



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

Magnolia

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A Gravegarden of Old Garden Roses— Lynchburg's Old City Cemetery

By Jane Baber White, Lynchburg, Virginia
Director and Restoration Chair of the Old City Cemetery

"Come into my garden. I want my roses to meet you." With these words, he breathlessly led me into his small backyard and quickly gathered about fifteen precious blooms from his roses. Clutching them in his gnarled, aging hands, he presented them to me with pride and expectation. It was an amazing and tender moment—a simple gift of his life and his love of roses.

That was about twenty years ago, but I remember it as well as yesterday. His name was Carl Cato. He was a humble man who had become so engrossed in the admiration of his roses and the pursuit of more and more "lost" varieties that he became known locally as an eccentric.

That passion, however, led him to join with other like-minded rosarians—including Edith Schurr, Lily Shohan, and Miriam Wilkins—to establish The Heritage Roses Group in 1975. That organization has grown to international proportions and has been the catalyst for saving these beautiful, fragrant historic treasures.

Carl Cato is gone now, but his influence certainly lives on. I like to think he'd be happy with the antique roses that now have come to symbolize the rehabilitation of the Old City Cemetery in Lynchburg, Virginia. Four struggling roses, which had survived on family plots for



'Katharina Zeimet' was one of only four roses growing in the Cemetery before rehabilitation began.

generations, were the foundation of a collection that now numbers about two hundred and draws thousands to a once-neglected cemetery.

In 1985, soon after meeting him, I asked Carl to come with me to the Confederate Section of the Old City Cemetery. I am a Landscape Designer and had enjoyed rescuing several other historic gardens in Lynchburg, but really didn't have much expertise in the field of antique roses. I needed help.

There was an 800-foot old brick wall, about five feet tall, along one side of the Confederate Section of the cemetery. It was barely visible in places and mostly engulfed in privet, honeysuckle, and poison ivy.¹ An occasional bit of rose foliage poked itself through the growth along the wall. The question I posed to Carl Cato was, "Is there anything here worth saving?"

After walking the length of the wall, shaking his head in sadness, he declared, "There's nothing here but rootstock." Pausing, he added, "Why don't we start over and replant a history of roses!" A year later that's what we had done.

The Buildings and Grounds Department of the City of Lynchburg, which had been maintaining the cemetery, cleared the wall of its growth. Carl Cato made the selection of roses to be included in the "history" and I planted them. Pickering Nurseries in Ontario, Canada, provided about two-thirds of the plants as a gift; the others came one or two at a time from rose sources around the United States. A few were rooted for us by Mr. Cato's connections around the country;

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CALENDAR

October 7-8, 2005. The 18th Annual "Southern Garden Symposium & Workshops," in St. Francisville, La. Speakers include SGHS member Denise W. Adams. Tours include the gardens at historic Afton Villa and Rosedown. For registration information call Lucie Cassity, (225) 635-3738.

October 13-15, 2005. Southeast Regional AABGA Conference, "Plant Conservation in the Southeast—Sharing Resources to Protect our Regional Flora." The meeting is hosted by the State Botanical Garden of Georgia in cooperation with the Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance. For addition information, please call (706) 654-6132 or e-mail: garden@uga.edu.

October 21-23, 2005. The Charleston Garden Festival at Middleton Place sponsored by the Charleston Horticultural Society and Middleton Place Foundation in Charleston, South Carolina. The outdoor festival at the beautiful setting of Middleton Place will feature such notable speakers as Charles Price and Glenn Withey, Page Dickey, Bobby Ward, Jason Powell and Linda Copeland. There will also be exhibit gardens, quality vendors, demonstrations, horticultural tours and a special lunch and tea with local celebrities in the "oldest landscaped gardens in America." More information and tickets are available by calling (843) 723-9293 or on-line at www.charlestongardenfestival.com.

October 28-29, 2005. Annual Oktober Gartenfest at Winedale, Texas. This year's theme is "A Thing of Beauty is a Joy Forever." Speakers include Jason Powell of Petals of the Past Nursery in Jemison, Alabama on herbs and fruiting plants; Chris Weisinger on heirloom bulbs; Charlotte Meyer and Russell Miller of Round Top, Texas on the restoration of a ca. 1920s Texas prairie-style home and garden; and Aubrey King of King's Nursery, Tenaha, Texas on new garden plants. There will be tours of Fragilee, country home of Diane and Bill Welch, the herb gardens at nearby Festival Hill, Burden garden, and The Outpost at Cedar Hill. For more information, visit the Web site: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden>, or call (979) 845-7344.

April 7-9, 2006. "From Prairies to Gardens," *Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, in Fort Worth, Texas.* Mark your calendars for next year's annual gathering. This will be an extraordinary setting for Society members. The city is located at the forks of the Trinity River among rolling hills that over time have absorbed the surrounding prairies. Originally, an army outpost, Fort Worth has become a commercial and cultural center for all of North Texas. The main sources that have fueled and will continue to fuel the growth of the area are cattle and oil. Along with the cultural backgrounds from the native settlers, many from other southern states have brought their influence and history. Today Fort Worth is a city where old coincides with new, with a flourishing historic downtown, including the Stockyards. Both areas have an array of restaurants, shops, and art galleries sure to please even the most discerning tourist. Diverse neighborhoods and a cultural district with world famous museums surround these historic areas. The meeting will expose the members to the native environment as well as several historic and private gardens that are influential to this area. We will visit the First Botanic Gardens in Texas and browse through their herbarium and library. Meeting coordinator Susan Urshel will be giving us further updates in the coming months.

Two current British Exhibitions of Note--
June 15 to September 4, 2005. "A Picture of Britain" at the Tate Britain, Millbank, SW1 (020-7887 8000; www.tate.org.uk)

May 2 to September 11, 2005. "A New Flowering: 1000 Years of Botanical Art," Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. A fully illustrated catalog by Dr. Shirley Sherwood accompanies the exhibition. For information, visit the Web site at: www.ashmol.ox.ac.uk



A Gravegarden of Old Garden Roses...

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some were collected from abandoned inner city neighborhoods. One, a rambler named "Gardenia", was within 5 feet of an approaching bulldozer when we arrived and rescued a piece of it. The list of the original 57 roses comprising the historic collection follows below.

The roses did amazingly well, but after a year of hauling gallon jugs of water, we decided we needed a drip irrigation system. After convincing appropriate authorities of the need, Mr. Cato, a former engineer, designed the system utilizing quart jars and different sizes and lengths of tubing. I was the laborer, again!

The roses continued to thrive for another year or two, until typical rose growers' frustrations set in: the roots of the nearby sugar maple trees discovered the drip irrigation. Then, the nearby wild cherry trees had a cyclical bumper crop of tent caterpillars which marched *en masse* over the brick wall and tombstones and devoured the tender growth of the roses. Then the neighboring herds of deer, which were increasing

in alarming numbers when a local leash law was enacted, discovered the buds and blossoms. One year, just as the public was discovering the annual profusion of bloom in the old graveyard, it became necessary to post a disclaimer of sorts explaining, "The caterpillars and deer are winning the 'War of the Roses.'" But those tenacious old garden roses persevered.

