



Magnolia

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

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Hollywood Cemetery: A Quintessential Garden Cemetery of the 19th Century

By: James R. Cothran and Erica Danylchak, Atlanta, Georgia

The rural cemetery movement in America began in 1831 with the development of Mount Auburn Cemetery (located a few miles outside of Boston in Cambridge, Massachusetts) and continued until circa 1885. During this brief fifty year time period, several hundred garden cemeteries were developed across the country in response to a variety of sanitary, social, and cultural conditions. While garden cemeteries were initially developed outside large northeastern metropolitan areas, such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, by mid-century notable examples could be found in cities and towns across the United States—in the South, Midwest, and as far away as California.

Greatly influenced by English landscape design principles of the eighteenth century, and modeled after the newly developed picturesque cemetery, Père Lachaise (1804) in Paris, garden cemeteries were characterized by a variety of distinctive landscape features including: winding carriageways and footpaths, sinuous lakes, meandering streams, and stately trees. Often built along rivers or streams on hilly sites with spectacular views and vistas, garden cemeteries were in sharp contrast to the crowded churchyards and barren burial grounds of earlier times. Not only did the development of garden cemeteries influence the taste of the American public in the nineteenth century, but it also created a heightened awareness of scenic beauty and the consoling benefits of nature. In addition to serving as picturesque burial grounds, garden cemeteries also benefited the general public as open space for passive recreation and, over time, influenced the development of the American park movement.

Of all the garden cemeteries developed in the southeast, Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, is perhaps the most significant, both in terms of size and



Valentine Richmond History Center

Colorized postcard showing entrance to Hollywood Cemetery.

history. Originally named Mount Vernon Cemetery, Hollywood was first conceived after two of Richmond's most prominent business leaders, Joshua Jefferson Fry and William Henry Haxall, visited Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The men returned home determined to develop a similar landscaped cemetery outside of Richmond. Richmond had seen rapid

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CALENDAR

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

February 17, 2012. Southern Garden Heritage Conference. "Treasures Lost, History Saved: Our Southern Garden Heritage," Athens, GA. Conference examines the importance of Garden Clubs and their efforts to stimulate understanding and appreciation of our garden heritage, with presentations on three iconic Southern plantations—Carter's Grove, Magnolia Plantation and Stratford Hall, and the gardens each inspired. Visit: www.uga.edu/botgarden/eduregister.html or call (706) 542-6156.

February 22, 2012. Cherokee Garden Library Lecture: "One Writer's Garden: Eudora Welty's Home Place," by Susan Haltom, Preservation and Maintenance Coordinator of the Eudora Welty Garden; McElreath Hall, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA; followed by book signing and reception. Contact (404) 814-4046, scatron@atlantahistorycenter.com; AtlantaHistoryCenter.com/CherokeeGardenLibrary.

February 25, 2011. "The Inspired Gardener," presented by Georgia Perennial Plant Association and Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta, GA. Speakers include Steven P. Brady, Stephanie Cohen, Norman Kent Johnson, Shannon Pable, and Katy Moss Warner. Visit: www.georgiaperennial.org.

March 6, 2012. 28th Davidson Horticultural Symposium, "The Roots of Passion: The Inspired Gardener," Davidson College, Davidson, NC. Speakers include Andrea Wulf, David Howard, Bill Thomas, and Sean Hogan. Visit: davidsonsymposium@gmail.com.

March 17, 2012. Charleston Horticultural Society will offer an exclusive tour of several private gardens and public spaces as part of the Art and Antiques Forum. Guides will introduce some of the people, places, and plants that made Charleston what it is today, a gardening mecca! Visit: www.charlestonantiquesforum.org.

March 25, 2012. 10th Annual Winter Garden Symposium & Workshop, Goodwood Museum and Gardens, Tallahassee, FL. Dean Norton, Mt. Vernon's Dir. of Horticulture, will speak on the latest research and changes to the Upper Garden at Mt. Vernon Estate and Gardens. Bill Finch, Exec. Dir., Mobile Botanical Garden, will speak about the longleaf pine in the South. Visit: goodwoodmuseum.org.

March 25-28, 2012. American Boxwood Society Annual Symposium, Charleston, SC. ABS has partnered with the Charleston Horticultural Society for access to Charleston's private gardens. Keynote speaker topiary artist Pearl Fryar plus Dean Norton, Kari Whitley, and Dr. Kelby Fite. Optional day of plantation tours. Visit: boxwoodsociety.org.

March 28, 2012. Cherokee Garden Library Lecture: "Gertrude Jekyll and the Country House Garden," by Judith B. Tankard, landscape historian and author; McElreath Hall, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA. The lecture will be followed by a book signing and reception. Event is free but reservations required. (404) 814-4046; scatron@atlantahistorycenter.com. Visit: AtlantaHistoryCenter.com/CherokeeGardenLibrary.

April 15-16, 2012. Colonial Williamsburg 66th Annual Garden Symposium. "Beautiful Gardens: Bountiful Options," Williamsburg, VA. Guest speakers and Colonial Williamsburg landscape staff will offer a bounty of tips and ideas to make the best use of your time and space. Visit: history.org/history/index.cfm.

April 21-28, 2012. Historic Garden Week in Virginia. Sponsored by The Garden Club of Virginia, Historic Garden Week is the oldest and largest statewide house and garden tour event in the nation. Visit: www.vagardenweek.org or call (804) 644-7776.

April 23, 2012. National Book Launch: An Evening with Peter Hatch, Charlottesville, VA. Celebrate the launch of Peter Hatch's *"A Rich Spot of Earth": Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Garden at Monticello*. Elegant garden party features the author as he discusses his pioneering new book. Enjoy informal tours, fine Virginia wine, and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Reserved tickets required, call (434) 984-9880.

