



# Magnolia

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

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## *Vernacular Gardens of Rural Florida*

by Riley M. Blitch, Gainesville, Florida

My interest in the vernacular gardens of this region stems from my close relationship with the farm that my great grandfather homesteaded near Ocala around 1838. He began building the house around 1880 and it remained intact until about 1960 when it was demolished. During this period many small developments were forming across Florida, many of which bore the name of the founder. The two that I have studied in most detail are "Blitchton," my grandfathers settlement, and "Dudley," a similar place near Gainesville. Blitchton still remains on the map even though the homestead is gone and Dudley Farm remains totally intact as a State Park soon to be opened to the public. The similarities between these two settlements and homesteads are astounding, with the main difference being the location of the ornamental gardens.

Both settlements developed along roads that led to the larger communities of Ocala and Gainesville. Both had stores at the roadside with post offices inside. The Blitchton settlement also built a church

and a school. None of these buildings were landscaped, as they would be today, except for strategically placed red cedars, camphor trees, and magnolias for shade.

The two homes, although built at the same time, had different architectural styles, but they both had a kitchen built separately from the main house and front porches full of

geraniums, begonias, and succulents in an eclectic collection of containers. They both had a wide lane running perpendicular to the road, alongside the fenced house and on back through the out buildings, each standing alone and each for a different purpose. Once again, the areas were completely devoid of plantings right down to the bare sand. I once asked my father

why it was done this way and he answered, "Well, when we needed a building for any reason we just built one and we kept them a fair distance apart so if we had a fire they wouldn't all burn. We kept the leaves swept and the chickens pecked away the weeds and grass so any forest fires couldn't burn through our home place."



*Dudley House, front.*

photo courtesy of Riley Blitch

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The activities that took place near these two homes were extensive. There was a cane grinder and syrup house with its vats for boiling cane juice and a smoke house for curing meat. Also on the properties were the wash houses, dairy, potato houses, hay barns, stables, and scattered chicken houses. The only major differences between the two sites was that Dudley had a tobacco barn whereas Blitchton had a sawmill. Both of these homesteads had water towers after gasoline engines and, later, electricity came to these rural farms. The small pumps kept the tanks full and the elevated tanks provided water pressure to the home and out buildings.



photo courtesy of Riley Blitch

*Blitch out buildings and swept yard.*

Fire was a fear of every homesteader and the grounds around these houses and outbuildings were kept, for the most part, free of grass, shrubs and other vegetation so that the frequent forest fires could not

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## Calendar

**August 15th-16th, 1997.** "Historic Plants Symposium." This symposium, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the **Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants**, will feature talks by Dr. Art Tucker on "Peonies, Pinks & Primroses," Scott Kunst on "Antique Bulbs for Gardens Old & New," John T. Fitzpatrick on "Perennials from the Past," Doug Seidel on "Noisette Roses, the Gems of the South," and Mike and Anne Lowe on "A History of Color, Pattern and Form in Bearded Iris." Tours of the CHP nursery and a reception at Monticello are also scheduled. For more information, contact Peggy C. Newcomb at P. O. Box 316, Charlottesville, VA 22902, (804) 984-9816; fax (804) 977-6140.

**October 2nd-4th, 1997.** "Breaking Ground: Examining the Vision and Practice of Historic Landscape Restoration," the eleventh **Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes** conference at Old Salem. Despite the increased popularity and emphasis on period landscapes, the field of historic landscape restoration remains as diverse today as the individuals involved and the properties themselves. The speakers, selected from a broad range of disciplines, will discuss the variety of philosophies and approaches currently employed within this expanding field. Lecture topics will range from the history of landscape restoration by Rudy Favretti to the National Park Service guidelines for site restoration by Robert Page; and from a case study of Jefferson's Poplar Forest by Allan Brown to Colonial Revival landscapes by Kent Brinkley. Other speakers include University

educators Catherine Howett (Athens, Georgia), Valencia Libby (Temple), and Mary Hughes (University of Virginia). Hosted by Old Salem and co-sponsored by Reynolda Gardens, Historic Stagville, The Museum of Southern Decorative Arts, and SGHS. Program registration materials have been mailed to all SGHS members. Please be on the lookout for this information. Contact the Landscape Conference, Old Salem Inc., P. O. Box F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108; phone (910) 721-7313.

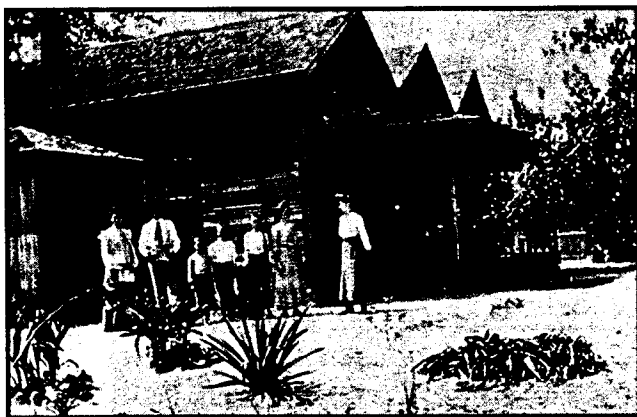
**October 2nd-5th, 1997.** "Women in Horticulture," the **Charleston Garden Festival**, commemorating the 100th-anniversary of the festivals benefactor, Florence Crittenton Programs. The all-female list of speakers includes Linda Askey, Edith Eddleman, Nancy Goodwin, Carole Ottesen, Peggy Newcomb, and Kim Hawks. For more information, contact Rebecca Gosnell, Festival Manager, 10 Saint Margaret St., Charleston, SC 29403, (803) 722-0551; fax (803) 577-0770.

