illustration showing the street trees planted down Dexta Avenue.

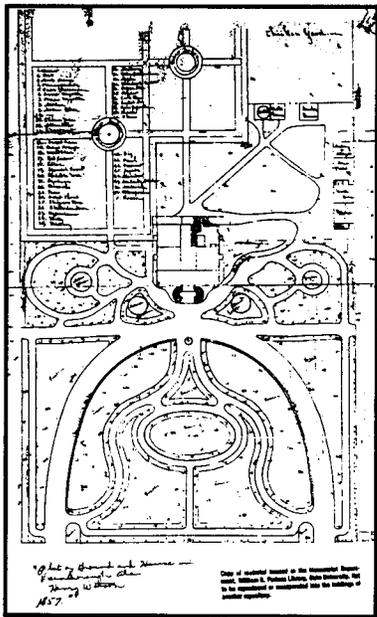
continued on page 4...

Southern Gardens of the 1850s... continued from page 3



desirable.

The Spruces are the most prized of this family in Europe, although so common, that they are planted by the thousand to serve as screens to lawns and gardens, and to plantations of other less hardy trees. The Norway Spruce, (*Abies excelsa*,) (sic)¹¹ the most common, is also the most beautiful. In fact, I know of no tree that equals it in gorgeous and impressive beauty. Some ten years ago, I imported a lot of fine plants of this and other Spruces; and, as in every other attempt to import young evergreens either from the North or Europe, I saved but a very small percentage. Of those saved were two Norway Spruces. For five years they did not make a growth of more than an inch a year! After that they shot up rapidly, and are now beautiful, healthy plants, eight or ten feet in height. Since then I have been more successful in habituating young plants to the climate, and have fine young trees



The only extant landscape design for Henry Watson, 1857, in Greensboro, Alabama.

of several species of Spruce.

The Cedars are very beautiful. And, by the way, what we know as the Red Cedar, is a Juniper, bearing a small purple berry; the Cedars are cone-

bearing. *Cedrus deodara*, the Great Indian Cedar is the most splendid tree of this family; perfectly hardy here, and of very rapid growth; rare, however. The Cedars of Lebanon is also hardy, but of much slower growth.

Two new evergreen Conifers, *Cryptomeria japonica* and *Cunninghamii* (sic) *Sinensis* - the former from Japan, the latter from China - I look upon as great acquisitions. Both are at home in our climate; requiring, however, like all of these resinous evergreens, a light sandy, but rich soil; and are most graceful and beautiful, yet curious ornaments to the lawn or door-yard.

Another of these, the great Chili Pine, (*Arancaria imbricata*), has not succeeded so well; though I have now a few young seedlings that seem to feel themselves at home.

The Junipers, headed by our own native, the so-called Red Cedar, (*J. virginiana*) are indispensable. In the "Red Cedar" there is a great diversity of foliage and habit of growth; some being open and loose in habit, others upright

and compact. The latter I have always selected from the seed-bed. They should have room to grow, and be allowed to sweep the ground with their branches; not pruned up into the likeness of a gigantic broom!

The Swedish Juniper¹² is very upright in growth and with fine and delicate, silvery foliage, and altogether a pretty plant.

The Arbo Vita is well known - that is, the Chinese, (*orientalis*), the sort common here. And to form a pretty screen hedge, I know of nothing more beautiful; requiring to be kept nicely clipped, and the seed cones picked off so soon as large enough - otherwise the foliage becomes brown.

The American Arbor Vitae, (*Thuja occidentalis*,) is still a more desirable plant; bearing the shears equally well, retaining its color better, and the foliage giving out a sweet odor when crushed. The *Thuja plicata* is a wavy-foliaged, pendulous kind, also pretty.

It was long before I succeeded with the Yews. The English Yew is now perfectly healthy and grows vigorously. Its close, dark green foliage renders it very desirable, and especially in the cemetery, where from time immemorial, it has been considered the most fitting ornament.

And so with the Tree Boxes - the neatest and prettiest of evergreen trees; always fresh and pleasant to look on. They grow better here than even their native climate; as does, also, the Dwarf Box, for edgings.

The *Euonymus*, evergreen and variegated, are both very ornamental. The evergreen is often misnamed Tree Box. They are very hardy and grow rapidly.

