



# MAGNOLIA

Bulletin of the  
Southern Garden  
History Society

*The Laurel Tree of Carolina*  
from Mark Cathey, 1951

(MAGNOLIA GRANDIFLORA)

Vol. VII, No. I, Summer 1990

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

George Washington complained once (or perhaps often) about the lack of solitude at Mount Vernon, where guests were constantly present at the table, on the lawn, in the garden. Twentieth-century tourism being what it is, I too have noticed the numbers at Mount Vernon during my previous visits there. But Dean Norton, Mount Vernon's horticulturist, who organized and carried out the recent meeting of the Southern Garden History Society there (with the help of Neil W. Horstman, Resident Director, and others on the staff, as well as a number of volunteers), solved this problem for us. While the general public toured in the midday sun, we prepared for our visit by hearing a series of lectures; and as the sun waned and the gates closed, we had our private tour.

As a result, my memories of this visit include the sound of my steps on the paths, the crunch of the gravel under the wagon wheels as they took us round, the wit of the program of eighteenth-century music that we enjoyed on the piazza, the peaceful view of the river from the lawn, and of the house from the river. It was a delightful meeting, meticulously prepared and carried out with gracious humor. We are grateful to Dean, especially, and to the others who made this so delightful a tour. For more



SGHS members enjoyed carriage rides along Mount Vernon's serpentine avenues surrounding the bowling green.

## CALENDAR

September 4th-8th, 1990: The American Association for State and Local History will hold its 50th annual meeting in Washington, DC. Contact Patsy Wilson at the American Association for State and Local History, 172 Second Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201 or call (301) 330-0809.

September 29th-30th, 1990: A symposium, "Refining the Garden: The Trowels and Pleasures of Gardening," cosponsored by the Atlanta History Center & the Georgia Perennial Plant Association which will feature lecturer Sir Roy Strong, as well as former SGHS president Dr. Ed Givhan and other notables, will be held at The Atlanta History Center. Write to: Refining the Garden, Atlanta History Center, 3101 Andrews Drive, Atlanta, GA 30305 or call (404) 261-1387 for more information.

November 1st-3rd, 1990: The Fourth Colonial Williamsburg History Forum will consider the subject of

"Taming Bountiful Nature: Plantations, Towns, and Williamsburg in Early Virginia" at the Hennage Auditorium of the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Gallery. Deadline for registration is October 1st. For more information write to Registrar, History Forum, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Post Office Box C, Williamsburg, VA 23187-9983.

April 12th-14th, 1991: SGHS 1991 Annual Meeting. See update on page 16.

May 17th-19th, 1991: The Heritage Rose Foundation will hold their annual meeting in Santa Rosa, California. Contact Charles Walker, 1512 Gorman St., Raleigh, NC 27606.

The American Horticultural Society has published an 18 month 1990-1991 National Gardening Calendar which provides time, place, and information on events of major garden groups. For a copy, send \$3 to AHS, 7931 E. Boulevard Dr, Dept PR-490, Alexandria, VA 22308.

## MRS. ST. CLAIRE WRIGHT RETIRES FROM BOARD

Founding member St. Claire Wright announced her plans to retire from the SGHS Board of Directors during the recent spring Board meeting at Mount Vernon.

Mrs. Wright has been a leading preservationist for over three decades. Her work with Historic Annapolis Foundation has earned her awards, citations, and honorary degrees from many prestigious organizations; among them the Louise duPont Crowninshield Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation (1968) and the Garden Club of America Historic Preservation Medal (1983).

No project which has received her forceful support and inspiration has been more outstandingly successful than the restoration of the William Paca Garden in Annapolis, Maryland. At the time in the late 1960s, when garden archaeology and preservation were barely recognized, she spearheaded public and private cooperation on this ambitious project to return the two-acre site of a hundred room hotel into the terraced, walled garden which preceded it. The courage and faith exhibited by this incredible transformation have inspired many garden restorations since that time.

Mrs. Wright continues to serve on the Board of Directors of Historic Annapolis Foundation and remains active as Chair of the William Paca Garden Committee.

Mrs. Wright, who has served on the Board since 1982, plans to continue as an active member of the Society.

## FURTHER CHANGES IN SGHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Effective May 1st, 1990, past President Dr. Edgar G. Givhan II became an ex officio board member, previous past President Catherine M. Howett returned as a regular board member, and Jane C. Symmes, owner of Cedar Lane Farm in Madison, Georgia, joined the board.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued

details, turn to page 4.

This meeting brought us new energy from Peggy Newcomb and Ken McFarland, who will take the lead as this bulletin grows. Please help by sending them your articles and notes.

Ben Page, board member from Tennessee, suggested a photographic archive of gardens visited during our yearly meetings. Such a resource would have enormous value for future research. Anyone interested in contributing pictures, be they color or black and white photographs or slides, should send their copies to Ben Page, 3801 Richland Avenue, Nashville, TN 37205. Please include as much information as possible about the photograph, such as the location of the site, individuals in the pictures, date when taken, etc. A more formal and systematic method of organizing and storing these images will be discussed at the fall board meeting in Atlanta.

Libby Page, of the same household, called for a Society newsletter to accompany or supplement this bulletin, and to include personal announcements (births, awards, deaths, marriages) as well as notices of employment opportunities as related to historic gardens and landscapes.

Mary Palmer and Hugh Dargan, South Carolina member and board member, suggested a photographic exhibit on our history in connection with our 10th annual meeting, to be held in their city, Charleston.

Please share any comments about these with us, and we hope to hear from other members with many more at the fall board meeting.



