Magnolia

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

Bulletin of the Southern Garden History Society

Vol. XVI *No. 2* *Winter 2000-2001*

Biological Thought in Eighteenth-Century Agriculture

by G. Terry Sharrer - Curator of Health Sciences, Smithsonian Institution
[from a presentation for the Southern Garden History Society's annual meeting at Mount Vernon, May 6th, 2000]

Today, every farmer knows at least something, and often a great deal, about principles of breeding, controlling disease, and feeding crops and livestock. Indeed, knowledge of genes, germs, and nutrition is what makes farming *modern*. Husbandry's latest tools — global positioning systems for tractors, computer-aided ammonia applicators, gene-deleted vaccines, for example —are means for growing things, but farming's fundamental "technology" is knowing how things grow. We can look back at early farm tools and roughly figure out how and why they worked, but the real curiosity of pre-modern agriculture is the biological thought that ultimately guided the plow.

Courtesy of Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association

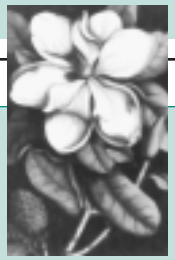
Mount Vernon farm site. *Photo by Roger Foley*

Perhaps the best place to begin divining those ideas, literally from the ground up, is the notion of "soil fertility" as it arose from classical antiquity.

Empedocles, the fifth-century B. C. Greek philosopher, proposed that all substances were made up of four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. Each element possessed a quality — cold, dryness, heat and moisture, respectively — that exhibited *natural* attraction or repulsion. Obviously, cold and heat could not exist simultaneously; nor dryness and moisture, but heat could blend with dryness or moisture, as could cold. Empedocles' contemporary, Hippocrates, interpreted this schematic and supposed that four basic *humors* existed — blood transformed from fire; phlegm from water; black bile from earth; and yellow bile from air — that determined health where "temperance" (i.e. balance) existed, or disease, from intemperance. Aristotle, writing a century after Empedocles and Hippocrates, grafted on to humoral theory the notion that life itself originated when the four elements blended into a "nutritive soul." His work, *On Plants*, described how water impregnated the earth, creating a seed that grew and developed as air and sunlight nourished the embryo. Roots, stems, and leaves contained all four elements, but in different proportions. Growth to maturity depended on continued absorption. Different species arose from different soil and climate situations — i.e. varying conditions governing

Continued on page 3…

Inside this Issue



CALENDAR

January-December 2001. "Les Reeves Lecture Series," of the Stephen F. Austin Mast Arboretum. Lectures are held the third or fourth Thursdays of every month. Scheduled speakers include Jeff Abt, Dave Creech, and SGHS members Flora Ann Bynum and Greg Grant. For more information, contact series organizer Greg Grant at Stephen F. Austin Department of Agriculture, 13000 - SFA Station (Wilson Drive), Nacogdoches, Texas 75962, telephone (936) 468-3705, e-mail ggrant@sfasu.edu, or visit their web site at: www.sfasu.edu/ag/arboretum/

March 5th-6th, 2001. "Artist in the Garden: The Interaction of Nature and Art," Davidson Horticultural Symposium XVII. Speakers include noted garden writers and artists Bob Lyons, Elizabeth Murray, Peter Loewer, Jenks Farmer, and Elsie Disnmore Popkins. For general information, call (704) 892-3665; for registration: (704) 892-0583; write: DHS XVII, P.O. Box 1145, Davidson, NC 28036.

April 17th-18th, 2001. "2001 Garden Symposium" at the Biedenharn Museum & Gardens. Speakers include garden writers and educators Neil Odenwald, Chris Horak, and Peggy Cornett. For information, contact program coordinator Jean Dixon, 2006 Riverside Drive, Monroe, LA 71201; (318) 387-5281; (800) 362-0983; www.bmusuem.org

May 4th-6th, 2001. "Pocosin to Parterre: Landscapes of the Carolina Coastal Plain," the19th annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society at Tryon Palace, New Bern, North Carolina. This meeting will explore the varied landscapes of the coastal region, from unique natural features to high style gardens. The program also includes a visit to historic Edenton. (See article below.) The meeting coordinators are Carlton B. Wood and Perry Mathewes. For more information, contact Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens, (800) 767-1560.

