



Magnolia

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

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William Watson and his Kew Horticulturists

by Mary Anne Pickens, Columbus, Texas

William Watson came to Brenham in 1859 and founded the Rosedale Nursery in 1860, thus becoming one of the first nurserymen in this region of Texas. No evidence has been found of any prior horticultural training, but Watson apparently saw an opportunity and acted accordingly. In 1860, Brenham was a small rural cotton-farming community. Thomas Affleck and William Watson added a new dimension to Brenham and Washington County, and with other horticulturists that Watson later induced to come to the area, put Brenham on the map as "one of the notable horticultural centers of the South."¹ Several of the other horticulturists were British, and two, William Falconer and William Arthur Yates, had been trained at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, near London.

William Watson was born in Drogheda, County Down, Ireland in 1835. His parents were British, however, and William was destined to have ties to England throughout his lifetime. He made his maiden voyage on a sailing ship when he was twelve years old, and until settling in the Brenham area in 1859,

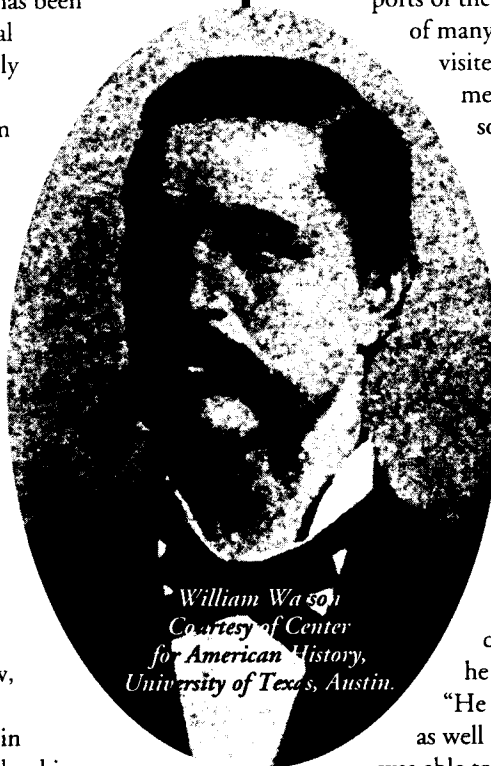
he led an adventure filled life. He "spent many years on the ocean, crossing the Atlantic no less than twenty-two times, visiting all the important ports of the world, exploring the interior

of many of the countries which he visited, and passing two years in merchandising in Africa."² After some of those trips across the Atlantic, he lived in New York, then later in Kentucky, and he traveled widely in West Virginia, Mississippi and Minnesota.³

When he arrived in Galveston in 1859, he had a wife, two children, and relatively little cash. He was advised to go to Brenham by Willard Richardson, owner of the Galveston News, and upon his arrival in Brenham he quickly found work as a carpenter, the field in which he had apprenticed as a boy.⁴

"He was a man of great industry, as well as untiring energy" and soon was able to start his fledgling nursery on three acres in town. In 1869, he moved his business to a larger acreage 2 1/2 miles east of Brenham and continued to operate it there until his death in 1897.

According to Charles F. Schmidt's *History*



William Watson
Courtesy of Center
for American History,
University of Texas, Austin.

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of Washington County, Texas, Watson published the *Texas Horticultural Almanac*, but no copies are extant.⁶ Other writings included "Grape Culture," published in the 1869 *Texas Almanac*, and numerous articles through the years in *Texas Farm and Ranch*. Watson was a member of the American Pomological Society, the American Horticultural Society, and the Texas State Horticultural Society, serving as President of the latter in 1888-1889. His presentation to the society during its 1888 meeting made reference to his earlier travels:

While we have a grand field to work in, and splendid material to work with, little has been done yet in this State. We have no cities large enough to get up and support fine parks like the Central Park at New York, Fairmount at Philadelphia, Druid Hill at Baltimore, or the fine parks at St. Louis and Chicago.

We will have, in a few years, cities that can and will have such. Have you thought over what has been done in the last thirty years? I am a comparatively young man, yet I remember when the Central Park of New York was as unpromising a piece

of ground as could be found anywhere. I shot snipe over where the finest part of that park now is. At Chicago I got lost in a swamp where now some of its finest streets stand. I remember wandering along the banks of the Schuylkill and Wishahickon Rivers, all wild as Nature made them. Look now what the park commissioners of Philadelphia have made them!"

He continued:

We have our splendid Magnolia Grandiflora, our Sweet Gum (you may smile at my naming the Sweet Gum). I remember that when I visited the magnificent grounds of the Palace of Versailles in 1858, I was shown, as some of the lions, a Sweet Gum, a Tulip Poplar, and a Magnolia. Those grounds were among the pet places near Paris, improved by the Emperor, Napoleon III, who had money enough at his command to get trees from anywhere. He admired those trees that we make fire-wood of. I mention this only to show you that we do not value what we have. Our possibilities are boundless. We have within our borders enough to make Texas a paradise. It takes money and time to get up fine

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Calendar

March 21st-23rd, 1997. "The Other Florida," Fifteenth annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, in Tallahassee, Florida. Lectures on "Early Gardening" by Dr. Day Williams, "Vernacular Gardens of Rural Florida" by Riley Blitch, and "The Red Hills Region: A Unique American Landscape" by Ken McGorty. The meeting focuses on Goodwood Plantation with field trips to Box Hall, Horseshoe, Alfred B. Maclay State Gardens, and Wakulla Springs State Park. For more information, call Nancy White (904) 877-4202 or Weej Broderon (904) 656-1163, or write to: SGHS 15th Annual Meeting, Goodwood, 1600 Miccosukee Rd., Tallahassee, FL 32308.

April 13th-16th, 1997. "English Influences on American Gardening," the fifty-first Williamsburg Garden Symposium. The keynote speaker, Sarah Boasberg, will consider "Genius of the Place: Our English Garden Tradition," Paul Henderson will speak on "Cotswold Manors and Gardens," Lucinda Mays on "Cottage Gardens in the Land of Log Cabins" among other topics. For registration and information, call (800) 603-0948 or (757) 565-8631, or fax (757) 565-8630.

The address is: Garden Symposium, Williamsburg Institute, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, P. O. Box 1776, Williamsburg, VA 23187-1776.

June 15th-27th, 1997. "Preserving Jefferson's Landscapes and Gardens," Historic Landscapes Institute sponsored jointly by the University of Virginia and Monticello. Newly created summer institute designed as an introduction to landscape history, garden restoration, and historical horticulture by using the landscapes of Monticello and the University as case studies and outdoor classrooms. Instruction provided by Monticello staff and UVA faculty. For more information or a brochure, contact Charlottesville Regional Programs, UVA, (804) 982-5313 or fax (804) 982-5324.

June 15th-19th, 1997. "On the Road Again: Mobility, Memory & Museums," annual conference of the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums, at the Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton, Virginia. As "The Gateway West," the Shenandoah Valley provides the perfect setting for this look at the patterns and trends of the westward movement in America since the late seventeenth century. For information, contact: Karen Becker & Katharine Brown, Museum of American Frontier Culture, P. O. Box 810, Staunton, VA 24402, (804) 332-7850; fax (540) 332-9989.

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specimens of landscape gardening. We must have large rich cities to keep up fine parks. We must have rich enterprising men to get up fine private grounds like those of Jay Gould, C. A. Dana, and others who own famous places. But Rome was not built in a day.⁸

A few years later, in 1894, Watson's own home and nursery was described by Rev. R. F. Butler who wrote under the name of "Uncle Snort" in *Texas Farm and Ranch*.⁹ Watson reprinted the article in his *Rosedale Catalogue*. Butler wrote:

I reached this place on the evening of the 16th, and as I stepped from the train onto the platform I was captured by an old friend, William Watson, and was hurried to a carriage and driven out to his palatial home, situated on a well selected plot of elevated ground, surrounded by the most beautiful grove of native trees—pine, live oak, pin oak, hackberry, ash, magnolia, wild peach, cedar, arbor vitae and others too numerous to mention; also a great variety of the most beautiful and rare flowers and shrubs. All these Mr. Watson planted in the years gone by with his own hands. Years ago when he moved out on this then bare sand hill he was laughed at by his neighbors. Now it looks more like I imagine the 'Paradise Lost' looked before the fall than it looks like a bare sand hill. Mr. Watson is the oldest nurseryman in the state, and he has 106 acres in nursery stock, containing something over 1,000,000 trees, vines, shrubs, etc. I have never seen a more beautiful nursery stock than this, all grown with such intelligent care, and that too, only varieties which are known to do well in Texas soils.¹⁰

Watson's holdings eventually grew to around 200 acres, located on the south east edge of Brenham. Mrs. Reese Lockett, of Brenham, recalls that in her youth there was still evidences of Rosedale and even the islands in Watson's Lake at the Rod and Gun Club had been landscaped and planted with fig and other fruit trees.

By 1870, Brenham had a population of around 2200 and Washington County had grown from 15,200 in 1860 to 23,100 in 1870. The 1869-1870 Rosedale catalogue, entitled



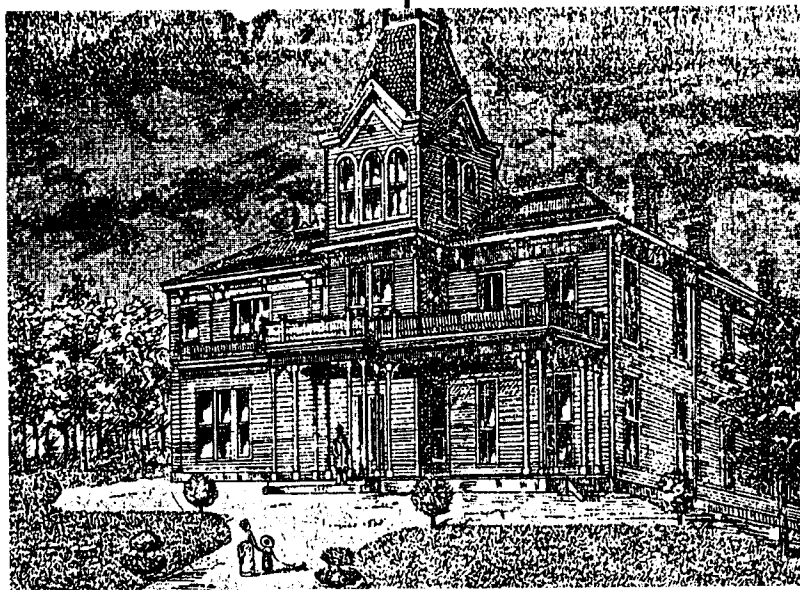
the *Descriptive Catalogue of Fruit Trees, Grape Vines, Ornamental Shrubs, Small Fruits, Etc. Etc. cultivated and for Sale at the Rosedale Nurseries, Brenham, Washington County, Texas* showed that fruit trees and grapes were most in demand for home orchards, but ornamental shrubs took up twelve of the thirty-one page catalogue, indicating they were an important part of Watson's business. The 1894 catalogue's title was simply *Descriptive Catalogue of the Rosedale Nurseries* and twenty-two of the sixty-two pages were for ornamentals.

Some of the trees and possibly shrubs in Brenham today could easily have come from Rosedale. The most publicized ornamental from Rosedale was Watson's 'Rosedale Hybrid', an arbor vitae that seems to have been a cross between a Chinese golden arbor-vitae (*Biota sempervirens aurea*) and a Japanese cypress (*Retinospora squarosa*).

Many of the plants Watson sold are familiar: Althea ("of different colors,

including the beautiful double white"), Spirea ("All the varieties of the Spireas are elegant shrubs of easy culture"), Philadelphus ("All the varieties have white flowers; some are fragrant"), Hydrangea ("A well known flower, mostly grown in pots or boxes; needs rich soil and plenty of surface manuring.... 50 cents") and, of course, many roses. Plants such as the flowering almonds (*Prunus glandulosa*) and sweet olives (*Osmanthus fragrans*) are available now but not widely grown, and a few that he advertised are not seen much in Texas today, particularly deutzias and lilacs, for they have proven to be unsatisfactory in this climate. Some plants that we consider standard ornamentals today were quite new then. One newspaper account referred to a "new hedge plant, Pyrrha Canthar, (*Pyracantha sp.*), which we think far superior to anything of the kind we have seen. It grows very thick and full of thorns; and its flavor is very distasteful to stock, which is of itself an important feature in this country."