April 25-28, 2012. Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation 34th Annual Meeting. "Powerful Vistas/ Powerful Views: New Perspectives in Historic Landscape Preservation," Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Centered at the venerable Empress Hotel on Victoria's Inner Harbor; includes Abkhazi and Butchart Gardens. Visit: www.ahlp.org.

June 1-3, 2012. Southern Garden History Society Annual Meeting, Richmond, Virginia. Our home base will be the historic Jefferson Hotel in downtown Richmond. See page 8 for more details. Visit: www.southerngardenhistory.org.

September 14-15, 2012. 5th Annual Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello. Celebrate the legacy of revolutionary gardener, Thomas Jefferson. Taste a bounty of heirloom fruits and vegetables and learn about organic gardening and seed-saving during this fun, affordable, family-friendly festival—held on the breathtaking West Lawn of Jefferson's Monticello. Event is sponsored by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc. and Southern Exposure Seed Exchange. Visit: www.heritageharvestfestival.com.

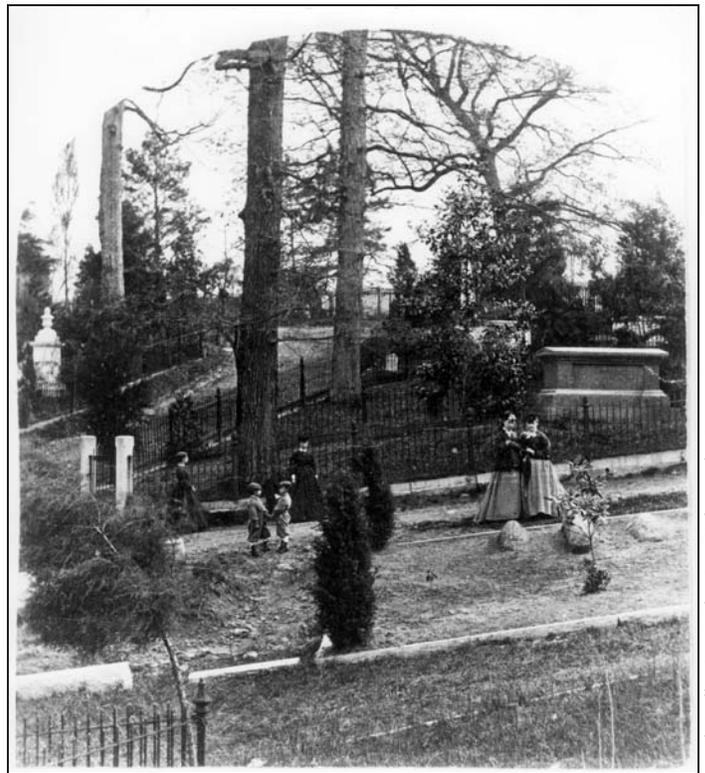
Hollywood Cemetery:..... (continued from page 1)

population growth in the early nineteenth century and had experienced crowded and unsanitary burial grounds within the confines of the city. Richmond's first burial ground, the churchyard of Saint John's Episcopal Church, had reached its capacity by 1821. To alleviate these conditions, the city had established Shockoe Hill Cemetery in 1820 in the northwestern section of the city. Within thirty years it too became overcrowded with approximately 4,500 graves surrounded by increased urban development. A patchwork of other private graveyards could simply not accommodate the growing number of dead in this prosperous city. The relatively new concept of a large, public cemetery outside the boundaries of the city was a timely solution for Richmond's dilemma.¹

In 1847, Fry and Haxall, along with other investors, purchased about forty-two acres of land known as Harvie's Woods, located about a quarter mile from the western edge of the city. The selected tract possessed all of the prerequisite features necessary to create a picturesque garden cemetery. Positioned on a steep bluff overlooking the falls of the James River, the site featured gently rolling hills, a main valley running north and south along the property's eastern edge, and stands of holly, poplar, elm and other hardwood trees.² Just prior to the cemetery's dedication in 1848, the *Richmond Enquirer* proclaimed: "Few Cemeteries possess so charming a variety as Hollywood—noble trees, bold rocks, dashing streams, dark and wild glens, deep vistas—such are some of the natural characteristics, which point it out as a hallowed ground for the dead."³ A later account heralded the striking views and vistas the site offered of the city and river below and painted the following poetic picture:

The scene from President's Hill, in Hollywood, is one that never tires the eye, because it embraces a picture which somewhere among its lights and shadows presents features that constantly appeal to imagination and refined taste. In the great perspective which bounds the horizon the distant hills and forests take new color from the changing clouds; while nearer—almost at your feet—the James River, brawling over the rocks, and chanting its perpetual requiem to the dead who lie around, catches from the sunshine playing on its ruffled breast kaleidoscopic hues . . . That, however, which attracts the attention of the visitor above all other objects as he views the broad prospect, is the city itself, with its bold yet broken outline of roofs and spires.⁴

In 1848, Hollywood's Board of Trustees chose well-known architect John Notman (1810-1865) to design the cemetery's layout. (It was Notman who suggested that the



Cook Collection, Valentine Richmond History Center

Women and boys in Hollywood Cemetery, early 1870s.

cemetery's name be Holly-Wood because of the prevalence of holly trees on the site.) A native of Scotland, Notman began his career as an apprentice in the office of William Henry Playfair, a highly regarded Edinburgh architect. In 1831 Notman immigrated to Philadelphia, where he later met John Jay Smith, a horticulturist and the librarian of the Library Company of Philadelphia. Smith became an influential supporter of Notman's work and in 1835 hired him to design a building for the Library Company. The following year, Notman won the design competition for Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, a project spearheaded by Smith.⁵ As Laurel Hill Cemetery's prestige and notoriety grew as the second largest garden cemetery in the United States, Notman was sought after to design other garden cemeteries, which "came to comprise nearly half of his work as a landscape gardener."⁶