During the next ten years, as the roses were going through their spurts of challenges and triumphs, so was the Old City Cemetery itself.

The Southern Memorial Association (SMA) was the organization, in this case a group of only four ladies including myself, who had inherited the care of the Confederate Section of the Old City Cemetery from various predecessors dating back to the year 1866. For generations this organization had worked alone, and then with the City, to oversee and beautify the portion of the 26-acre graveyard where 2200 Confederate soldiers were buried. Through the years, they had planted the many sugar maple trees and American Boxwood hedge on the

boundary line to enclose the area from the rest of the rather neglected cemetery. They built an obelisk monument to the fourteen states represented by the soldiers buried there, and later a handsome entrance arch, a classic Speakers' Belvedere, and a Veterans' Bench. Fifty years after the Civil War ended, they completed the enormous task of marking the 2200 individual graves with marble tablets inscribed with each soldier's initials, company, regiment, and state. It was truly because of the work of these dedicated ladies through the years that the Confederate Section of Lynchburg's Old City Cemetery had always been cared for. Even though the bramble patch of rose root stock and privet existing along the brick wall in 1985 was the only unkempt part of the Confederate Section, that particular area did, however, mirror the deplorable conditions that existed throughout the rest of the 190 year-old graveyard.

Then in June 1993, a huge storm, a "wind sheer," struck

the entire city of Lynchburg, doing \$12 million in damage to the area. In the Cemetery, many of the massive sugar maples in the Confederate Section were destroyed, the Speaker's Belvedere toppled, and hundreds of trees in the rest of the cemetery were downed as well. The previous growth along the brick wall where the rose collection now grew was "nothing"

compared to the neglect and destruction throughout the grounds. The much-loved Confederate Section and the much neglected "rest" of the cemetery had been dealt equal blows. It was a heart-wrenching scene. Miraculously, amidst all the destruction, the historic rose collection along the wall was untouched.

As is often the case, some catastrophic event becomes the genesis of something good.

The Southern Memorial Association, after a period of shock and mourning, decided to change its focus from just the Confederate Section to the entire cemetery—all 26 acres: including the fallen gravemarkers, the honeysuckle-engulfed

Plant Name	Date	Plant	Color	Bloom	Growth	Price
Bessie Bunt	1880	Specimen	Shipped	no	3	30
Maryland Beauty	1880	Specimen	Brill. br.	no	3	40
E. Woodhouse	1880	Specimen	White	yes	8	20
Queen Rose (Old Plant Rose)	1880	Rose	Pink	no	4	30
Delaware	1880	Specimen	Pink	no	4	20
Clashing Old Rose	1880	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	20
Old Rose	1880	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	30
Great White's Rose	1880	Specimen	Pink	no	11	40
E. Woodhouse	1880	Specimen	Pink	no	20	60
Queen's Pink Cluster	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	4	50
Yellowish plant (Queen's Rose)	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	8	70
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	80
Yellowish at Hampton	1881	Specimen	Pink	no	20	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	20	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	no	8	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	4	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	4	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	20	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	32	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	32	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	32	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	32	100

Mud-stained worksheets from the planting of the original 57 historic roses along the Old Brick Wall in the Confederate Section

Plant Name	Date	Plant	Color	Bloom	Growth	Price
Bessie Bunt	1880	Specimen	Shipped	no	3	30
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Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	4	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	4	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	4	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	4	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	20	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	32	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	3	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	32	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	32	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	14	100
Queen's Rose	1881	Specimen	Pink	yes	32	100

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A Gravegarden of Old Garden Roses...

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trees, and the expanses of seldom cut grass punctuated by “weed-trees” and approaching engulfing kudzu.

At first the goal was to clean up the fallen trees and debris, but the City of Lynchburg was not available to help because of the enormous devastation elsewhere in the city that, logically, took priority.

We raised a little money, about \$5,000 from the Keep Lynchburg Beautiful Commission, its Forestry Advisory Committee, and some from Hillside Garden Club. In my earlier life as a Landscape Designer and restorer of abandoned gardens, I felt I knew what to do—this was just on a scale 26 times larger than I had ever dealt with before.

Luckily a “yard man” from my past, Frank Coles, lived in a very humble dwelling back to back with the cemetery boundary near the train tracks. Frank had helped me at my home in recent years with gardening projects. He needed the money. So did Jimmy Preston, a younger man with a family who lived in the cemetery neighborhood.

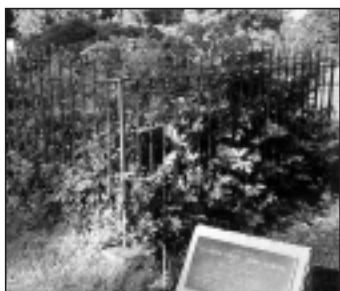
The three of us began the cleanup with power saws, axes, clippers, rakes, shovels, and gloves. Forsaking all other projects, we worked daily for about a year. Occasionally the city would send through a chipper to grind up what we had dragged over to the side of the road.

The story of the cemetery, its restoration—reclaiming—rehabilitation—has so many directions from this point. Each is an entire chapter in itself—each is an important story to be told.

But back to the roses, for they are the symbol, the common thread of love and beauty and persistence—thorns, problems, blooms, bursts of energy, cycles of progress, some losses, some gains, some victories. Through it all, they have been there.

Throughout the rest of the cemetery, four roses had been discovered earlier: a ‘La Marne’ in the Confederate Section hedge, a Katharina Zeimet on the gravemarker of Cora Belle Gilliam, ‘Shailer’s Provence’ on the iron fence around the Harrison-Norvell family plot, and the Banshee on the grave of the great-niece of George Washington: survivors all.

A lovely story concerns the Banshee rose. We had cut the Banshee, entangled in much honeysuckle and privet, to the ground in the innocent effort to uncover a small iron fence enclosure. The surprise revelation was the false crypt of Maria Ball Carter Tucker and her daughter Rosalie, and the



(Before) The Tucker plot was engulfed in jungle growth.



(After) After clearing, Banshee rose re-blooms again 150 years later.

inscription on the crypt which read, “the rose and rosebud scarce half blown...” The Banshee rose, we surmised, had been planted on the grave by the surviving family. Miraculously this living symbol of the mother, the “rose,” and 14-year-old daughter “rosebud scarce half blown”, revived and lived and blooms beautifully even today.

Fallen gravemarkers were set upright again and, though no longer legible, many did have some carving intact. A rose was a common adornment, sometimes “full bloom,” sometimes drooping its head, a symbol of death. Noticing these symbols on the gravemarkers was my first exposure to the beautiful subtleties evident throughout this, or any, old graveyard. There was so much I didn’t know. I didn’t begin to know how much I needed to know to reclaim this graveyard. All I really had going for me was persistence and determination...and the fact that there was so much to be done that it took time. Time was what was needed for me to learn and begin to open my eyes to the bigger picture—the amazing history of the sacred place, and to gather more and more volunteer helpers and private funds.