There are several of the *Viburnum* which are handsome evergreens. *V. Lucidum* (sic)¹³ has rich dark foliage and showy white flowers, and makes a large plant. *V. laurus-tinus* (sic)¹⁴, or Laurustinus is one of the very richest of our flowering evergreens; blooming, too, so very early in the spring, or in the winter rather, as to be very desirable.

The Laurels are all beautiful. But, like many of our finest plants - because not named in Northern books on gardening; and because Downing expresses his regret, at the same time that he gives expression to his admiration of the plants, that they are "too aristocratic in their nature to thrive on our Republican!"¹⁵ - the whole tribe has been overlooked. The *Laurus nobilis*, the Portugal, the English, and the Carolinian laurels¹⁶, are perfectly hardy - the three first after *habitation* to the climate - and are rich and very beautiful evergreens. I have splendid plants of all, and especially of the English - (*Cerasus lauro-cerasus*.)

continued on page 8...

Legendary Southern Horticulturist William Lanier Hunt Dies

by Flora Ann Bynum, Winston-Salem,
North Carolina



photo by C.A. Brown

William Lanier Hunt of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, honorary president of the Southern Garden History Society, died October 19th after a brief illness with cancer. He was ninety years old.

Thanks to his extraordinary vision, the *Southern Garden History Society* owes its very existence to Bill Hunt. In 1979 at Old Salem's first "Restoring Southern

Gardens and Landscapes" conference (in Winston-Salem), he made an eloquent speech proclaiming the need to establish a garden history society in the south. He further urged that such an organization, modeled after the Garden History Society of England, needed to begin preserving old southern gardens and plants immediately. At the second conference in 1980, Mr. Hunt repeated the plea.

He made such a society sound so appealing that Old Salem's business office began receiving inquiries from people who wanted to join.

John B. Flowers III, representing the Stagville Center of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources in Durham, and Flora Ann Bynum, representing Old Salem Inc., met with Bill Hunt three times to draw up bylaws and incorporation papers. In March 1982, with Bill signing the Articles of Incorporation as "initial registered agent," the society was born officially.

The society's first board met in May of that year and named Bill Hunt honorary president. He served also as host to the society's fall board meeting at his home in Chapel Hill in October 1984. SGHS's first issue of *Magnolia Essays*, published in 1993, was dedicated to Bill Hunt for "his lifelong contributions to the appreciation of southern gardening and southern garden history."



The North Carolina Botanical Garden gave a dinner honoring Bill Hunt the evening of October 18th, on the occasion of the thirtieth-anniversary meeting of the Botanical Garden Foundation, Inc. He also became the third recipient of the Flora Caroliniana Award, joining

the ranks of Lady Bird Johnson and naturalist John Terres. A booklet prepared for the meeting by Ken Moore, assistant director of the Botanical Garden, called Mr. Hunt the "Dean of Southern Horticulture." The booklet's introduction states: "In celebrating William Lanier Hunt's life . . . we are celebrating his many, many contributions to the world of horticulture, his founding of the Botanical Garden Foundation, and his lifelong efforts to keep us all mindful of the heritage, not only of our natural world, but of the cultural life of our state and community during the twentieth century."

Bill Hunt was born in 1906 in Pomona, North Carolina, on the outskirts of Greensboro and near his uncle's 400-acre Lindley Nurseries, one of the south's oldest and largest. There he played in the greenhouses and learned from the nursery staff, which included gardeners from Europe. He graduated from Woodberry Forest School in Virginia, and from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in 1931, where he studied botany under the late Dr. W. C. Coker. He continued to live the rest of his life in Chapel Hill. A profile of Bill Hunt printed in *The Chapel Hill News* (October 18, 1996) described his career that continually sought for information about southern horticulture, noting: "In the decade after his 1931... graduation ... he referred to himself as 'a wandering garden specialist,' roaming from town to town consulting on park and beautification projects, lecturing and teaching garden short courses. Nurseries, private gardens and even cemeteries became his outdoor classrooms, and the first-hand knowledge he amassed was stored away for future use."

During his college years he explored the rhododendron-covered bluffs called Laurel Hill along Morgan Creek east of Chapel Hill, and gradually began buying land. He was determined to preserve this magnificent natural landscape, and eventually gave the one-hundred-twenty-five acres, known as *The William Lanier Hunt Arboretum*, to the North Carolina Botanical Garden.