Beyond the establishment of Rosedale, William Watson's other major contribution to the state was the trained horticulturists he brought to Brenham. On August 25, 1871, a meeting took place in the District Court's office of British



William Watson's Home at Rosedale Nursery. Courtesy of Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin.

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natives and members of the Victoria Club "for the purpose of organizing a society to advance the interest of those now residing here and induce English immigration to this country and to provide those with employment and suitable houses, and for election of officers for the present year." It is not known whether William Watson attended that meeting, but he had at least four horticulturists from England or Scotland work for him at Rosedale through the ensuing years and two of those were trained at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. They brought education and expertise and made both their individual and collective contributions to the science of horticulture.

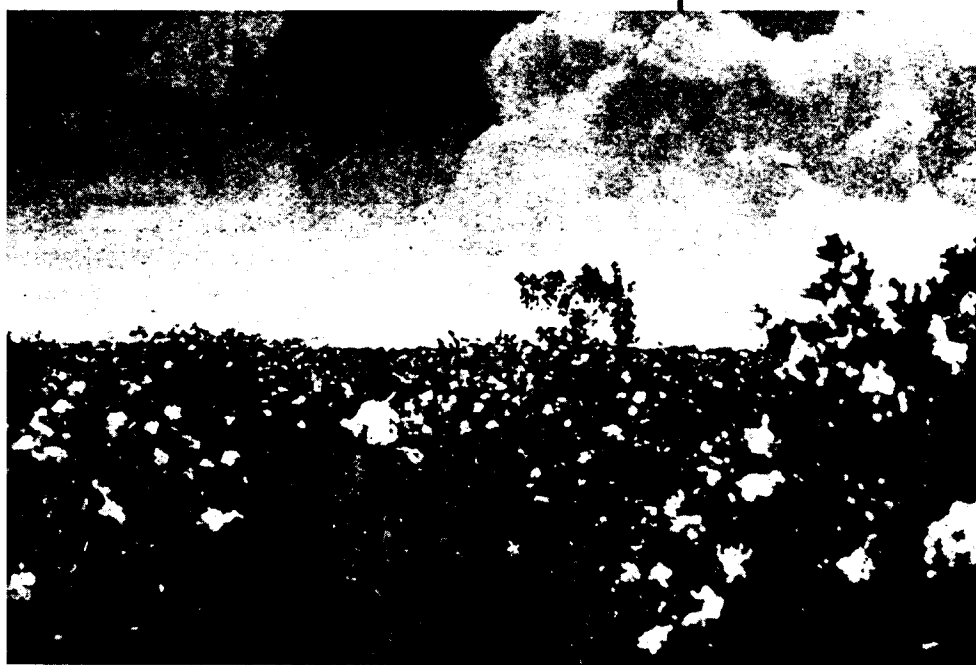
Kew, The Royal Botanic Gardens, originally was private property of the English nobility. A 1724 reference by Daniel Defoe described it as the "delightful retreat of their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales."¹⁵ Depending on the interest of the reigning monarchs, the gardens' course

State property. Sir William Hooker (1785-1865) was appointed director. Hooker directed a new period of expansion to make Kew a national scientific institution beyond comparison, but at the same time remain accessible to the public. In 1871, when the "Victoria Society" was meeting in Brenham, Texas, Queen Victoria had been on the throne for thirty-four years, and the "delightful retreat," now under the direction of Sir Joseph Hooker (1817-1911), had grown into elaborate public gardens with herbariums, greenhouses, and orangeries housing collections of plants from all over the world.

All gardens, of course, have to have gardeners, and with an institution the magnitude of Kew, the gardeners are extremely numerous. Originally, their training was by apprenticeship, and most were young, from rural areas and seeking a practical means of making a living. In 1848, a library was established at Kew, giving the gardeners access to reading material in their field. In 1859, their training included lectures on elementary botany, chemistry and meteorology. Students usually left Kew after about eighteen months for positions in gardens around the world.¹⁸ Those gardeners or horticultural students that Watson enticed to Brenham were well trained in their field and eager to broaden their own horizons.

One of the first to come was twenty-four year old William Falconer in 1874. Born in Forres, Scotland, Falconer trained at Kew from May 1871 to February 1872. Arriving in Brenham in 1874, he worked for Watson until 1876 and then left to become superintendent of the Botanical Gardens at Harvard University. His

horticultural career spanned a gamut of activities. After being at Harvard for almost ten years, he left to manage the estate of Charles Dana, owner of the New York Sun. While holding that position, he wrote widely for horticultural journals, edited a horticultural paper, "*Gardening*," and published horticultural articles in the Sun. In 1896 he went to Pittsburgh where he became superintendent of all the city parks. His last position was that of superintendent of the Allegheny Cemetery in Pittsburgh from 1903 until his death in 1928. At ease with the written word, Falconer left us with some interesting comments about the state of horticulture in Texas in 1875:



Cape Jasmine Farm, Austin, Texas. Courtesy of Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

varied with the tides of fortune. A particularly strong period of growth came during the reign of George III from 1760 to 1820. During this time, Sir Joseph Banks, (1743-1820), naturalist, plant collector and friend of George III, advanced Kew and helped it develop into a world renowned institution.¹⁶ Banks financed plant expeditions that acquired plants and seeds from all over the world, including Australia, Calcutta, Jamaica, South Africa, and Singapore, as well as North and South America.¹⁷

By the time Queen Victoria took the throne in 1837, the tide of interest had ebbed, and the gardens at Kew were neglected. In 1840, Kew was placed under the authority of the Commissioner of Woods and Forests, thus becoming

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The Native Serviceberry in Antebellum Southern Gardens

by James E. Kibler Jr., Whitmire, South Carolina

The Shadblow, or Serviceberry, (*Amelanchier*) is a genus of small trees and shrubs comprising twenty-five species, at least six of which are indigenous to the South. Two of these six become trees. Most botanists call the genus "extremely difficult, complicated, and confusing to classify," and the discrepancies in current botanical literature prove it. In the twentieth century, *Amelanchier* has achieved at least a modest landscaping niche, often through its hybrid *Amelanchier x grandiflora*, said to be the product of a cross between *Amelanchier arborea* var. *arborea* (the Downy Serviceberry) a red-fruited variety, and *Amelanchier arborea* var. *leavis* (the Allegheny Serviceberry) a purple-black-fruited tree. In the South, both these beautiful white-flowering understory trees may achieve a height of thirty or more feet and bloom in advance of other spring trees against the grays of a hardwood forest. The fruit of the latter (*A. arborea* var. *leavis*) is used by Southern mountain people for preserves and pies. It is juicy, sweet, and good to taste. *A. arborea* var. *arborea* is not as palatable. Another black-fruited species growing in the Southern midlands and coastal region is *Amelanchier obovalis* (the Coastal Serviceberry). Its height is usually no more than five feet. This species is identified by its round leaves, and blooms in April. It spreads by underground runners. The *Amelanchiers* are thus beautiful, practical natives, and many of our century have recognized the fact.

What is not known is that in the antebellum South, at least one important horticulturist-nurseryman was advocating that they should be widely used in Southern landscapes and gardens. In an essay in 1856, Adam G. Summer of Pomaria Nurseries in Upcountry South Carolina (the subject of an article in *Magnolia*, Vol. X, No. 1, for Fall 1993) called the *Amelanchier*, or "May Cherry," "a graceful ornament to the lawn." His enumeration of its habits and his sensitive description of its beauty as he had witnessed it "along the shores of our Southern rivers," with "its long racemose flowers" that "shine out like snow-drifts, amongst the leafless trees," shows he had a good familiarity with the plant in its native environment.

Here follows Summer's short article as it appeared in his own periodical, *The South Carolina Agriculturist: A Journal of Agriculture, Horticulture, Mechanics, Rural Taste and Industrial Improvement* (Columbia, SC), Volume I, no. 2 (June 1856), p. 51. Summer's *A. Botryapium* is likely *A. arborea* var. *arborea*, and his *A. Rotundifolia* is likely *A. obovalis*.



Amelanchier — New American Fruit

By the Editor [A. G. Summer]

"A striking and most attractive tree, frequently attaining the height of twenty feet is the Shad-flower or May Cherry. The first flower-bearing tree which expands its white blossoms along the shores of our Southern rivers, its long racemose flowers shine out like snow-drifts, amongst the leafless trees. In May, its rich red fruit, contrasts in sweetness with the fragrant strawberry, and is acceptable to the palate of most persons. The botanical name of this tree, is *Amelanchier Botryapium* (Torrey and Gray) but it was classed by Elliott as *Aronia Botryapium*. Transplanted from the woods, it is generally fruitful and bears abundantly. It is a graceful ornamental to the lawn, and is not subject to the attacks of insects, retaining its light green foliage till frost. If it were an exotic, it might be more popular as an ornamental tree, as amateurs usually neglect the beautiful within reach of their homes, for popular novelties from abroad.

The *Amelanchier Rotundifolia* is another variety, remarkable[y] dwarfed in its habit, and is found widely diffused throughout middle South Carolina and Georgia. It attains the height of six feet and flowering about the tenth of April, invariably produces a heavy crop of fine black fruit. Several of our friends cultivate it, and it should fill the place in the Southern garden, which in Northern climates is occupied by the currant family. It is really a valuable fruit, and, being extremely sweet, enters into the manufacture of preserves, jams, and jellies, and with the usual preparation, is a fine dessert fruit. It is easily propagated by suckers, and would be a valuable addition to the smaller fruits, of every garden."

The extant ledgers of orders from Pomaria Nurseries from October 1858 to 1862 record the sale of twenty-four *Amelanchier* plants to fifteen customers, thus proving that gardeners in A. G. Summer's sphere were heeding his advice and planting this ornamental. Summer's comment that if the *Amelanchier* "were an exotic, it might be more popular as an ornamental tree, as amateurs usually neglect the beautiful within reach of their homes, for the popular novelties abroad" reveals the high degree of his garden sophistication. The Southern patrons of his nursery obviously shared that sophistication with their orders of this and other native plants, like Yellowwood, Devil's Walking-stick, Carolina Silverbell, Hemlock, *Torreya taxifolia*, Live-Oak, Deciduous Magnolias, Native Azaleas, *Gordonia*, Red Bay, Sweet Bay, and *Stewartia*, to name only a few.

The antebellum Southern gardener's use and appreciation of plants native to the South is a subject that needs to be researched and should prove fruitful, especially in our time of the convergence of great interest in both landscaping with native plants and the faithful restoration of period Southern gardens.✦

William Watson and his Kew Horticulturists...continued from page 4



Horticulture is very backward here; true I saw one little greenhouse at Galveston and another at Houston, and a few Oranges, Oleanders, and such things, in the gardens; but in country places, poultry and pigs reign supreme where Daffodils and other flowers ought to grow. With respect to vegetables, the people seem peculiarly negligent, and can in no way be compared, as regards industry in this direction, with the New Englanders. Just now, all we possess in the way of culinary produce are Sweet Potatoes and Shallots, whereas "up north" they have Potatoes, Cabbages, Squashes, Turnips, Carrots, and other roots in the cellars, besides quantities of Tomatoes, berries of many kinds, Pears, and barrels upon barrels of Apples. Here very inferior Apples cost from 10 to 20 cents a-piece.²⁰

By 1876, after he was already at Harvard, he wrote a lengthy article entitled "Horticulture in Texas." He gave a description about various soil types, and then wrote:

Of prairies we have immense sweeps, and, too extensive ranges of Pine-wood and post-Oak timber lands. The State is not mountainous but rolling, and west of Austin somewhat rocky and hilly. Galveston is the Liverpool of Texas, Houston the Manchester, Austin the capital, Brenham the nursery, Dallas the best city in the north, and San Antonio in the south-west.²¹

Falconer was very complimentary of Watson's nursery:

Great credit is due to Mr. Wm. Watson, the proprietor of The Rosedale Nurseries, Brenham, as a pioneer of horticulture in Texas, for, together with Affleck, he laid the foundation of true gardening. Mr. W. is an Englishman, a Lancashire lad, and began his business with debt for a fortune, but he is of that navigating character, 'he will neither sink nor drown.' Thus his spirit and perseverance have built himself one of the best establishments, if not the very best of its class, in the South. Every new kind of fruit he must get if attainable, and now in the nurseries he has growing specimens of 100 different kinds of Apples, 170 Pears, 120 Peaches, and other things in proportion. Quite a number of other nurseries have sprung up at Brenham lately, as well as all over the State, but none of them can be said to be very permanently established.²²

The following week, Falconer described some of the fruits being grown in Texas:

Texas is second to no other State in the Union, except California, as a Grape growing country. Wild Grapes grow luxuriantly everywhere in woodlands and cross-timbered prairie-lands, in the poorest and in the richest soils; they are, too, less liable to disease than most fruit trees, and they seldom or never fail in producing a crop. The trees in the bottom-lands are draped with the Mustang Grape Vine, that fruits in loads, black and tempting to look at, but to taste as palatable as a Sloe.²³ They make excellent wine, however, highly commended by physicians. Mustang Grapes cling to the Vines after they ripen till they shrivel, consequently they are useless as hog-mast; but the Post-Oak Grapes, that are like wise plentiful and fruitful, not only yield good food for man, but they drop when ripe, and feed the swine. After these comes the winter Grapes—tiny black berries, borne in large and thickly-set clusters. Concord, Hartford Prolific,

Delaware, Herbemont, Ive's Seedling, and Norton's Virginia are amongst the best cultivated sorts; and on

Galveston Island and the immediate Gulf coast, with some care, Rose Chasselas, Muscats, and Hamburgs are grown successfully and profitably.... The Germans bestow considerable pains on the Grape Vines, and make a deal of wine, much more so than the Americans.