By now, time had taken its toll on Carl Cato. He had had to put his beloved wife in a nursing home where he took care of her daily for years. Then he himself required care. We talked many times before and during this difficult period. I knew my rose mentor was leaving, and he did, too. In preparing for the move into the nursing care facility, he gave his precious roses, the plants themselves, to me and two other rose friends, Shirley Lynde and Julie Sackett. We transferred them to our own gardens. He went through his rose library and gave me the entire collection of books, papers and early issues of the Heritage Roses Newsletter.²

I remember my utter sense of panic at my inability to remember all the principles and techniques of pruning of the various classes of old roses. Each spring I had prevailed on Mr. Cato to come to the Old Brick Wall Roses and help me train and prune them. We did this for at least three years, but each year seemed to present the same questions...there was so much to learn and he was fading away.

One wonderful occasion helped with the closure that was inevitably approaching. In October 1996, the Horticulture Committee of the Garden Club of Virginia hosted an Annual Horticulture Field Day in Lynchburg with the roses along the Old Brick Wall being the actual hosts. Special guests for the occasion were Garden Club members from across the state, Carl Cato, and our keynote speaker, Washington Post columnist and garden writer, Henry Mitchell. It provided a poignant first time meeting for these two men who had known and admired each other through the years.



Carl Cato (left) and Henry Mitchell enjoyed a first-time meeting before the Garden Club of Virginia Horticulture Field Day in Lynchburg.

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A Gravegarden of Old Garden Roses...

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Another special time was the visit of National Public Radio (NPR) around 1990. I followed as we walked the Rose Wall with Mr. Cato. They sniffed the roses and produced a rose story to the nation that is remembered by an occasional visitor even today.

But to “fast forward” past the sad years of the decline and death of both Carl Cato and his wife, Lionel, in 1996, his rose lessons and legacy do live on in the Old City Cemetery. As the rehabilitation of the cemetery grew into ever expanding areas and its latent history and secrets continued to be discovered, the realization of its horticultural potential continued in many other directions and included the planting of hundreds of trees, a shrub garden, an antique daffodil collection, a watergarden, plantings for butterflies, bees and birds, and medicinal herbs. But roses continue to be the most popular with the ever-increasing numbers of visitors.

Carl Cato's insatiable appetite to collect and know more and more of the old garden roses was contagious and resulted in our planting many more roses throughout the entire cemetery, beginning with the guideline that every tombstone with a rose carved on it should have a rose planted beside it “because whoever was buried there must have liked roses best!” Others were planted to climb into an eyesore of a partially dying tree, or on a plot enclosed by iron fencing, “just as if the family had planted it themselves.”

Horticultural research continued alongside historical research and revealed the origins of that root stock foliage smothered in growth along the Confederate side of the Old Brick Wall. Back in the 1930's, the earlier stalwart generations of Southern Memorial Association ladies had planted alternating “red, white, red, white roses” to provide a profusion of bloom to peak for the annual Memorial Day observance in the Confederate Section. Research revealed that they had planted “Silver Moon” and “Paul's Scarlet Climber.”²³ In 2002, four plants of these two varieties were replanted along the outside of the Old Brick Wall to recreate and retell



A rose was planted beside every tombstone that had a rose carved on it.



'Sombreuil' (1850, climbing tea rose) cascades over the Old Brick Wall.

that rose story.

Because of the lack of maple tree root competition and more sun there, at least 50 additional roses were planted along the “outside” of the old brick wall, some grouped by classes and some at random.

Others have been deliberately grouped informally along the cemetery driveway to be more visible and accessible to the elderly or handicapped visitors who are unable to walk alongside the 800-foot walk.

In March 1999, a special planting of roses was installed quite visibly and permanently near the roadway, beside the Confederate Section, in front of the Pest House Medical Museum. These were Carl Cato's own roses—the same ones he had dispersed to the three Lynchburg rose lady-friends. At the entrance to the planting a plaque has been mounted on a large flagstone:

Some additions to the cemetery roses today are in the form of memorial roses with a memorial plaque, which can be “adopted” by a donor for a fee.

That same adoption process has occurred in reverse, as thousands of the cemetery roses have gone out into Lynchburg and elsewhere each May during the ten successive and successful Antique Rose Festivals since 1995. Held annually during the peak of bloom, usually the second Saturday in May, rooted rose cuttings from the cemetery roses are offered for sale to the hordes of visitors who make their annual pilgrimage to enjoy their show of beauty.



At the Annual Antique Rose Festival where hundreds of rose cuttings from the cemetery are sold.

Memorial Day. Sixty-four years later in 2005, the present SMA decided to reenact that event for Lynchburg Day of Historic Garden Week in Virginia. A dozen cooperative local florists saved “spent” rose petals and, after receiving permission from the FAA, a former City Councilman, who was a private pilot, dumped “millions” of rose petals over the



Text of the plaque at the entrance to the collection of Cato's personal roses.

Another very recent rose event at the cemetery was actually a reenactment of sorts. Research had revealed that back in 1941 those dedicated early SMA ladies had staged a flower drop from an airplane over the Confederate Section to commemorate

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A Gravegarden of Old Garden Roses...

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Art Tucker (left) and Doug Seidel visit the Cemetery roses in May 2005

cemetery (and surrounding neighborhood!) to the delight of the many visitors gathered below.

The care of the more than 200 roses growing in the Cemetery today is the shared responsibility of the two City of Lynchburg groundskeepers and SMA “grave-gardener” volunteers. We want the roses to look their best during that first May bloom, but many continue blooming until late fall. We tolerate their imperfections and admire them for a variety of traits and features. Because we also love our honeybees, butterflies and birds, we do not spray, but use companion planting instead with herbs such as rosemary, tansy, thyme, catnip, garlic and chives—to help ward off bugs and deer.

Not only are the Cato roses alive and well today, but the entire cemetery has experienced a rebirth as an historic park commemorating the lives of the 20,000 citizens buried there, and as an arboretum



A home school group tour of the Pest House Medical Museum and Cemetery roses.

of 19th-century plants. Our 20,000 annual visitors come for many reasons: some are doing genealogical research; some are enjoying our educational tours, programs and special exhibits. Some come to see the four small museums with their docents in period attire. Many simply enjoy the peace and beauty wandering through the tombstones or at the Butterfly and Lotus Pond. Children particularly enjoy the fun of the Alpine goats as they browse the steep perimeter hillsides or learning about the honeybees or compost education. Others may be attending a wedding (surprisingly!) or a funeral. Regardless of what draws visitors to the Cemetery, they all find a peaceful “gravegarden.”

A Virginia Historic Landmark on the National Register of Historic Places, the Old City Cemetery is open daily dawn to dusk and is free. We welcome your visit. Our roses want to meet you!

End Notes

- 1 The rest of the Confederate Section was well-tended.
- 2 This collection of books and papers is now a permanent part of the Tom Burford Horticulture Library in the Cemetery Center of the Old City Cemetery.
- 3 ‘Scarlet Rambler’ was actually listed in the record but was thought to be the common name for ‘Paul’s Scarlet Climber’, so popular during that era.

Old City Cemetery

Also known as the Old Methodist Cemetery

- Established 1806.
- Oldest public cemetery in Virginia, possibly in United States, in continuous use.
- Approximately 20,000 citizens buried there.
- Seventy-five percent of burials are African and Native-American.
- One-third of burials are children under the age of four.
- Confederate Section contains graves of over 2200 Confederate soldiers from 14 states.
- Cemetery is situated on 26 acres.