For Hollywood Cemetery, Notman created a plan that enhanced the inherent picturesque qualities of the site and simultaneously provided practical solutions for issues of access, cost, and functionality. For example, Notman sited the entrance to the cemetery at the northeast corner of the property because it provided an easy access point from the city and, according to Notman, was "the most desirable point to get the first glance of the beautiful variety of hill and valley."⁷ Notman also laid out countless winding roads that created numerous burial lots fronting the thoroughfares. The design followed the contours of the existing topography and eluded the site's steepest

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terrain. The numerous lots fronting roadways provided opportunities to maximize profits from the sale of choice burial lots and allowed carriages easy access to most lots during funerals, which Notman felt was imperative. Meanwhile, the position of the roads greatly eliminated the cost of grading and cutting of the road beds. Notman's curvilinear circulation system also revealed "charming views" at choice turns in the roadways. In addition, Notman proposed that the site's main valley, which was traversed by a wide stream and two creeks, be the chief ornamental feature of the cemetery since burials were not

possible there. A report that accompanied his plan for the cemetery called for the creation of an island, in the midst of the stream, judiciously planted with magnolias and other flowering shrubs and for the embellishment of the valley with indigenous trees secured from the surrounding woods. While neither planting plans nor plant lists have survived, Notman observed that in some parts, the cemetery "is well grown in poplars, elms, &c., but is wanting in trees and bushes of lower growth. In order to form groups of these, I have desired the gardener employed to procure all he could from the natural woods, the trees that are indigenous, being invariably the best to thrive, and be ornamental in the places desired." For Notman, the valley had the potential to be "of the most beautiful description, varied and pleasing."⁸

In the mid-nineteenth century, garden cemeteries became a retreat for the living from increasingly dense, disorderly, and dreary urban environments created by the Industrial Revolution. Cemeteries became natural sanctuaries that reminded city dwellers—albeit in an idealized way—of the rural environments they had once known and enjoyed. Although easily reached by carriage or streetcar, garden cemeteries were located far enough from cities to offer a quiet refuge from the incessant noise of the city's bustling streets and commercial/industrial establishments. Garden cemeteries offered urbanites a reprieve from the visual monotony and inhospitable landscape of the city. Meanwhile, marble monuments and grave markers, a common feature in garden cemeteries, provided visitors with symbols of hope and immortality that helped lessen the fear of death by promoting the idea of a peaceful afterlife.⁹

By the mid-1850s, Hollywood Cemetery was becoming a popular attraction for the public and the city of Richmond began operating an omnibus line, a



Plan of Hollywood Cemetery, from 1852 Elliot & Nye's Virginia Directory.

precursor of the American trolley, to the cemetery every afternoon to make the grounds accessible to visitors. By the late 1860s, access was made even easier by the extension of a streetcar to the cemetery's northern gate. In 1871, the *Richmond Whig*, a local newspaper, reported that Hollywood had "become of late the favorite and almost the only resort of our people, as well as for the pleasures of pure air and refreshing scenery, as for the love that is felt for the spot where the lost ones of the family are laid."¹⁰ The following year, Hollywood was featured in *Picturesque America*, a two volume set of books edited by William Cullen Bryant, which described America's scenery and propelled Americans to explore the natural beauty the country offered. It provided romantic descriptions of America's most celebrated garden cemeteries including: Mount Auburn, Laurel Hill, Greenwood, Magnolia, and Hollywood. In regards to Hollywood Cemetery, it noted:

Far away from the noises of city-life, curtained by Nature with the luxuriant foliage of tree and flower, and presenting at every turn of hill and dell patches of beauty which art cannot improve, there is perhaps no spot in America more suggestive of the solemn associations that attach to the sacred circle of the dead . . . and all around the spacious grounds shafts and cenotaphs are reared to pay the tribute of the living to those who have 'gone before.'¹¹

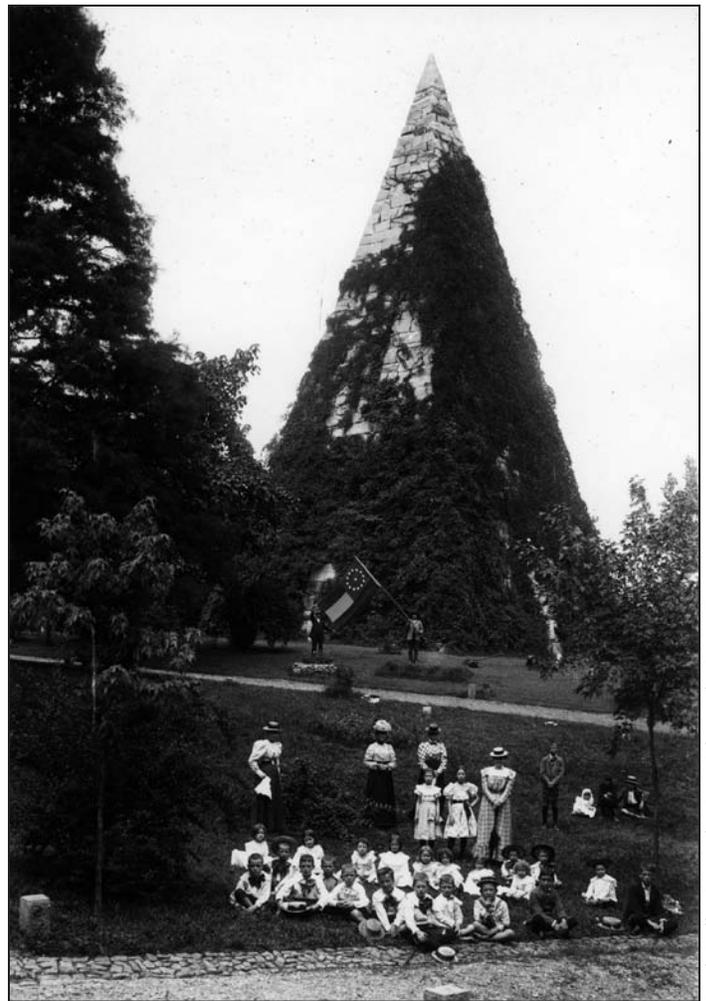
Monuments to the famous drew large crowds to Hollywood. In 1858, former President James Monroe was removed from a cemetery in Manhattan and reinterred in Hollywood on the hundredth anniversary of his birth, after the Virginia General Assembly had convinced Monroe's descendants that he should rest in his native state. According to Mary H. Mitchell's definitive history of Hollywood Cemetery, Monroe's interment "gave the