Dean and Susanne Norton with daughter Nellie.

### OF INTEREST

-In mid-June, the secretary-treasurer of SGHS received a phone call from Paris asking for information about Magnolia and the Society. As a result, the National Museum for Natural History in Paris has now joined and has requested back issues of Magnolia for 1989 and 1990. The society now has members in New Zealand, West Germany, and

England in addition to the new member in Paris.

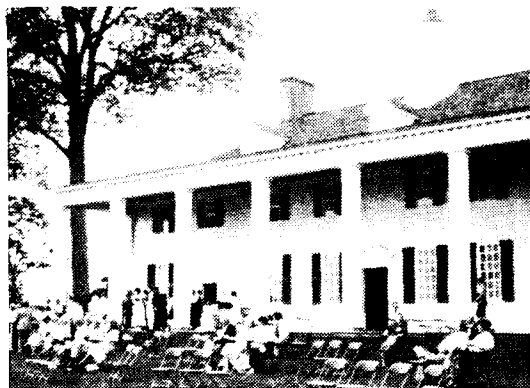
-Membership in The Historic Iris Preservation Society provides a twice yearly newsletter, sources for antique and historic cultivars, a forum for identifying older varieties, nationwide location of display gardens, slides of older varieties, access to historical reference

materials, and an active plant and information exchange program. Individual memberships are \$3 a year. Write Verona M. Wiekhorst, Treasurer, 4855 Santiago Way, Colorado Springs, CO 80917.

-The American Garden and Landscape History Program at Wave Hill is looking for information on the location and content of records which document American landscapes to be included in the "Catalog of Landscape Records in the United States." For the purpose of the catalog, information is primarily sought on documentation of designed,

manipulated or maintained landscapes in the United States: from small private gardens to national parks; from parkways to college campuses; from urban parks to private estates; from earthworks to historic restorations; from planned communities to reserved lands. Please write the Catalog at Wave Hill, 675 West 252nd St, Bronx, New York 10471 or call (212) 549-3200 if you can be of any assistance in this important project.

### SGHS 1990 ANNUAL MEETING AT MOUNT VERNON by Peggy C. Newcomb, editor



*Cocktails and parlor music on the piazza at Mount Vernon, overlooking the Potomac River.*

The 8th Annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, hosted by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, assembled the largest gathering of our membership to date. Thirteen southern states, including the District of Columbia, were represented as well as members from NJ, DE, and CT for a total of 139 participants.

After months of planning and with support from his staff and his wife, Susanne, Mount Vernon's horticulturist J. Dean Norton assembled a memorable three days of activities and talks. A wide diversity of speakers addressed topics ranging from the practical to the esoteric; the controversial to the inspirational. By all accounts, the meeting was, in the words of Florence

Griffin, "a triumph."

The meeting began Friday afternoon, May 18th, at the Old Town Holiday Inn located in the heart of historic Old Town Alexandria. Following the opening remarks by the Society's outgoing president, Dr. Edgar G. Givhan II, Mount Vernon's resident director, Neil W. Hortsman, welcomed the Society and sketched a brief history of the Ladies' Association which was founded 20 years before the 1876 Centennial and decades before the preservation movement in America. He paid particular tribute to Ann Pamela Cunningham whose vision and leadership inspired the movement to purchase and protect the plantation home of George Washington.

The keynote speakers for the afternoon explored areas seemingly divergent from historic garden restoration: paint analysis and graining. However, parallel issues were clearly evident in "Eighteenth-Century Paints: Rediscovering a Colorful World," Mathew J. Mosca's insightful treatment of the tastes and styles of earlier periods. Just as our 20th-century aversions for Prussian blue and verdigris, now evident in Mount Vernon's interiors, must not

affect the restoration process, so too must our depictions of earlier gardens reflect their original integrity.

In "Myths and Truths of the Art of Illusion" the talents of Malcolm F. Robson, a fifth-generation master grainer who works in conjunction with Mosca, made for an entertaining and lively demonstration of this exacting art. The technique of transforming a smooth surface into a wood-like finish, or faux finish, dates back to the Ming dynasty and, according to Robson, can be traced through the Renaissance, mainly as a means of covering inferior craftsmanship. Like the use of expensive pigments in paint color, graining evolved into a fashion statement and status symbol during Washington's period. His presentation further emphasized that earlier tools and methods must be preserved and passed down in order to achieve the most accurate results.

Donald Taylor, the director of Gunston Hall, then prepared us for the evening's events with a brief slide presentation describing the history of George Mason's home on the Potomac River and the restoration of both house and grounds. During the early evening reception we wandered among Mason's original boxwood allée, planted around 1760, and restored parterres designed and planted by Williamsburg landscape architect Alden Hopkins for the Garden Club of Virginia in the early 1950s. The grounds still possess a number of magnificent trees, including two massive willow oaks near the entrance and a graceful little-leaf linden extending across the swept yard of the dependencies. One of the most intriguing elements of Mason's landscape was a converging double row of black heart cherry trees aligned so perfectly that visitors arriving by river or after dark would believe they saw only four trees when standing in the middle of the front doorway. Today, Mason's clever deception still exists, though replanted with red cedar and southern magnolia.

The evening concluded with a banquet dinner in the meeting room of the Ann Mason visitors center and a slide presentation on "Symbolism and History of Italian Gardens" by Oatlands' horticulturist, Alfredo Siani. His obvious love of the subject elicited a captivating look into the mystery and beauty of Italian villa gardens.