Museums

- Pest House Medical Museum (building moved into Cemetery, 1986)
- Hearse House and Caretakers Museum (completed, 1999)
- Station House Museum (completed, 2001)
- Chapel and Columbarium (under construction, July 2005)
- Cemetery Center (completed, 1997; addition, 2003), including:
 - 19th-century Mourning Museum
 - Lucy Baber Research Library for Cemetery Records
 - Tom Burford Horticultural Library
 - Office of the Southern Memorial Association

Address: 401 Taylor Street, Lynchburg, VA 24501

Phone: (434) 847-1465 • **Fax:** (434) 856-2004

Email: occ@gravegarden.org

Website: www.gravegarden.org

All images for the *A Gravegarden of Old Garden Roses—Lynchburg’s Old City Cemetery* article are
Courtesy of Southern Memorial Association

The Garden of Anne Spencer “Half my World”

By Rebecca T. Frischkorn & Reuben M. Rainey, Charlottesville, Virginia

“This small garden is half my world
I am nothing to it—when all is said,
I plant the thorn and kiss the rose,
But they will grow when I am dead.”

“Any Wife to Any Husband, A Derived Poem”
Anne Spencer

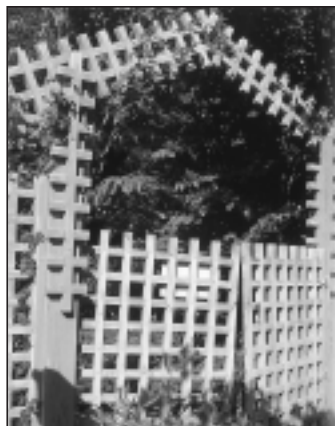


Annie Bethel Scales Spencer in her wedding dress, May 15, 1901

The Anne Spencer house and garden in Lynchburg, Virginia are a rare treasure, a highly personal expression of the creative personality of the Harlem Renaissance poet, Anne Spencer. Edward Spencer built the house in 1901 for his young family, and Anne Spencer lived there her entire life until her death in 1975. It was there that, as co-founder of the local chapter of the NAACP, she welcomed field organizer, James Weldon Johnson, a distinguished poet, editor, and diplomat. Johnson recognized the creative genius of this young wife and mother,

encouraging her to publish her work. From that point forward, Anne Spencer's life was a rich blend of private and public, creative expression and political activism, all driven by her passion, great intellectual curiosity, and what the poet herself described as her “colossal reserve of constructive indignation” towards the segregated society of her time. A wife and mother, librarian and teacher, she always made time to write and to garden, and her creative spirit is preserved in the legacy of her poetry and her garden world.

This is a story that has deserved to be told. In October of 1987 an article was published in the journal of the American Horticultural Society, then called *The American Horticulturist*, entitled “Restoration of a Poet's Garden” by Jane Baber White. White described the exciting and challenging process of restoring the neglected garden, an effort she spearheaded beginning in 1982. With volunteers from a local garden club, a Boy Scout troop, and high school students, she was able to bring the garden back to life. The family of the poet, and



The restored gate to the second garden room, originally constructed of recycled latticework from the former two-story porch.



The restored paths of the third garden room. In the 1930s this area was lushly planted with flowers.

especially her son Chauncey and his wife, whom the family calls “Anne Jr.,” offered inspiration and archival evidence in the form of stories, letters and photographs. White, as a landscape designer, knew the importance of choosing a specific period in the garden's history, so she might develop a concise design that reflected a unified spirit of an ever-changing garden. She chose the 1930s version of the garden since it was well documented and also was one of its most sophisticated expressions. She also recognized the need to create a simplified version of this very high maintenance garden, a garden with a complex herbaceous palette, so that the garden could withstand the toll of frequent visitation and could be maintained primarily with volunteer labor and limited funds. She developed the design for the garden, raised both funds and commitment from volunteers, and embarked upon the rebuilding of the garden. Anne Spencer's garden today, though simplified from the garden shown in photographs from the 1920s and 1930s, is true to the spirit of the original garden and highly evocative of Spencer's creative soul.

As Executive Producers of *GardenStory*, a television series for Public Television on American gardens, we found in the Anne Spencer garden an exciting and significant topic to explore through the medium of film. In May of 2002, working with Rubicon Productions, we filmed a 12-minute pilot in the Anne Spencer garden. Chauncey and Anne Jr. were great supporters and spent hours in conversation with us, sharing stories of how the garden evolved and how it was used. Clearly this garden was both a private sanctuary, a place in which the poet derived inspiration for her poems and where she actually composed her work, and also a more public place for entertaining. Family and friends gathered in the garden, and Anne, who was the librarian of the local African-American high school, entertained groups of school children, using her garden world as a way of teaching young students about the world of nature as well as etiquette and literature. The fame of the garden spread throughout the African-American community, and the Spencers entertained many distinguished visitors, including Langston Hughes, W.E.B.

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The Garden of Anne Spencer...

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View of the fourth garden room, the pool garden, as framed through the grape arbor.

DuBois, Paul Robeson, Marian Anderson, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Our challenge was to capture the complexity of this story, as well as the four-dimensions of the garden world, through film. Without a wealth of archival images, we decided to use a technique called docudrama, and Carol Spencer Read, granddaughter of the poet, joined the production in the role of Anne Spencer. As the poet, she is shown walking in the garden, or sitting at her desk in the small writing studio, “Edankraal,” which Edward had created as a “room of one’s own” for his wife, a place where she could literally be *in the garden* and write her poetry. As host, Rebecca leads the television audience through the restored garden, telling the story of this creative woman and her world in Lynchburg.

We were extremely fortunate. Chauncey Spencer agreed to be filmed for the pilot. Three months later he died at the age of 96. By this time we had all agreed that the story should be told more fully, and we began research for an article about the poet, her garden and her poetry, and the parallels between these two creative worlds. Board members of the Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum, Inc., shared generously of their stories and support. Jane White encouraged us with her recollections, and Anne Jr. continued her husband’s enthusiastic interest in our project. It soon became apparent that there was far more story than any article could hold: we began a book, *Half My World, The Anne Spencer House and Garden, A History and Guide*. We soon discovered that there was a wealth of unarchived materials, in the cellar, in the attic, and in storage at a local office. Whereas the garden itself could tell us a great deal, informing our understanding of the poet’s creative sensibilities simply through the unique expressions of design, an exploration of her garden library told us even more. We found garden magazines from the 1920s that included articles with garden plans and elevations by such noted landscape architects as Loutrell Briggs. Here we could see the source of design ideas which Anne Spencer took and adapted for her own use. With only six years of formal schooling and no training in landscape design, Spencer was clearly a

passionate student, perpetually questing for knowledge. She searched for inspiration and information, but she adapted these in a highly idiosyncratic and original way, using a bold color scheme and recycled architectural fragments from demolished Lynchburg houses. This made her garden unique and engaging.

The process of writing this small book was an adventure. We all agreed that we sensed the spirit of Anne Spencer directing us. Indeed, after a long day of rummaging through boxes of materials, while we were loading our photographic equipment into the car, Carol Spencer Read came running out to the parking lot with a copy of a 1931 garden catalogue. “My grandmother didn’t want us to miss this!” she exclaimed as she held out the catalogue, on one of the color plates, a page of *Centaurea*, we found an unpublished poem in the poet’s hand, “Not many things I know nor do, but one....” What exciting evidence of the inextricable connections between Spencer’s two creative worlds!