**October 3rd-4th, 1997.** Tenth annual **Southern Garden Symposium & Workshop**. A stellar line-up of speakers at this popular conference include D. H. Marc Cathey, president of the American Horticultural Society; Marco Polo Stufano, director of Wave Hill Gardens outside New York City; rose specialist Odile Masquelier from Lyon, France; and SGHS board member Gordon W. Chappell, director of landscape at Colonial Williamsburg. For more information, write: The Southern Garden Symposium, P. O. Box 2075, St. Francisville, LA 70775. phone, (504) 635-6303.

## Vernacular Gardens of Rural Florida...

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burn into the sites. As a child I can remember seeing my grandmother or one of the farmhands sweeping the grounds down to the stark white sand with what they called a brush broom. It was a primitive, but efficient broom made by tying together wax myrtle branches, which were always available along the fence rows nearby. Landscaping within the fenced yard of the Blitch house was sparse and limited to shade trees and a few isolated and quite random plantings of sago palms, pampas grass, agave, and the native *Yucca filamentosa*. There were honeysuckle and allamanda vines and climbing roses (probably 'Louis Phillipe') scrambling up the porch columns. That yard was never planted, however the Dudley yard was extensively



*Early Blitch house with swept yard.*

planted, we believe, during the 1930s and '40s. The Dudley yard has been carefully cleaned up over the last few years. Every stump, rock, plant, and post has been documented by Sally Morrison, the State Park Ranger in charge of Dudley Farm. At this time, we are recreating on paper how this garden immediately surrounding the house evolved over the years from a "swept yard" to the way it appears today. We know that both yards were fenced with pickets in the early days and later with a decorative gothic style woven wire fence. Both homes had cisterns that collected valuable rain water from the roof, and planted very near to each was an ancient fig tree, which took advantage of the cool leaking water and lime from the mortar. The porches were always lined with potted plants in every kind of container imaginable. My grandmother religiously propagated her prized red, white, and pink geraniums under glass jars and shared them with visitors who would bring other exotics to her.

The outbuilding areas were shaded with camphor, red cedar, and pecan trees. The other plantings that I



remember were a huge clump of bamboo used for fishing poles, tomato and bean stakes, and patching fences. The hog pen had a mulberry grove planted within it and when the big, juicy berries ripened and fell to the ground, they were a treat for the hogs.

The most striking difference between these two homes was the location of the ornamental gardens. My grandmother's garden was a completely separate place fenced and maintained as if it were a botanical



*Gate to back fenced area with a rose. Dudley House.*

garden exclusively for her collection of flowering plants. My mother recalled its appearance around 1925 when she lived there as a young bride:

"The flower garden was across the lane from the house. It was about eighty yards long and forty yards wide with a high wire fence and a pretty picket gate. Deep at the far end toward the



*Dudley House—flower pit.*

West were two seedling orange trees, the sweetest oranges imaginable, and at orange blossom time the fragrance was heavenly! Along the North fence was a row of cedar trees for a windbreak and three very tall ancient eucalyptus trees, their leaves flashing silver in the breeze. The South fence had an asparagus bed; the fern climbed up and over the fence and the fresh spears were picked and fed to the chickens. The family never ate asparagus. Nearby were several cattley guava bushes providing guavas for the sweet rosy jelly we made each year. There were three peach trees [that] bore enough peaches for ice cream in the summer and for lots of canning. In one corner of the garden was a huge century plant and in another a very large cactus with arms like you see in the desert, I can't imagine where it came from! Along

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## Vernacular Gardens of Rural Florida...

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the East fence where the gate was there was a wide, long bed of lilies, we called them "Peppermint Lilies" because the flowers had red and white stripes. On each side of the gate were great bunches of pampas grass, the plumes were used for winter bouquets in the house. Along the garden paths that meandered on and on you passed Bridal Wreath Spirea, Blue Hydrangeas, Oak Leaf Hydrangeas, and a cluster of Umbrella Plant [*Cyperus alternifolius*], which had been brought down from South Carolina. Blue Plumbago thrived in a bright, sunny area and a huge Crape Myrtle with pink blossoms and a taffy colored slick, twisted trunk. There were several coontie and sagos along the path and Mock Orange and Carolina Yellow Jasmine were the



Blitch  
front  
porch  
—swept  
yard.