Saturday, May 19th, began with a continental breakfast aboard the Spirit of Washington as we cruised past Old Town Alexandria, Fort McNair, and Fort Washington. Our leader, Dean Norton, along with Susanne and their thirteen-month old daughter Nellie (Penelope Jane), kept the orange juice, coffee, and conversation flowing as we sped down the Potomac and docked at the foot of Mount Vernon.

Our morning lectures took place in the meeting room of Mount Vernon's Ann Pamela Cunningham building where Holly Shimizu, public programs specialist for the United States Botanical Garden, spoke first on "Roses for the Historic Landscape." Shimizu, formerly curator of the National Herb Garden at the National Arboretum, presented a highly informative lecture on the character and culture of many historic varieties, beginning with the "mad Gallicas" (*Rosa gallica* 'Officinalis' and 'Versicolor'), the oldest European roses, dating before 1600. (see the following rose list by H. Shimizu.) Speaking from her vast



Anthony O'Grady and Peter Hatch, Director of Gardens and Grounds, Monticello, aboard the Spirit of Washington.

experience and knowledge, Shimizu also suggested unique combinations and methods for growing historic roses in both contemporary and recreated gardens. She concluded with a preview of the design for the rose garden to be included in the U. S. Botanical Garden's major new project which will be installed on property adjoining the present conservatory near the U. S. Capital building.

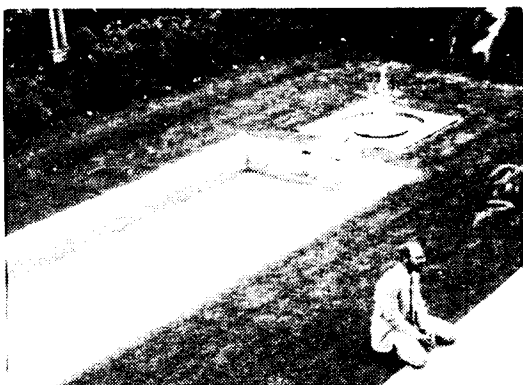
Brent Heath, another skilled and experienced plant specialist, spoke next on "Efficient and Effective Use of Eighteenth-Century Bulbs." Along with his wife Becky, he manages the Daffodil Mart which supplies high-quality bulbs to a number of major historic sites. Heath discussed not only a wide array of bulbs-- from the fragrant *Narcissus odoratus plenus* to the garlic-smelling *Ipheon uniflorum*-- but also many useful cultural methods such as deep planting for naturalizing tulips; sun, water, and fertilizer requirements; and the efficient use of back-saving tools. Members wishing to receive a copy of their catalogue should send \$1 to: The Daffodil Mart, Rt. 3, Box 794, Gloucester, Virginia 23061 or phone (804) 693-3966; FAX (804) 693-9436.

The buffet luncheon held at nearby Woodlawn Plantation afforded us a lengthy mid-day break to tour the grounds and study the collection of Heritage Roses which were in peak bloom. Beth Holloway, Woodlawn's Superintendent of Grounds, was on hand for questions and background information. The house and property, originally owned by Washington, now belongs to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

We then returned to Mount Vernon where landscape architect and historian C. Allan Brown presented "Masonic Influences on Garden Design?" possibly the most provocative lecture of the conference. Although Brown is not the first to entertain the notion of Masonic influences upon the basic garden design of George Washington's boxwood parterres, he was careful to stress the speculative nature of his analysis. Originally, the Masonic brotherhood, founded in London in 1717, was a gathering of builders, or freemasons, who based their doctrines upon the secrets of geometry, the "great architect of the universe." Over time their tenets developed into a philosophy of morality veiled in symbolism and allegory. In America, the golden age of Masons occurred between 1750 and 1825. It was during this period that George Washington, who was raised to the position of master mason at the age of twenty, became perhaps the most celebrated masonic icon. Brown made a convincing case for the validity of his thesis through well chosen slides which visually supported his argument. He further noted possible influences even in the books Washington owned, including the English treatise on gardening by Batty Langley, an avid Freemason. Are these emblems truly evident in

Washington's garden? Do the clipped boxwood borders and columns suggest the Mason's symbolic apron and symmetrically paired columns? Are the parterres meant to represent the squares, hearts, and hexagons in masonic imagery? Brown leaves us to ponder these fascinating implications.

The conference's formal lectures concluded with "Influences of American Gardens and Gardeners on the British Landscape," by Anthony O'Grady, head gardener for the American Museum in Bath, England, where the actual garden plan of Mount Vernon is reproduced. O'Grady assumed a philosophical approach in his historical look at the waves of plant introductions upon the English landscape over the centuries. Speaking from



The inexhaustible Dean Norton finally winds down at Evermay.

the standpoint of a gardener keenly aware of his environment and native ecology, O'Grady's perspective was both powerful and relevant to those of us living in a country still luxuriant with its indigenous flora. In looking at the almost totally transformed English landscape of today, it is difficult to imagine there is only one true native evergreen, which is not the "English" boxwood. O'Grady challenged us to strive toward the preservation of our unique landscape heritage, both in the cultivated and natural sense.

We spent the remainder of this very full day on the grounds of Mount Vernon in true eighteenth-century style. (See Harriet Jansma's report on page 1.) As the festive evening drew to an end we could indeed sense the meaning of Washington's own remarks, "No estate in United America is more pleasantly situated than this."

Sunday's optional tours, traditionally scheduled for our third and final day, were well attended by conference participants. A major blow to Dean's masterfully planned schedule was the last-minute cancellation of the White House tours (despite Dean's alleged threats that all members would henceforth vote Democratic if not already doing so.) But any disappointments soon vanished with the realization that a day at Dumbarton Oaks, Tudor Place, and Evermay, along with a dazzling luncheon at the Anderson House, could not possibly accommodate another event.