cemetery lasting prestige, not to mention a prime tourist attraction, and ensured that the citizens of Richmond would take greater pride in the budding necropolis.”¹² In 1862, former President John Tyler was buried in Hollywood within view of Monroe’s plot. Hollywood has the unusual distinction of being the only cemetery, other than Arlington, that has two United States presidents buried there.¹³

From June 1861 to April 1865, Richmond served as the Capital of the Confederacy. Not only did this greatly expand the city’s population, but also placed tremendous demands on the city’s physical and economic resources as well. While Hollywood Cemetery was originally conceived as a burial ground for residents of the city, with the advent of the Civil War, it soon had to accommodate Confederate casualties resulting from battles and skirmishes in the region. By 30 April 1862, 739 Confederate soldiers had been buried in the Soldiers’ Section of Hollywood Cemetery, and by the end of the war more than 11,000 soldiers had been interred in the cemetery’s grounds.¹⁴

Overwhelmed by the maintenance responsibility for so many graves, Hollywood’s cemetery company reached out to the community for help. Within a month of the end of hostilities, Thomas Harding Ellis, the President of the cemetery company, encouraged Richmond’s women to organize a society to preserve the graves of the Confederate dead. On 3 May 1865, 200 women convened at a local church and formed the Hollywood Memorial Association of the Ladies of Richmond to raise money to maintain the graves of the South’s fallen soldiers. In 1867, the Association decided to fund the construction of a fitting memorial in the Soldiers’ Section and chose a design by local architect/engineer Charles H. Dimmock—a dramatic, ninety-foot pyramid made of large granite blocks. Completed in 1869, the monument bears Latin inscriptions that translate: “In eternal memory of those who stood for God and Country.” In the early 1870s, the Association undertook another mission—to have the bodies of all of the Confederate dead that remained at the battlefields around Gettysburg brought to Hollywood for proper burial. Ultimately, 2,935 soldiers from Gettysburg were reinterred at Hollywood Cemetery.¹⁵ Even as decades passed, the Civil War continued to impact Hollywood Cemetery as confederate veterans were buried in its grounds, well into the twentieth century. Visitors came to find the graves of ancestors who died in the conflict and pay tribute to the dead. And to this day, “the sound of cannon and rifle salutes reverberate frequently throughout the grounds.”¹⁶

Over time, garden cemeteries became, in part, outdoor museums that provided the general public access to sculpture and sometimes provided lessons on history and biography. At Hollywood, two particularly noteworthy examples of monumental sculpture relate to the Civil



Cook Collection, Valentine Richmond History Center

Women and children by Confederate Pyramid, Memorial Day, early 1890s.

War and stand over the graves of Jefferson Davis, former President of the Confederacy, and his daughter, Varina Anne. In 1893, Davis was buried in Hollywood after briefly resting in Metairie Cemetery in New Orleans after his death in 1889. Before the end of the century, the Hollywood Cemetery company erected a bronze statue designed by sculptor George Julian Zolnay that depicted a dignified Davis dressed as he was when captured by Union troops at the end of the Civil War. Zolnay, a Hungarian native who had recently immigrated to the United States, quickly gained recognition as a superior sculptor and won commissions to design busts of many famous Americans. For the cemetery company, Zolnay also completed a seven-foot Carrara marble statue of a seated angel of grief honoring Davis’ daughter who was born in 1864 at the height of the Civil War and was known as the “Daughter of the Confederacy.”¹⁷

Since its founding, Hollywood Cemetery has served the city of Richmond as a pastoral “sleeping place” for its dead and as an important cultural institution for its citizens. For over 160 years, Hollywood has offered a safe and dignified place for burials removed from the

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Hollywood Cemetery:..... (continued from page 5)

noise and confines of the city. Featuring the picturesque elements typical of the rural cemetery movement, it has enticed visitors to find solace and enjoyment within its boundaries. Today, Hollywood remains an active cemetery and continues to welcome visitors to enjoy its striking scenery, its memorial monuments, and its rich history conveyed in stone.

* As this issue went to press, we learned that our longtime and dear colleague Jim Cothran was gravely ill. He died Sunday, January 29, 2012. Our friend's sudden and unexpected passing tragically diminishes all of us. A remembrance and tribute to Jim will appear in the spring issue of *Magnolia*.

Jim and Erica Danylchak were collaborating on a book entitled *Nineteenth Century Garden Cemeteries and the Rural Cemetery Movement*, from which this article was taken. Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery will be a destination during the SGHS Annual Meeting, June 1-3, 2012.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Mary H. Mitchell, *Hollywood Cemetery: The History of a Southern Shrine* (Richmond: Library of Richmond, 1999), 7-10.
- 2 Ibid, 7.
- 3 "Holly-Wood Cemetery," *Richmond Enquirer*, June 12,

- 1849.
- 4 William Cullen Bryant and Oliver Bell Bunce, *Picturesque America or the Land We Live In* (New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1872), 1: 73.
- 5 Constance M. Greiff, *John Notman, Architect, 1810-1865* (Philadelphia: Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 1979), 16-18.
- 6 Keith N. Morgan, "The emergence of the American landscape professional: John Notman and the design of rural cemeteries," *Journal of Garden History* 4, no. 3 (1984): 281.
- 7 Greiff, 142.
- 8 Ibid, 143-45.
- 9 John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 100-104.
- 10 Mitchell, 79.
- 11 Bryant, 73.
- 12 Mitchell, 4.
- 13 John Francis Marion, "Hollywood Cemetery," in *Famous and Curious Cemeteries: A Pictorial, Historical, and Anecdotal View of American and European Cemeteries and the Famous and Infamous People Who Are Buried There* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1977), 167.
- 14 John O. Peters, *Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery* (Richmond, VA: Valentine Richmond History Center, 2010), 46-55.
- 15 Ibid, 55-70.
- 16 Ibid, 64.
- 17 Mitchell, 120-121.