May 19th, 2001. "Spring Garden Tour 2001" organized by The Alliance for Historic Hillsborough in North Carolina will highlight the historic downtown area and outskirts with gardens representing the history of the area's landscape design and reflect a survey of collections. In addition, participants can hear a presentation by nationally recognized garden expert Nancy Goodwin of Montrose Gardens. A plant sale will be held at the Burwell School Historic Site. For additional information, call (919) 732-7741; e-mail: ahhillsboro@visionet.org.

May 26th, 2001. 9th Annual Open House at Tufton Farm sponsored by the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello. Speakers are Douglas T. Seidel on the roses of Easton (PA) Cemetery and noted author and PBS-TV host Liz Druit, currently assistant garden editor of *Southern Living* magazine. For information, call (804) 984-9822; www.monticello.org. To be placed on the mailing list for Monticello's "Saturdays in the Gardens" programs, write: Monticello Public Affairs Department, P. O. Box 217, Charlottesville, VA 22902.

June 10th-22nd, 2001. "Preserving Jefferson's Landscapes and Gardens," the 5th Annual Historic Landscape Institute, sponsored by Monticello and the University of Virginia. Two-week curriculum includes lectures, field trips, and hands-on gardening activities. For information, contact Monticello's Public Affairs Department (see above) or Peter Hatch at (804) 984-9836; phatch@monticello.org, or visit the web-site at: www.monticello.org.

August 3rd, 2001. Gunston Hall Plantation's Annual Garden Seminar. Topic and speakers to be announced. For information, call (703) 550-9220 or (800) 811-6966; web site: www.GunstonHall.org; e-mail: historic@GunstonHall.org.

September 27th-29th, 2001. "CULTIVATING HISTORY: Exploring Horticultural Practices of the Southern Gardener," 13th Biennial Conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes at Old Salem in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The theme will explore historic horticultural practices in the South. For more information, contact Keyes Williamson, conference chair, Old Salem, Inc., Box F - Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27l08, telephone (336) 721-7377, e-mail: facilities@OldSalem.org or visit their web site at: www.oldsalem.org/planandplano.html

October 14th-18th, 2001. 9th International Heritage Rose Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. This conference will focus international attention and educate the public on the historic contributions of Charleston as the source of the Noisette Rose, the first class of rose to be developed in America. Speakers will include both regional and international rose experts such as: John Meffert, Greg Lowery, Marie Butler, Malcolm Manners, Greg Grant, Odile Maquelier, Trevor Nottle, Phillip Robinson, Marijke Peterrich, and Rosamund Wallinger. Post conference tours will include opportunities to visit Brookgreen Gardens, Medway Plantation, Mepkin Abbey Gardens, Magnolia and Drayton Hall Plantations, Wadmalaw Island, and the Charleston Tea Plantation. Hosted by Ruth Knopf; honorary chairs: Mrs. Joseph H. (Patti) McGee and Mrs. Alexander Sanders. For general questions about the conference, e-mail: roseconf@webtv.net or contact Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, P. O. Box 975, Charleston, SC 29402. Phone (803) 853-8000. For registration and payment questions only, e-mail: coned@cofc.edu or phone (843) 953-5822.

April 18th- 21st, 2002. 20th Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society in Natchez, Mississippi. Dr. Elizabeth Boggess, meeting chair, is planning a special anniversary event.

Biological Thought…

continued from page 2

absorption—and diseases arose from malabsorption. For centuries afterward, then, when people spoke of "soil fertility" or "fertilizer," they meant nutriment because nutrients explained how life generated spontaneously. Any farmer could see proof of this in seeds germinating from springtime's rain and warmth, or maggots emerging as flies from the heat and moistness of manure piles. Humoral theory, and its spontaneous generation corollary, explained so many "observable" phenomena that their inadequacies and inconsistencies were only minor faults.

The belief that fertility originated in the soil rather than the sexuality of plants (even though Rudolph Jakob Camerarius accurately described plant sexuality in 1694) had consequence in the ways farmers managed their fields. Notable English "improvers," such as Jethro Tull, who wrote *Horse-Hoeing Husbandry* in 1732, believed that "tillage, tillage, and more tillage" broke soil into small particles so the plants could more easily absorb them. Proponents of crop rotations, liming, deep plowing, and root crops offered variations on the same theme — ways of unlocking fertility that existed in the soil. Eighteenth-century authorities referred to these practices as "the new husbandry," though they actually were rediscoveries from the Roman writers, Pliny, Cato, Varro, Columella, et. al. Two-thousand years separated their opinions, but the Romans and the British agreed that maintaining soil fertility was agriculture's first and foremost problem.