"Bill Hunt has been my link to Southern Garden heritage," noted Linda Askey, SGHS member and garden editor for *Southern Living* magazine. "He and his contemporaries, Elizabeth Lawrence and Caroline Dorman, gardened voraciously and wrote eloquently, setting a pace that challenges the most experienced gardeners with their diverse palette of plants while offering the simple understandings that beginners need." In 1967, at his urging, the University of North Carolina Press reprinted Elizabeth Lawrence's 1942 classic, *A Southern Garden*, for which Bill wrote the

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William Lanier Hunt

... continued from page 5



forward. In 1995 Bill Hunt was named an honorary member of the Garden Writers Association of America at its meeting in Texas. He was an active promoter of the garden club movement begun in the 1920s and he lectured to club members in fifteen states while still a very young man.

He served overseas during World War II where his ability to speak and read French and German enabled him to work with the Belgian underground and the strategic bombing survey. He was one of the first American Fellows of the Royal Horticultural Society (F.R.H.S.) and had many contacts in England through visits there.

In the 1960s he worked with University of North Carolina trustees and others to develop the North Carolina Botanical Garden, which opened in 1966. He organized and served as first president of the Botanical Garden Foundation, Inc. Bill Hunt was instrumental also in establishing the renown Landscape Gardening School at Sandhills Community College in Southern Pines, North Carolina.

In 1982, Duke University Press published Mr. Hunt's *Southern Gardens*, *Southern Gardening*. The

book's jacket states: "William Lanier Hunt is the leading authority writing today on southern gardens. His historical knowledge, deep appreciation of gardening in all its aspects, and firsthand experience of all the South, makes this collection of his best writings a valuable and practical source for every southern gardener. Hunt encourages his readers to move beyond the stereotyped gardens of dime store seed flats and instructs gardeners in the finer points of growing and finding native plants, flowers and



photo by C.A. Brown

... "Dean of Southern Horticulture."

trees. He recalls what our grandmothers and great-grandmothers grew, and exhorts his readers to look up from the spade to become aware of the overall design of their gardens, of color schemes, and of how to plan beyond azaleas and daylilies."

Linda Askey aptly describes him as the essential grand gentleman of the garden who still managed to retain "the spark of enthusiasm that keeps him ever young and ever dear to countless gardeners he has influenced." ♣

Tallahassee to Host 1997 Annual Meeting

by Gina M. Edwards, Tallahassee, Florida

When Florida became a United States Territory and opened for settlement in 1821, among the many prominent families who migrated South were brothers Hardy and Bryan Croom, sons of William Croom of New Bern, North Carolina. Their love of family, horticulture and the north Florida countryside created a vision that would eventually become Goodwood Plantation near Tallahassee — site of the upcoming SGHS annual meeting on March 21-23, 1997. Heeding the distinct contrast to the tropical southern region of the state, the dramatic character of Florida's north and central areas is the focus of the conference's theme:

"The Other Florida."

Unlike the sandy soil and small-leaf evergreens of the southern region, north Florida is characterized by

continued on page 7...

1997 Annual Meeting... continued from page 6

deciduous trees and fertile, red clay. Freshwater lakes and meandering rivers run throughout both the north and central parts of the state. Early nineteenth-century plantations that escaped Civil War destruction are scattered throughout these areas. Many began as prosperous, crop-producing farms that, later, transformed into hunting plantations, country estates, and luxury homes. So, too, there are houses and gardens built by wealthy Northerners who used Florida as their playground during the boom times of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Included among these antebellum and post-Civil War properties are Box Hall, Horseshoe Plantation, and Maclay Gardens.

Tours of Tallahassee area plantations and estates will include the conference host site, Goodwood Plantation, where director of horticulture Nancy White and curator Larry Paarlberg will give attendees a historical overview. White and Paarlberg have studied hundreds of photographs and documents to piece together the lives of Goodwood's alluring and multifarious occupants, as well as the plantation's horticultural history. The main house, peripheral buildings, and grounds are still undergoing extensive restoration, so conference participants will get an uncommon private view into the process of recreating the spirit and essence of a historic Southern home and garden.

Goodwood's builder was Bryan Croom, but it was his brother Hardy who first conceived the idea for the house. The brothers owned extensive acreage throughout what is now the Florida Panhandle, in Gadsden, Jackson, and Leon counties, including a large part of what was originally the Lafayette Land Grant. In addition

to property ownership, the territory supplied Hardy with a vast and untouched wilderness for his botanical interests. A lawyer by training, but a planter by vocation, Hardy Croom wrote in many scientific journals about plants and planting in the South. Along with a number of Florida plants, Hardy is credited with the discovery of the *Torreya* tree, named in honor of his friend, Dr. John Torrey, one of the best known American botanists of the nineteenth century.