Members in the News

Judith B Tankard was elected second Vice President of the Beatrix Farrand Society. Garland Farm, the Society's headquarters on Mount Desert Island, Maine, was the last home of landscape architect Beatrix Farrand. Their mission is to reinstate Farrand's educational goals through programs and developing a landscape library. Judith's book *Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes* was named an Honor Book by Historic New England.

The Spring 2012 issue of *Hortus: A Gardening Journal* includes an article by Ms. Tankard, "The Turning Tide: America's Best Gardening Books Published in the last Twenty-five Years," highlighting several SGHS authors, including: **May Brawley Hill, Emily Wilson, Susan Haltom, Jane Roy Brown, Denise Wiles Adams, and James Cothran**. The article also cites *Keeping Eden: A History of Gardening in America*, with essays by **Peggy Cornett** and **Catherine Howett**. The British magazine *Hortus* is a privately published, quarterly journal by Bryans Ground Press.

In November 2011 **John Sykes** was appointed the new executive director of Magnolia Mound Plantation, an active living history museum in Baton Rouge. Participants to the 2011 Annual Meeting (which Sykes co-chaired) will remember touring this early Creole plantation house and its 19-acre site along the Mississippi River. Built about 1791, it was as a center of large indigo and cotton plantation. Since 1966, the property has been restored and preserved by the City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish. Sykes was formerly the education manager of the Louisiana State Museum in Baton Rouge.

The **Anne Spencer Museum and Garden** was highlighted in the January-February 2012 issue of *Horticulture* magazine as one of "10 inspiring gardens that have opened to the public in the past 10 years ..." According to the **Garden Conservancy**, these gardens are "up-and-coming destinations [that] preserve the legacy of North American garden culture." **Jane White's** latest book, *Lessons Learned from a Poet's Garden* (Blackwell Press, 2011), was also cited. Visit: annespencermuseum.com.

Francis Higginson Cabot Jr. – 1925-2011

By Susan Hitchcock, Atlanta, Georgia

A loss to the garden community occurred on November 19, 2011, with the death at age 86 of one of the world's leading garden preservationist, Frank H. Cabot. Known as a visionary, hands-on horticulturist, he created two gardens of note during his lifetime: Stonecrop, the 12-acre garden he created with his wife, Anne, in Cold Spring, New York, which is open to the public from April to October; and Les Quatre Vents, in the Laurentian Mountains of La Malbie, 90 miles northeast of Quebec City, Quebec, Canada.

Cabot, a blue-blood financier and self taught horticulturist, was the recipient of numerous awards from horticultural societies, including the Gold Veitch Memorial Award of the Royal Horticultural Society. He also was named a Chevalier of the Order of Quebec, as well as a Member of the Order of Canada in recognition of his efforts, through his family's Quatre Vents Foundation, to preserve the patrimony of Charlevoix County, Quebec.

His book, *A Greater Perfection*, which received the Council of Botanical and Horticultural Libraries' 2003 Literature Award, described the development of Les Quatres Vents, often considered to be one of horticultural masterpieces of the twentieth century. In a video about the garden he stated:

“Achieving aesthetically satisfying spaces has become the most intriguing aspect of the game, more so, really, than plants and flowers, as such. Textures and architectural forms, vistas, and the harmonious relationship between the contrived landscape and the natural landscape surrounding it are now uppermost in my horticultural enthusiasm. The trouble is that one does have to wait very, very patiently for the end result.”

But perhaps his greatest contribution came in 1989 after a visit to the “dry” garden of Ruth Bancroft in Walnut Grove, California. Concerned that the garden would not survive its aging owner, he founded the Garden Conservancy. Since its inception, the Garden Conservancy has

done more than any other national institution to save America's exceptional gardens for the education and enjoyment of the public. It has helped more than ninety gardens throughout the country survive and prosper; including several notable Southern gardens: the Elizabeth Lawrence Garden in Charlotte, Nancy Goodwin's Montrose in Hillsborough, North Carolina, Longvue House and Gardens in New Orleans, and the Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden in Bishopville, South Carolina. Long time SGHS and Garden Conservancy member Patti McGee (Charleston, SC) was instrumental in helping the Elizabeth Lawrence Garden become a Garden Conservancy Preservation Project, and the Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden was a destination on the 2009 Annual Meeting in Camden, South Carolina. Frank Cabot's legacy lives on in the preservation of these among many other iconic American gardens.

