



Magnolia

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

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Winter 1996

St. George Tucker's Buried Landscape, Rediscovered

— by Kathleen D. Duncan, Hampton Roads, Virginia

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

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

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

Continued on page 2 . . .



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

**Inside
this
Issue**

Page 9 Book Reviews
Page 11 Members in the News
Page 12 SGHS 1996 Meeting – Tidewater Tapestry
Page 12 Of Note: Antebellum Gardens Photo Search

Calendar



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

St. George Tucker's Landscape *continued from page one*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



view across the open area of Courthouse Green. The house would also help shield the gardens from the noise and public nature of the large green. Soon after acquiring the property, Tucker ordered several hundred

pales, evidently to further fence the property. From the time the house was moved until 1789, it went through several renovations and enlargements to hold Tucker's ever-increasing family.

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



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

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

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

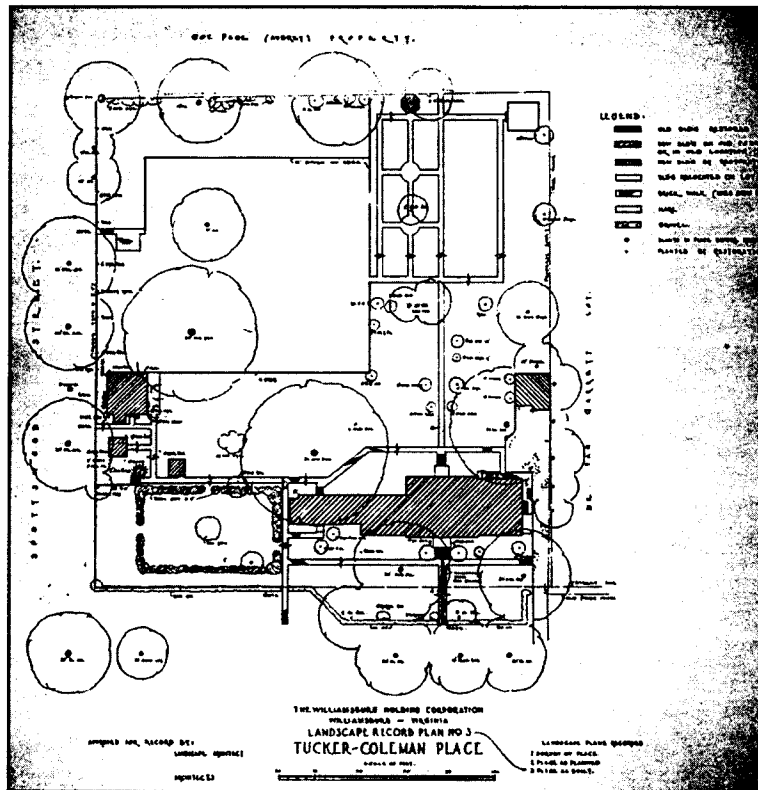
In Williamsburg, Tucker gardened for thirty years in addition to the ten previous years



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

Tucker sometimes also recorded what he planted and where. In November 1791 he noted planting peach stones "near the stable door." According to an 1815 insurance policy, the stable stood due west of the house along Palace Green. Willow trees stood at the south and east sides of the stable. Tucker wrote that on March 12, 1807 raisin stones and Malapa grapes "were sown in a box and under the willow tree and at the east end of the stables." Several times Tucker wrote that he planted seeds and plants under a willow, probably for the protection it provided. An almanac entry from October 1792 mentioned eight peach stones, including six lemon peach stones planted "near the nursery," however, the location of the nursery remains unknown. Large white pears were planted "near the east pales" and four other peach stones were planted "at the corner of the lawn on the south side of the pales, east end." The location and length of fencing on the property is also currently unknown.

Comments such as these are valuable for determining garden layout. Unfortunately, no maps or sketches of Tucker's garden have been discovered, leading us to speculate as to



Shurcliff's 1931 plan of Tucker House.