Cherokee and other north-eastern counties I have seen moderately fair Gooseberries and Currants, still I don't think that they repay the trouble spent on them. Black Walnuts and Hickory are abundant in the woods, and together with the Oaks, make the hogs' hearts glad, and their backs round and broad, that is when the pigeons are gracious enough to keep away. Pecans are quite frequent and fruitful, but their whereabouts are well known, and their nuts carefully gathered and sold. Persimmons grow in groves every here and there, and bear an immense quantity of fruit that when fully ripe is rich, sweet, and pleasant, but if not quite ripe they are more nauseous than Mustang Grapes. Orange groves are being planted at Galveston, where are many large bearing trees; there too, are some Bananas, but the winds are too fierce to permit of them being grown for profit. Mulberry trees thrive apace, and bear prodigiously.²⁴

He described Galveston's "nice little homes in the suburbs:"

... and all seem to strive for superiority as gardeners, particularly the ladies. Of shrubs and roses they have a goodly quantity, but of little or herbaceous plants the selection is limited. A carpet of grass is a rarity, still in some instances it is to be found. They arrange their flower garden in scroll-patterns, by edging the little beds with wood, inverted bottles, bricks, shells, plates, etc. They endeavor to have their houses and part of their gardens shaded by trees, for which they use Oranges, Umbrella Chinas, Cottonwoods, Mulberries, Persimmons, Live Oaks, Honey Locust, and such other kinds as they find native to the soil. Trellises covered with vines of different kinds are scattered here and there, and every garden of any pretensions has an arbor covered with grape vines.²⁵

With wonderful detail he described the flowers he saw in Galveston:

Amongst the little flowers I may mention Verbenas that grow here outside summer and winter, reproducing themselves from seed and rooting along as their branches grow. I never saw finer Verbenas than some of these at Galveston. Phlox Drummondii grow wild all over Texas, and sometimes the prettiest are permitted to grow unmolested in the garden, but the inferior colors are rooted out. Pelargoniums of the Zonale and sweet scented types survive the winter out-of-doors and are quite common. November flowers or Chrysanthemums are in every Dutchman's garden; and common seedling Pansies are much prized. Carnation pinks are highly valued, but not over plentiful, and they have a goodly variety of bulbs. Conspicuous amongst these was a splendid red amaryllis, clumps of which were full bloom whilst I was there in April. The largeness and brightness of those Amaryllis blooms and the lavishness with which they were borne surpassed all my previous acquaintance of this class.²⁶

William Watson and his Kew Horticulturists...continued from page 6

He then reviewed shrubs, which included bridal wreaths, mock oranges, altheas, crape myrtles, plumbago, deutzias, Weigela rosea, lavender shrubs, lilacs, "tried by many but so far as I have seen with bad results," hydrangeas, Calycanthus, snowballs, and red and white oleanders. He spoke of cape jessamine saying, "no amount of coaxing" will make them flourish at Galveston, but that the people in Houston "grow the best in America."²⁷

Writing of evergreens, Falconer reported "Pittosporum tobira and its variegated form are perhaps the most favored evergreens on the island" and were sometime "clipped into fancy shapes." Other evergreens he observed were "Viburnum odoratissimum" and the "common Spindle tree known here as the 'Evergreen'." He was strongly opinionated about the use of our native cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*): "The American Cedar is largely used to prune into stiff columns and round headed blocks—a very old and ugly fashion."

He wrote that Galveston was no place for pines, and magnolias did poorly, but that "Magnolia grandiflora along Buffalo Bayou attains the dimensions of immense timber trees." He seemed surprised at the omission of a few shrubs in Galveston that he called "first rate Texas plants," the Chinese Tea Plant (*Thea bohea*), the Sweet Olive (*Olea fragrans*) and Banana shrub (*Magnolia fuscata*), all three of which were advertised in Watson's 1869-1870 Rosedale catalogue.

"Galveston may be termed horticulturally the island of Oleanders and Roses. Roses are the favorite flowers and are more extensively grown than all other flowers put together."²⁹ He described the variety of roses in great detail and of course, many of the names are quite familiar to any of us that appreciate old roses today: Marchal Neil, Safrano, Gloire de Dijon, Lamarque, Souvenir de la Malmaison, and others. Speaking of climbing roses and the fact that they were greatly appreciated at Galveston, he said the white Lady Banks or Bridal Rose was a "favorite for the cemetery." He went on to say that "plants and slips are being continually stolen from the graveyard." But on a happier note:

The ladies of the island are such good gardeners that they raise most of their own roses from cuttings, which they exchange and present in true neighborly fashion. Marchal Neil, Triumph of Luxemburg, and some others they find slow growers from cuttings, so they have now a 'budding' mania.³⁰

In another article, Falconer addressed roses in Texas:



William A. Yates.
Courtesy of Houston
Metropolitan Research
Center.

These seem to be admirably adapted to Texas providing the plants get established, but many failures occur, owing to setting out small and weakly rooted plants; what we want are plants big enough to go ahead and take care of themselves. By the presence of several local nurseries and the continual presence of traveling agents from northern nurseries, the people have become as familiar with the names of Marchal Niel, Souvenir de la Malmaison, and Archduke Charles as they have with General Grant and Trophy Tomatos. Only the more intelligent and careful care anything about H.P.'s—monthly Roses (Teas and Chinas) being all they want. About our little cities, say Galveston, Houston, Austin, Victoria, and Bryan, may be seen Tea Roses in great luxuriance, as bushes, as climbers, on poles or trellises, or trained against the houses. They bloom too in great profusion, and in quality can keep pace with Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Bath, or Exeter.³¹

While Falconer left us with some very interesting descriptions of horticulture in Texas during his brief tenure here, for a more lasting influence on this region's horticulture, we must look to another of Watson's protégés, William Arthur Yates.

Yates was born at Goosnargh, near Preston, Lancashire, England, September 15, 1862. He apprenticed at Kew Botanic Gardens before coming to the United States when he was eighteen years old. He landed in New York, but then came to Houston and spent several years there in the floral trade. In the early 1880s he moved to Washington County and worked for William Watson at Rosedale at least through 1892. In time, he opened his own nursery, the Highview Nursery, which was originally right next to Rosedale. He was particularly interested in fruit trees and his articles published in *Texas Farm and Ranch* and in the local *Brenham Banner* indicate that he was a dedicated scientist in his search for fruit varieties appropriate for our locale. He operated his nursery until 1917 at which time he became Washington County's first Agricultural Agent, a position he held until about 1927. He then returned to the nursery business, which he continued until his death in 1940 at the age of 77.³²

Like Falconer, Yates wrote prolifically. In 1892, sixteen years after Falconer's review of horticulture in Texas, Yates wrote:

There is now an increasing and commendable desire among the people of Texas, both in town and country, for the possession of well 'fitted up' homes, with pleasant surroundings, and certainly nothing adds more to the attractiveness of the home than a

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William Watson and his Kew Horticulturists...continued from page 4



tastefully arranged garden, containing well grown and carefully selected trees and flowers.... Wherever we see, on passing through the suburbs of our towns and cities, a residence surrounded by a tastefully laid out and well kept garden, we at once think of the owner as a man of superior culture and refinement. So closely associated in our minds is the word garden, with all that is elevating and refined in human nature, and to such an extent are we influenced by it that we are instinctively prepossessed in the owner's favor without as much as a personal acquaintance. The number of strictly first-class flower gardens ornamental grounds in Texas is not large as yet. This State is comparatively a new country and its citizens are only just beginning to realize its horticultural possibilities.³³

Birmingham Botanical Garden Lecture Series Features SGHS Members

The 1997 schedule of speakers for the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in Birmingham, Alabama includes Southern Garden History Society members Dean Norton (Mount Vernon), past SGHS president William Welch, and Gail Griffin of Atlanta. For more information about these programs, contact Catherine A. Sims, 908 Highland Rd., Birmingham, AL 35209-3422. ♦

Hillsborough Spring Tour

Few towns in North Carolina rival Hillsborough for its history, early architecture, and its gardens and landscapes. Readers will remember that Hillsborough sites and people have several times been covered in the pages of *Magnolia*. Those who wish to see and enjoy in person the evocative setting of this easily-accessible community should visit Hillsborough for the Saturday, April 26, 1997 spring tour. Among the tour's highlights will be Nancy Goodwin's deservedly famous gardens at Montrose. Featured too will be the garden at the historic Burwell School, a site linked to the rediscovery of the musk rose, as well as Moorefields, a house whose landscaped, rural setting still recalls its late eighteenth-century origins. In addition, tour sponsors will hold a sale of historic plants. For further information, call the Orange County Visitors Center at (919) 732-7741. ♦

The article gave a few recommendations for specific plants. One of interest was the tulip tree, "a grand acquisition to our list of desirable shades and for symmetry of growth and beauty of foliage is not surpassed by any tree known to horticulture. Mr. Watson has in his nurseries here some noble specimens that he raised from seed over twenty years ago." Yates also extolled the virtue of the sycamore: "...many good qualities as a shade tree, its vigorous growth and hardiness making it well adapted for street planting, while for small gardens, may be grown as compact as a sweet gum by judicious pruning." Other trees he discussed were the silver maple, catalpa, magnolia, wild peach and Japan privet.

W. A. (Bill) Yates, Jr., remembers helping his father collect seeds from the magnolia trees that his father had planted at Prairie Lea Cemetery, so that they could continue to grow additional trees. Bill remembers they sold magnolias to Teas Nursery in Houston. He also told me that all the pecan trees in the park at Old Washington were planted by his father in 1928 or 1929.³⁴

After becoming the Washington County Farm Agent, the Yates family moved into town. In about 1919, they purchased property where St. Mary's Catholic Church is now. After Mr. and Mrs. Yates both passed away, the property was sold to St. Mary's late in 1965. The current rectory and the parking lot are on what was the Yates' last homestead and nursery.

Yates' circa 1915 nursery catalogue listed a more conservative selection of fruit trees than Watson's lists. For example he recommended only four variety of pears: Le Conte, Smith's, Garber and Kieffer. He honestly stated that he had no pears that were blight proof, but he recommended the Kieffer as being the most resistant. Indeed, his own evolution as a pomologist is evident here, for in earlier articles he had given the history of fruit growing in the South and particularly concerning pears, had suggested that the Gulf coast country of Texas (Alvin) might be so successful as to give us the "pear baron" to rival Florida's "orange baron" and California's "prune baron."³⁵

In his catalogue, he openly stated that this was "not apple country in the strict sense of the word," but he listed seven varieties that did fairly well, which were: Red Astrachan, Early Harveal, Yellow Transparent, Nickajack, Shockley, Transcendent, and the Becker. The Becker got the highest

recommendation and perhaps the best description of any I have read of this apple: "Originated in Dr. Beckers' orchard near Frelsburg, Colorado Co., seems especially adapted to Southern Texas. Of



*Horticultural certificate
to J.F. Leyendecker*

continued on page 9...