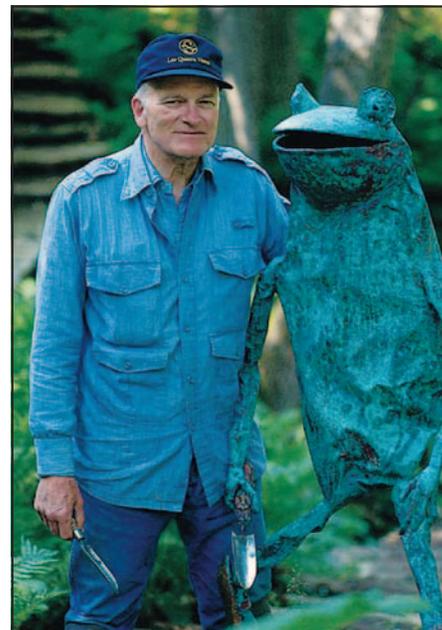


Photo by Richard W. Brown

Garden Conservancy's Continued Support of Fryar and Lawrence Gardens

By Bill Noble, Director of Preservation, the Garden Conservancy

Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden, Bishopville, South Carolina:

Visitors by the thousands continue to find their way to Pearl Fryar's Topiary Garden, inspired by the film *A Man Named Pearl*, which also had a recent airing on the Oprah Winfrey Network, and by word of mouth. Visitors now have an easier time finding their way thanks to

new signage, especially a striking entry sign by metal-smith, English Cooper. Plans are being finalized to build restroom facilities for visitors at the garden, underwritten in part by the Coca Cola Company.

A garden brochure has been produced and an updated Web site was launched last year. A new membership program was initiated in 2010, to encourage support the garden—its maintenance and preservation. All of this was done with the aid of project manager Lindsey Kerr, who

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managed marketing and visitor services. Much remains to be done to secure the future of the garden and a concerted effort is being made to develop local leadership and to raise operating, acquisition, and endowment funds through the Friends of Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden and the Garden Conservancy. For more information visit: www.pearlfryar.com

Elizabeth Lawrence House and Garden, Charlotte, North Carolina:

The spirit of Elizabeth Lawrence lives on in her garden. Since acquiring the garden in 2008, Wing Haven Foundation has spearheaded the repair and renovation of the Lawrence house and garden, with the advice and the assistance of the Garden Conservancy. The house has undergone considerable repair and refreshing, including structural repairs, utility upgrades and a fresh coat of paint inside and out. Substantial repairs have been made to the garden's hardscape: a restored entry court; reset brick

and stone steps and paths; restored pool; and restored walls, piers, and garden edging. Failing trees and hedges have been removed and the cherry laurel hedge replanted. Shrubs have been pruned and some of those added to the garden following Elizabeth Lawrence's tenure were assessed for appropriateness and retained, relocated or removed. Two gardeners have led this effort: Katie Mullen, Garden Conservancy Marco Polo Stufano Fellow, and Elizabeth Lawrence Garden Associate Andrea Sprott. New signage and interpretive materials have been placed in the garden and many plants identified and labeled. An advisory committee has been formed and an interpretive consultant, Erin Derham, will help with an exhibit in Elizabeth Lawrence's study. During the initial phase of the project she will be gathering memorabilia and photographs as well as conducting oral history interviews. Wing Haven has integrated the Elizabeth Lawrence Garden into its mission and public programs; the garden is open regular hours. www.winghavengardens.com.

Celebrating 30 Years!

2012 Annual Meeting in Richmond

Set your sites on Richmond, Virginia for our 30th Annual Meeting, June 1-3. Our home base will be the historic Jefferson Hotel in downtown Richmond. After our business meeting and lectures on Friday afternoon we will depart The Jefferson and travel nine blocks to Capitol Square where we will tour the Executive Mansion, which is the oldest governor's mansion in continuous use in the country. The evening will be spent at Maymont Estate. We will tour the house and gardens and proceed to the beautiful Robins Nature and Visitor Center for dinner. Saturday's lectures will be held in the elegant ballroom of The Jefferson. At the conclusion of the afternoon lectures we will proceed to historic Hollywood Cemetery for tours. The evening's festivities, including strolls in the garden and dinner, will be held at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Sunday's optional tour will begin at five beautiful gardens just off River Road, just minutes from The Jefferson Hotel. After the morning walking tour, we will board buses and travel to two significant sites on the National Register of Historic Places in Henrico County. We will have lunch at Historic Tuckahoe Plantation, the boyhood home of Thomas Jefferson. Tuckahoe, considered by architectural historians to be the finest existing early eighteenth-century plantation in America, stands on a bluff overlooking the James River Valley and remains remarkably untouched by the passage of time. Redesdale, built in 1925, was designed by William



Photo by Dean Norton

Redesdale.



Tuckahoe Plantation.

Lawrence Bottomley and listed on the NRHP in 2008. According to the NRHP nomination, "Redesdale is one of the great Georgian Revival country houses of early twentieth century Virginia." Brochures will be mailed by mid-February. For more information: www.southerngardenhistory.org.

Book Review

Public Spaces, Private Gardens: A History of Designed Landscapes in New Orleans, by Lake Douglas | Louisiana State University Press, May 2011 | 340 pages | ISBN-13: 978-0807138373 | list price: \$55

In the preface to *Public Spaces, Private Gardens: A History of Designed Landscapes in New Orleans* Lake Douglas writes that his goal as an author was “to write a broadly defined landscape history of one of America’s most interesting cities, a community in which this history, curiously, has not yet been examined.” The genesis of his new book, available for purchase at the 2011 SGHS annual meeting in Baton Rouge, was a senior research project while an undergraduate in the landscape architecture program at Louisiana State University. Born in 1949, he then launched a professional interest in the landscape of New Orleans that has engaged his efforts as an historian, bibliographer, collector and teacher (at his alma mater) for some forty of his sixty-two years. These pursuits as scholar and observer coalesced in 2001 in his work as curator of an exhibition, “In Search of Yesterday’s Gardens: Landscapes of 19th-Century New Orleans,” mounted by the Historic New Orleans Collection, and as author of *Gardens of New Orleans: Exquisite Excess*. The scholarship of another decade, built on new research and the files assembled over many years, has come to fruition in *Public Spaces, Private Gardens: A History of Designed Landscapes in New Orleans*.