Courtesy of Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association

Plowing with mules at Mount Vernon.

Signs of what could happen if soil fertility was wasted came from nearly every traveler who visited England's North American colonies and from the colonists themselves. Only nineteen years after the Jamestown settlement took root, farmers who had taken over an Indian village named Pasbehegh asked to move because the lands had become "worn out"— exhausted of their fertility. This first rumbling about soil exhaustion, in 1626, thus came about the time that successful farming began around Jamestown, or perhaps a little before. The reverberations lasted for the next three hundred years.

Foreign and local "experts" agreed that raising the same crop on the same field year after year had despoiling effects. They saw tobacco, in particular, as a "heavy feeder" that consumed the soil's natural fertility. And the evidence was observable — successive tobacco plantings showed diminishing returns. The farmer' solution was to let the land "rest" for up to twenty years, or clear new fields, or simply move on, leaving the problem behind. Old fields grew up in weeds, giving the look of hopelessness that novelist Ellen Glasgow still could beckon in *Barren Ground* (1925).

What farmers and experts hardly knew at all before the twentieth century was that in the space a single tobacco plant occupied, the populations of microfauna and microflora could be astronomical — millions of nematodes, billions of fungi, trillions of actinomycetes, hundreds of trillion bacteria — all competing for life in a complex environment. Tillage influenced their populations, as air and ultraviolet radiation killed off certain species. The smell of a newly plowed field actually came from dying molds and actinomycetes. Planting a crop allowed organisms that cannot make their own food to establish themselves, and if the same crop followed the next season, those organisms multiplied and, in effect, made their crop hosts sicker and sicker. For Virginia-grown tobacco, the main problems were the root knot (*Meloidogyne* spp.) and cyst (*Globodera* spp.) nematodes, and three fungal species, *Fusarium oxysporum* (flax wilt), *Thielaviopsis basicola* (black root rot), and *Sclerotium rolfsii* (southern blight). Generally, the nematodes chewed on the roots allowing the fungi to infect. Farmers noticed that in certain years, after a hard winter, tobacco crops improved, though they were unaware that freezing partly killed off the nematode population. Warm springs and hot summers favored the fungal predators. *Fusarium* blocked the tobacco plant's xylem pathway and produced enzymes that broke down cell walls. Farmers could see their plants begin to turn yellow on top, as though starved, and then bend as the yellowing moved down one side. Rotating corn or wheat between tobacco plantings knocked down the *Fusarium* load, but if the farmer grew clover, or flax, or beans, or cotton in the rotation, the fungi thrived since it infected those plants too. A buildup of *Fusarium*, indeed, could ruin the soil for tobacco over many years — explaining the "rest" farmers gave their "exhausted" fields.

Did it really matter, though, that no one understood soil exhaustion actually was a disease phenomenon rather than a