photo courtesy of Riley Blitch

first blossoms in the spring, the ground turning gold as the blossoms fell. Coming back toward the gate and passing the big holly tree you came upon the roses. Some old named varieties I can recall were Marchel Niel ['Maréchal Niel', 1864], Fran Karl Druski ['Frau Karl Druschki', 1901], Louis Phillippe ['Louis Phillippe', 1834], and 'American Beauty' [1886]. A single Cherokee Rose [*Rosa laevigata*] clambered over a large stump of an old tree. For perfume in that garden there were cape jasmine [*Gardenia jasminoides*], honeysuckle [*Lonicera japonica*], Confederate jasmine [*Trachelospermum jasminoides*], and banana shrub [*Michelia figo*]. No mulch was used in this garden and just like the yard around the house, it was kept brushed down to the

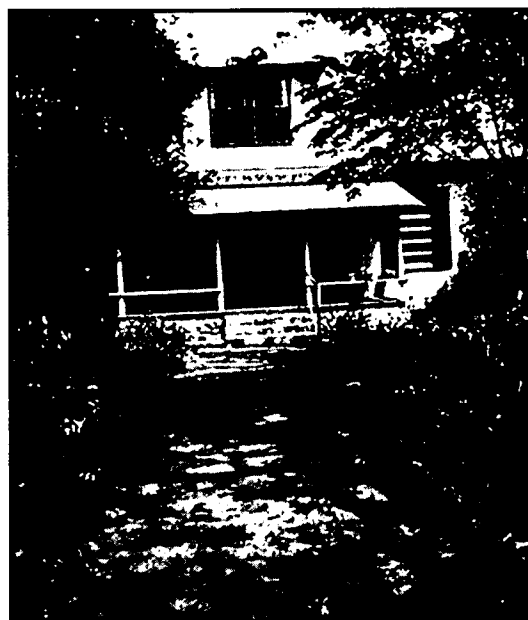


bare white sand. We gathered flowers from this garden every day to put in every room of the house."

Just behind the flower garden that my mother just described was a fenced vegetable

garden that was planted every year precisely on February 15th. Adjacent to it was a large pear orchard from which crates of pears were harvested and shipped out from the T&J (Tampa/Jacksonville) Railroad station in Emathla, a few miles East of the farm.

Instead of a separate ornamental garden, the Dudley home still has its plantings surrounding the main house. As you walk through the picket gate and on toward the front door, you find a network of swept sand paths all neatly lined with fieldstones. The large plants in the front garden include five or six very old camellias, a sago with six or seven feet of clear trunk, a multi-trunked Rose-of-Sharon (*Alibea rosea*), and a saucer magnolia (*Magnolia soulangeana*). The trees include a Southern Magnolia (*M. grandiflora*), several



Dudley  
house—  
path  
to  
front door.

photo courtesy of Riley Blitch

red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*), and two ancient crape myrtles, all of which were probably planted about the same time the house was built. Next to the front porch is a tree of great importance, the Florida State Champion red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*), with a caliper of about nine inches and standing as tall as the two story Dudley house. In the beds formed by the fieldstone is an extensive collection of antique roses including the chestnut rose (*Rosa roxburghii*) and many others. There is also a wide variety of lilies and bulbs, including crocosmia, leucojum, a beautiful white lily called "Bridesmaid's Lily" by the Dudley family and many others still being identified. The porch column has a Glory Bower vine (*Clerodendrum sp.*) growing

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# SGHS Annual Meeting in the "Other Florida"

**T**he 1997 annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, held March 21st-23rd, gave members the opportunity to take an in-depth look at a truly unique region of the South. Despite a registration of over one-hundred forty, conference organizers, under the watchful coordination of Weej Broderson, provided an intimate and well-designed experience for each of us. Centered at Goodwood Plantation, in Tallahassee, the program launched out to explore the Red Hills Region in the northern most tier of counties in the Florida Panhandle and into Georgia. Our speakers — University of Florida's professor of Landscape Architecture Kay Williams on "Early Gardening in 'The Other Florida'" and Kevin McGorty, director of Red



*The central atrium at Millpond.*

Hills Conservation Program for Tall Timbers Research Station — and our tour guides provided insights into the evolution of nineteenth-century plantations into early twentieth-century hunting lodges and eventually to nature preserves and historic sites. Privately owned Box Hall and Horseshoe Plantations revealed the layers of design and decades of landscaping that have shaped the current aspect of these properties. A rare treat for SGHS members was the chance to see Millpond Plantation, with its turn-of-the-century Arts and Crafts style home, central atrium filled with tropical species and its romantic, aging garden areas.

Visits to public sites were nicely interspersed with the plantation pilgrimage. The Friday evening reception/dinner at the Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science on Lake Bradford was particularly delightful during the off-hours when conference participants could wander through the wildlife areas without hordes of noisy school groups. The museum



also features several historic buildings that look at the development of this region during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These farmsteads reflected the type of vernacular gardening described in the following morning's presentation by Riley Blich (see page 1).

The story of Goodwood itself, and its road to restoration today, is of particular importance to the focus of this Southern Garden History Society meeting.