William Watson and his Kew Horticulturists...continued from page 8



upright vigorous habit. Fruit oblate in shape, medium to large in size, highly colored, red with yellow markings. Flesh crisp, juicy, sub-acid, quality the best. Late June and July."

He covered practically every variety of fruit tree, but again, always with only a few of what he considered choice selections. His list of ornamental plants was quite extensive, including seven varieties of altheas, six *Lonicera* (honeysuckle), eight spiraea, and a full six pages of roses. He recommended five varieties of ornamental grasses including pampas and *Arundo donax*, which we now see so commonly along our highways. His list of vines included our native Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), which he noted "in the autumn takes on the most gorgeous coloring."

In addition to Yates and Falconer, two other English horticulturists worked for Watson at Rosedale. William Baker, (1856-1899), was born at Egham, Surrey, and came to Brenham in the 1870s. He worked for Watson, possibly at the same time that Falconer did, and was in Brenham until around 1880. His younger brother, James Beauland Baker, graduated from Sam Houston Normal Institute in Huntsville in 1880,

and in 1884, they opened Baker Brothers Nursery in Fort Worth. J. B. Baker was a founding member of the Texas Nurseryman's Association and was president of the Texas State Horticultural Society at one time. According to Samuel Geiser, the two Baker Brothers introduced two native species to the nursery trade, *Salvia greggi* and the Hardy Lantana.³⁶ Advertisements in the Fort Worth Morning Register in April 1899 include some one-liners from Baker Brothers: "Large Caladiums or elephant ears at Baker Bros."; "Flower seed, suited to this climate. Baker Bros."; "Fine new cannas, best varieties, at Baker Bros."³⁷ J. B. Baker, Jr. served as president of The Texas Nurseryman's Association in 1942-43 and continued to run the family nursery business until sometime in the 1970s.

Nurseries apparently came and went in earlier days just as they do today. To have succeeded in the nursery business for many years is a credit to Watson, Yates, and the Baker brothers. They along with Falconer, who chose a different horticultural career, were some of our pioneer horticulturists who with a little help from Kew Gardens led us down our historical garden paths. +

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Geiser, Samuel W., *Horticulture & Horticulturists In Early Texas*, University Press in Dallas, SMU, 1945, p. 46.
- 2 Johnson, Frank W., *A History of Texas and Texans*, Vol. III, The American Historical Society, Chicago and New York, 1916, pp. 1290-1292.
- 3 *Texas Farm & Ranch*, Dallas, June 15, 1891, p. 1.
- 4 *Texas Farm & Ranch*, Dallas, June 15, 1891, p. 1.
- 5 Johnson, p. 1291.
- 6 Schmidt, Charles F., *History of Washington County, Texas*, The Naylor Company, San Antonio, 1949, pp. 51-52.
- 7 "Watson, Wm., "Landscape Gardening," *Initial Report of the Texas State Horticultural Society for 1886-1889*, Geo. W. Curtis, editor, College Station, December 1889, pp. 72-3.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- 9 *Texas Farm & Ranch*, Dallas, July 8, 1893, p. 2.
- 10 *Descriptive Catalogue of the Rosedale Nurseries*, Eugene Von Boeckmann, Printer, Austin, Texas, 1894, p. 63.
- 11 Personal interview, Mrs. Reese Lockett (b. 1905), Brenham, Texas, July 31, 1996.
- 12 *Texas Almanac*, Dallas, 1978.
- 13 Watson, Wm. "The Rosedale Hybrid," *Texas Farm & Ranch*, April 23, 1892, Dallas, p. 10.
- 14 "Rosedale Nurseries," *Brenham Banner*, July 9, 1874, Brenham, Texas, p. 1.
- 15 Desmond, Ray, *Kew, The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens*, Harvill Press, 1995, p. 359.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 423.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 291.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 221.
- 19 Desmond, Ray, *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturists*, J. Kew Guild of 1929, p. 711-12.
- 20 Falconer, Wm., "Notes of the Week," *The Gardener*, London, England, March 6, 1875., p. 192.
- 21 Falconer, Wm., "Horticulture in Texas," *The Gardener's Chronicle*, London, England, September 30, 1876, p. 424.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 425.
- 23 "The astringent fruit of the blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*." (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1960).
- 24 Falconer, Wm., "Horticulture in Texas," *The Gardener's Chronicle*, London, England, October 7, 1876, p. 457.
- 25 Falconer, Wm., "Gardening at Galveston, Texas," *The Gardener's Monthly*, Philadelphia, August, 1875, p. 225-6.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 226.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 226.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 227.
- 29 Falconer, Wm., "Notes from Galveston, Texas," *The Gardener's Monthly*, September, 1875, London, p. 258.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 259.
- 31 Falconer, Wm., "Horticulture in Texas," *The Gardener's Chronicle*, October 21, 1876, London, p. 521.
- 32 Geiser, pp. 93-94.
- 33 Yates, W. A., "The Ornamental Garden in Texas," *Texas Farm & Ranch*, December 17, 1892, Dallas, p. 11.
- 34 Yates, Jr., W. A., Telephone Interview, August 21, 1996.
- 35 Yates, W. A., "The Coast Country and its Possibilities," *Texas Farm & Ranch*, Dallas, October 8, 1892, p. 10.
- 36 Geiser, p. 33. (Note: Geiser may be in error on *Lantanas*. The 1869-1870 Rosedale Catalogue, p. 30, advertises *Lantanas*, "Several kinds...50cents".)
- 37 *Ft. Worth Morning Register*, Fort Worth, Texas, April 20, 1899, p. 5.

Of Note

The World of Horticulture Loses a Bright Star

J. C. Raulston, one of the South's finest and most beloved horticulturist, died in an automobile accident on December 21, 1996. Although he was not directly involved in garden history, J. C. was history in the making. Like the great plant hunters through the ages, he was a modern-day John Bartram, Mark Catesby, or E. H. Wilson, traveling the world for garden-worthy specimens to test in his trial beds at the North Carolina State Arboretum in Raleigh. J. C. leaves a void impossible to fill and he will be greatly missed. +

Book Review

Bartram's Garden Catalogue of North American Plants, 1783. Journal of Garden History, vol. 16, no. 1 (January-March 1996).
John Dixon Hunt, editor. Taylor & Francis Ltd.
66 pages. paper. ISBN 0144 5170.



Joel T. Fry and his colleagues at the John Bartram Association have given us a scholarly assessment of one of the rarest early American horticultural artifacts — a broadside catalogue of North American plants published by the Bartram brothers, William and John, in 1783. There are only two extant copies of this catalogue. Although no date is printed on them, Fry makes a convincing case for the year of publication based on a knowledge of the Bartram family business, the 1783 date on a similar catalogue printed in France, and a 1785 reference by Humphry Marshall to a “sheet catalogue” published by the brothers.

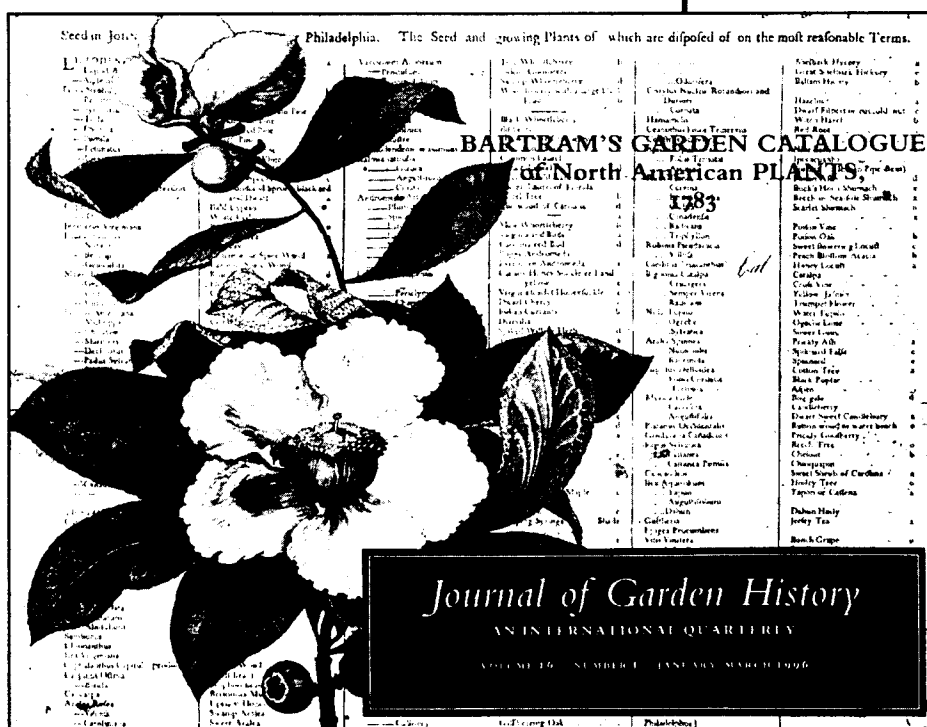
Fry asserts that the Bartram broadside was the first nursery catalogue published in America but I wonder why there is no reference to the broadside published by William Prince of Flushing, New York in 1771. The note on William Prince in Appendix B refers to a 1790 broadside and makes disparaging remarks on his operation. Since the 1771 Prince broadside is reproduced in Hedrick's *History of Horticulture in America to 1860*, it would have been appropriate for Fry to refute its date or otherwise explain why he did not acknowledge it as preceding the 1783 broadside.

The heart of this special issue of the *Journal of Garden History* is the alphabetical listing by current botanical name for the plants in the 1783 catalogue. Each botanical name is followed by its current common name and corresponding information from the catalogue — botanical and common names as well as the “soil type” recommended for growing the plant. This primary listing is supplemented by Appendix A, which is a transcription of the original broadside text, along with corrections made to one of the sheets by William Bartram, and by Appendix D, which lists Bartram botanical names in alphabetical order.

Since the 1783 catalogue is comprised almost exclusively of woody plants (218 of them), Fry also reports on fifty-eight herbaceous plants from a 1784 Bartram shipping list, in order to give some idea of herbaceous plants available from the Bartrams at that time. The herbaceous plants are included as a group at the end of the primary list and related appendices.

Although Fry says that it “is not as difficult as it might seem” to identify the catalogue plants, in 37 of 218 species he indicates an uncertainty about the identity of the historic plant. I found it disappointing that we were not given some details of the taxonomic investigation he followed. For the thirty-seven cases, it would have been useful to know why there was uncertainty. For instance, for Bartram's listing of “*Azalea Caroliniana*, Sweet Azalea,” Fry gives the current

continued on page 11...



In addition to photographic reproductions of the three broadsides, the article includes historic photographs of Bartram's garden and botanical paintings by William Bartram, some of them published here for the first time. Extensive notes to the text, Appendix B (“Fellow gardeners and botanists of early America”), and Appendix C (“A bibliographic note on existing copies of the 1783 Bartram *Catalogue*”) testify to a thorough research effort. The text provides readers with a broad general orientation to the Bartrams, plant taxonomy in their time, and their patrons — “curious gentlemen.”

Book Review

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names "*Rhododendron arborescens* [?], Carolina Rhododendron," and the alternative but, according to Fry, less-likely possibility of "*Rhododendron atlanticum* [?]." What are the differences between *R. arborescens* and *R. atlanticum*? What historic and contemporary references were consulted? What makes one species more likely than the other? Drawing readers into the investigation would have given a fuller appreciation of the complexity of identifying plants from historic records.

Although the majority of the catalogue plants are familiar, most readers will be amazed at a few of the plants listed. *Litsea aestivalis*, *Nyssa ogeche*, *Persea borbonia*, and *Zanthoxylum americanum* amazed me. The Bartram's 1783 catalogue is a testament to their extraordinary native plant knowledge. I will go back to this publication many times.