Hardy grew to love the area and he longed to move his family there. Although he resolved to build the house,

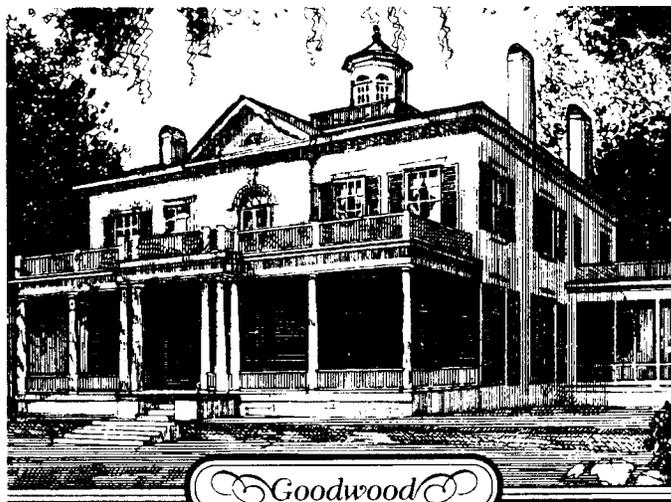


his wife Frances resisted for several years. Once she finally agreed and the family headed South toward their new life in Florida, Goodwood's future was forced into ambiguity. Hardy, his wife, and three children drowned on October 9, 1837 when a hurricane off the coast of North Carolina, called Racer's Storm, sank their steamship, ironically named "Home."

Eventually Bryan took control of the property and in the 1840s he built the house of which his brother Hardy dreamed. Bryan turned the land into a prosperous farming plantation, but the story of Goodwood might be quite different had Hardy lived. Goodwood's tumultuous history began when Bryan was sued by the family of Frances Smith Croom, Hardy's wife, for a part of the estate. After a precedent-setting, twenty-year lawsuit, Frances' mother, Henrietta Smith won ownership of Goodwood, only to sell it a few short weeks later.



Harman
Blennerhassett.
Photo by
S. Nicely.



Goodwood

Over the next century, Goodwood passed through opulent times of elaborate entertaining and through uncertain times verging on penury. Its owners ranged from the elusive Dr. and Mrs. William Lamb Arrowsmith to the highly social and wealthy Mrs. Fanny Tiers, to the world-traveling Senator W. C. Hodges.

Goodwood's last owner, Mr. Tom Hood, left the estate in the hands of the Margaret E. Wilson Foundation upon his death in 1990. Named for his late wife, this foundation allowed for the beginning of the property's restoration so

that it can be opened to the public as a museum and cultural park.

The 1997 conference promises to be a gateway to the historic landscape of north and central Florida. Like the gates of Goodwood itself, which open amidst dignified live oaks, sago palms, and Spanish moss, SGHS members will be welcomed to an enrapturing promenade to the past.

All members will receive full details on the 1997 meeting within the next two months. Please join us. ♣

Southern Gardens of the 1850s... continued from page 4



The *Photynias* (sic), or Japan Hawthorns, are like Laurels, as yet somewhat rare in our gardens and lawns. There is a superb plant of the smooth-leaved Photynia (*P. glauca*)¹⁷ in Mr. Profilet's garden behind the Episcopal church in the city of Natchez, which has been for many years an object of admiration, and especially when covered with its myriads of snow-white blossoms. It is, I should judge, some twenty-five feet tall, affording a fine shade. The Holly-leaved, (*P. serrulata*) is yet more beautiful. I do not know of a richer evergreen. The small-leaved is also very pretty.

The Pittosporums, both evergreen and variegated, are well known and favorite plants. They bear the shears well.

Olea fragrans, the Fragrant Olive, is an (sic) universal favorite with the ladies, and most deservedly so.

There are several of the Privets which form beautiful ornamental evergreen trees. The handsome

evergreen, so generally admired, on the top of the mound, between the house of our friend Mr. Andrew Brown and the river, is the *Chinese Privet*¹⁸. It is at all times a beautiful plant, but especially when covered with its racemes of white flowers. The Evergreen, the Myrtle-leaved, and the Box-leaved¹⁹, though commonly used for hedging, may be readily trained into very pretty smallish trees.