Jane White, now the director of the Old City Cemetery in Lynchburg, an exciting garden restoration and collection of historical artifacts from the area, provided invaluable assistance, sharing her archives of photographs and historic documents. The book was published in December of 2003, and in 2004 won a coveted Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

By this time, we had continued filming for three additional episodes of *GardenStory*. The intent of the series is threefold: to broaden people’s definition of what a garden is, to explore how gardens reveal the values of their culture, and



The deutzia in bloom, arching over the curving concrete bench of the restored pool garden.

to examine how gardens have the power to change people’s lives and embody stewardship of our environment. Episode Two, Thomas Jefferson’s Academical Village at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, is entitled “The Garden

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The Garden of Anne Spencer...

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The pool in the restored fourth room of the garden, looking back toward the grape arbor and Edankraal.

as Classroom” and depicts how the gardens of the university enrich the life of the academic community. The third episode was filmed at Ashintully, a garden in the Berkshires designed by composer John Stewart McLeannan, and explores parallels between the design of gardens and the composition of music. This episode is entitled, “The Garden as Creative Expression.” And the final episode of *GardenStory* was filmed in a preserve of the Nature Conservancy on the Upper Shavers Fork of the Cheat River in the million-acre Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia. This episode, “The Garden as Environmental Stewardship,” encourages the viewer to understand the garden as the place where we forge a personal relationship with a piece of ground, the very roots of commitment and conservation.

In the winter of 2005, the public television station in Charlottesville, WHTJ, in conjunction with WCVE Richmond PBS, expressed interest in broadcasting the four episodes of *GardenStory*. However, they wanted four half-hour episodes, and this entailed returning to the Anne Spencer garden for a second round of filming. Having done research for the book, we knew that we now had the materials and information to tell the story much more fully. We also wanted to find additional “talking heads” who could speak about Spencer’s poetry and the relationship between her poetry and her garden. Two professors, Deborah McDowell, Professor of English at the University of Virginia, and Camille Dungy, Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, agreed to be filmed. Jane White was filmed in the garden, telling the story of its restoration. Anne Jr. provided additional reminiscences of her mother-in-law. In his role as Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Virginia, Reuben gave a design analysis of the garden and described various ways it was used. Retired teacher, Garnell Stamps, who met Anne Spencer when he was a boy and found inspiration in her career as an educator, talked about Spencer and her life in Lynchburg. He also directed a group of middle school students in a choral reading of one of Spencer’s most beloved poems,

“Earth, I thank you
for the pleasure of your language
You’ve had a hard time
bringing it to me
from the ground
to grunt thru the noun
To all the way
Feeling seeing smelling touching
—awareness
I am here!”

Enriched by an original score by Adrienne Penebre, music evocative of the jazz, blues and ragtime of the Harlem Renaissance, and with the addition of many archival images of Lynchburg as well as the garden, the revised episode, Episode One, “The Garden as Muse,” became a strong member of the *GardenStory* “quartet.”

This is an exciting time in the history of the Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum, Inc. The museum has a new part-time Executive Director, Judith Johnson, who is available to lead tours of the house and the garden. Two books, our guide to the garden and a collection of Spencer’s poetry with an essay by board member, Nina Salmon, are for sale at the house and on the new website, www.annespencer.org. By early August, the *GardenStory* DVD, a compilation of all four episodes, beginning with the episode on the Anne Spencer garden, will be available for sale both at the house and website and through the catalogues, stores, and website of Plow & Hearth, www.plowandhearth.com.

And although there is much to be done, including a major fundraising effort to meet the costs of critical maintenance to the property as well as important archival efforts, the Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum are poised as never before to move forward, sharing the legacy of this distinguished poet and gardener.

We encourage you to explore the Anne Spencer garden further. Together with the books, the video will share the story in far richer detail than this article has offered. But nothing communicates the *genius loci*, what the poet Alexander Pope called *the spirit of the place*, like a visit to the garden. Even in its simplified form with minimal maintenance, the garden sings out its unique melody. To be alone in the garden at the end of the day, experiencing the long shadows of twilight and the ubiquitous birdsong, evokes the very spirit which Spencer herself described in a poem she called, “He Said:”

Your garden at dusk
Is the soul of love
Blurred in its beauty
And softly caressing;
I, gently daring
This sweetest confessing,
Say your garden at dusk
Is your soul, My Love.

All photos for this article are from the book “*Half My World*.”

Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference, Old Salem, September 29-October 1, 2005

By Davyd Foard Hood, co-chair, Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference

Members of the Southern Garden History Society who attended the 2005 annual meeting in Fredericksburg will particularly appreciate the topic of the 15th Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference, “Issues and



Old Salem, Inc., director of horticulture, Matthew Noyes (left) and president, Paul Reber, breaking ground at the dedication of the newly-restored Single Brothers' Garden in Old Salem, May 13, 2005.

Challenges in Southern Landscape Restoration.” The landscapes and gardens of three sites we visited in April, Kenmore, Stratford Hall and Montpelier, raise questions that are central to the debate between differing schools of thought, philosophy, practice in landscape preservation and garden restoration in the 21st century. Each of the three sites present special concerns, which our speakers will address directly either in their presentations or in the lively panel discussion we anticipate Friday evening.

The restoration of the grounds of Kenmore, an 18th-century house on much reduced acreage and surrounded by an early 20th-century neighborhood, was the first restoration project of the Garden Club of Virginia and became an icon of the garden restoration movement. Should that status and the significance of an early Gillette Colonial Revival-style garden influence current and future work there? Or is the moment passed? And what role should new research on 18th-century Virginia gardens, including garden archaeology, play in the decision-making process there and elsewhere in the commonwealth? Those questions could also apply to consideration of the grounds of Stratford Hall, which Ken McFarland has demonstrated in recent

articles in *Magnolia* to be a remarkable hybrid reflecting near equal parts of historical documentation and a 20th-century idealization of Stratford Hall's past. The conundrum heightens when one approaches Montpelier. There, the du Pont era additions to James Madison's house have been pulled down, and, courtesy of Paul Mellon's many millions, a presidential mansion is being reconstructed on the skeleton of the structure that survived. The issue of whether to restore/recreate the Madison period house is settled. But, will the house find ease in a landscape that reflects features of successive owners through the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, and particularly in the lush park that William du Pont created as the setting for his buff-colored, stucco country house?

The 15th conference is not confined to landscape and garden restoration in Virginia, while it could be because of the critical questions being faced there, which are fresh to mind, but it embraces a series of approaches, issues, and projects in Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina, where Old Salem's newly-restored Single Brothers Garden will be highlighted at the conference.

The program for Thursday afternoon, September 29, through Saturday morning, October 1, includes a distinguished series of speakers who bring varied perspectives from their work in the public, private, and commercial spheres in the South, Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, the coordinator of the National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative and co-editor with Robin Karson of *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (2000), is the keynote speaker. His brief is to frame the state of Southern garden and landscape preservation in both its historical and



A costumed interpreter of Old Salem, Inc., watching a group of visitors attending the ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony on May 13th.