— John T. Fitzpatrick, Cold Spring, New York
[Bartram's Garden Catalogue can be ordered through Historic



Bartram's Garden for \$19.95 plus \$3 shipping.
For information, call (215) 729-5281.] ♦

New Perspectives on Southern Gardens. *Journal of Garden History*, vol. 16, no. 2, April—June 1996. C. Allan Brown, guest editor. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 152 pages. ISBN 0144 5170. This issue can be purchased through the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants. For ordering information, call (804) 984-9816. ♦

The Gardens of Salem, *The Landscape History of a Moravian Town in North Carolina*. by Darrell Spencer with photographs by Virginia R. Weiler. Old Salem, Inc. publishers. 1997. 104 pages. ISBN 1-879704-01-3. This paperback edition has been selected as an alternate selection by the Garden Book Club. It can be ordered through the Old Salem Town Merchant, (800) 822-5151. Retail price: \$14.95. ♦

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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, Primroses and Pinks," Scott Kunst on "Historic Bulbs for Today's Gardens," John Fitzpatrick on "Perennials from the Past," Doug Seidel on "The Noisette Roses of Léoné Bell," and Mike and Ann Lowe on "Historic 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.

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will range from the history of landscape restoration by Rudy Favretti to the National Park Service guidelines for site restoration by Charles Birnbaum; 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. For more information contact the Landscape Conference, Old Salem Inc., P.O. Box F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108.

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SGHS Fall Board Meeting

The fall directors' meeting was held November 1st-3rd, 1996 at Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet, South Carolina. Board member Lawrence Henry was host. Board members heard a report from William E. Alexander, landscape curator for the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina outlining tentative plans for the society's annual meeting in 1998. The theme will be "Mountain Heritage: Landscapes and Gardens of the Blue Ridge." An exact date in April or May will be set at the upcoming spring board meeting.

The board selected Houston, Texas as the site of the 1999 annual meeting with board member Nancy Haywood as chair. Mount Vernon, Virginia will host the meeting in 2000, with board member Dean Norton as chair.

Barbara W. Sarudy of Monkton, Maryland, Dr. Elizabeth M. Boggess of Natchez, Mississippi, Harriet Jansma of Fayetteville, Arkansas, and Dr. Edgar G. Givhan of Montgomery, Alabama were introduced as new board members elected at the 1996 annual meeting. Mrs. Jansma and Dr. Givhan are both former presidents of the society, returning to the board for second terms.

Board president Dr. William C. Welch appointed a nominating committee of Mrs. Jansma as chair, Peter Hatch, and Flora Ann Bynum to select candidates for the 1996-98 slate of officers. Immediate past-president Ben G. Page, Jr. of Nashville, Tennessee was appointed a member of the executive committee. ✦



Call for Papers

The Southern Garden History Society invites members and others doing research on some aspect of the landscape history of the South to submit essays of thirty to fifty pages in length suitable for publication as a volume of *Magnolia Essays: Occasional Papers of the Southern Garden History Society*. (The first volume of *Magnolia Essays* was devoted to Frederick Law Olmsted's residential design in Georgia.) Papers must be received by October 15, 1997 and should be sent to the editor, Catherine Howett, School of Environmental Design, Caldwell 609, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602. ✦

Members in the News

Colonial Williamsburg's landscape Architect **Kent Brinkley** is featured in the November-December 1996 issue of *Southern Accents*. The article, "Winter Green," explores "the glory and trial of Virginia's English heritage: the boxwood garden." ✦

Catherine Howett has been named Senior Fellow in the Studies in Landscape Architecture Program at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC. ✦

Dr. William C. Welch, President

Peter J. Hatch, Vice-President

Flora Ann Bynum, Secretary-Treasurer

Magnolia grandiflora reproduced by courtesy of Rare Book Division,
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Deadline for the submission of articles for the spring issue of Magnolia is April 15th.

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

Bulletin of the
Southern Garden
History Society

Vol. XIII

No. 2

Spring 1997

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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In Print

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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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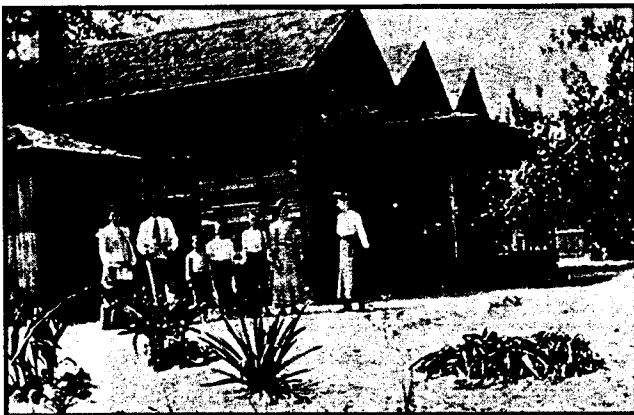
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October 3rd-4th, 1997. Tenth annual **Southern Garden Symposium & Workshop**. A stellar line-up of speakers at this popular conference include D. H. Marc Cathey, president of the American Horticultural Society; Marco Polo Stufano, director of Wave 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 garden exclusively for her collection of flowering plants. My mother recalled its appearance around 1925 when she lived there as a young bride:

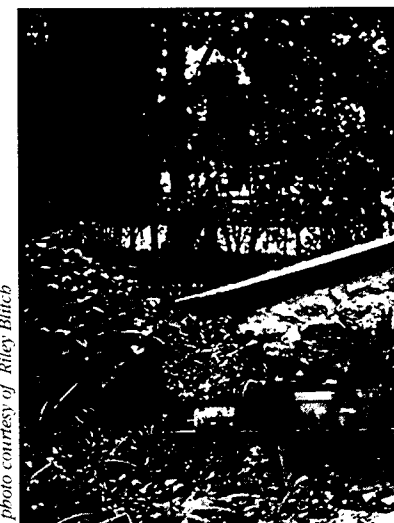
"The flower garden was across the lane from the house. It was about eighty yards long and forty yards wide with a high wire fence and a pretty picket gate. Deep at the far end toward the

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



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



Dudley House—flower pit.

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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

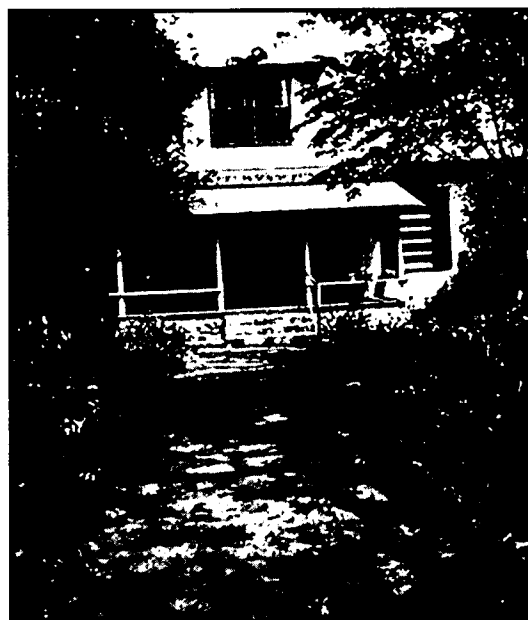


bare white sand. We gathered flowers from this garden every day to put in every room of the house."

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"

The 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 unequalled 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

... continued from page 5

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.

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

continued on page 8...

Shaping the Landscape

Image...

continued from page 7



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

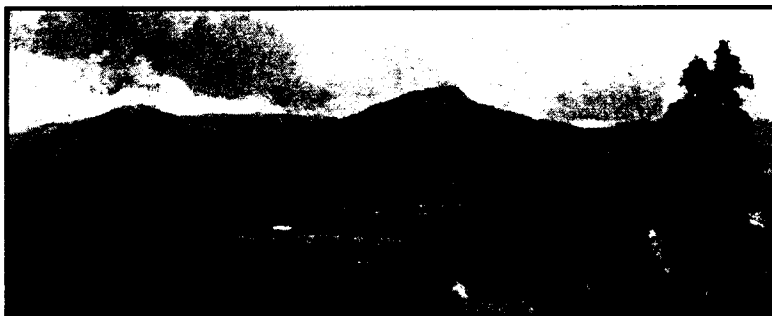
this country and abroad; however, his work for Appleton would remain the principal achievement of an important career.

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...

continued from page 4

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. +

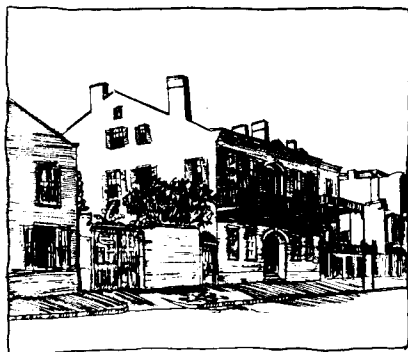
In Print

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

This 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

The 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

The 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

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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 26th-29th, 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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The Professional Gardener's Trade in the Eighteenth Century

by M. Kent Brinkley, ASLA, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



Eighteenth-century Williamsburg, as capital of the Virginia colony, became a focal point for politics, the courts, trade and material consumption due to its many merchants and as the site of weekly, open-air markets. The city was also populated with some fine town homes and gardens, and also became the locus of an active trade in garden seeds and plants between several local, gentry gardeners and their "curious" gentlemen friends of scientific learning in England.

A lesser-known facet of Williamsburg's gardening and horticultural history, however, concerns the influences of, and the spread of horticultural knowledge by professional, English- and Scottish-trained gardeners. [NOTE: The word "professional" in this article's context is specifically used to draw a distinction between someone who was formally trained as a full-time gardener, as opposed to a talented amateur, for whom gardening was a

part-time avocation.]

An examination of the professional gardener's trade and how they were trained in their craft reveals much about why such men eventually came

to these shores. Also revealed is how their presence in Williamsburg led to the establishment (late in the eighteenth century) of a commercial landscape plant nursery here.

As tradesmen, English- and Scottish-trained gardeners were never present in large numbers in Virginia, though their influence was certainly profound in other ways. While horticultural books were available and were widely purchased by local gardeners, it was through personal contacts and friendly advice to neighbors and

acquaintances, that professional gardeners helped to spread sophisticated horticultural knowledge and expertise to an ever-widening circle of interested amateurs.

Mostly gentry-class gardeners in Virginia were

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eager to learn how garden successfully in a vastly different climate from that of England, where all of the gardening books then in print had originated. Because of these climatic differences, Virginia gardeners were ultimately forced to experiment to greater or lesser degrees. The degree of experimentation largely depended upon the extent to which someone had access to other local sources

of reliable information. For this reason, then, such people particularly valued the advice of any trained gardener who might live or work nearby, in helping them to

make their modest gardening efforts achieve greater success.

Similar to practices still in use today, aspiring, professional English gardeners in the eighteenth century learned their trade by serving a lengthy apprenticeship under the teaching and direction of a "head" gardener. Adhering to a tradition that went back to the middle ages, gardeners, though many

were from a respectable middle class background, were always regarded as servants in the households they served, and were always men.¹ As a craft or group, they often had very little identity as individuals. Sometimes unskilled adolescent boys and working-class women might be hired seasonally

to collect grass clippings after turf was scythed, or to pick caterpillars or other pests by hand from the flowers and vegetables.² But everything else on a large English estate, other than the most menial of tasks, was done by the resident staff of apprentices and journeymen gardeners. To accomplish these chores, a small army of gardeners were typically employed on most estates.

Just as there was then an established structure or hierarchy among all members of society (and even within the ranks of the gentry) in all large English households so, too, was there a hierarchy that existed among the servants. The chief servants of a large manor house ranked above all others, and were duly accorded the dignity and title of "Mr." by the lesser servants under them. These chief servants included the butler, the clerk of the kitchen, the head cook, the head groom, and perhaps the head gardener, depending upon the size of the estate and the degree of responsibility he had. These men usually took their meals together at a private table; apart from the remainder of the staff. All of the other servants typically ate together in the servant's hall. These included footmen, under butler(s), porters, coachmen, grooms, gardeners, stable-boys, odd men and household maids. All of the kitchen staff (excepting those mentioned above), including kitchen and scullery maids, ate in the

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GENTLEMEN and others, may be supply'd with good Garden Pease, Beans, and several other Sorts of Garden Seeds: Also, with great Choise of Flower Roots; likewise Trees of several Sorts and Sizes, fit to plant, as Ornaments in Gentlemen's Gardens, at very reasonable Rates, by Thomas Crease, Gardener to the Cottage, in Williamsburg.

Virginia Gazette, January 13, 1738.

CALENDAR

November 4th, 1997. Felder Rushing, co-author of *Passalong Plants*, will present "Minerale de Minnesota" at the New Orleans Old Garden Rose Society. P.O. Box 51416, New Orleans, LA 70151-1416.