Dumbarton Oaks, our first destination, stands as one of the premier gardens in America. Noted landscape gardener Beatrix Farrand designed these magnificent gardens for Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss, who purchased the property in 1920. The series of intimate garden rooms evolved under Farrand's supervision over a twenty year period. This intricately designed landscape incorporates traditional elements of French, English, and Italian gardens combined in a uniquely distinctive fashion, reflecting a sophisticated eye for color, texture, and form. The gardens today are flawlessly tended by a dozen groundskeepers under the supervision of long-time superintendent Don Smith. Following his introduction to the gardens, many chose to accompany Smith for the remainder of the morning. Others elected to wander at will, captivated by the restful sounds of the fountains, the play of light through the giant copper beech, the swirl of subtly blended stones in the Pebble Garden, and the stately curves of the American hornbeam Ellipse (*Carpinus caroliniana*).

In the afternoon we visited Evermay and Tudor Place, both also located in Georgetown and within walking distance of Dumbarton Oaks. The manor house at Evermay, the private residence of Mrs. Peter Berlin, commands unspoiled views of the city while retaining a sense of enclosure due to the high brick walls and large trees surrounding the property. SGHS members enjoyed



*The signature profile of William L. Hunt strolling through Dumbarton Oaks' rose garden.*

the lush, terraced gardens and statuary as the afternoon slowed to a more relaxed pace.

The gardens and grounds of Tudor Place, nurtured by the Peter family since 1805, reflect an amalgam of designs and uses of landscape. Forsyth Woodberry, the site's new horticulturist, presented a thorough interpretation of the grounds during our visit, discussing at length the many fine historic roses in the Flower Knot. This particular garden area was reconstructed in its original, early nineteenth-century design which resurfaced in the 1923 edition of Historic Gardens of Virginia. The property is also memorable for its collection of grand trees, including several massive white oaks, a tulip poplar, and an enormous American holly. Members were also fascinated by a smoketree "grove" (*Cotinus coggygria*) along the edge of the South Lawn and by the China Rose 'Old Blush' planted by Martha Custis Peter, against the South Facade.

The weekend, in its entirety, can not be given full justice in this brief summary. Memories of the experience, from the early morning excursions through the Farmer's Market in Old Town Alexandria to the late night bus tours of the Capital city's monuments, will surely continue best through the fellowship of further gatherings of the Society.

ROSES FOR THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE by Holly H. Shimizu, Public Programs Specialist, U.S. Botanical Garden

<i>Rosa gallica</i> 'Officinalis'	before 1600	<i>R.</i> 'General Jacqueminot'	1853
<i>R. gallica</i> 'Versicolor'	before 1581	<i>R.</i> 'Champney's Pink Cluster'	1811
<i>R.</i> 'Tuscany'	before 1820	<i>R. moschata</i> var. <i>nepalensis</i>	1822
<i>R.</i> 'Cardinal de Richelieu'	1840	<i>R.</i> 'Paul's Himalayan Musk Rambler'	no date
<i>R.</i> 'Empress Josephine'	before 1824	<i>R. moschata</i> 'Plena'	before 1596
<i>R.</i> 'Madame Plantier'	1835	<i>R.</i> 'Mary Washington'	1891
<i>R.</i> 'Celestial'	before 1848	<i>R.</i> 'Bloomfield Dainty'	1924
<i>R. damascena</i>	16th Century	<i>R. filipes</i> 'Kiftsgate'	1954
<i>R. damascena</i>	before 1850	<i>R. banksiae</i> 'Lutea'	1824
'Trigintipetala'		<i>R. bracteata</i>	1793
<i>R. damascena</i>	before 1819	<i>R. foetida</i> 'Bicolor'	before 1590
'Semperflorens'		<i>R. foetida</i>	before 1542
<i>R.</i> 'Celsiana'	before 1750	<i>R. x haisonii</i> 'Harison's Yellow'	1830
<i>R.</i> 'Mae Hardy'	1832	<i>R. rugosa</i> 'Frau Dagmar Hartopp'	1914
<i>R.</i> 'Leda'	1827	<i>R. rugosa</i> 'Rubra'	no date
<i>R. centifolia</i> 'Muscosa'	1696	<i>R.</i> 'Pink Grootendorst'	1923
<i>R.</i> 'William Lobb'	1855	<i>R. virginiana</i>	before 1807
<i>R.</i> 'Alfred de Dalmas'	1855	<i>R. canina</i>	before 1737
<i>R.</i> 'Old Bush'	1752	<i>R. glauca</i> ( <i>R. rubrifolia</i> )	before 1830
<i>R.</i> 'Hermosa'	1840	<i>R. eglanteria</i>	before 1551
<i>R. chinensis</i> 'Mutabilis'	before 1894	<i>R. sericea</i> var. <i>pteracantha</i>	1890
<i>R. chinensis</i> 'Minima'	before 1818	<i>R. wichuraiana</i> var. <i>poterifolia</i>	no date
<i>R. chinensis</i> 'Viridiflora'	1856	<i>R.</i> 'Petite Pink Scotch'	before 1750
<i>R.</i> 'Louis Philippe'	1834	<i>R.</i> 'Lavender Pink Parfait'	
<i>R.</i> 'Niphetos'	1843		
<i>R.</i> 'Safrano'	1839		
<i>R.</i> 'Sombreuil'	1850		
<i>R.</i> 'Reine Victoria'	1872		
<i>R.</i> 'Souvenir de la Malmaison'	1843		
<i>R.</i> 'Zepherine Drouhin'	1868		