The Japan Plum - *Eriobotrya (Meapilus) Japonica* (sic)²⁰ - whether as a mere ornamental evergreen, for which it is second to few others, or for the fragrance of its flowers, or delicious fruit, is deserving of infinitely more attention than it has received. It has hitherto been somewhat scarce, and what few there were budded on quince. I have now large, healthy and handsome trees, *seedlings grown here*, many of which are now full of blossoms. The Japan Plum has ripened its fruit repeatedly in this country; and a very delicious fruit it is. It is now abundant in the markets of New Orleans in April.

The *Gardenias* - Cape Jessamine is the most common - are of course indispensable. The dwarf kind (*G. radicans*) is a lovely little plant. Fortune's new Chinese (*G. Fortunei*) was lauded so highly that I feared a disappointment. But it proved to be all he represented—the foliage larger and richer, and the blossoms fully double the size and more perfect in form; and though fragrant, not so oppressively so as the old sort.

But I have already extended my notes to such a length, that I must now be brief.

I find I have omitted a very beautiful ornamental plant, which forms a small tree - a great favorite of the ladies - the Venetian Sumac, Fringe or Mat tree²¹; the blossoms appearing in numerous and delicately colored, haze-like spikes. It is not evergreen, but a lovely plant in a group of evergreens.

The Deutzias, Crape Myrtles, double-flowering Pomegranates, Forsythias, Honeysuckles, Lilacs, Snowballs, Syringas, (or Mock Orange)²², Ivy²³, Brooms, with a host of other beautiful plants, I must leave for another opportunity to describe.

As to transplanting shade trees, ornamental plants, and especially evergreens - bear in mind, that a thing that is worth doing at all, is worth doing well, and act up to it. Let the ground be properly prepared. If the entire lawn was well manured and thoroughly trench-plowed, and garden or door-yards well and deeply dug, so much the better. When this cannot be done. Let large be dug, but not too deep if in a stiff retentive clay. For evergreen, provide a supply of rich, black, leaf-soil from the woods, and of well-rotted manure; for deciduous trees, any good and not too rank manure will do.

If your shade trees are to be procured from fields or woods, select those only which grow *in the open* - not from dense woods or thickets. Spare no pains in

Old Salem Hosts Landscape Restoration Conference in October 1997

by Darrell Spencer, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

The field of historic landscape restoration remains as diverse today as historical properties themselves. As we attempt to remove or reveal successive layers of change in the historic landscape we are faced with a perplexing array of issues such as historical significance, current site use and public access, interpretive intent, budgets and maintenance. "Expanding and Redefining the Vision," the topic of the eleventh Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes conference (see calendar) will address these complex and often confusing concerns. The conference speakers, including SGHS members Kent Brinkley, Rudy Favretti, Catherine Howett,

Allan Brown, Valencia Libby and others, will draw from their wide-ranging experiences with historic landscapes of the South to explore the meaning of landscape "restoration" from a variety of perspectives. The conference will examine proven strategies for implementing such restorations. ♦

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Southern Gardens of the 1850s... continued from page 8



the taking up all of the roots that can be saved, and especially the small fibrous ones; covering them with wet moss or gunny bags, or old carpets, etc., to keep them from being dried by the air or sun. When the tree is a handsome or valuable one, it should be lifted with a sufficient mass of earth to insure its safety. Trees or shrubs which have been prepared the year before for removal, as is done in all the good nurseries, can be transplanted with infinitely less risk than those from the fields or woods. I have large specimens of English Laurel, Euonymus, Cedars, Junipers, Spruces, Japan Plums, Hollies (sic), Magnolias, etc., which have been repeatedly root-pruned, so that a very moderate sized ball of earth would contain all of the roots necessary to the well-being of the plant.

Transplanting should be done, now, as early as possible. November, February, and March, I deem the best seasons here. Plant no deeper than the tree grew

naturally. Mix the manure with the best of the soil that came out of the hole; when the manure is rank and coarse, best put in the larger portion near the surface. Finish with a few buckets of water, and stake the tree or plant firmly, that it may not be shaken with the wind.

In removing large trees, thin out the top somewhat, and shorten the branches; but never trim the tree to a bare pole, or anything approaching to it. For although in some instances trees thus treated may live, they will be exceptions to the rule. In transplanting Live oaks, I prefer clipping off a portion of the leaves, first shortening the branches. I have a very handsome lot of these, now five to six feet high, which have been twice transplanted and root-pruned, so that they may now be removed with entire safety.