*Reception at Goodwood. (L to R) Diane and Bill Welch, Steve Weaton, and Bill Griffin.*

Larry Paarlberg, director of the Margaret E. Wilson Foundation, which oversees Goodwood, reviewed the property's history and the current restoration efforts underway. Goodwood went through many transitions after the tragic death of its builder, Hardy Croom, and the subsequent legal complications in settling the estate. The next owner, Arvah Hopkins, and his family made Goodwood into a popular center for Tallahassee society from the 1850s through the 1880s. After a succession of other owners, the property was eventually purchased by Senator William C. Hodges in 1925. He and his wife, Margaret Wilson Hodges, entertained the socially and politically elite in a fashion unequaled since the Civil War. Mrs. Hodges remarried after the senator died in 1840 and her new husband, Thomas Hood, began planning for the restoration of Goodwood as a public museum after Margaret's death in 1978. He established the Margaret E. Wilson Foundation in memory of his wife, which assumed stewardship of Goodwood upon Tom Hood's death in 1990.



*Goodwood Plantation.*

Since that time the Foundation has undertaken the painstaking process of recording and eventually restoring the structure. Funding for the total restoration effort is limited and the Foundation has narrowed its

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# SGHS Annual Meeting

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focus toward research, fundraising, essential repairs and maintenance, as well as toward restoration of the grounds. It was decided to restore the landscape to its late 1910s and early 1920s appearance during the Hodges period.

Great care has been taken to assure that the grounds restoration retains the atmosphere of a rural, country estate of the 1920s rather than that of a formal garden. It is the goal of the Foundation to illustrate Goodwood's various owners' responses to the North Florida climate, their interests in farming, garden design, and horticulture, and their concern for hospitality and presentation. This restoration program was originally coordinated by Weej Broderson, an advanced Master Gardener with a deep interest in historic preservation. She used Goodwood as the basis for her Masters thesis on preserving southern gardens. In 1995 the Wilson Foundation moved the restoration to the next professional level by hiring a director of horticulture, Nancy White, who spoke further on the development of the Goodwood landscape at the meeting.

Conference participants toured Goodwood on Friday afternoon and returned Saturday evening for a marvelous buffet dinner. The after-dinner speaker, writer Bailey White, read her short story, "A Garden," which describes the quirky transformations and reincarnations of the magical garden grotto at her family homesite. Ms. White's stories, mixing poignant memory and humor in a distinctly Southern fashion, are published in such popular books as *Mama Makes*



Member exploring the garden at Millpond.



photo by P.C. Newcomb

Goodwood Plantation hosts Weej Broderson and Linda M. Williams.

*Up Her Mind*, and are probably best known as commentary for National Public Radio's "All Things Considered."

Sunday's events shifted the geography and focus of the conference, highlighting adherence to a garden's mission and philosophical approach. The speakers took us South of Tallahassee to Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales with a lecture by the garden's director of horticulture, David Price, on "Essence and Intent of a Garden Design: Keeping the Faith." Robert Bowden, director of the Harry P. Leu Gardens in Orlando, completed the morning by speaking on "A Public Garden and the Community Outreach."

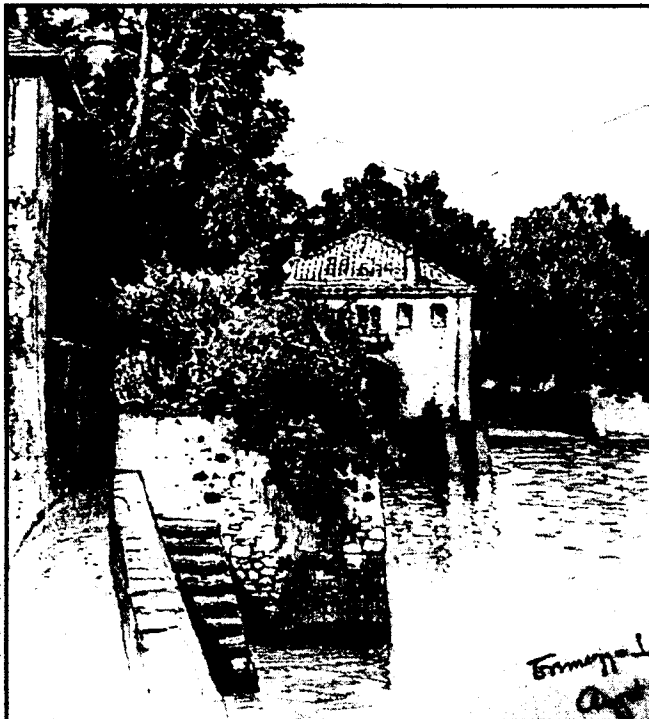
The meeting's delightful grand finale took participants to another of the regions vast hunting plantations, Welaunee, and then to Wakulla Springs State Park for a boat ride on the river. The hardwood hammocks and swamps that form the park feature large stands of native pine, live oak, maples, magnolia, and cypress. A trip down the Wakulla offered an extraordinary opportunity to see virgin native plants along with animal and bird life in an unrestricted environment. Thanks to this exceptional meeting, Southern Garden History Society members will no longer think of Florida merely as an exploited vacationland and high-density retirement Mecca. Our memories of the "Other Florida" will forever flavor our image. — [pcn] +

photo by P.C. Newcomb

# Bayly Museum Exhibit "Shaping the Landscape Image, 1865-1910: John Douglas Woodward"

by *Davyd Foard Hood*, Isinglass, Vale, North Carolina

For two months this spring, a little-publicized show devoted to the landscape artist John Douglas Woodward was on exhibit at the Bayly Art Museum at the University of Virginia. "Shaping the Landscape Image, 1865-1910: John Douglas Woodward" provided a remarkable and fascinating perspective on the life and career of this Southern-born and New York-trained graphic artist and illustrator. Woodward achieved a high reputation and international fame in the last decades of the nineteenth century for his depictions of landscapes and scenery in both his native South and other parts of the United States, where he was sent on assignment, as well as for his views of Europe and Palestine.