March 27th-29th, 1998. The Life and Work of Ellen Biddle Shipman, a symposium presented by the Sarah P. Duke Gardens of Duke University in Durham, NC. (see article below) Speakers to include Judith Tankard, Mac Griswold, John Franklin Miller, and John T. Fitzpatrick. For more information, contact Taimi Anderson, education coordinator at Duke Gardens, (919) 969-7796.

April 24th-26th, 1998. The Dallas Area Historical Rose Society will host the 1998 Annual Conference of the Heritage Rose Foundation. Speakers will include

Dr. Katherine Zuzek, Scott Kunst of Old House Gardens, and Stephen Scanniello of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. In addition to lectures and panel discussions, the schedule includes tours of public and private gardens, and a banquet in a unique and dramatic setting. An all-day, pre-conference bus tour to the Antique Rose Emporium is scheduled for Thursday. For more information, contact The Heritage Rose Foundation, 1512 Gorman Street, Raleigh, NC 27606-2919; phone (919)834-2591; e-mail: rosefoun@aol.com.

May 29th-31st, 1998. 16th Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society will be held in Asheville, NC, with the Biltmore Estate as host and chaired by William Alexander, landscape curator of Biltmore.

The Professional Gardener's Trade ... *continued from page 2*



kitchen.³ This kind of rigid class system, while typical in England, would probably not have been seen in the colonies to this extent, except within the respective households of the royal governors of each colony and among the paid household staff of the royal colleges.

Though the available documentation concerning eighteenth-century English gardeners' lifestyles is not extensive, enough data exists to relate what must have been fairly typical cycles of daily life on most estates. The gardeners, young and old, all boarded together, usually in the lean-to sheds on the north side of the walled kitchen garden, often sleeping two or three in a bed. If they worked for a large estate, then their meals were provided for them as described above.⁴ Usually the head gardener was given separate, private quarters in a specially-equipped outbuilding or garden pavilion for himself and his family, if he had one.⁵

The gardeners' work day typically started at six in the morning or even earlier, and ended around six or eight o'clock at night. On a well-run estate, after having their supper the gardeners then had to study gardening, botany and various other sciences until their bedtime.⁶ Work tasks were dictated by weather and the season. Major construction work had to be accomplished within the usually short weather "window" between the moderately dry summer and the wet late fall months. If left until too late in the fall, the soil became too heavy and waterlogged. In those days, to create new planting beds in formerly turfed areas required the labor of scores of gardeners.⁷

Each apprentice or journeyman gardener on the estate was expected to adhere to a set of rules established by the head gardener, or perhaps by the owner himself. They would be fined or their pay would be docked if they left their tools and implements dirty, if they smoked while on the job or were absent from work without permission. Fines could also be levied for other infractions, such as if they did not have a pruning knife on their person or if they failed to wear the

gardener's trademark apron. They could be given stiff fines especially if they did not know the basic knowledge expected for their rank or position, such as the proper Latin names for common garden plants, or the names for each particular tool of their trade and their respective use(s) or purpose(s).⁸

A gardener's apprenticeship period could vary, but generally lasted about three years. The new "journeyman gardener" could either remain in the employ of the estate

where he apprenticed, or he could leave and become a "jobbing" or contract gardener on his own. If he chose the latter course, he usually had to purchase a full set of his own tools, which then cost the huge sum of £7 or 8. Regardless of the career path he chose, he could reasonably expect to receive a wage of about three or four shillings a day. If he had no other sources of income, this modest salary was just enough to support a very humble lifestyle for himself, a wife and one child. Because of the growth of its suburbs and the many large nursery gardens, which employed a large labor force, London offered the best job opportunities for journeymen gardeners. While jobs were available, the overly-plentiful supply of gardeners kept daily wages low. Thus, the standard of living of most jobbing gardeners in urban areas tended to be mediocre to very poor.⁹

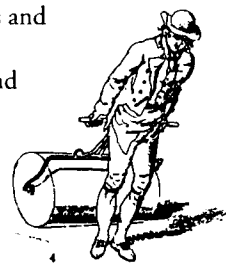
While most great English estates underwent revisions after about 1725-30, due to changes in gardening tastes to a more natural style, the gardens of large town houses in English cities remained geometrically-configured until the

very end of the eighteenth century.¹⁰ This was probably due to the need for organization within the very limited space available for urban gardens. Large town house gardens were typically laid out and planted by local jobbing gardeners and nurserymen to meet the needs and desires of their upper middle-class owners.¹¹

To assist those needy fellow tradesmen and their families, gardeners who worked near or within the cities often joined gardeners' societies and lodges. One group of gardeners in London formed the Society of Gardeners in the late 1720s, and well over twenty influential gardeners and nurserymen were among its members. These



Frontispiece Thomas Mawe and John Abercrombie, "Every Man His Own Gardener," 12th ed., London, 1788.



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The Professional Gardener's Trade ...

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organizations fulfilled both a benevolent and professional purpose and were organized very much like Masonic fraternity lodges, with elected officers and membership dues required. These gardener's lodges exerted much influence over their members and even the communities around them until at least the 1820s.¹²

Scottish gardeners appear to have been the most sought-after gardeners in Georgian England. The Scots seemed to have been particularly desirable because of their ambition, their willingness to work hard, and their reliable and frugal natures. Their gardening education was notably well above average and typically included studies in geology, chemistry, meteorology, physics, and botany. Many young, aspiring, Scots gardeners broadened their learning to other areas, such as dancing, fencing, chess and backgammon, and skill with a musical instrument; to become more well-rounded and advance further in life. With such an ambitious work ethic, it is little wonder, then, that professionally-trained Scots gardeners were so much in demand throughout Britain and also within her American colonies.¹³

Journeyman gardeners with talent and ambition aspired to eventually reach the position of a head gardener. The most common career path to this goal was usually to work hard and secure a favorable reputation as a journeyman; to acquire good references from all previous employers; and to secure a head gardener's post with a minor gentleman with a small- to moderate- sized estate. Head gardener posts on large estates could seldom be attained without a proven track record on a smaller estate in a similar position. Thus, advancement to this level often took many years.

For those who did not have the talents, education, or organizational abilities to be promoted to the post of head gardener even on a smaller estate, a life of poverty and destitution in old age were always possibilities. Some of the larger nurserymen in northern English and Scottish towns paid very low wages to their employees and, thus, forcibly



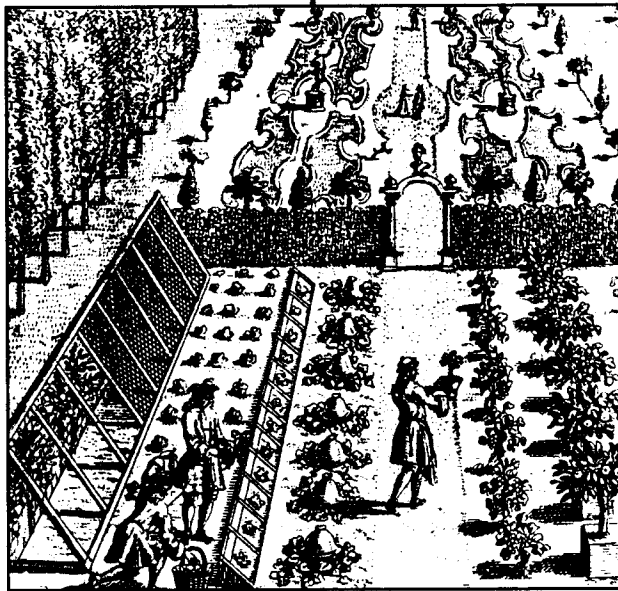
kept their workforce in squalid living conditions that were often no better than slavery. The supply of journeymen gardeners in urban areas such as these typically exceeded the demand. Finding a good job was difficult, and competition for the available gardener's jobs in these localities was apparently quite fierce.¹⁴

In the colonies, however, quite the opposite condition existed. Gardeners trained to English/Scottish standards were relatively scarce in the colonies and, thus, many young journeymen gardeners chose to emigrate to these shores where, with less competition they could better their lot and increase their employment chances. Undoubtedly, not a few of these expatriates were also probably just one step or two ahead of the law and/or debtor's prison.

Those few who were lucky and talented enough to secure a post of head gardener led a much better life than their charges. While their greater daily responsibilities demanded much from them, they often had a few additional perquisites, which made life more comfortable. A well-kept and elegant garden had long been regarded in England as a visible symbol of the owner's taste and sophistication. Therefore, one of the eighteenth-century English gentry pastimes was to visit and experience each other's gardens with a critical eye. Naturally, the owner of an estate wanted to make the best impression possible at all times. He also wanted to ensure that

his gardeners treated his guests hospitably, and that they receive direct and courteous answers to their questions about the plants and the garden's daily management.

It was usually the head gardener's duty to escort all important visitors around the house and grounds.¹⁵ This task, while often time-consuming, had decided advantages. Wealthy guests often tipped handsomely for such personal tours, and these contacts could often result in an outside design commission for the particularly knowledgeable and deferential head gardener. Lancelot "Capability" Brown, the most famous of all eighteenth-century English landscape gardeners-turned-architects, got his start doing design works on a part-time basis through earlier social contacts he had made while giving tours as head gardener for Lord Cobham, at "Stowe," in Buckinghamshire. Brown's reputation quickly spread, and his services increasingly became more in demand. After Lord Cobham's death in 1751, Brown finally left Stowe



Wall screens, cloches, bell-jars and potted fruits shown in a charming early 18th century garden. The Practical Gardener, Stephan Switzer, 1724.

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Colonial American Garden Exceptionalism

by Barbara Wells Sarudy, Monkton, Maryland

Early American garden history did not parallel English garden history of the period.¹ Colonial Americans did not rush to adopt the "natural" pleasure garden craze that was changing the English countryside at the time. Why?

By the eighteenth century in Britain, aristocratic families had farmed grand estates of one-thousand acres or more for centuries. There, famous landscape designers travelled from one great estate to the next, redesigning the face of a land already tightly sectioned off into hedged parcels. English gentry were escaping to their country estates and to the smaller second homes and gardens on the Thames near Richmond to avoid the corrupting forces of court politics and urban commerce.

In early America we find a wholly different phenomenon. While the names Chesapeake gentry chose for their estates may have reflected the ideal of innocent rural retirement — Solitude, The Retreat, The Hermitage — they knew these plantations were serious business. These colonials were not just tending their pleasure gardens, they were actively managing the day-to-day struggles of carving out a comfortable life from the still untamed American countryside.² Visitors were well aware of the differences.³ "In America," a French traveller noted in the 1790s, "a very pretty country house corresponds only to a place moderately kept up on the outskirts of a large French city, and even then one will find in [America] neither the good taste . . . nor the comforts which make living in it a pleasure."⁴

Among early Americans, there was no great social gulf between the landed aristocrats and the mass of local gentry and shopkeepers. American gardens did not symbolize political disagreements between the Whigs and the Tories. British Americans generally shared a conservatism that undergirded the emerging new representative democracy. The new American government took inspiration from the Roman republic and drew much of its symbolism from classical sources.

Unlike England, America had an abundance of natural resources.

Pleasure parks served as timber

nurseries for the concerned English gentry when trees became scarce in the British countryside. The colonial landscape still offered lush virgin woods.⁵ Early American landowners did not need forest keepers, they needed forest clearers.⁶

The English gentry also designed and stocked their

pleasure parks as protected private nesting retreats for wild fowl and game animals. Foresters patrolled the "natural" gardens of eighteenth-century England. Wild animals and birds were plentiful in the American countryside, where people were free to hunt for game unencumbered by the English laws

that allowed only the privileged to hunt and sometimes punished poachers with hanging.⁷ English landowners were deadly serious about protecting game in their parks from both human and animal predators. English fox hunting was more than sport; it was war against the impudent fox who dared to feast on the gentry's game. In the Chesapeake, the hunt was a social cold weather recreation where gentlemen often "let a fox loose. . . which afforded an agreeable ride after the hounds."⁸

In eighteenth-century America, wild game was abundant but having enough to eat was an issue.⁹ Most colonial families struggled to raise enough off the land to feed themselves and their workers, plus some extra to sell to others and make a profit. Only after the first quarter of the century did a relatively stable, native-born population begin to flourish in the Chesapeake. While laboring simply to survive, some of these British Americans made earnest attempts at pleasure gardening. Their triumphs are revealing exactly because of these cultural and economic pressures and priorities. We can trace the historical precedents for many of their garden designs, but the motives behind American gardens of this period often reflect a new idealism, shared equality, and a spirit of rebellion not common in mother England.