In conclusion, let me advise those who have places to improve, to secure good sized plants, if such can be had that can safely transplanted. A pleasing effect is thus produced, and at once, which would otherwise require long years of waiting for. ♣

Footnotes:

¹ Hortus III recognizes the Holly oak as *Quercus illex*, a native of the Mediterranean region. The exact identity of this plant is not certain. There are several oaks that have a holly-leaved form...

² The Turkey oak is now known as *Quercus laevis*. Hortus III recognizes no forms of Turkey oak, as the cut-leaved one he refers to.

³ *Sterculia platanifolia* was reassigned and is now *Firmiana simplex*.

⁴ The identity of this plant is not certain. *Exotica* has a listing for a tree croton, *Codiaeum poilanii*, but this is no guarantee they are the same plant.

⁵ The identity of this plant is not certain.

⁶ *Acacia julibrissin* was reassigned and is not *Albizzia julibrissin*.

⁷ The Spanish chestnut is another name for the European chestnut, *Castanea pulchella*.

⁸ *Salix babylonica* 'Crispa' or sometimes called 'Annularis', introduced 1730 (Dirr). The more commonly seen *Salix matsudana* 'Tortuosa' was not introduced until 1923 (Dirr).

⁹ *Satsuburia adiantifolia* has been reassigned and is now *Ginkgo biloba*.

¹⁰ This sentence can be read as one plant with two different common names, or two separate plants. Longleaf pine is *Pinus palustris*. The identity of the second one is uncertain. L.H. Batley identifies the Old Field Pine as *Pinus taeda*, the Loblolly pine.

¹¹ The Norway spruce is not *Aibes*, but *Picea aibes*. This group was pulled out of the *Aibes* group, which are the Firs, and put in a genus all their own.

¹² This plant, *Juniperus suecica*, is now thought to be a form of Common juniper, *J. Communis* var. *fastigiata*.

¹³ Today, *V. lucidum*, meaning "the shiny viburnum," is no longer recognized. It was the old name for a *Viburnum tinus* cultivar, according to Hortus III. It should be written *V. tinus* var. 'Lucidum'.

¹⁴ This plant name should be written *Viburnum tinus*, according to Hortus III.

¹⁵ This quote by the famous landscape architect practicing at the time up North- and widely read in the South- appears not to be complete as written. Apparently the last word was left out during typesetting. It should probably read "on our Republican soil."

¹⁶ The exact identity of these three forms of Laurel is not certain. Hortus III recognizes three forms: one with very narrow, willow-like leaves, one with golden leaves, and one with leaves that have a wavy margin.

¹⁷ Now: *Photinia glabra*, Japanese photinia.

¹⁸ This plant appears to be what is now *Ligustrum lucidum*, the Waxleaf ligustrum, which is evergreen in Alabama. Further north the extreme cold will cause it to lose all its leaves. Hortus III says that the real Chinese Privet, *L. sinense* is deciduous.

¹⁹ The identity of these three forms is uncertain.

²⁰ *Eriobotrya japonica*, the Loquat.

²¹ The exact identity is not known. Because he calls it a Fringe tree, it can be *Chionanthus virginicus*, Grancy greybeard, but you could not describe the flowers as hazy spikes. This description could apply to the lilac-chaste tree, *Vitex agnus-castus*.

²² *Philadelphus*. The native is *P. inodorus* and has no fragrance. *P. coronarius*, which looks very much like the native, is strongly scented.

²³ Probably the Scotch broom, *Cytisus scoparius*.

Of Note

Historic Landscapes Institute: Preserving Jefferson's Landscape and Gardens

For two weeks in June, the gardens and grounds of Monticello and the University of Virginia will serve as the setting for a unique educational experience in the theory and practice of historic landscape preservation. This newly created summer institute is designed as an introduction to landscape history, garden restoration, and historical horticulture by using the landscapes of Monticello and the University as case studies and outdoor classrooms. Monticello staff and UVa faculty will provide instruction through lectures, walking tours, field trips, and field work. The 1997 Institute will be held from June 15th-27th. For more information, contact Charlottesville Regional Programs, UVa, (804) 982-5313 or fax (804) 982-5324. ♣

Recent Discovery Sheds Light on the Gardens of Blennerhassett Island

by Linda Watkins, Parkersburg, West Virginia



"... shrubbery, laid out in such a manner as to represent the thirteen states of the Confederacy!"