Tremezzo, Lake Como, August 26, 1898. Pencil on paper. Collection Shrine Mont. Diocese of Virginia.



Cocoa-Nut Trees at Key West, Florida, in *Hearth and Home*, August 12, 1871. Wood engraving by Meeder-Chubb.

Courtesy American Antiquarian Society.

John Douglas Woodward (1846-1924) was born in Middlesex County, Virginia; however his childhood and youth were spent in Covington, Kentucky, where his father moved the family and established a hardware business. Situated on the south side of the Ohio River below Cincinnati and at the edge of the Confederacy, the Woodward family became caught up in the misery of conflicting loyalties during the Civil War and temporarily removed to Canada. At the War's end, the family returned to the South and to Richmond. Meanwhile, John Douglas Woodward had begun study at the National Academy of Design in New York in 1863-64, and was a student at the Cooper Union in 1866. The following year his painting, "View in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia," was exhibited at the National Academy of Design. In 1871 Woodward undertook a commission to travel in the South and produce a series of views for the weekly magazine *Hearth and Home*. His polished, evocative view of "Cocoa-Nut Trees at Key West, Florida" appeared on the cover of the magazine on 13 August of that year. In June 1872 his sketch of the Natural Bridge in Virginia was published on the cover of *Hearth and Home*.

This initial professional work quickly brought Woodward to the attention of other publishers in New York. In 1872 he began working for D. Appleton and Company producing landscape and scenery views for

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## *Shaping the Landscape*

### *Image...*

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its lavish Picturesque America series. Woodward soon became one of the firm's most accomplished artists, and in the mid 1870s Appleton sent him and other illustrators to Europe to produce Barbizon-influenced views for its new publication, Picturesque Europe. At the end of the decade Woodward was in the East preparing sketches for another Appleton work, Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt, published from 1881 to 1883. Selections from this later group of works

formed a major part of the Charlottesville show, providing lovely, poignant images of a land now scarred by religious and ethnic wars.

During the remainder of the 1880s and 1890s Woodward produced work for various magazines and publishers, traveling in

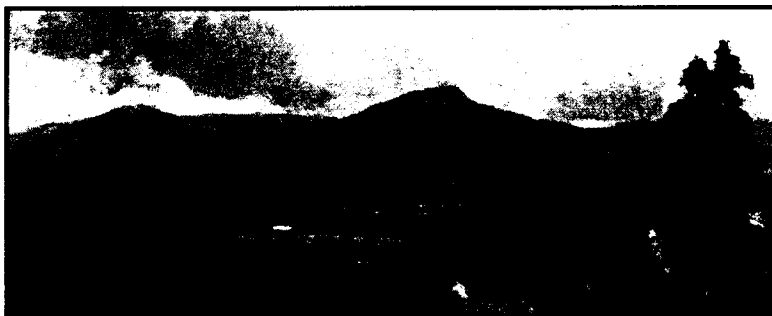
this country and abroad; however, his work for Appleton would remain the principal achievement of an important career.

In 1895, at the death of his father, Woodward came into a sizable inheritance, one sufficient to enable him and his wife to travel and live free of financial worry. In retrospect, this ease appears to have undercut the drive that had encouraged his earlier,

prolific output. In 1905 he and Mrs. Woodward settled into a newly-built house and studio at New Rochelle, New York, where he lived and painted until his death in 1924. In 1940 many of Woodward's sketches, drawings, engravings, and paintings were put on exhibit at Shrine Mont, an Episcopal conference center in Virginia established by his nephew. The center's Art Hall was erected by Mrs. Woodward, who donated all of her husband's surviving works to Shrine Mont.

The handsome exhibition catalogue of the same name, written by Sue Rainey and Roger B. Stein, who served as curators for the show, is available from the Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 22903-2427, for \$25, plus \$3 postage. To order a

copy, please call Suzanne Foley at (804) 924-3592. A color reproduction of Woodward's painting of Luray, Virginia, executed in July 1870, appears on the cover of the paper bound catalogue. With stocks of wheat in the foreground and the Appalachian Mountains in the background, Woodward's agrarian scene records an important, beautiful landscape of the American South. +



*Cover illustration of Shaping the Landscape Image, 1865-1910.*

## *Vernacular Gardens of Rural Florida...*

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up it and the porch is lined with pots of geraniums and begonias. Also in the front garden is a very interesting structure that Mrs. Dudley called a "flower pit." It is a small stone building about six by eight feet, built over a four foot deep pit with shelves around the inside. The South wall is open so that one can step down inside and put plants on the shelves. A tarp is used to pull over the opening. This ingenious structure was designed by the Dudleys to keep their prized potted plants alive during hard freezes.