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

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

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

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

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

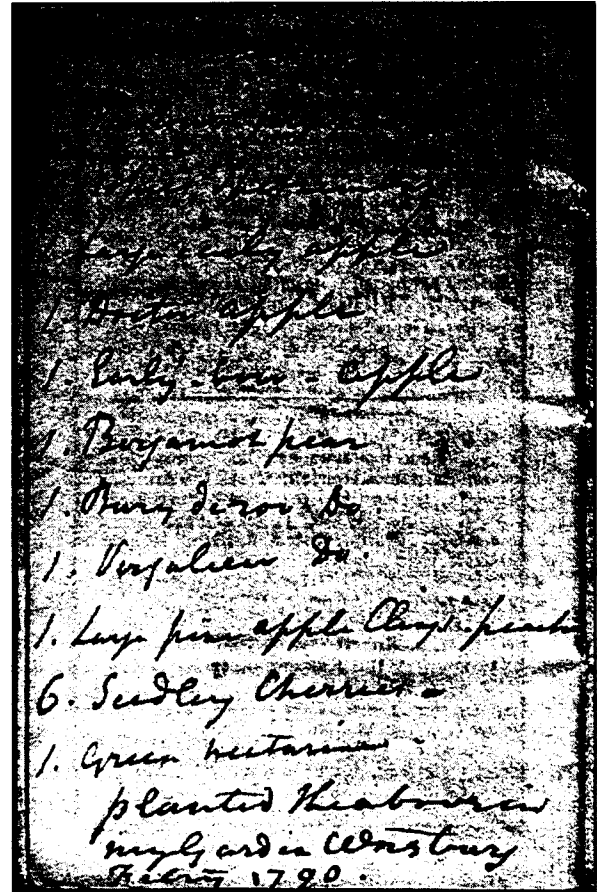
Little is known about the landscape changes after Tucker's death, which is perhaps an area for further exploration. Documentation of the landscape began again during the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg under John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In 1928, Landscape Architect Arthur A. Shurcliff surveyed the Tucker-Coleman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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



St. George Tucker House, pre-reconstruction.

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

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

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

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

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

Brinkley drew up several hypothetical

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

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

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

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

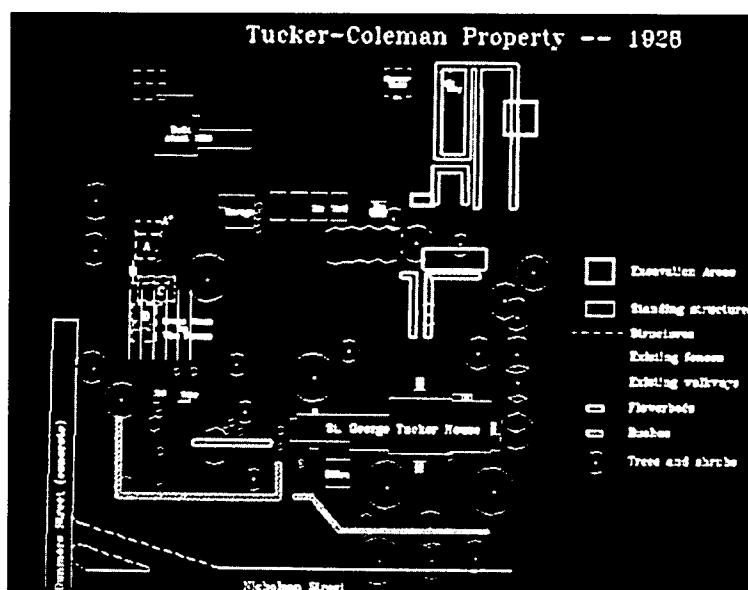


earlier planting since both were recorded in England in 1594. However, they were popular for a number of centuries so they may relate to a later planting. *Leucojum* appeared in one of the photographs from the 1930s,

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Book Review

GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN The Old-Fashioned American Garden

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



they love +

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

— Marty Ross
Kansas City, MO

Members in the News

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

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

father's garden flourishes in downtown Annapolis."

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

Southern Garden History Society – Membership Form

Annual Dues (Check One):

_____	Student	\$	5.
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Return with check to Southern Garden History Society, Old Salem Inc., Drawer F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108.

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

SGHS 1996 Meeting — Tidewater Tapestry



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

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

Of Note: Antebellum Gardens Photo Search

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

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

Ben G. Page, Jr., *President*

Dr. William C. Welch, *Vice-President*

Flora Ann Bynum, *Secretary-Treasurer*

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