I use the term "Chesapeake" loosely here. From Pennsylvania to Virginia, country landowners often built their houses on a rise of ground, preferably on the bank of a river or a bay, and then sliced the hills supporting their dwellings into level garden areas connected by sometimes steep turf ramps. Though it is true that gardeners up and down the Atlantic included terraces in their garden designs, this penchant for terraces, slopes, and falls truly characterized mid-Atlantic taste. Those fortunate enough to build on the grounds falling toward the great Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries seemed particularly enamored with this style, which allowed the owner to manipulate both access and views to and from his house. The preference owed as much to control as to art.

Many garden historians scour English garden history searching for models for eighteenth-century colonial gardens. They pour over garden treatises and geometry texts hoping to stumble on some magical mathematical formula that American garden builders followed. They rehash the easily-accessible, well-documented, overly-analyzed but



"English landowners were deadly serious about protecting the game in their pleasure parks from both human and animal predators." Woodcut, Bowles & Carver, 1780-1795, London, England.



"Early American landowners did not need forest keepers, they needed forest clearers." Woodcut, Thomas Bewick 1753-1828, Northumberland, England.

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Colonial American Garden Exceptionalism

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unique garden efforts of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson in an attempt to explain American gardening in general. They read descriptions of contemporary American gardens by English travellers who borrow terminology from grand English villas and grounds to describe what they see.¹⁰ They hear art historians warning them to discount depictions of early American gardens and landscapes as copies of European prints. And there is a little bit of truth in all of it.

Thomas Jefferson, who had toured gardens in Europe and Britain during the 1780s, wrote to William Hamilton in 1806 that his garden at the Woodlands in Philadelphia was "the only rival which I have known in America to what may be seen in England."¹¹ The difference was in the details, of

course, just as one Englishman said when he compared Britain's Richmond on the Thames to the American Richmond on the James River in 1796, "The general

landscapes from the two Richmond-hills are so

similar in their great features, that at first sight the likeness is most striking. The detail of course must be extremely different . . . The want of finish and neatness in the American landscape would first strike his eye."¹²

Eighteenth-century American gardens were not copies of English natural landscape gardens, they were uniquely republican in style and in what they symbolized to their creators. They were an ordered, practical balance between the ornamental and the useful. +



Woodcut, Bowles & Carver, 1780-1795, London, England.

- 1 The most enlightening recent book on gardening in eighteenth-century England is *Polite Landscapes* by Tom Williamson, published in 1995 by The Johns Hopkins University Press in Baltimore, Maryland.
- 2 One of the best explanations of rural retirement may be found in an excellent discussion of this concept in the British American colonies in C. Allan Brown's article "Eighteenth-Century Virginia Plantation Gardens: Translating an Ancient Idyll," which appears in *Regional Garden Design in the United States*, edited by Therese O'Malley and Marc Treib and published by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Washington, DC, 1992.
- 3 When some contemporary European visitors heap lavish praise on the American "villas" dotting Virginia's rivers, Allan Brown explains that perhaps such "comments may exemplify their capacity to see beyond the actual to the significant." *Ibid.*, 139.
- 4 Moreau de Saint-Mery, M.L.E. *Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey 1793-1798*. Edited and translated by Kenneth Roberts and Anna Roberts (Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1947) 121.
- 5 When British troops were brought across the Atlantic to fight during the Revolution, they were sometimes trained in Canada to become familiar with military maneuvers in the "wooded country of America, with which they were totally unacquainted." *A Journal by Thos. Hughes*, introduced by E. A. Benians, (Cambridge: University Press, 1947) 6. The dense, dark woods frightened some English visitors. One wrote that "the idea of being benighted in the wilds of America was not a pleasing circumstance to a European female." *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, edited by Evangeline Walker Andrews and Charles McLean Andrews, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), 146. Robert Hunter wrote of woods in Virginia where "the trees were so thick that we could scarcely see the way at all." *Quebec to Carolina in 1785-1786: Being the Travel Diary and Observations of Robert Hunter, Jr.*, a Young Merchant of London, edited by Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1943), 239.
- 6 William Eddis, *Letters from America*, edited by Aubrey C. Land, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 66.
- 7 In England, hunting had long been a mark of social status. Legislation ensured that not just deer, but also other forms of game such as hares, partridges, and pheasants were reserved for the use and enjoyment of the rich. The Game Act of 1671 directed that game could only be taken by people possessing freehold property worth at least 100 pounds per year;

by those holding leaseholds of ninety-nine years or longer or copyholds worth at least 150 pounds per year; or by those who were the sons or heirs apparent of esquires or others "of higher degree." Not only did this act restrict the right to hunt to less than one per cent of the population, it also restricted it specifically to the established landed rich. In 1707 the penalty was increased to a blanket fine of five pounds or three months in prison. In 1723 the Black Act, "for the more effectual punishment of wicked and evil disposed persons going armed, in disguise" ensured that merely appearing in the vicinity of a game reserve, armed and with face blackened, was a hanging offense. In 1773, a new Night Poaching Act raised the fine up to fifty pounds depending on the number of prior convictions and allowed imprisonment of up to twelve months plus public whipping. Williamson, *Polite Landscapes*, 136.

- 8 For American fox hunting see *Extracts from the Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer of Philadelphia*, edited by Jacob Cox Parsons, (Philadelphia: William Fell & Co., 1893) 9-10, 13, 23.
- 9 On October 19, 1769 newly arrived royal appointee took his first trip to Maryland's Eastern Shore and noted, "It abounds . . . with game." William Eddis, *Letters from America*, edited by Aubrey C. Land, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959), 15. In the eighteenth century, the Chesapeake woods were alive with grouse, woodcock, squirrels, rabbits, wild turkey, and deer. Panthers, cougars, bobcats, wolves, and bears lived in the hills to the west of the bay. For more information about Maryland hunting see Meshach Browning's *Forty-Four Years of the Life of Hunter*, published by J. B. Lippincott in Philadelphia, 1860. For shooting pigeons see *Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer*, 10. For shooting and eating venison see *Ibid.*, 25.
- 10 Some eighteenth-century Americans did not put much stock in travel accounts written by Europeans. One wrote on September 11, 1795, "To-day I finished reading de Warville's 'Travels.' I can readily understand why he makes so many errors, for his stay was too short to give an accurate account of matters and things." *Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer*, 219.
- 11 Jefferson, Thomas, *Jefferson's Garden Book* edited by Edwin M. Betts (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society 1944), 322-323. July 1806.
- 12 Edward C. Carter II, John C. Van Horne, and C. E. Brownell, eds., *Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820: Selections from the Watercolors and Sketches* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press 1985), 72. "And in point of situations, there is no comparison, Richmond is allowed by all foreigners to be the most beautiful spot in England." *Quebec to Carolina: Diary of Robert Hunter Jr.*, 301

The Professional Gardener's Trade ...

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to go into business for himself full-time as a designer. He was among a very select few head gardeners who successfully managed to make a lucrative new career for himself giving design advice to wealthy patrons.¹⁶

A head gardener's typical duties were quite diverse. His major responsibility was to secure a continuous supply of fresh vegetables for the kitchens and flowers for the house. The head gardener also saw that the gardens and greenhouses were always kept neat and clean, and he had to introduce as many new and exotic plants as possible. He supervised the storage of roots, fruits and seeds; manage the sale of any excess produce; and directed all new construction work on the estate. In addition, he also had the daily duty of supervising and educating his apprentices; serving as a tour guide for visitors; and sometimes acting as a night-watchman to foil potential poachers!

With all these responsibilities, many head gardeners felt that they were very underpaid. Those who worked on a medium-sized estate earned about £40 a year, with about eleven shillings a week returned to the owner for their board. Aside from visitors' tips, there were few other income opportunities available. Yet it was not unusual for a head gardener to handle the wages of his gardening staff and construction contracts, which could total as much as £3,000 or more a year. No matter how much they improved themselves or the staff, it was rare for employers to increase their wages. A head gardener usually had to leave one job and go to another if he hoped to increase his earnings.¹⁷ New job positions were secured via contracts on a yearly basis, and, as stated before, good references were absolutely essential. Even for the most talented and conscientious gardener, one employer with a bad disposition or who bore him a grudge over a small transgression could easily ruin his career.¹⁸ The



reputations about particular head gardeners and the quality of their work did, indeed, get around!

If employed by a great peer with a large estate, a head gardener was truly at the pinnacle of his profession. Many such men felt themselves fortunate to have advanced that far, and most were content to do their demanding jobs for the rest of their careers from this lofty plateau. As stated previously, only a select few aspired (and even fewer managed) to ascend even higher. Aside from giving design

advice, the only other career alternatives were to go into business by opening a seed shop or plant nursery, or to write gardening books for sale to a gentry clientele, which was ever-hungry for practical design and cultural gardening advice.¹⁹

The would-be gardener-turned-designer often faced stiff competition from men with other various backgrounds. Painters, architects, builders, doctors, pharmacists, and minor gentlemen all decided, at one time or other, to try garden design as another way to make money.²⁰ The professionally-trained gardener did have a clear advantage due to his horticultural knowledge, but he still had to have a sense of prevailing tastes in garden design as well as an eye for design. Finally, because he would still be seen somewhat as a servant in his client's eyes, he would have to constantly display tact and diplomacy, personal wit and

charm, social refinements, and personality so necessary in daily dealings with one's social betters in order to succeed. These demands were formidable enough to deter many humble gardeners from attempting design work for the gentry. A few gardeners, such as Thomas Spence of Byfleet in London, managed to do quite well by limiting his design efforts to smaller, urban gardens for upper middle-class clients.²¹ Commercial plant nurseries were located near any large city in England, but only the largest and most aggressive operations provided their owners with a sufficient income to



The Gardener, An aquatint from the series "Cries" by Thomas Rowlandson, publ. 1799. (Museum of London)

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support a modest lifestyle. For most of the eighteenth century, however, the horticulture trade was centered in London; providing a wide variety of offerings. In 1730, there were about thirty important seedmen living and working in London. By 1760, that number had grown to at least thirty nurserymen and ten seedsmen located there, and as many again were scattered throughout the rest of England.²²

Advertisements.
GEORGE RENNEY,
GARDENER,
From ENGLAND,
INTENDING to settle in this place,
will undertake, by the year, to keep in order a few
GARDENS, at a reasonable price. Should he not meet
with encouragement in this way, he would be willing to
engage with any Gentleman in the country.
WILLIAMSBURG, Sept. 28, 1769.

Virginia Gazette (Purdie & Dixon)
Supplement to September 28, 1769

Virginia by naturalist Mark Catesby, in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.²⁴ Two of the most famous and successful nursery operations in England, however, were Loddiges Nursery, founded by Conrad Loddiges, the German gardener of Sir John Sylvester, and Brompton Park Nursery, founded in 1681 by four noted master gardeners, Roger Looker, Moses Cook, John Field and George London. Loddiges, located in Hackney, was also noted for its introduction and availability of plants from the American colonies.²⁵



Botany Woodcut published by Bowles & Carver, London, c.1770-1790.

Brompton Park was propelled to greatness in the 1690s under the operation of London and his new younger partner, Henry Wise, after London's original partners had died or had sold out to him to retire. The popularity of London and Wise was due to the combination of their design skills and their ability to anticipate the latest gardening fashions desired by their clients. These talents, coupled with maintaining a large enough inventory in their nursery to meet virtually all demands for plants called for in their expansive design schemes, assured their business success.²⁶ Their work also had a profound influence on early gardens in the colonies, such as at the College of William and Mary.

Compared to the total number who practiced the trade, not many professional gardeners ventured to write gardening books. Those few who did write usually managed to become quite wealthy from it, and to achieve a degree of immortality for their efforts, besides. Gardening

books were constantly being published in England during this period. Between 1730 and 1750, twenty four major gardening books were published, and sixty-six tomes appeared between 1765 and 1785. The most notable among the authors of this productive period in garden literature was Scots gardener, Philip Miller.