As you walk on around the house you pass a fringe tree, several figs, a large planting of hydrangea, wisteria, datura, crinum, and elephant ears. The older

trees are camphor, pecan, and cedar, with some much younger cypress, horse chestnut, and dogwood mixed in.

The gardens of these and other such homesteads began not so much as extensions of the living area, as they are today, but more as places to grow fruits and vegetables for the table and flowers for cutting. They expanded as space was needed to add to the collection and were seldom designed with a final result in mind.

With ongoing research, such as the one at Dudley Farm, we can be assured that the buildings and gardens of future restored properties of this type will be done with the authenticity we all desire. +



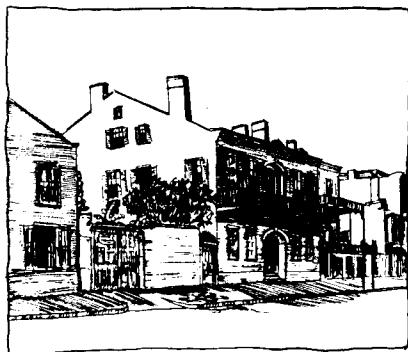
## In Print

### ***A New Orleans Courtyard, 1830-1860:***

***The Hermann-Grima House.*** Shingo Dameron Manard, editor. Published by the Christian Woman's Exchange, New Orleans, LA. 1996. paperback, 57 pp. LC # 96-72021

**T**his monograph is a compilation of essays recounting the research and methodology used in replanting the courtyard of the Hermann-Grima Historic House reflecting the 1830-1860 period in the Vieux Carré of New Orleans. Documentation for the plants selected and for garden design of the period is included in the essays and the citations listed by the authors.

*Hermann-Grima House—Pen and ink drawing by Samuel Wilson, Jr., 1950.*



An important primary resource for garden design is the unique watercolor drawings of the city's properties for sale at auction in the nineteenth century, which are located in the New Orleans Notarial Archives. An extensive bibliography and the citations used by the essayist will be helpful for researchers and for garden restorations in the Deep South.

In 1831 Samuel Hermann, a German-born merchant who made his fortune in the New World, and his Louisiana-born wife tore down their older home in New Orleans' French Quarter and commissioned a Virginia-born, architect-builder to design a high-style brick mansion, today known as the Hermann-Grima House. This complex, which was acquired by the Christian Woman's Exchange in 1924, included the main house,



courtyard, three-story kitchen building, stable, and patio at 820 Saint Louis Street. For over twenty years, since the property ceased to be used to house needy, working women, the Board and members of the Christian Woman's Exchange

in New Orleans have devoted themselves to the meticulous restoration of their architecturally significant property—a National Historic Landmark.

***A New Orleans Courtyard, 1830-1860: The Hermann-Grima House,*** edited by SGHS board member Shingo Dameron Manard, documents one aspect of the property's restoration and captures the spirit, care and devotion, as well as discipline, of these remarkable women. Beginning in the 1970s, the re-creation of this lush, formal Creole courtyard ranks as one of the earliest of such historical landscaping projects. This well-illustrated volume's essays, all by involved contributors, provide a lucid narrative of this long-range project. Perhaps more importantly, ***A New Orleans Courtyard*** should serve as an inspiration toward scholarly research for other groups and individuals fortunate enough to have custody of significant sites.

—Betsy Crusel, New Orleans, Louisiana

***The Influence of Women on the Southern Landscape — The proceedings of the tenth conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes.*** Cornelia B. Wright, editor. Old Salem, Inc. Winston-Salem, NC. 1997. paperback, 213 pp. ISBN 1-879704-03-X

**T**he fifteen essays and two panel summaries in this volume bring together for the first time research on the relationship of women to the landscape of the South. These essays span centuries and cultures—from prehistoric women and horticulture, the backcountry housewife's use of plants, and the life of the plantation mistress, to spirituality and memory in the gardens of modern-day African-American women. They explore the roles women have played as garden writers, painters, photographers, and landscape architects, and look at

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## Of Note

### ***Call for Papers: Journal of the New England Garden History Society***

Proposals are now being accepted for Volume 6, the 1998 issue of the *Journal of the New England Garden History Society*. Subjects are not restricted to New England and can include all facets and time periods of the field of North American landscape history: gardens and parks, horticultural practice, landscape literature, profiles of individual landscape architects, garden designers or significant patrons, landscape preservation, or any interdisciplinary topic. Proposals should be one page and should include an indication of illustrations and a brief biography of the author. Deadline for proposals is September 1st, 1997. Send to Editor, Journal of the New England Garden History Society, Massachusetts Horticultural Society, 330 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA 02115. Fax: (617) 262-8780. ♦

*In Print...*  
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how Southern women today combine their feeling for landscape with their commitment to education, career, and the environment. Further essays address the role of garden clubs in publishing Southern garden history in the early twentieth century, late nineteenth-century plants for flower gardening, and flowers in Eudora Welty's garden and prose. Published by the conference committee, Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, Old Salem, Inc. For more information, call (910) 721-7313. To order, contact: Old Salem, Inc., Box 10400, Winston-Salem, NC 7108, attn.: Mail Order. Telephone orders, 8 am - 5 pm EST, at (800) 822-5151. Cost is \$12.95 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling.