Continued on page 4…

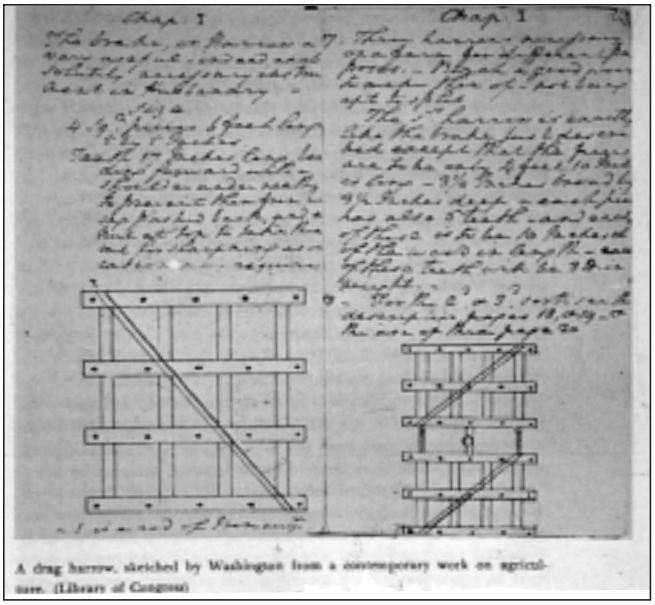
Biological Thought…

continued from page 3

nutritional problem? In either case, the results were the same. Perhaps in the eighteenth century it made little difference, but it mattered in the nineteenth century because of an extended argument Virginian Edmund Ruffin (1794-1865) put forth. In 1821, Ruffin published a paper on "Calcareous Manures" in the most popular agricultural journal of its day, *American Farmer*, and later expanded his belief that a top dressing of marl — a carbonate of lime found in fossilized oyster shells—had a prodigious effect on soil fertility. He refined the details in his own journal, the *Farmer's Register*, and presented them in book form as an *Essay on Calcarious Manures* (1832). Later, as South Carolina's official agricultural surveyor (1842) and president of the Virginia Agricultural Society (1852), he argued that a marl-borne restoration of soil fertility in the tobacco and cotton growing regions could produce an economic revival that would pave the way toward southern independence. He also became a staunch defender of slavery, since digging up marl and grinding it into a powder required brute labor. In South Carolina he praised the agricultural progress the Virginians made, and in Virginia, he talked about the South Carolinians' success, forging a sense of common destiny. And when that fated moment arrived, it was Edmund Ruffin who was given the "honor" of firing the first shot against Ft. Sumter. As the war ended, he took his own life, unaware that Pasteur's assault on the underlying thought — about soil fertility, spontaneous generation, and humoral theory — had begun.

While Ruffin was in his heyday, however, agricultural researchers in Rothamsted, England set about an incredible experiment to test the nature of soil exhaustion by raising wheat on the same field, year after year, for an entire century. They noticed that after a few seasons, yields fell, but eventually returns leveled out at a low rate and remained relatively constant, discounting weather differences. Eighteenth-century farmers would have supposed a constant fall, finally to nothing. By the time their study was completed in 1943, the entire yield profile over time could be attributed to microorganisms that first diminished the plants and then reached a static state where parasite-host relationship continued indefinitely. These findings confirmed that soil exhaustion was not a matter of chemistry alone, but one of biochemistry. Thereafter, the old conception, which dated from antiquity, was left to befuddle historians who relied more on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century diaries, travelers' accounts, and manuscripts than on recent scientific journals.

Colonial Americans added little, if anything, to the body of thinking about soils, but they did make contributions to botanical thought — most significantly, giving the first descriptions of true plant hybrids. The ancient world knew about grafted hybrids, but the idea that two species could cross naturally came very slowly, first because the proof of plant sexuality did not appear until the late seventeenth century, and second because chimeras always suggested something bizarre, inferior, and not deserving of serious attention. When John Lawson saw a fine oak in North Carolina, "betwixt the Spanish and the red oak," noting that "the chief use is for fencing and clap boards" and that "it bears good acorns," he accurately described a true hybrid. This appeared in his 1709 book *A Voyage to Carolina*, under the heading "Bastard-Spanish." Cotton Mather, the Massachusetts cleric of Salem witchcraft trial fame, correctly wrote about natural crosses of gourds and squashes in *The Christian Philosopher*, which he published in 1721. Three years later, Paul Dudley, a judge in Massachusetts, wrote a piece for the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions*, explaining how different colored corns promiscuously mixed via wind-blown pollen. James Logan and John Bartram of Pennsylvania, William Byrd and John Mitchell of Virginia, and others commented on plant hybrids, and this



A drag harrow, sketched by Washington from a contemporary work on agriculture. (Library of Congress)

Courtesy of Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association

George Washington's sketch of drag harrow.

fundamental discussion should not be discounted, even though breeding according to Mendelian principles did not open new ways of creating crop plants until the twentieth century. Plant breeding discussions, that at least created the cultivated strawberry in France — from the Chilean and Virginian species — was part of the revolutionary rethinking that took place as the eighteenth century drew to a close. Perhaps an example from Paris will illustrate.

Jean and Jean shared a delight in plants. And in the Paris of 1770, they enjoyed talking about their interests in the Garden of the King. We don't know what they said, but we might imagine. The first Jean was French, and the eleventh child of a family in an era when inheritances went to the

continued on page 5…

Biological Thought…

continued from page 4

Courtesy of Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association

Field of tobacco. *Photo by Roger Foley*

eldest son. His father proposed the priesthood as a career and sent him off to the Jesuits for schooling. But, when his father died, Jean bolted for the army, joining in time for the late campaigns of the Seven Years War. Afterward, he went to Paris, worked as a bank clerk, and studied the medical aspects of botany. The second Jean was Swiss, the son of a Geneva watchmaker, who had grown up in very unloving circumstances. Drawing flowers had been his mental refuge, for in them he saw gentle and refined characteristics that were lacking in so many people he knew.