Born in 1692, Miller was at first a florist, then gardener to the Company of Apothecaries, where he became extremely knowledgeable about plants. His book, *The Gardener's Dictionary*, went through sixteen editions, with the last one appearing long after his death in 1771.²⁷ A more obscure, but no less important book, entitled *City Gardener*, was published by Thomas Fairchild in 1722. Fairchild's work is unique in that he was the sole Georgian garden writer who wrote specifically about the topic of town gardens, and he was the only one who wrote for an amateur audience. His competitors wrote exclusively for professional readers, and so their books usually were little more than a calendar of monthly or seasonal tasks.²⁸ Both Miller's and Fairchild's books, as well as several others, were known by and purchased for the personal library shelves of several notable gentlemen in eighteenth-century Virginia.

After reviewing the typical lifestyles of eighteenth-century English and Scots gardeners and the conditions by which they had to make a living, it is little wonder that so many of them ultimately chose to abandon the certain continued servitude and low wages in their homelands to take their chances by emigrating to the American colonies. Though some of those who emigrated may have remained in some form of servitude once here in Virginia, nonetheless their chances to improve their lot financially, with less competition, were greatly enhanced.

Several professional gardeners in eighteenth-century Virginia worked as head gardeners at either the Governor's Palace or the College of William and Mary, or both.²⁹ Some gaps exist in the records that have survived, but the Palace head gardeners' names we do have, and the period they worked there are as follows: Thomas Crease (1720 to about 1725-6); Christopher Ayscough (1758 to 1768); James Simpson (1768 to 1769); James Wilson (1769 to about 1771); and John Farquharson (1771 to 1781). Those gardeners who worked for the College and the period they worked there were: James Road (1694 to ?); Thomas Crease (1726 to 1756); James Nicholson (1756 to 1773); and James Wilson (1773 to 1780).³⁰ We also know that Crease (in 1738), Ayscough (in 1759), and Wilson (in 1774) placed advertisements in the *Virginia Gazette* newspaper offering to sell garden seeds directly to the public, in order to augment

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their regular incomes.³¹

Several other gardener-tradesmen were in Williamsburg at various times during the eighteenth century, and a few placed advertisements in the Virginia Gazette newspaper to offer their services for hire. One was George Renney, who, after arriving from England during the late summer of 1769, was looking to settle down here and find work, ".....by the year, to keep in order a few GARDENS, at a reasonable price."³² Other surviving documentation reveals that several English and Scottish gardeners were living in Virginia during the eighteenth century, including a William Henderson in Westmoreland County (in 1742); Nicholas Hingston in Alexandria (in 1798); David Mathesons in Stafford County (in 1775); Alexander Petrie in Richmond (in 1783-88), and later (1796) in Norfolk; and James Stewart (in 1775).³³ There were undoubtedly many others whose names and places of residence are now lost to us.

One final, late eighteenth-century Williamsburg gardener deserves mention here. He was seedsman and nurseryman, Peter Bellett. Although nothing is known of his birthplace or professional training, Bellett obviously emigrated from France sometime in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. By the mid 1780s, he and a Dutchman named Kroonem were partners in a Philadelphia seed store, advertising themselves as "florists, seedsmen, botanists and gardeners." Kroonem minded the store while Bellett frequently made periodic trips to Baltimore, Alexandria, Richmond, Petersburg, and Norfolk to sell seeds directly to customers there.³⁴

Landscape nurseries, such as Prince's Nursery in New York, were also beginning to appear in several of the former colonies by the end of the century. In 1794, Bellett sold his seed store interest to his partner and moved his family south to Williamsburg. He eventually purchased a total of twenty acres of property on the west side of Capitol Landing Road, located directly behind the Coke-Garrett house, and there opened a landscape nursery [NOTE: Sadly, the site of Bellett's Nursery has today been all but totally destroyed by the later

construction of Lafayette Street and the railroad tracks. Both features run directly through the middle of what was the former nursery site].³⁵

Obviously, Bellett must have re-located to Williamsburg to seize an opportunity to meet what must have been a growing regional demand for plants. From the steady growth of his operation over a ten year period, we also know that he helped to create further demand because, significantly, Bellett was quite an entrepreneur for his day. He firmly believed in constant, aggressive marketing to promote his wares. He periodically placed sales advertisements in all of the newspapers within the region. Moreover, he even prepared printed catalogs annually and distributed them to store owners in Petersburg, Richmond, and Norfolk to act as sales agents for him, no doubt on a commission basis. Williamsburg residents Joseph Prentis and Joseph Hornsby purchased seeds, plants, and fruit trees directly from Bellett, as no doubt many other regional residents did, as well.³⁶

By 1804, Peter Bellett's Williamsburg plant nursery reached the height of its success, with an astounding inventory of 100,000 fruit trees being grown by Bellett and his staff of eight slave gardeners. Late that year, however, for reasons which are today not entirely clear, Bellett

placed his entire nursery, garden tools, livestock, and all of his slaves up for sale, announcing his intention to move to New York state. He apparently never made it. While successful in selling a part of his holdings, two years later Bellett was still trying to divest himself of the remaining property. He must have been ill, because by December of 1807 he was dead, and his surviving family of a wife, at least one son, and five daughters remained in Williamsburg, where they apparently each lived out the rest of their lives.³⁷

Bellett is just one example of that group of foreign-born, professionally-trained gardeners who, through hard work, determination, and aggressive marketing of themselves and their wares, were able to eventually realize what we have today come to call "the American dream." Coincidentally, by doing so they also helped to spread horticultural knowledge and the awareness of gardening as a fine art, a somewhat novel concept to most Virginians who, at that time, tended to regard a garden primarily as a place for growing cabbages and lettuce for the table. In their own humble ways and via simple,



Colonial Williamsburg's Terry Yemm & Wesley Greene

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everyday tasks, professional gardeners helped their clients to see the aesthetic as well as practical potentials of gardening. Through their efforts, and of those men with the wherewithal to indulge in ornamental horticultural experimentation, a "garden" in this country eventually came to be regarded as a place of repose and reflection, a place where art and artifice could be displayed, and as a source of visual delight. Finally, their efforts helped to create a market for ornamental plants to support the rise of commercial landscape plant nurseries in this country.

This is the story that long-time Colonial Williamsburg employees and costumed gardeners, Wesley Greene and Terry Yemm, are today endeavoring to tell visitors who stop by our "Colonial Nursery." This interpretive and plant sales site first opened in the Spring of 1996 on lots located directly across Duke of Gloucester Street from Bruton Parish Church. Through the efforts of many dedicated staff members from several departments as well as volunteers, this project has been both a great interpretive and financial success for the Foundation so far.

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The Professional Gardener's Trade . . . Endnotes:

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26. Fleming, Laurence and Gore, Alan, *The English Garden*, Spring Books, London: 1988, pp. 59-60; and Harvey, *Early Nurserymen*, pp. 51-56.
27. Stuart, *Georgian Gardens*, pp. 153-4, 157.
28. Cruickshank, *Life in GC*, pp. 199, 201; Harvey, *Early Nurserymen*, pp. 49, 77, 150.
29. See unpublished manuscript by the author, entitled, "Plantsmen and Tradesmen of the Soil: Biographical Sketches of Notable 18th Century Williamsburg Amateur and Professional Gardeners." Williamsburg, VA: 1991, pp. 27-32, 40. (hereafter cited as "Brinkley, M. Kent. 'Plantsmen and Tradesmen.'")
30. Ibid. Additional personal information was gleaned from source material listed in *The Virginia Historical Index*, 2 volumes, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, Bruton Heights School Education Center, CWF.
31. *Virginia Gazette* issues: 13 Jan. 1738 (p. 4, col. 1); Nov. 1759 (p. 3, col. 2); 03 Mar. 1774 (p. 3, col. 2).
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Members in the News

Joanne Seale Lawson, regional director of the Garden Conservancy's *Open Days Directory* and SGHS member, will direct a survey of Historic Texas Landscapes, as funded through Bayou Bend Gardens. The report will identify a wide range of Texas landscapes, from private estates to heritage ranches to public parks and institutional sites. Survey results will be incorporated in Wave Hill's comprehensive database, The Catalog of Landscape Records in the United States.

SGHS secretary/treasurer Flora Ann Bynum is featured in *Country Home – Country Gardens*' fall 1997 issue. The article, "Colonial Flora," which includes numerous full-page photographs, profiles Flora Ann's mid-Victorian garden in Old Salem.

The October issue of *Southern Accents*, features "Living Legacy," an article by Susan Dowell, with original watercolors by Meg Kratz. The story's focus on heirloom bulbs profiles Old House Garden's Scott Kunst and highlights the recent Historic Plants Symposium at Monticello with quotes by Peter Hatch and Peggy Newcomb.



In Print

The Gardens of Louisiana: Places of Work and Wonder, by Suzanne Turner, photographs by

A. J. Meek. Louisiana State University Press, 1997. \$49.95

Heirloom Vegetable Gardening, by William Woys Weaver, Forward by Peter J. Hatch. Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1997. ISBN 0-8050-4025-0. \$45.00

American Gardener's Calendar, Bernard McMahon. New facsimile reprint of 1806 edition with Forward by Peter J. Hatch. Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, Inc., Charlottesville, VA, 1997. ISBN 0-929332-00-8. \$45.00

[copies available through the Center for Historic Plants, (804) 984-9817; www.monticello.org/shop]



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The daily and seasonal tasks of eighteenth-century gardeners were not so vastly different from those still confronting gardeners today. But many other similarities exist, as well. Even the mentoring system of educating gardeners today under the guidance of a more experienced senior has not changed so radically from practices used over two centuries ago. However, the major difference between the lives of eighteenth- and late twentieth-century gardeners lies in the fact that colonial gardeners lived largely in an uncertain, though perhaps benevolent form of paid servitude and, of course, today's gardeners do not. Another major difference is that modern technological advances have eliminated much of the back-breaking manual labor required of eighteenth-century gardeners. Science and technology has reduced not only the need for maintaining large labor forces, but has also enabled today's professional gardeners to accomplish more work within a shorter period of time, and with far less physical effort.

With all these thoughts in mind, perhaps we are now better able to more fully appreciate the contributions that the

professional gardeners of the eighteenth century made to the expanding world of gardening in America. While seeking a better life in the New World, these men helped to pass on Old World gardening knowledge and, perhaps most importantly, to impart a new appreciation of the expanding world of horticulture in all its many forms and fashions. Their contributions, however insignificant they may at first seem today, were ultimately but one facet of the much broader process of taking possession and making use of the land, which was, in turn, a significant part of the story of our becoming Americans. ♦

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 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.

A Symposium to Celebrate the Life and Work of Ellen Biddle Shipman



This three day symposium, March 27th–29th, 1998, focuses on Ellen Biddle Shipman, noted landscape architect, whose prolific design career extended from 1910 to 1945. Among her work dealing mostly with private gardens was one public garden commission, the design for the elegant Terraces of the Sarah P. Duke Gardens, which were featured in the edition of *Magnolia*. The Terraces, dedicated in 1939, are one of the few Ellen Shipman designed gardens still intact and show her great skill in laying out the structural framework and architectural details of this outstanding garden.

The publication of Judith Tankard's book, *The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman*, has stimulated renewed interest in the life and work of this remarkable and talented woman landscape architect. An exhibition, "The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman," organized by the Library of American Landscape History, is travelling to various museums and will be mounted at the Duke University Art Museum from the end of March until the end of May. This exhibition presents thirty projects of Shipman's garden designs through photographs,

drawings and plans, and will be augmented with drawings and photographs specific to the Terraces at Duke Gardens. The opening of the exhibition at

DUMA with a gala reception will be the inaugural event of the three day symposium.

The series of symposium lectures will focus not only on the life and work of Ellen Shipman, but also explore the setting of the country place era and the role of women landscape architects during that time. The present-day challenges of garden and landscape preservation and a case history of an Ellen Shipman garden restoration also will be examined. In addition to Judith Tankard, speakers will include Mac Griswold, author of *The Golden Age of American Gardens*, John Franklin Miller, director of Stan Ilywet in Akron, Ohio, during the restoration of the Shipman garden; and John T. Fitzpatrick, former project manager of the Garden Conservancy. All are SGHS members, with the exception of John Miller.

Symposium participants will have an opportunity to tour the Sarah P. Duke Gardens and a garden tour will take participants to Winston–Salem to view Reynolda Gardens of Wake Forest University, and the formal garden at the President's House at the University, designed by Ellen Shipman during the 1920s for De Witt and Ralph Hanes. ♣

Dr. William C. Welch, *President*

Peter J. Hatch, *Vice-President*

Flora Ann Bynum, *Secretary-Treasurer*

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