When you are working with a home that burned to the ground in 1811, you cannot help but be a little envious of the gardening records that exist from other notable historic estates. At the Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park near Parkersburg, West Virginia, we look longingly at the copious plant lists and landscaping plans of Virginia's Thomas Jefferson (Monticello) and Lady Jean Skipwith (Prestwoud). All we can do is to read in diaries or a very few books or travelers' accounts of the glories that once existed in the Blennerhassett gardens. From these accounts and some archaeological work done in the 1970s and 1980s, we can draw some rather nebulous conclusions, and these were shaken considerably by the recent discovery of an 1843 newspaper article. But first, some background information is in order.

Harman Blennerhassett was a wealthy Irishman who settled with his wife Margaret on a wilderness island on the Ohio River. There, in 1798, he built a magnificent mansion and estate. At a time when many of their neighbors lived in log structures, the Blennerhassett Mansion, with its elegant furniture, gilded cornices, and Oriental carpets, was truly a showplace. For a few brief years, it was the glittering center of social activity in the valley.

Unfortunately, in 1806, Harman Blennerhassett became entangled in a mysterious military enterprise with Aaron Burr. President Jefferson accused both men of plotting treason in attempting to establish an empire in the Southwest. Although Burr was tried and acquitted and Blennerhassett released from prison, the circumstances ruined the lives of both men.

Furthermore, the exquisite mansion accidentally burned to the ground in 1811, leaving no trace of its graceful, semicircular lines. In 1973, archaeologists rediscovered its foundations, and through a continuing program of careful historical and architectural research, the mansion has been recreated and furnished.

The gardens, alas, have not. Descriptions in visitors' diaries and journals unearthed by park historian, Dr. Ray Swick, indicate that they should exist. Documentary evidence tells us that the Blennerhassetts laid out two gardens — one to the north-northwest of the house, which was ornamental, and another, more utilitarian kitchen garden to the south-southwest. The custodian in charge of the gardens was Peter Taylor, an Englishman from Lancashire who "had been bred to the pursuit." He entered the Blennerhassetts' service in 1803.

The kitchen garden encompassed an acre and was surrounded by a paling fence. Although no archaeological work has been done, we know from

written accounts the kitchen garden contained currant bushes, strawberries, musk melons, cantaloupes, and a vinery. Orange, lemon, olive, citron, and fig trees were brought to maturity in hothouses. Beyond the kitchen garden lay the orchards, where a wide variety of fruit trees were grown.

The Blennerhassett flower garden extended over two-and-a-third

acres and was enclosed by a tall paling fence, with surviving post holes that have allowed twentieth-century archaeologists, under the direction of Jeff Graybill, to trace the garden's exact boundaries. The fence was



*View of the restored 1798 Blennerhassett mansion.
Photo courtesy of Blennerhassett Island State Park.*

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Gardens of Blennerhassett Island

... continued from page 10

decorated on the interior side with espaliers of peach, apricot, quince, and pear trees, and gooseberry bushes. Toward the center of the garden wound serpentine gravel paths that, bordered by "thick masses" of shrubs, passed under bowers and arbors of honeysuckles and eglantine roses. Some of the shrubs were imported from abroad; others were selected with great care from the adjacent forest.

The paths led to ornamental summerhouses or gazebos where strollers could sit to rest and admire the view. A maze or labyrinth of high hedges added an air of mystery. The garden's trees and



shrubs were mirrored in the waters of a fish pond. All in all, the garden was surely worthy of the accolade given it by English actor John Bernard in 1801 who called it "this Italy of the West," adding that "... until I go to my grave I must bear with me, as of a dream, the remembrance of the beautiful Blennerhassett ... the Paradise."

These accounts had led us to assume that the gardens of the well-read and widely-traveled Blennerhassett reflected the naturalistic gardening styles then popular in Britain. Imagine our surprise upon the discovery of an account in the Zanesville Gazette, published October 18, 1843. The article, by a man who visited the island while the Blennerhassetts were still in residence, described the area in front of the crescent-shaped mansion: "The space in front of the principal building, and between the two wings, was set in flowers. On the north, between the house and river, was the shrubbery, laid out in such a manner as to represent the thirteen states of the Confederacy! gravelled walks, answering to boundary lines! This was the shrubbery which Wirt says 'even Shenstone might have envied'."