***The Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg.*** M. Kent Brinkley and Gordon W. Chappell. Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1996. ISBN 0-87935-158-6 (hc). Hard cover. \$29.95

***Williamsburg's Glorious Gardens.*** Photography by Roger Foley. Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1996. ISBN 0-87935-160-8. Hard cover. \$19.95

**T**he Colonial Revival-style gardens making up the landscape of the Colonial Williamsburg Restoration are surely the best known of all those created during the twentieth-century historic preservation projects in this country. If there is any possible argument on that point, there can be none on the broad influence these highly romantic plantings have had on residential design in the sixty-odd years since they first began to be created, and particularly in the early decades of that period. First represented as authentically restored gardens of the Colonial Period, and believed by a large public to be such, they were increasingly understood and appreciated by garden historians as idealized representations of a dream-like past. They were part of a mythical landscape in which residents of modest tenements were endowed with handsome gardens that wealthy planters of the real past could well look upon with envy and delight. In recent years garden archaeology at a series of seventeenth and eighteenth-century sites in Virginia and elsewhere has corrected and enhanced our understanding of colonial gardening practices and design. We have come to look upon the gardens of Williamsburg with sharper eyes, to judge them on different terms, and to be less critical of those lavish landscapes, which often bore little resemblance to the specific gardening history of their site. They

remain remarkable creations of the Colonial Revival and contemporaries of the extraordinary Colonial and Georgian Revival houses and estates of the 1920s and 1930s. Unlike so many of those

private houses and gardens, victims to changed incomes and circumstances, these gardens have been handsomely and expensively maintained, illusions of an earlier age and yet products of our own.

In 1996, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation published two books on its gardens that appeal to the differing interests of visitors; each serves its constituency well. ***Williamsburg's Glorious Gardens*** is an album of color photographs by Washington-based photographer Roger Foley; his views of plants, borders, gardens, and landscapes show the restored area in its springtime prime, rich in color, effect, and appeal. His images convey the special qualities of individual plants while also capturing the richness of small garden scenes or the larger views across borders, fences, and roofs. Foley records garden pictures that were planned by designers and generations of gardeners, and other vignettes in which he, as a cameraman, uses plants to compose images that have a beauty and appeal separate from their horticultural interest.

The ***Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg***, larger in size, longer in length, and altogether different in approach and intent, presents historical and photographic sketches of twenty gardens in the town center. This book is the work of two men who have long held responsibility for the maintenance of the gardens at Colonial Williamsburg and reflects years of association with the restoration and steward's nurturing of place. Gordon W. Chappell, director of landscape and facilities services, and M. Kent Brinkley, staff landscape architect, came to work at Williamsburg in 1983 and 1985, respectively. They share their knowledge and appreciation of these twenty major gardens under their care. In a few short introductory pages they provide a brief overview of the garden restoration work that began with Arthur Shurcliff, whose New England background dominated the 1930s appearance of the gardens. Shurcliff was succeeded by Alden Hopkins whose work here and elsewhere in Virginia is gaining a wider recognition.

Accounts of the site history and comments on owners and/or occupants introduce each of the twenty garden sketches, and these are followed by a brief review of what is known of the gardening history of each place. A description of the existing garden concludes these paragraphs. The text is supplemented with color photographs, mostly by David M. Doody, and mostly shot in the spring when tulips, other bulbs, and flowering shrubs are dominant. One of the chief merits of the book is a series of twenty site plans that

*continued on page 11...*

## Members in the News



An article in the May/June issue of *The American Gardener* titled "Old as the Hills, Tough as a Boot" mentions SGHS members **Charles Walker, Jr., Bill Welch, Mike Shoup, and Liz Druitt**. The article discusses the **Texas Rose Rustlers** and their work in searching out and saving old roses. Liz Druitt's book, *Organic Rose Garden*, is also noted in another article in this issue. SGHS members **Tovah Martin** and **Arthur O. Tucker** wrote book reviews for this issue, and Peter Loewer's new book, *Tboreau's Garden* is reviewed.

"Belle of Nashville," a four-page, color-illustrated article in the Garden Design section of May/June *Southern Accents* discusses the five-acre estate of SGHS members **Walter** and **Margaret Ann Robinson** in the Belle Meade section of Nashville, Tennessee. **Ben Page, Jr.**, Nashville landscape architect has designed "an intimate series of gardens just outside his clients' door," for family use and for entertaining. The article comments on "Page's devoted interest in garden history, in particular, the tradition of Southern garden-making." (Ben Page is immediate past president of SGHS).

SGHS Board member **Gordon W. Chappell** will speak on "Plants in Colonial Gardens" on the program for the Southern Garden Symposium and Workshops October 3rd-4th in St. Francisville, Louisiana. Friday lunch at the symposium will be served in the gardens of Afton Villa, with the owners, SGHS members **Mr. and Mrs. Morrell F. Trimble**, as hosts.

SGHS president **Dr. William C. Welch** was part of a panel to advise on how to collect old roses for "Heirloom Roses, Magnificent Obsession," a program at the Pequot Library, Southport, Connecticut, June 17th.