**THE PLANT REPORTER: SEARCHING FOR PINK ROMAN HYACINTHS**  
by Flora Ann Bynum, Winston-Salem, NC

Many years ago I noticed early each spring in our farmers market that a few women had for sale little bunches of a very sweet-smelling pink hyacinth with a double blossom. After I got into the "garden history bit" in the early 1970s, I asked Elizabeth Lawrence about these and about the little single blue hyacinths so common to our gardens here. She identified them both as Roman hyacinths, *Hyacinthus orientalis albus*, native to southern France, which is how Hortus Third (1976) lists them. They are a variety of the more frequently grown garden or Dutch hyacinth (*H. orientalis*). Most garden writers refer to these small hyacinths simply as Roman hyacinths. French-Roman is sometimes used; this name seems to appear first in the early twentieth century, apparently because the bulbs were being imported from France. The flowers are white, various shades of blue, and pink or rose-pink.

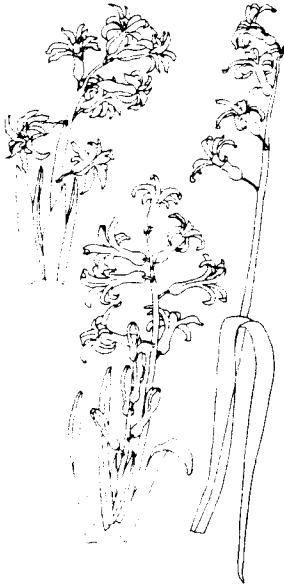
The farm women who brought the pink hyacinths to market here would not sell me some bulbs; they would always say they only had a few. In the last two years, only one woman has brought pink hyacinths to market and she in early June did bring me ten small bulbs. Hers came down to her from her mother.

A dear older friend, Julia Maud Conrad, who lived on her family farm near here, told me that in 1922 she dug from the original Conrad farm, which had been in the family for generations, "those little old-timey double pink hyacinths" and planted them in her own garden. She remembers there was once a double row of these bordering the walk at the old farm. The bulbs she brought persisted for years, but finally disappeared, as had the bulbs on the older farm. She "watched out" and called friends searching for bulbs for me for years, with no luck. She knew of one old farm in another part of the county where the back yard was full of white and blue little single hyacinths. But, alas, we never got there, and Julia Maud died last year, in her late eighties.

I tried in the past years to find a commercial source for the Roman hyacinths, especially the white and the pink. Park Seed Company in 1977 listed pink, white, and blue French-Roman hyacinths, calling them the old-fashioned single hyacinth. I ordered and grew these, but they did not look like the little blue hyacinth of Southern gardens; they were much larger, like Dutch hyacinths that have been grown in the garden for years and "petered out." Park no longer lists them. Van Bourgondien listed them in its 1984 catalogue, but not since, to my knowledge.

This spring I renewed my investigation into Roman hyacinths, especially the elusive pink. I consulted with SGHS members John T. Fitzpatrick, director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, Monticello, Charlottesville, VA; William Lanier Hunt, well-known Southern garden consultant and writer, Chapel Hill, NC; Dr. Arthur O. Tucker, research professor, Delaware State College, Dover, DE; and Dr. William C. Welch, extension landscape horticulturist, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.

Description: In gardens, the Roman hyacinth blooms much earlier than the Dutch hyacinth, and is often the first bulb to bloom in the spring. The flowers are extremely fragrant, with the individual flowers much smaller and produced more sparingly on the stem than the Dutch hyacinth. The spikes are dainty, light and graceful, with three, four, or more spikes produced per bulb, instead of the one heavy thick spike of the Dutch hyacinth. The pink flower



Caroline Dorman's  
line drawing from  
Elizabeth Lawrence's  
Gardens in Winter.

spikes are smaller than the blue, in size closer to a lily-of-the-valley. Apparently in its native location in southern France, white was the more common color and is the color most often mentioned by early writers, although it is the blue that persists in our gardens today. Roman hyacinths are too tender to grow outdoors in the northern states. Bill Hunt mentions, in Southern Gardens, Southern Gardening (1982), that the Roman hyacinth likes the South's warmth and temperature of soil.

Current Commercial Sources: Mr. Fitzpatrick contacted the Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Center in New York in June to ask if Roman hyacinths were being commercially produced in Holland today. He was told that they were not, and that "the only place in Holland where you can still find [them] is in the Hortus Bulborum. They still grow the blue and the white form. However, all of these bulbs suffer from the mosaic virus. A double form ... is, to my knowledge, nowhere to be found." (A 1928 reference sent me by Dr. Tucker mentions "because of diseases which attack the bulbs in the European bulb fields, it is seldom seen now in florists' stores." So disease problems have been around for some time.)

Mrs. Mary Mattison van Schaik of Cavendish, Vermont, a former bulb importer, told me she had for years obtained French-Roman hyacinths from the Dutch growers and sold them through her company. The new owner of van Schaik Imported Dutch Bulbs business, who also lives in Cavendish, offers "Fairy" hyacinths in blue, pink, and white and is hoping to find a source for the once very popular French-Roman hyacinths. Bundles of Bulbs of Owings Mills, Maryland, has French-Roman hyacinths in their current catalogue, but the owners checked their Dutch source, and it lists the bulbs as Multiflora or "Fairy," so they feel they do not have the true French-Roman hyacinth.