One might suppose their conversation touched on the work of Carl Linnaeus, the great Swedish classifier of things, whose system of nomenclature and identification popularized nature studies since the 1730s, somewhat like Roger Tory Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds* did two centuries later. It gave amateurs a way of sorting things out. They could have talked about the great plant explorers, like Henri Bougainville, who had brought the Nobel variety of sugarcane from Tahiti to Martinique, and so transformed the colonial economy. Almost any topic might have come up, as botany was an intellectual pathway to many subjects — to philosophy, science, economics, politics — in the eighteenth century.

It is not difficult to guess who these two Jeans were. The Swiss was Jean Jacques Rousseau, author of *The Social Contract* (1762), and the central ideologue for the age of revolution. He railed against private property (particularly inherited wealth), called the Church a perversion, and proposed the overthrow of the monarchy. Throughout his tempestuous career, Rousseau continued collecting and studying plants; his last occupation was as a teacher of botany. He died in 1778, the same year as Linnaeus.

The Frenchman was Jean Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet, who after the deaths of all his older brothers inherited the title of Chavalier de Lamarck. In 1778, he published *Flore francaise*, which helped him land a job as a botanical specialist in Louis XVI's Natural History Museum. His connection with Rousseau, though, proved useful later on. During the Reign of Terror, which began with the King's execution in 1793, the National Convention appointed Lamarck professor of "inferior animals" (the invertebrates), among the reforms of the museum. His lack of training in animal studies mattered less than his once having known Rousseau — an early example of political correctness. Nevertheless, he focused on worms with admirable diligence and published his most renown work, *Zoological Philosophy*, in 1809 — the first theoretical study of evolution. Many years later, Charles Darwin said Lamarck "did the eminent service of arousing attention to the probability of all change in the organic, as well as in the inorganic world, being the result of law, and not of miraculous interposition," though more specifically, he thought the book "veritable rubbish." Among other things in this work, Lamarck coined the word "biology."

The central idea of *Zoological Philosophy* was the notion of acquired characteristics. Lamarck did not originate the thought that species could acquire traits in response to environmental change — actually, this was an ancient concept — but he did incorporate it into a theory that explained how and why change happened gradually over a long time. The often-mentioned example comparing Lamarckian and Darwinian evolution has to do with the length of the giraffe's neck. Lamarck would have said that, in times of drought, giraffes stretched their necks to reach leaves higher on trees and so created a characteristic that they passed on to their progeny. In contract, Darwin would have argued that stretching had nothing to do with it. Only giraffes with long necks survived. This was natural selection.

The difference is more than academic. Like Rousseau, late nineteenth-century philosophers saw powerful social implication in these biological theories. Herbert Spencer, for one, applied Darwinism to the evolution of the industrial state. The Marxists rejected both capitalism and Darwinism. They found Lamarck more to their liking; since the notion of acquired characteristics implied that perfecting the environment (even the economic surroundings) improved the organisms within. Stalin's Minister of Agriculture, Trofin Lysenko — the architect of collectivized farming — took Lamarkianism to mean that research on plant hybridization was unnecessary and, worse, anti-socialistic. Consequently, he

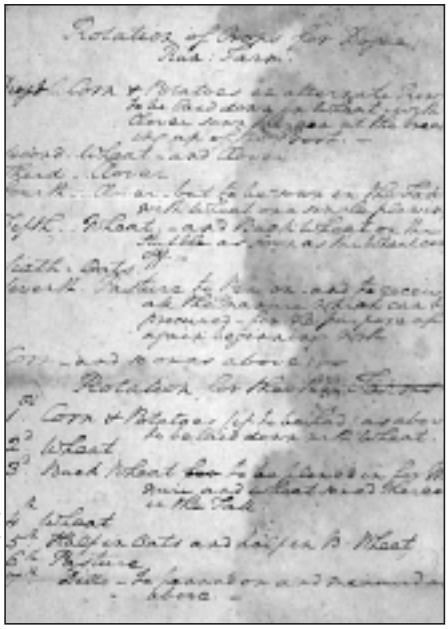
continued on page 6.…

Biological Thought…

continued from page 5

saw that one of the world's great plant breeders, Nicoli Vavilov, was discredited. Vavilov died in prison in 1942; Lysenko continued to exert some influence in the Soviet Union until his death in 1972. Considering the food shortages in Russia today, and the dismal history of Soviet agriculture, those conversations about plants —about evolution and revolution — between the two Jeans in the Garden of the King, make a poignant connection between the eighteenth century and our own time.