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Restoring Southern Gardens...

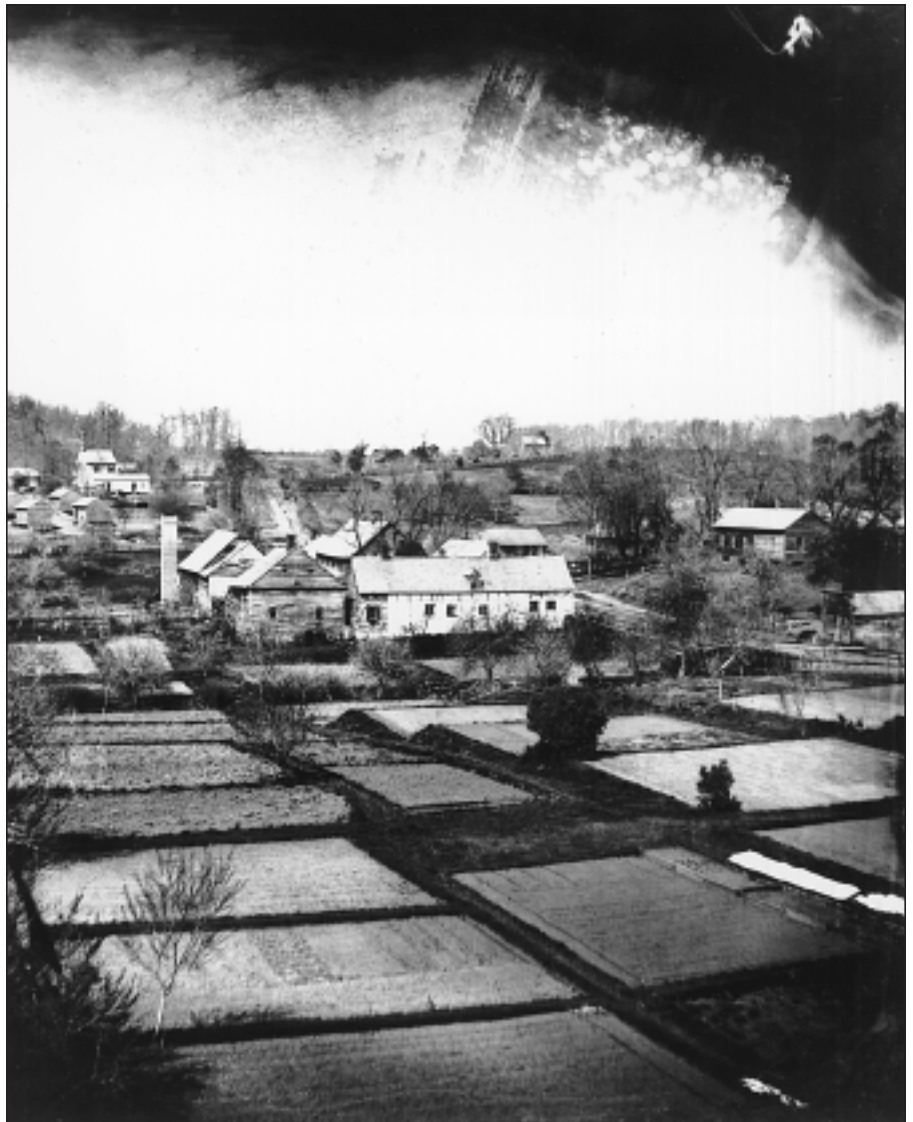
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national contexts, analyzing where we are and the avenues to consider in the future. His presentation will be followed by that of William D. Rieley, consulting landscape architect to the Garden Club of Virginia, whose purview includes not only the three sites noted above but also an important mid 20th-century garden that is one of the "Three Diverse Case Studies" noted in the title of his paper.

With Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, as a sponsor of the conference, we return to Reynolda House Thursday evening for dinner and the traditional sharing session, "What's New in the Old Landscapes of the South?" Nourishment for body and soul will include tours of the handsomely restored mansion, its gardens and the new exhibition wing. Emily Herring Wilson will also speak on her biography of garden writer Elizabeth Lawrence, *No One Gardens Alone*.

On Friday the value of archaeology in garden restoration is a topic that Martha Zierden of Charleston can expertly answer, having worked at a number of sites where her findings have proven beyond price. One such site is the lot at 14 Legare Street, Charleston, where landscape architect/historian C. Allan Brown has combined her findings with his own exemplary research as the basis of a brilliant recreation of a town garden. The conference agenda returns to the landscape of the Southern plantation in a pair of papers preceding and following lunch. Craig Hadley will address the dilemma he faces in interpreting one of America's great 18th-century houses, Drayton Hall, in a setting that encompasses only a fraction of the land that was once its domain. After lunch Ann L. Miller, consulting historian at Montpelier, will speak to research on the presidential estate, including that of several historians, most recently, C. Allan Brown, where the issues are related but different.

The restoration of the Single Brothers Garden, the newest landscape restoration project in the South—and the nation—will be presented by J. Keyes Williamson, the former director of horticulture at Old Salem, with tours of the garden to follow. After dinner we re-convene for a panel discussion, "Landscape Restoration; Are we doing it right? What is right?" where the opportunity for every point of view will be equal.



*Single Brothers' Garden, ca. 1890, from the collection of the Wachovia Historical Society.
[Photograph courtesy of Old Salem, Inc.]*

On Saturday morning Susan L. Hitchcock, a landscape historian on the regional staff of the National Park Service, will speak on the findings of the Georgia Historic Landscape Initiative, and how its inventory of historic gardens and landscapes can provide important documentary support and the context for interpretative programs in that state. "Planting the Future" will be resolved in two ways. First by Denise Wiles Adams, whose *Restoring American Gardens: An Encyclopedia of Heirloom Ornamental Plants*, was published by Timber Press in 2004. Next, at the end of the conference, Matthew Noyes and the gardening staff of Old Salem will have a selection of heirloom and native plants of Old Salem and the Piedmont for purchase at a sidewalk garden shop.

“Colonial Meets Revival” – Virginia’s Northern Neck and Fredericksburg

By Mary Anne Pickens, Columbus, Texas

Members attending the 2005 Southern Garden History annual meeting in Fredericksburg and the Northern Neck of Virginia were treated to museums, private homes, restoration works in progress and ruins on April 15-17, 2005. The meeting was co-hosted by Ken McFarland, Stratford Director of Preservation and Education, and Beate Jensen, Head Gardener at Belmont, the Gari Melcher estate and Memorial Gallery.



Frances Parker of Beaufort, South Carolina admiring a branch of Pearlbush (Exochorda racemosa) at Sabine Hall. [Photo by Bill Welch.]

Activities began Friday morning at the Great Hall of the University of Mary Washington, with the keynote presentation by William Rieley, landscape architect for the Garden Club of Virginia. Rieley gave the history of that illustrious organization which has contributed so much to the preservation and support of gardens across the state of Virginia. Both Stratford and Belmont gardens are Garden Club of Virginia projects.