At the May 6th meeting of the New Orleans Old Garden Rose Society, **Jim Cothran**, author of *Gardens of Historic Charleston*, spoke on "Historic Plants of the Old South," including recent research he has done on heirloom plants in New Orleans, Louisiana.

*Magnolia* editor **Peggy C. Newcomb** spoke at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC on June 2nd. Her presentation, part of the "A-Peale-ing" lecture series held in conjunction with the exhibition on *The Peale Family: Creation of an American Legacy*, discussed the botanical images in the Peale portraits and still lifes.

Colonial Williamsburg Landscape Architect **M. Kent Brinkley** spoke at Gunston Hall Plantation along with art historian **May Brawley Hill**. The June 12th conference, "Everything Old is New Again," focused on the Colonial Revival garden. Ms. Hill's book, *Grandmother's Garden: The Old-Fashioned American Garden 1865-1915*, and Kent Brinkley's new book, *The Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg*, were highlighted at the symposium.

The garden of Atlanta landscape architect **William T. Smith** has received much media attention this spring. An article in April *Southern Living* by **Linda C. Askey** features "A Woodland in Bloom," pictured under a canopy of trees. The Garden Book of White Flower Farm, Southern Edition for Fall 1997, pictures Bill's woodland garden noting the "varied and delightful effects that can be enjoyed in southern gardens with a little planning. Well done, Mr. Smith!" Finally, the PBS television program, *Victory Garden*, recently featured an interview with Bill. +

## In Print...continued from page 10

show the complete grounds of each place and locate buildings, outbuildings, and other features, and major trees, shrubs, and plantings. These photographs and plans are invaluable records of the gardens as they exist in the mid 1990s, and they bear interesting comparison with views of the gardens published in *The Architectural Record* in December 1935. (Incidentally, these plans are invaluable, as well, to those of us who make innumerable slides of gardens and afterward

find ourselves with views and plants we cannot remember to their place. Now, for Williamsburg garden views, there will be no such difficulty.) Each garden entry in the catalogue also features a plant list for the trees, shrubs, and vines, which comprise gardens that have intrigued and pleased visitors to Williamsburg in every season. +

— *Davyd Foard Hood*,  
Isinglass, Vale, North Carolina

## Annual Membership Dues

Dues Notice. 1997-98 dues notices were mailed to the society membership in early June, and responses are coming in well. Any members who have questions about their dues may call the society's membership secretary, **Kitty Walker** in the Old Salem office, (910) 721-7328.

Benefactor	\$250	Joint/husband-wife	\$30
Patron	\$150	Individual	\$20
Sustainer	\$75	Student	\$5
Institution/Business	\$30		
Life membership	\$1,000		

The membership year runs from May 1st to April 30th. Members joining after January 1st will be credited for the coming year beginning May 1st. Write to membership secretary at: Southern Garden History Society, Old Salem, Inc., Drawer F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27108. phone (910) 721-7328.

# Spring Board Meeting Report

by *Flora Ann Bynum*, secretary-treasurer



The spring meeting of the society's board of directors met at Goodwood Plantation on March 21st, immediately preceeding the annual meeting in Tallahassee. President William C. Welch presided. The date for the upcoming, sixteenth-annual meeting was set for May 29th - 31st, 1998 in Asheville, North Carolina, with the Biltmore Estate as host. William E. Alexander, landscape curator of Biltmore Estate, will serve as chair of the Asheville meeting.

The date for the seventeenth-annual meeting was set for March 26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, 1999 in Houston, Texas, with board member Mrs. Theodore J. Haywood (Nancy) as chair.

Gordon Chappell, director of landscape and facilities for Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Virginia, was elected as a new director at the meeting. Gordon has been an active, long-standing member of SGHS and has played a prominent role in the maintenance and restoration of the gardens at Colonial Williamsburg for many years.

Mrs. Cornelius C. Crusel, Jr. (Betsy) of New Orleans, Louisiana, and Mrs. Robert H. Gunn (Louise) of Atlanta,

Georgia, were re-elected to second terms. It was reported that Lawrence Henry of Brookgreen Gardens, South Carolina, felt he could not accept a second term at the present time. Mrs. William W. Griffin (Florence) of Atlanta was re-elected to the board after having been off for a year under the board rotation system. Society president Bill Welch thanked for their years of service the three members retiring for the board: Mrs. E. Dameron Manard (Shingo), Mrs. John C. Symmes (Jane), and Suzanne L. Turner.

Vice-president Peter Hatch continued his appeal for a Plant List for the South. There have been few responses to date, and none from the pre-1820s period. Members are encouraged to contact Peter (804) 984-9836 or Flora Ann Bynum (910) 724-3125 with questions or responses. ♦



photo by P.C. Newcomb

SGHS Board members (L to R): Elizabeth Boggess, Jane Symmes, James Barganier, Ed Givhan, Nancy Haywood, and Betsy Crusel.

Dr. William C. Welch, *President*  
Peter J. Hatch, *Vice-President*  
Flora Ann Bynum, *Secretary-Treasurer*  
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*Deadline for the submission of articles for the summer issue of Magnolia is August 1<sup>st</sup>.*

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