Biological thought has always influenced human events, because all people have had ideas about the nature of life — its origin, diversity, and destiny. Questions about life formed the basis of religion. It is difficult to characterize the eighteenth century as either an age of faith or as an age of doubt because it ended up so unlike it began and so much controversy took place in between. The English Civil War of 1642-49 saw Puritanism triumph over Charles I's Episcopalian and Catholic supporters, but it was a victory that preceded Protestantism's break up into weaker sects. In the reign of the three Georges, religiosity fell out of fashion. But, that was also the century of John Wesley, who appeared at religion's low ebb and turned the tide for many. Theists, Deists, and Atheists all had their say. The Deists, who salvaged only beliefs in God and immortality from traditional theology, imagined that after the act of Creation, God pretty much let the world go its own way. Conservatives thought that God had a hand in every creation, beginning to end, and in every detail. Both looked to nature to fined evidence of their theories.



Courtesy of Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association

Washington's plan for rotation of crops.

An important difference between these ideological poles was their general impression about which direction humankind and the Earth were headed. The fundamentalists believed that perfection existed when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden. Original sin started a chain of descent — a slide into irreversible degeneration. The Deists, in contrast, imagined room for improvement existed, and saw evidence of that in the taming of wilderness — the domestication of plants and animals, for example — and the simultaneous moral and material improvement of humanity. That's why, among other things, the first waves of landscape and botanical painting belonged to the optimistic, religious liberals, rather than to the dour Puritans. Deism, though it amounted to more of an absence than a presence of religion, unshackled biological thought, and grafted a sense of progress on the eighteenth century.

People who looked beyond the Bible for their philosophy of life had two other great reservoirs of knowledge — learning from the classical world, and the newer findings of science, particularly in Newtonian physics. What Newtonian science added to these ancient biological ideas was a sense of order, based on the supposition a simple set of mechanical principles governed the existence of all things, from the orbits of the planets to plant physiology, even to the existence of the soul. Proponents of this philosophy prized experimentation, as they believed knowledge arose from experience. Others, who might be called social scientists, valued reason over empiricism, but Immanuel Kant, who coined the term "Enlightenment," saw observation and reason as complimentary means to the same end — understanding the reasonable laws of nature.

Biological thought in the eighteenth century, then, freed itself off from the constraints of the Church. People did not have to believe literally in the six days of Creation, or in the ecclesiastically determined age of the earth as being about 6,000 years. They could wonder about fossils and newly discovered species. Indeed, questioning became fashionable. Knowledge from antiquity, and contemporary science provided some answers, perhaps not like the bedrock beliefs of religious faith, but adequate enough to produce tangible results. All of this added up to an intellectual taste for change, especially when it was coupled with the idea of progress.

The simple farmer of the late eighteenth century probably never heard of Kant or Newton, Linnaeus or Lamarck, and perhaps not Tull or Bartram, but he was not without an intellectual construction about how things grew and how to grow them. When he plowed and planted, cultivated and harvested, he assumed certain possibilities and probabilities. Many of his ideas have existed for millennia, yet they would collapse in the next century. His nearness in time to intellectual irrelevance ought to be appreciated today, as molecular agriculture may well make our ideas and practices relics in a not too distant future.

continued on page 7….

Biological Thought…

continued from page 6

Further Reading:

A. A. Crozier, *Popular Errors About Plants*. New York: Rural Publishing Company, 1892.

Avery O. Craven, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland*, 1606-1860. Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1965 reprint of 1926 edition.

Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard and Lorena S. Walsh, Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

G. E. Fussell, *Crop Nutrition and Practice before Liebig*. Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1970.

Lois N. Magner, *A History of the Life Sciences*. New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1994.

Ernst Mayr, *The Growth of Biological Thought: Diversity, Evolution and Inheritance*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1892

Naomi Riches, *The Agricultural Revolution in Norfolk*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937.

Sir E. John Russell, *A History of Agricultural Science in Great Britain*, 1620-1954. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1966.