Kent Brinkley, landscape architect and author, addressed the Colonial Revival work of the late Alden Hopkins. Hopkins, whose work included Stratford, Williamsburg and Kenmore, followed Arthur Shurcliff as landscape architects for the Garden Club of Virginia, the position currently held by William Rieley.

John Hennessey, Chief Historian/Chief of Interpretation, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, gave insights into problems faced in the preservation of battlefield landscapes in the Fredericksburg area where original small National Military Parks in pastoral settings are becoming surrounded by development.

Visitors to the symposium had time on Friday afternoon to tour sites in historic Fredericksburg and to visit private gardens. The homes of George Washington’s mother and sister

were both available for tour, as was James Monroe’s law office. Other historic sites were Chatham, Belmont, the Confederate Cemetery and Fredericksburg Cemetery. Flowering fruit trees—pears, cherries, and crabapples—throughout the city cheerfully welcomed visitors. Downtown historic Fredericksburg appeared to have snowflakes swirling as the flowering pears shed their petals. To visitors from areas without such magnificent displays, it was a marvelous sight.

Private gardens on an easy walking tour allowed members to enjoy the gardens and the fellowship of other gardeners. One innovative gardening couple had placed their rabbit hutch and their chicken coop over composting bins. The beauty of their garden indicated that their method worked! A beautiful collection of maples graced a serene Japanese garden. Refreshments in one of the gardens revived us and reminded us that gardening is also about pausing to enjoy the beauty of the effort.

Friday evening festivities were held at Belmont, the estate of American artist Gari Melchers. The unseasonably cool evening did not prohibit a warm and festive dinner and dance on the grounds of the Melchers’ estate.

Melchers and his wife Corinne bought the 18th-century Virginia home in the early 20th-century, restored it to their taste, and lived and worked there the rest of their lives. Melchers died in 1932, and Corinne donated their property to the Commonwealth of Virginia before she died in 1955. Visitors today can see the house essentially as it was when the Melchers lived there. Beate Jensen’s handiwork in restoring the gardens was quite evident. A particular impressive view from a second story window in the Melchers’ home was a very natural looking stand of native switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) which Jensen was instrumental in planting.

On Saturday, SGHS members toured the Northern Neck of Virginia, the peninsula “nestled between the Potomac and



A visit to Barboursville ruins on Sunday’s optional tour.

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“Colonial Meets Revival” –...

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the Rappahannock Rivers, and spilling into Chesapeake Bay.” Referred to by George Washington as the “Garden of Virginia,” the Northern Neck is the home of Stratford Hall and other historic plantation properties. To begin the day, Ken McFarland and other Stratford Hall personnel detailed the important architectural and decorative arts features of Stratford Hall, the Lee family home and the birthplace of Robert E. Lee.

McFarland has reviewed the history of Stratford in two recent issues of *Magnolia*, Volume XIX, issues Winter-Spring 2004 and Winter 2004-2005. Visitors to Stratford toured both the house and the extensive grounds and enjoyed dinner and period dancing in the Great Hall on Saturday night.

Other Northern Neck visits included a visit to Landon Carter’s ca.1735 home, Sabine Hall, and Mount Airy, John Tayloe II’s 1748-58 dwelling. Current owners of the plantations, Carter Wellford of Sabine Hall and Mrs. Tayloe of Mount Airy welcomed Society members to their homes and answered questions about their respective properties. Mrs. Tayloe delighted visitors when she announced in an understated manner, “This isn’t a museum, it is just our home.” Her stories kept visitors enthralled—particularly when she told about the Yankee officer who took one of the family’s crystal wine glasses and whose descendant years later refused to return it to a descendant of its rightful owner.

Members who lingered in Virginia on Sunday to take the optional field trip, traveled to Prospect Hill, Barboursville,



Members tour the house and garden of Mount Airy Plantation. [Photo by Beate Jensen]

and Montpelier. Prospect Hill, built in 1811 by the Hallyday family, is a collection of restored cabins that the current Hallyday owner operates as The Littlepage Inn, a bed and breakfast. On the grounds is a small cemetery where visitors



Sunday’s bus trip, with Nancy Haywood (Houston, Texas) and friends. [Photo by Beate Jensen]

from Texas were inquisitive about the stone on the grave of a Texas Ranger.

SGHS members enjoyed lunch on the grounds of Montpelier, the home of James and Dolly Madison. Ample time was provided to tour the grounds before leaving to visit Barboursville, where visitors visited the ruins of the home of Governor Barbour, now on the grounds of Barboursville Winery.

As technology improves, research enlightens and ongoing maintenance is required, work is often almost constant at historic sites. Two “works in progress” in the weekend’s itinerary allowed visitors to see restoration work being done. On Friday afternoon members observed the detailed “toothbrush cleaning” being done on ceiling cornices at Kenmore, the home of George Washington’s sister, Betty, and her husband Lewis Fielding. Students from nearby University of Mary Washington wielded the brushes as they comfortably stood on scaffolds and greeted visitors.

At Montpelier on Sunday, major “deconstruction and restoration” was in progress while the property continues to be open to the public. William du Pont purchased the Madison home in the early 20th century and made major additions to it. Amid much controversy, those additions are now being removed to restore the home to its appearance during the time President Madison lived there. A brief lecture by associate director of architectural research, Alfredo Maul, gave visitors insight to the enormous amount of work being done at Montpelier.

Happily, the Montpelier grounds are basically undisturbed except immediately around the house. A number of large trees dating from the Madison era still grace the grounds, reminding visitors of Madison’s forethought. Two-hundred acres of old growth timber are included in the 2300-

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“Colonial Meets Revival” –...

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acre estate. The formal gardens with large boxwoods were installed by the du Ponts. Lovely glazed ceramic tiles lined some of the beds and attracted much attention from some visitors.¹

Society members saw two examples of “ruins” during the weekend. On Saturday, the “stabilized ruins” of Menokin, the home of Francis Lightfoot Lee, was a point of interest. At Menokin, a roof has been constructed over the entire building to protect it from the elements. Barriers keep visitors from accessing the ruins, but allow observation of the remaining structure. After seeing the ruins, members visited the Menokin Foundation office where architectural features from the house are stored. The director of the foundation was on hand to discuss possible restoration of the property in the future.

A second ruin on Sunday, the Thomas Jefferson designed Palladian-style villa of Governor James Barbour, near present day Barboursville Winery, allowed visitors a close up view of the three-story structure. The large boxwoods there led to speculation about the history of the garden, but sadly there were no apparent answers.

Ruins, works in progress, museums, and private homes made the visit to Fredericksburg and the Northern Neck a memorable trip.



Members visit Landon Carters' 1735 home, Sabine Hall, courtesy of his descendant and current owner, Carter Wellford. [Photo by Beate Jensen]

¹ For an in depth look at such tiles, see “Victorian Garden Edging Tiles” in *Antiques*, August 2003, by Jim Cothran, President, Southern Garden History Society.