Lake Douglas has a wealth of information and documentation at his disposal; travel accounts beginning in the eighteenth century, soon after settlement at the place that became the most cosmopolitan in the American South, newspaper advertisements, articles in regional and national horticultural journals, a gardening literature including Jacques-Felix Lelièvre’s *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane* of 1838, that is unrivalled by that of any other important Southern city, maps, plats, prints, watercolours, drawings, and paintings spanning the entire history of New Orleans, important nineteenth- and twentieth-century documentary photographs, local nursery and seed catalogues that begin in 1849 with the broadside issued by Comstock, Ferre, & Company, merchants at the New Orleans Seed Store and Horticultural Warehouse, and continue through those issued by Chris. Reuter from 1915 to 1978, a host of public records, most notably the holdings of the New Orleans Notarial Archives, and the ephemera of our lives, past and present, that often enables historians to establish critical links between all of the above. His position is enviable.

As the title indicates, the opening chapter of the book examines the history, character, and use of the city’s appealing public squares, waterfront areas, and the urban parks whose design, plantings, and appearance have evolved through time. The commercial pleasure gardens

of New Orleans, developed as a variant of England’s well known Vauxhall and Ranelagh Gardens, follow as a subset of the city’s public spaces. They rightly hold a particular interest for the author and are well addressed.

The treatment of domestic garden design is more of an overview than an examination of individual house grounds; however, the gardens of two major urban mansions of the mid-nineteenth century, (houses completed for James Robb in 1855 and Florence A. Luling in 1865) are more fully discussed.

Mr. Luling’s remarkable Italian Renaissance-style villa was designed by James Gallier Jr. who may also have been responsible for its gardens, which are likely the most lavish domestic grounds in New Orleans history. The glory was short-lived. By 1871 Mr. Luling was forced to give up his thirty-acre estate, and that year it became the property of the Louisiana Jockey Club.

In his “Concluding Comments” Lake Douglas writes that he “was inspired to collect as many threads as I could find, suspecting that they would all have some relevance to this community’s urban fabric when assembled. My goal has been to weave them together and present them as a tapestry of this city’s landscape. It is not necessarily whole cloth yet, as there are likely loose threads that, through future investigations, can be spun out and interwoven into what now exists.” The five short chapters in the second half of *Public Spaces, Private Gardens*, in which he writes of agricultural and horticultural practices, horticultural commerce and its tradesmen, gardeners, and the horticultural literature of New Orleans, reflect his skills as a gatherer of the many threads of landscape history and a weaver of its fabric. He concludes with a twenty-two-page appendix of fruit, vegetable, herbal, and ornamental plants known to have been grown and sold in New Orleans.

As Mr. Douglas allows, two critical areas of New Orleans landscape history await a fuller, complete scholarship; the color renderings in the New Orleans Notarial Archives, and the design history of Audubon Park. A group of twenty color renderings, selected from the extensive holding of the Notarial Archives, are ganged as full-page illustrations in the center of *Public Spaces, Private Gardens*. Aside from the images featured



Plate 20. Greek revival structure with kitchen gardens and outbuildings.

New Orleans Notarial Archives

(continued on page 10)

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

on the dust jacket and endpapers of the book, they comprise its only color illustrations. These twenty date from between 1835 and 1869, and most (seventeen) are signed by the artists who prepared them as records of the sale and transfer of property. They are nothing short of extraordinary as a group and as such they have no known parallel in American landscape history. Plates fifteen and twenty are collaborations of Eugene Surgi and Marie Adrien Persac.

An exhibition of the works of Marie Adrien Persac (1823-1873) was jointly mounted by the Louisiana State University Museum of Art and the Historic New Orleans Collection with showings in both Baton Rouge and New Orleans in 2000-01. The catalogue for that show, published as *Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist*, contained essays by five distinguished scholars including John H. Lawrence, who penned the "Afterword" in *Public Spaces, Private Gardens*, and Sally Kittredge Reeves, archivist of the New Orleans Notarial Archives, who prepared the translation of Lelièvre's *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane* that was published as *New Louisiana Gardener* by the Louisiana State University Press for the Southern Garden History Society in 2001. The two drawings by Surgi and Persac published in *Public Spaces, Private Gardens* also appeared in the 2000 Persac catalogue, the most important of which is the "Plan of a Splendid Property and of Two Fine Lots of Ground." It represents the handsome Greek Revival-style villa and gardens of Benjamin Rodriguez that was sold in 1860, a (rental) residence of the Musson Family, and where the French painter Edgar Degas visited with his kinsman—and painted—while in New Orleans.

The remarkable representations of gardens appearing in these drawings merit intensive address, individually and as a group, incorporating research into the notarial records, deed transfers, census records, and any other sources and avenues that can confirm the ownership of the properties, the makers, dates, and materials of the gardens, and the truth of the images that were both legal

documents and artistic enticements to promote a good return on sale. The treatments of these works by both Lake Douglas, in *Public Spaces, Private Gardens*, and Mrs. Reeves, in her important contribution to *Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist*, are significant steps toward a full understanding of these unique plans, which can enhance our knowledge both of the artists and New Orleans garden history.

Audubon Park, named for John James Audubon (1785-1851), is one of the two major public parks in New Orleans. In the eighteenth century its acreage was part of a sugarcane plantation, and during the Civil War it was the site of Union encampments. In 1871 property was purchased by the city of New Orleans, designated as "New City Park," and in 1884-85 it was the site of the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition that boasted a vast Horticulture Hall modeled on Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace of 1851. In the late 1880s and 1890s proposals to develop the property as a public park, by then renamed to honor Mr. Audubon, failed until the Audubon Park Association approached the Olmsted firm in Brookline. Mr. Douglas writes, "In June 1898, the board signed a contract for the park's design with the Olmsted Brothers, a professional relationship that continued into 1941." In the endnote for this statement the author cites the inventory for the Audubon Park project at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site that "includes 506 plans and drawings, dated 1897-1941; three file folders of planting lists dated 1900-1936; and one photograph album with 117 images, dated 1898-1941." Surely a monograph on Audubon Park, arguably the best documented civic landscape in New Orleans and one of the longest lasting projects in the Olmsted office, is in order.