John T. Schlebecker, ed., "Eighteenth-Century Agriculture, A Symposium," *Agricultural History*, XLIII:1 (January 1969).

Henry A. Wallace and William L. Brown, *Corn and Its Early Fathers*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988 revised edition.

Upcoming Annual Meeting in New Bern

By Perry Mathewes, Tryon Palace

On May 4th - 6th, 2001 members will journey to New Bern, North Carolina for the nineteenth annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society hosted by Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens. The theme of the meeting, "Pocosin to Parterre: Landscapes of the Carolina Coatstal Plain," will include informative and entertaining presentations and visits to some wonderful gardens.

The program will start on Friday, May 4th in the Tryon Palace visitor center's auditorium with presentations on such topics as: the unique natural ecosystems of the Carolina coastal plain, the cultural landscape, Mary Collins of Somerset Plantation, and the Tryon Palace gardens. Tours of the Palace gardens will follow. That evening, we will take a candlelight tour of the Palace, then enjoy dinner on the lawn overlooking the Trent River.

On Saturday the fifth, we will board the buses and head towards the historic town of Edenton. We will first tour Somerset Plantation and lunch on the grounds there, before heading into town to visit the Cupola House gardens and seven private gardens, including Hayes Plantation. That night we will dine on the Edenton waterfront before departing for New Bern.

On Sunday morning there will be presentations on the longleaf pine and naval stores industry, Claude Sauthier (who may have designed the original Tryon Palace gardens), John Lawson (a founder of New Bern who wrote North Carolina's first natural history), and landscape archaeology at Tryon Palace. The afternoon optional tours will include Bellair Plantation and the Croatan forest.

Tryon Palace in New Bern, NC

This year we will offer post conference tours, also. One option will be a day tour on Monday the seventh to the Wilmington area to visit several sites including, Airlie Gardens and Orton Plantation. Another option will be a multi-day tour starting that Monday and exploring the Outer Banks, including Ocracoke Island, Hatteras Island, and Roanoke Island.

We look forward to welcoming everyone to eastern North Carolina in May of 2001.

Annual "Oktober Gartenfest" in Winedale, Texas

by Mary Anne Pickens, contributing editor

More than 150 Texas gardeners, many of them Master Gardeners, converged on Winedale near the small hamlet of Round Top, Texas on October 27th-28th, 2000, to attend the Oktober Gartenfest symposium, *Texas Gardens: Something Old, Something New*. The 7th annual fall gardening

Photo by W.C. Welch

Avid gardeners descend on the plants offered at the Plant Sale. Twenty minutes after this photo was taken, the tables were almost bare.

symposium was presented by the University of Texas Center for American History and its Winedale Historical Center in cooperation with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Texas A & M University System. Dr. William C. Welch, Professor and Landscape Horticulturist, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, and former Southern Garden History Society president, chairs the Winedale Oktober Gartenfest committee that plans the event. Other SGHS members on the committee are Diane Welch, chairperson of the Winedale Historical Center Advisory Board, Cynthia Mueller, Jayme and Harley Ponder, Irene Pendergrast, Elizabeth Winston Mize, and Bob and Mary Anne Pickens. Also taking part in the annual conference are the International Festival-Institute at Round Top, Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit and the Pioneer Arts Foundation.

Through their individual presentations, each speaker contributed to the *Texas Gardens: Something Old, Something New* theme, the search for plants that will do well in Texas gardens without pampering, harsh chemicals, or excessive water. All speakers recommended the use of native or time-tested adapted plants, which may be both beautiful and ecologically correct in Texas gardens. Drought conditions for the past several years have played a major role in defining Texas gardens as more and more cities limit water usage.

Dr. William C. Welch and SGHS member Greg Grant, Horticulture Faculty Member at Stephen F. Austin University, Nacogdoches, Texas, were speakers at the symposium. Welch, well known for his many contributions to our gardening heritage, presented highlights of the plant specimens available at the Gartenfest plant sale held in conjunction with Gartenfest. Grant spoke on *Heat and Drought Tolerant Color for Texas Gardens*. Among his many gems of wisdom, he recommended, "Go visit the oldest gardener in your area and see what they are growing; or go to old homesites, abandoned gardens, or those in the poorer sections of town." According to Grant, those sites will have plants that can withstand Texas' various climate problems. "Yes, those are common plants," said Grant, "because they work."