This article contains the first mention of a parlor garden that we have seen, changing our concept of an expansive grass lawn in front of the mansion. The late eighteenth-

and early nineteenth-century practice of growing flowers in front of the house might easily have captured the imagination of Margaret Blennerhassett.

The most intriguing aspect of the article, however, is the reference to the area "laid out in such a manner as to represent the thirteen states of the Confederacy!" Could this possibly be referring to the maze of high hedges noted in an earlier visitor account to the island? Certainly it seems to indicate a highly developed imagination on the part of the designer. One wonders, however, what Shenstone, who embraced the naturalistic movement, might have envied in such a garden.

It is obvious that much research needs to be done before the Blennerhassett gardens can be restored. The Blennerhassett Historical Foundation, Inc., recently initiated a program to begin again the archeological work that had been interrupted in the 1980s. An archaeologist has been retained who will work with field school students from West Virginia University to complete a professional dig of the garden area. The Parkersburg community and representatives from WVU are enthusiastic and supportive of this opportunity.

Only when the gardens are complete can the mansion be seen as it was for the few glorious years that the Blennerhassetts resided there. Eventually, the restored gardens will take their rightful place as the proper background of the romantic Blennerhassett story. ♣

Ranunculacea COLUMBINE



46.—COLUMBINE.
AQUILEGIA VULGARIS.
Blue, red, white. 2 ft. Fl., 1 in. June.

Editors

A correction to Flora Ann Bynum's article "A Plant List for the South" (Vol. XII, No. 3). While most SGHS members are familiar with our vice-president, Peter Hatch, we did not mean to omit his last name in the article.]

Notes

Two corrections for the illustrations in Michael Trostel's article "The Maryland Orangeries" (Vol. XII, No. 3). The captions for the Robert Cary Long, Jr. watercolor of Hampton Mansion (p. 3) should note of the original painting "Present whereabouts unknown," and the elevation and plan of the Wye House Orangerie (p. 4) is from *The Monograph Series*, No. 5, Vol. XVI, 1930.]

More on a Southern Plant List

by Peter Hatch, Charlottesville, Virginia



A common interest among all members of the Southern Garden History Society has been historical plant lists as a way of documenting plant introduction dates. Members of the society are ably equipped and eager to supply regional lists from their particular geographic area. A marvelous joint project for the society would be the pooling of these lists to create a "Southern Plant List." The society could edit and publish such a document, which could serve as a landmark research project for the study of Southern gardens. By involving all SGHS members, this participatory project could significantly further the Society's scholarly mission. Credit would be given to both the person submitting each list, and to whomever might be involved in the editing of plant names. Everyone can now be a contributor.

Flora Ann Bynum, who first announced this project in the last issue of *Magnolia* (Vol. XII, No. 3) has volunteered her supreme organizational skills to assemble the plant lists. In addition, a board of editors will be required to edit, annotate, and botanically identify the historical species and varieties, or review an annotation done by the submitter.

It is essential here that acknowledgement is provided, and that submitters avoid popular secondary sources that do not contain footnoted documentation.

I believe the goal for the first stage should be to assemble Southern plant lists before 1820. Undoubtedly, this will restrict the focus to the Atlantic seaboard states, but we are narrowing the scope of this first stage to gauge whether this is a manageable project. I also think we should include the entire South as defined in the mission statement of SGHS.

Stage two would include plant lists from 1820 to 1860.

Stage three might include pre-1900 lists.

The publication would begin with a general introduction on plant lists, including a mild disclaimer about the value of introduction dates. (Introduction dates do not necessarily mean a plant was in general cultivation; plants ordered or sought may never have been obtained or established; native plants are sometimes difficult to deal with because one is sometimes not certain they were indeed cultivated.)

The main body of the work would include the lists, organized either by state and region or by date, possibly cross-indexed by types of garden plants: trees, shrubs, herbaceous ornamentals, fruits, vegetables. Plants will be identified with their complete botanical name, when possible.

I believe we need to actively pursue these lists by keeping the idea before the members. *Magnolia* will include regular recapitulations of the purpose of the plant list as well as a seasonal tally of what has been submitted and by whom. ♣

Dr. William C. Welch, *President*

Peter J. Hatch, *Vice-President*

Flora Ann Bynum, *Secretary-Treasurer*

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