Multiflora or "Fairy" Hyacinths: Often commercial sources will have the Multiflora, or "Fairy," type of hyacinth, and these tend at times to be confused with the Roman hyacinth. Dr. Tucker and Mr. Fitzgerald both sent me an article titled "The Hyacinth Story" by Frederic Doerflinger from the journal Adsurgens which states that Multiflora hyacinths "were derived, initially, by George van der Veld of Lisse, some 50 years ago by crossing Roman hyacinths with single Dutch hyacinths to obtain early flowering varieties with larger-scale flowers in a wider colour range." Multiflora hyacinths come in white, pink, and blue; 'Borah' (blue) is one of the most commonly listed varieties. ["The Hyacinth Story" appeared in the Autumn 1989 issue (vol.1, no.1) of Adsurgens, Journal of the Wycliffe Hall Botanical Gardens, County Durham, England.]

Forcing: The Roman hyacinth has been used a great deal by commercial florists for forcing. In years past two local florists with greenhouses sold single white hyacinths forced into bloom at Christmastime. One is no longer in business and the manager of the other says they are difficult to grow and it is hard to regulate when they will bloom, so the company has not grown them for the past two years.

Roman hyacinths in Southern gardens today: These hyacinths exist here and there today in our Southern gardens. The blue can be found in many places, in various shades, and persists over the years. The bulbs in my garden have been in the same spot since we bought the house in 1952. A friend here has on an old farm both a light blue and a deep blue. Another friend brought me

bulbs of "little blue hyacinths from Cousin Phoebe's place," an old house in a neighboring county built about 1808, and she knows they go back generations. Dr. Ed Givhan, in Flowers for South Alabama Gardens (1980), notes "Many of the older gardeners have what they call 'old fashioned hyacinths' which are small blue or white flowers that bloom in early February or early March. They are extremely fragrant. They behave as perennials here and generally are quite satisfactory." George Stritikus of Montgomery, AL, says the blue there is almost purplish. He found a double blue in the garden of a 1920 house, but attempts to move them failed.

Ed Shull, SGHS board member from Maryland, overheard Bill Welch and me discussing the pink Roman hyacinths at the SGHS annual meeting at Mount Vernon in May. He said a clump of the pink had been growing at the backdoor of his 1910 house since he moved there. Bill Welch has a family friend in Mangham, Louisiana, who has the pink hyacinths. She obtained them from an older neighbor's garden where they had been growing as an edging for her bulb bed for many years. So the Dutch may not have the pink Roman hyacinth, but it exists here and there in Southern gardens today-- and sometimes in the double form.

History: The blue and white Roman hyacinths were listed by Parkinson (1629) and in Johnson's edition of Gerarde (1633), according to Dr. Tucker. When they first came into Southern gardens, we do not know.

An 1830s account of the garden at the Mordecai House in Raleigh, NC, mentioned that the "little single white hyacinth, now called the Roman hyacinth" was grown. In 1981, the horticulturist at The Hermitage, Nashville, TN, inquired about "the white Roman single hyacinth," as he had found it on an early list for the garden. Mr. Stritikus sent me a list of bulbs thought to be those grown in 1813-1815 in The LeConte Botanical and Floral Garden on Woodmanston Plantation, Liberty County, GA, which included the blue Roman hyacinth.

Dr. Welch, in his book Perennial Garden Color (1989), lists "the white French Roman hyacinth that naturalizes in much of Texas and the South." He also says that "blue forms also will naturalize, but bloom later." He told me the white was almost cream in color.

Bill Hunt has not seen the pink or the white in gardens in the South in recent years. Celia Ann Jones at Sisters' Bulb Farm in Gibsland, LA, says that her grandmother did grow the pink Roman hyacinth during the 1940s and 1950s, but they did not seem to adapt very well to that area and she has not seen any for many years.

Elizabeth Lawrence in Gardens in Winter (1961) says the Roman hyacinth is as varied as the Southern gardens in which they are found. She tells of Caroline Dorman's finding the double form on an old homeplace in Louisiana, in "a most exquisite flesh pink." Miss Lawrence also noted "in North Carolina white Roman hyacinths usually bloom in winter, sometimes at Christmas, but my blue ones, which came from Georgia, bloom in February."

Here is a long-cultivated flower, fairly common today in Southern gardens, yet one that few people, even the experts, identify correctly. Within the past two to three years, it seems to have disappeared from commerce. Within the past twenty to thirty years, two forms, the white and especially the pink, have become quite scarce, almost an endangered species in the garden world.

When did the Roman hyacinth first come to America? Do any SGHS members have references to Roman hyacinths in early Southern gardens? Where in the South are the pink growing today, or the white, other than Texas? Please report!

## CONFERENCE EXAMINES VIRGINIA PLANTATION LIFE by Kenneth M. McFarland

On the heels of our Mount Vernon gathering, several Southern Garden History Society members found themselves learning even more about George Washington, and his fellow Old Dominion planters, at a conference on "Re-creating the World of the Virginia Plantation, 1750-1820." The meeting took place May 31- June 2 at the University of Virginia and Monticello, apt locations indeed for such an event. There, leading scholars addressed an array of issues ranging from plantation archaeology, to interpretive methodologies (with an especial focus on slavery), to the mentality of the eighteenth-century planter.