Davyd Foard Hood
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Vale, North Carolina

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Awarded Top Museum Honor

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Washington, DC, selected Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden as one of only ten libraries and museums to receive the 2011 National Medal. The National Medal is the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries for extraordinary civic, educational, economic, environmental, and social contributions. Recipients must demonstrate innovative approaches to public service and community outreach.

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden was nominated by U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA). Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden was selected based on its work growing fresh produce for the hungry; actively participating in urban greening and water management initiatives; contributing to economic development and work-force training; and educating diverse youth and adult audiences about critical issues related to the interdependence of people and plants. Visit: www.lewisginter.org.

Notable Books by SGHS Authors

Lessons Learned from a Poet's Garden, by Jane Baber White | Blackwell Press, Lynchburg, VA | hardcover, 192 pages, 310 photographs and illustrations | ISBN: 978-0-0830482-5-1 | limited edition available through the author | \$45 plus shipping and 5% tax for Virginia residents

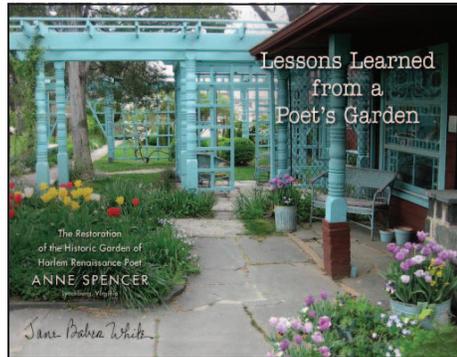
Southern Garden History Society board member Jane Baber White has written a beautiful and practical guide to restoring an historic garden. Using

the enchanting garden of Harlem Renaissance poet Anne Spencer as a case study, Mrs. White has documented the steps taken by her garden club over a 28-year period to restore and maintain this historic National Register property. The ladies of Hillside Garden Club, a member of the Garden Club of Virginia, have provided an example of lessons learned, which can serve as inspiration and instruction to others facing similar challenges. The beautiful results have received international recognition.

Scott Kunst, owner of Old House Gardens in Ann Arbor, Michigan, gives Jane White's compelling book high praises, describing it as "a richly illustrated book laid out something like a scrapbook with all sorts of bits and pieces clipped together and overlapping one another – old family photos taken in the garden, notes Anne scribbled on seed catalogs, receipts, newspaper clippings, snapshots of the restoration, and evocative photos of the restored garden today." As an added bonus, the book also includes poetry and writings of Anne Spencer never-before published. The Anne Spencer Garden received the Garden Club of Virginia Commonwealth Award in 1985 and 2009, and it receives preservation assistance from The Garden Conservancy. The Southern Garden History Society will visit the Anne Spencer Garden in 2013 during the Society's 31st annual meeting in Lynchburg, Virginia.

The book is offered for sale by the author to support the continuing work of Hillside Garden Club in the ongoing care of the Spencer Garden. For ordering information, visit: annespencermuseum.com

Vegetable Gardening the Colonial Williamsburg Way, by Wesley Greene | Rodale Inc. and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, co-publishers | 256 pages



|February 2012|ISBN-10: 1609611624; ISBN-13: 978-1609611620|\$30

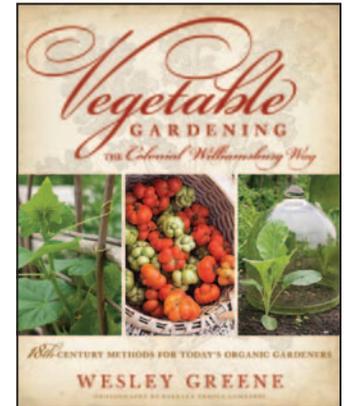
In his new book, historic gardener and long-time SGHS member Wesley Greene introduces today's gardeners to the art of the well-ordered eighteenth-century kitchen garden by mixing history and folklore with practical advice on growing vegetables and herbs. Greene—a student of the period gardening tomes of influential British authors such as Philip Miller (*The Gardener's Dictionary*, 1768)—founded the Colonial Garden and Plant Nursery in the Historic Area of Colonial Williamsburg, where he and other historic gardeners study and interpret eighteenth-century plants, tools, and cultural techniques and share their knowledge with visitors to the garden.

Now Greene offers readers the wisdom of gardeners who grew purple broccoli and three-foot-long cucumbers, improved melon seeds by walking around with them in their pockets, sheltered transplants with oiled paper, heated hotbeds for January seedlings with manure, used lime water to control aphids and trapped slugs in the lettuce beds with a simple tile.

"What connects all generations of vegetable gardeners is the optimism of committing seed to earth," explains Greene. "It's an unpredictable endeavor, and yet generations of garden writers have dared to predict that a seed planted in April will provide a harvest in July. In this book, we give you the best advice for the management of your kitchen garden from the most notable gardeners and botanists of the eighteenth century."

The book, illustrated with images by Colonial Williamsburg photographer Barbara Lombardi, has received pre-publication praise from Greene's fellow historic gardeners. J. Dean Norton, director of horticulture at Mount Vernon, said, "Greene's historical guide to eighteenth-century vegetables and gardening practices showcases tried-and-true techniques that are remarkably relevant for today's home vegetable growers — all thoroughly researched, beautifully illustrated, and written to inform and entertain." Peter Hatch, director of gardens and grounds at Monticello, called the book "a steaming hotbed of garden wisdom."

Wesley Greene will be a speaker at the Society's upcoming annual meeting in Richmond, VA.





Southern Garden History Society

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Awards and Scholarships

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

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

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

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

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

Annual Membership Dues

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

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

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

Deadline for submitting articles for the Spring issue of Magnolia is March 30, 2012.

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