Flora Ann Bynum Receives SGHS Award

At the last meeting of the SGHS Board of Directors, held in Fredericksburg April 14, 2005, the Directors approved by acclamation a motion from the Executive Committee to create an occasional award to be presented to members of the society for exceptional service. This award is to be in the form of a pewter medal to be known as the Flora Ann Bynum Medal of the Southern Garden History Society. The first recipient of the Flora Ann Bynum Medal is Flora Ann Bynum. Subsequently the medal was presented to Flora Ann by SGHS President Jim Cothran at the Society's annual meeting. Flora Ann was an organizing, charter member of the society and secretary/treasurer of the society for 21 years. It is only through Flora Ann's dedication and clear sense of direction that the SGHS has enjoyed the success it has since May 1982. Flora Ann retired as secretary/treasurer at the May meeting.



Flora Ann displays the medal to the audience while Jim Cothran looks on. [Photo by Bill Welch]

CORRECTION:

The lead article in the Winter 2004-2005 *Magnolia*, Vol. XIX, No. 4, “To Revive the Spirit of the Time”—Restoring the Grounds and Gardens at Stratford Hall Plantation, 1929-1934, omitted the author's name. The article was written by Kenneth M. McFarland of Fredericksburg, Virginia, director of education at Stratford Hall Plantation and associate editor of *Magnolia*.

2005 Spring Board Meeting Report

By Flora Ann Bynum, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

At its meeting on April 14 in Fredericksburg, Virginia, the society's board of directors selected Fort Worth, Texas, as the site of the 2006 annual meeting. The board voted to accept the proposed dates of April 7-9 and the theme for the annual meeting of "From Prairies to Gardens." Susan Urshel of Fort Worth will chair the local annual meeting committee.

James R. Cothran, society president, appointed a long-range planning committee to secure annual meeting sites for the next several years and report to the fall board meeting and each succeeding meeting. Serving on the committee are Mary Anne Pickens, chair, Patti McGee, Sally Reeves, Jeff Lewis, and Nancy Haywood.

At the annual business meeting of the society held April 16 in Stratford, Virginia, four new directors were elected to serve a first term on the board. These new directors are Gail Griffin of Bethesda, Maryland; Davyd Foard Hood of Vale, North Carolina; Molly Ridout of Annapolis, Maryland; and Susan Urshel of Fort Worth. Flora Ann Bynum was elected an honorary director. Mrs. Haywood and Susan Haltom were elected to a second term on the board.

Sherold D. Hollingsworth of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was elected secretary-treasurer of the society, as Mrs. Bynum, former secretary-treasurer, has resigned. Serving on the nominating committee were Mrs. Pickens, chair, Mrs. Haltom, and M. Edward Shull.

In recognition of the twenty-one years she has served as the society's secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Bynum was presented a specially-designed pewter medal at the annual business meeting at Stratford. Mr. Cothran said that the board of directors had established an award, named the "Flora Ann Bynum Award." The award and medal will be given on occasion to those whose contributions to the society merit special recognition.

Copies of a report from Mrs. Haltom, chair of the membership committee, were given members of the board at the meeting. Other committee members are Ruth Coy and Mrs. Hollingsworth. The committee suggested that current society members be encouraged to contact prospective society members, and also to send in names of prospective members to society headquarters at Old Salem. Other suggestions for increasing the society's total membership to 750 included announcements in newsletters of other organizations, gift memberships, advertisements in regional publications.

Book Review

by Bobby J. Ward

A Rage for Rock Gardening: The Story of Reginald Ferrer, Gardener, Writer & Plant Collector, by Nicola Shulman. David R. Godine, publishers, 2004. Boston. 120 pages plus preface; 8 color illustrations. ISBN 1-56792-249-X. \$20

If you have never met a truly obsessed gardener, then you've probably not met a member of the North American Rock Garden Society. These are gardeners who specialize in growing dwarf plants in a rocky setting in the garden, or in troughs or stone planters. Their interest in plants is endearingly infectious. Elizabeth Lawrence wrote that all gardeners eventually become rock gardeners even if they don't intend to be.

Among the obsessive "giants" of the rock gardening world was Reginald Farrer (1880-1920), a Yorkshireman who is credited with single-handedly elevating Twentieth Century rock gardening to an art and style. Farrer (pronounced FAIR-er) produced a mammoth tome, *The Rock Garden*, an encyclopedia in two volumes in 1920 that has become a standard work for rock gardeners. His travels to the European Alps and to Asian mountaintops provided him new plants to describe and write about, in a style often described as "purple prose," that is, writing that is ornate and flowery. For example, he wrote that plants "sulked," were "miffy," "demanding," or "cheerful."

Nicola Shulman, a writer for the *Sunday Telegraph* (England), has written a slim biography of Farrer, titled *A Rage for Rock Gardening* (Short Books 2002) in both U.K. and American editions. Farrer's life was complex; he was an Edwardian fop and Oxford graduate who hated exercise and outdoorsmanship; he was short and stocky and had a cleft palate and harelip that he suffered through childhood. He wore gentleman's clothes of the day and was initially dependent on his father for his income. Farrer had a sharp wit, was a great conversationist and became interested and "driven" by plants. He fancied himself a fiction writer and often took Jane Austen books with him on foreign treks.

Farrer died "for plants and duty" on a mountaintop in Burma during a monsoon in 1920, sipping whiskey as he faded away.

Though Shulman's biography doesn't fully plumb the depths of this complex man and his personality, it is a welcomed introduction to the bookshelf of gardening biographies.

[Bobby J. Ward lives and gardens in Raleigh, N.C. He is the past president of the North American Rock Garden Society. He can be reached at biblio@nc.rr.com]

Publications Available Through SGHS

The New Louisiana Gardener - *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane*, 1838
publication by Jacques-Felix Lelièvre and translated into English by Sally Kittredge Reeves. Published by LSU press in cooperation with SGHS. Hardcover. 186 pages with color photographs and halftones. Specially priced for SGHS members at \$25 (plus \$3.95 postage). *NC orders add 7% sales tax.*

Bound Sets of Magnolia Back Issues. Includes Vol. I, No. 1 (Fall 1984) through Vol. XIV, No. 4 (Winter/Spring 1999), with index. \$50. Price includes postage and tax. (Individual back issues of *Magnolia* \$5.00 each)

NEW *Cultivating History: Exploring Horticultural Practices of the Southern Gardener* (2001 proceedings of the thirteenth biennial Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference held at Old Salem). \$10 (plus \$3.95 postage). *NC orders add 7% sales tax.*

Also available: *Breaking Ground* (1997 proceedings) and *The Influence of Women on the Southern Landscape* (1995 proceedings). Contact publications secretary for special SGHS member's pricing.

Send orders to: Kay Bergey, publications secretary, SGHS, c/o Old Salem, Inc., Drawer F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108.

NOTE: Checks payable to SGHS for *Nouveau Jardinier* and *Magnolias*. Checks payable to **Old Salem, Inc.** for conference proceedings. For information call (336) 721-7378 or e-mail: bergeymk@wfu.edu

Annual Membership Dues

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

The membership year runs from May 1 to April 30.
Members joining after January 1 will be credited for the coming year beginning May 1.

Write to membership secretary at:
**Southern Garden History Society,
Old Salem, Inc., Drawer F, Salem Station,
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27108
phone (336) 721-7328
www.southerngardenhistory.org**

Deadline for the submission of articles for the fall issue of Magnolia is September 30, 2005.

Officers:

President: James R. Cothran, Atlanta, Georgia
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