While no one focused on the subject of the garden per se, several speakers did offer fascinating perspectives on issues linked closely to gardening practices of the era. Of especial interest was their examination of the near obsession-- historian Rhys Isaac termed it an "Enlightenment fascination"-- many planters exhibited in rationalizing their farming operations and with the measurement and record-keeping practices which accompanied such activity. Scrutinized were the habits of such planters as Washington, Jefferson, Landon Carter, and John Tayloe. And while their reforming activities were shown largely to rest in the domain of seventeenth-century science, and the orderly universe it projected, perhaps even more interesting were the many obstacles such systematizers confronted as they

attempted to modernize and regiment when faced by work forces (including both slaves and overseers) steeped in traditional methods of land management and labor regimentation. This focus on agricultural operations required no great imaginative leaps to see how the same issues could be at play as plantation reformers also embraced new paradigms of gardening and landscape design.

Tours of Jefferson's home and its environs offered a look at the fascinating landscape and gardens (an area quite familiar to many SGHS members) that were such an important, if ever-changing, component of that world. Many conference attendees also visited the Monticello archaeology laboratory where they examined artifacts which had earlier been at the center of a presentation made by staff members Cinder Stanton, Director of Research, and Bill Kelso, Resident Archaeologist at Monticello. Joined to this was also the opportunity to observe demonstrations of various plantation "industries" and agricultural activities.

This trip to Monticello and the conference as a whole underscored the complexity of life on the Virginia plantation. At the same time it was a reminder of the importance of examining this plantation macrocosm in order to understand better the gardening activities of the period.

## ALHFAM CONFERENCE by F.A. Bynum

Historical gardening was emphasized at the 20th annual meeting of the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural

Museums held at Brown University in Providence, RI, June 17th-21st. Three SGHS members conducted pre-conference workshops held at Old

Sturbridge Village. Dr. Arthur O. Tucker of Delaware State College, Dover, DE and Scott Kunst of Old House Gardens, Ann Arbor, MI spoke on the workshop session on "Identifying and Locating Sources for Historically Correct Plant Material." Peggy C. Newcomb of Monticello spoke on two sessions on Monticello's program of guided garden tours and on the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants. During the regular conference program, Dr. Tucker and Mr. Kunst spoke on "Recreating Ornamental Gardens."

In addition to the pre-conference workshop on historic gardening, two days of sessions were held at Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, MA, and Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, MA. At Old Sturbridge, those interested in historic gardening had an opportunity not only to see the gardens and the working farm of the village, interpreting the 1830s in New England, but also to visit the staff and discuss types of plants used in living history sites as well as gardens and farm interpretation. At Plimoth Plantation, sessions were offered on seed preservation, Wampanoag Indian horticultural

history, types of crops grown and cultivating techniques. Plants grown in the 1627 recreated village are of that period.

Approximately 400 people from throughout the United States and Canada attended the meeting.

In the spring, 1989, issue of Magnolia a "Source List for Historic Seeds and Plants" was reproduced. Scott Kunst originally compiled the list for AHLFAM's seeds and plant materials committee. At the annual meeting in Providence, Mr. Kunst distributed the list updated to June, 1990. The new list may be obtained by sending \$1 and a business-size, self-addressed, 25 cent stamped envelope to Scott G. Kunst, Old House Gardens, 536 Third St., Ann Arbor, MI 48103. In addition to sources for historic seeds and plants, the list also includes steps on how to determine and use appropriate plants at a historic site, and a list of books and plant-finding aids.

Membership in ALHFAM includes a bi-monthly bulletin and is open to anyone interested. Dues are \$10 a year for individuals, \$25 for institutions. Write AHLFAM, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC 20560.

### Members in the News

Shadows-on-the-Teche has received a \$50,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to fund a three year project, "A Plan for the Preservation and Interpretation of the Landscape at the Shadows-on-the-Teche." Shadows director (and SGHS member) Shereen Minvielle will be project director and Suzanne Louise Turner, SGHS board member, has been selected as historic landscape scholar who will research documentary material in the initial stage of the project.

Suzanne is currently an Associate Professor at the Louisiana State University School of Landscape Architecture. Her investigations on the Shadows material will produce an "Historic Landscape Report" and form the basis for all garden design options.

Grover E. Moulton III of Tulane University will serve as chair of the project's advisory committee. The committee's mission is to establish a methodology for the responsible restoration of this

region's historic gardens and to create at Shadows a very important regional garden. Mr. Mouton is a new member of the SGHS.

Suzanne Turner is also the subject of Southern Accents April 1990 article, "Spirit of the Landscape: Preserving Gardens of the Past." The article, which will likely be of interest to most SGHS members, focuses on the work she has done at the Hermann-Grima House in New Orleans.

On July 20th, 1990, Mrs. M. Truman (Shingo) Woodward, Jr., SGHS board member, and Mrs. Morrell F. Trimble, SGHS member, spoke on "Current Historic Garden Restoration in Louisiana" at the Louisiana Preservation Alliance's conference on Historic Landscapes, Tourism, and the River Road. On the 21st, at the same conference, William C. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist at Texas A&M University and SGHS board member, spoke on "Native and Historic Plant Materials along the River Road." Mrs. Woodward was Honorary Chair of the conference, and co-chairs were Patricia H. Gay and H. Paul St. Martin, both SGHS members.

Restoration contractor and SGHS member Todd Dickinson was profiled in the May 1990 issue of Preservation News for his work in the preservation and rehabilitation of North Carolina architecture. Dickinson, selected 1988 winner of the preservation foundation's prestigious Robert E. Stipe Professional Award, was further recognized for his charitable community activities, particularly in South Carolina's hurricane Hugo-ravaged coastal towns. Todd and his wife, Sue, also an SGHS member, reside in Hillsboro, NC.

SGHS board member Ben Page was recognized in the May issue of Southern Accents for his 1986 landscape design and master plan for Boxwood, the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Fleming in Nashville, TN. The original gardens for the home, built in 1927-1928, were left unattended

for years before the Flemings, avid garden enthusiasts, recently purchased the residence. Working with the existing boxwood and large American beech and southern magnolias surrounding the property, Page redesigned the garden in three separate rooms which feature a rose garden and boxwood parterre. Native plants were also brought in to create a woodland garden. Another major aspect of the project involved the movement of large antique Italian statuary.

The Louisiana Association of Museums has presented the Elizabeth McLundie Bolton Award to Mrs. Sue Turner of Baton Rouge for her long term dedication and service to Louisiana museums. Mrs. Turner has been a member of the board of directors of the Louisiana State Museum since 1981 and has received national recognition as an advisor of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She is associated with Magnolia Mound, the Foundation for Historical Louisiana, and the Anglo-American Art Museum in Baton Rouge, the Preservation Resource Center in New Orleans, and the American Association of Museums. She was a founding member of both the Louisiana Association of Museums and the Louisiana Preservation Alliance. She is co-chair of the 1991 SGHS annual meeting in Louisiana next April.

The March issue of Southern Gardening featured Ed and Peggy Givhan in "Flowers English Style." The article profiles their "second career" of creating flower borders in the English fashion using perennials and annuals that can withstand the intense heat and humidity of the muggy summers of Montgomery, AL. In addition to his medical profession, Ed was further noted for his second book, in progress, on flower gardening and his role as board member of the SGHS.

The May/June issue of Historic Preservation featured an article on

the re-restoration of a garden destroyed by Hurricane Hugo in Charleston's historic district. Landscape architects *Hugh and Mary Palmer Dargan* of *Hugh Dargan Associates* originally created a circa 1800 parterre garden for the frame house at 58 South Battery. The American Society of Landscape Architects recognized the garden restoration with a National Award of Merit last summer, just weeks before Hugo's devastation.

The nearly complete destruction

of the garden from salt water and a deposit of approximately six inches of plough mud from the receding tide necessitated an all-out effort by the *Dargans* to salvage what was left and start anew. In the end their perseverance was well rewarded. The *Dargans* turned this disaster into a rare opportunity to replant completely with appropriate nineteenth-century antebellum plants. This project has generated a deeper interest in and awareness of accurate garden restoration among Charleston's residents.

### In Print

Kelso, William M. and Rachel Most, Earth Patterns: Essays in Landscape Archaeology, University Press of Virginia, 1990. A collection of essays resulting from the 1986 Conference on Landscape Archaeology held at the University of Virginia and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello which focus on the archaeological recovery of the "designed" environment, particularly gardens. Specific sites from the early American period of the Chesapeake region to Monticello are set against work by classical archaeologists at ancient sites.

Favretti, Rudy and Joy, For Every House a Garden, University Press of New England, 1990. A 1990 reprint of a 1977 guide for reproducing period gardens.

M'Mahon, Bernard, The American Gardener's Calendar, 1806. A facsimile of the original edition published by Theophrastus in Little Compton, Rhode Island. 648 pp, plus index. This handsome hardbound edition, reproduced exactly as the original, is considered "The Bible" of early nineteenth-century horticultural research. M'Mahon's

Philadelphia nursery supplied plants, seeds, and bulbs throughout the eastern United States and his calendar was meticulously followed by gardeners of all types during the 1800s.

To purchase a copy, send \$40 plus \$3 shipping and handling to: The Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, P.O. Box 316, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Lawrence, Elizabeth, Gardens in Winter, Claitors, 1973. An excellent work which focuses primarily on the Piedmont North Carolina region but also offers ideas for gardens in New England and other areas of the country.

The 1990 Flower and Herb Exchange (formerly the Olde Thyme Flower and Herbal Seed Exchange) has just been printed. This 48 page publication contains 182 members who are offering 700 listings of heirloom flowers and herbs. The book also includes a list of commercial sources for historic flowers and herbs and a plant search for anyone who has lost heirloom varieties. For an annual membership and a copy of the publication, send \$3 to: The Flower and Herb Exchange, Rural Route 3, Box 239, Decorah, Iowa, 52101.

## **New State Editor For North Carolina**

James (Jai) C. Jordan, Administrator/Curator of Historic Hope Plantation in Windsor, has stepped forward to assume Kenneth McFarland's former position as North Carolina state editor. Jai has a special interest in eighteenth and nineteenth-century foodways and gardens and has lectured on the topic of "Recreating the Federal Period Garden" for the October 1989 Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes conference at Old Salem. We appreciate Jai's willingness to serve our organization.

## **Update on SGHS 1991 Annual Meeting**

The 1991 Annual Meeting will be held in St. Francisville, Louisiana from April 12th-14th. Co-ordinators of the meeting are Mrs. Cornelius C. (Betsy) Crusel, Jr.; Mrs. Robert L. (Carole) Pettit, Jr.; and Mrs. Bert H. (Sue) Turner and working with the co-ordinators are Shingo Woodward and Susan Turner, directors of the Southern Garden History Society. Lodging has been arranged in a nearby small hotel. Committee meetings are being held and the selection of speakers and planned events will be announced in the next issue of Magnolia.

## **Autumn Issue**

The upcoming issue of Magnolia will feature a story on seventeenth-century beekeeping by Susan Ferguson, assistant horticulturist at Tryon Palace in New Bern, NC. Please send your articles and announcements to Kenneth McFarland, Stagville Center, P.O. Box 71217, Durham, NC 27711-1217 no later than November 1st.

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