Robert Anderson, ASLA, who has created designs for the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Research Center and the new Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, spoke on *Resource Efficient Landscape Designs*. Anderson, quoting from Frederick Law Olmstead's description of a Texas prairie from *A Journey Through Texas* said: "The beauty of the spring-prairies has never been and never will be expressed. It is inexpressible." Anderson said that in spite of 150 years of grazing, cultivating, plowing, and destroying

Photo by W.C. Welch

A well-integrated plant palette at the Malletee Garden, Round Top, TX., includes modern cultivars such as Artemisia *'Powis Castle' and a lawn of improved, drought-resistant Buffalo grass* (Buchloe dactyloides) *mingled with old-fashioned roses and time-tested perennials.*

continued on page 9....

Annual "Oktober Gartenfest"...

continued from page 8

much of the original native prairie, it is a hope or a dream that a portion of this original diverse plant life could be recreated and be restored as an example of a resource efficient landscape. Anderson uses native plants in his landscaping to reflect our plant heritage, to provide a "sense of place" and to create a resource efficient landscape.

Describing gardening as a combination of art, science and religion, Robert Richter, Travis County Extension Horticulturist, spoke on *A Sensible Look at Organic Gardening*. Heidi Sheesley and Bill Rohde, Treesearch Farms, provided information on *Old and New Fruits, Shrubs and Perennials for Texas Gardens*, and Mark Bowen, Houston Gardener and Naturalist, addressed *Habitat Gardening*. A Friday evening dinner program at this year's Gartenfest was presented by Marian Buchanan, a Dallas County Master Gardener and North Texas Master Naturalist, who humorously told of her personal development as a wild-scape gardener.

Photo by W.C. Welch

A recent re-creation of a Central Texas cottage garden in the Anglo-German style, Goad Ranch, Round Top, TX.

Standard features of each Gartenfest symposium are quality programs, printed proceedings with all essays included, and an annual sale of unusual and hard-to-find plants. Harley and Jayme Ponder manage the sale, which funds landscaping projects at the Winedale Historical Center. Antique roses, native and introduced shrubs and perennials, and bulbs, all known to survive Texas heat are sold each year. This year's sales totaled about $5000 with profits more than $2,700.

This years' plant selections included several native *Muhlenbergia* grasses, the popular Mexican Feather grass, *Stipa tenuissima*, Possum Haw Holly, *Ilex decidua*, Banana Magnolia Tree, *Michelia x foggii*, 'Montrose Purple' Vitex and Lecompte Vitex, *Vitex agnus-castus* 'Montrose Purple' and *Vitex agnus-castus* 'Lecompte', Carolina Asters, *Aster carolinianus*, several *Lagerstroemia* selections and a variety of native mallows. Also available were a selection of gingers, variegated-leaf cannas, and a wide selection of crinums and bulbs known to naturalize in Texas gardens. For the past several years, the sale has included the hard-to-find *Chionanthus retusa*, the Chinese fringe tree introduced from China by Robert Fortune prior to 1852. Among the roses available this year were Veilchenblau and Caldwell Pink, an unidentified but almost everblooming shrub rose that excels in Texas heat.

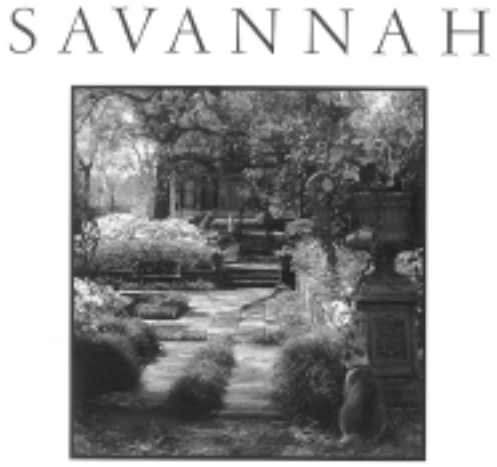
A new feature of this year's program was a tour of local gardens. In spite of enduring a severe summer drought and record heat, the gardens had stood the test and drew appreciative crowds. The gardens generally could be classified as Cottage Gardens, all very appropriate to their setting in the Texas German community of Round Top. Not a camellia or azalea was to be found, but the Country Girl chrysanthemums, antique roses, and blooming lavender and rosemary in Tony and Kay Scanipico's garden would have made even Elizabeth Lawrence green with envy. The small waterfall and ponds in the Diers'garden featured native stone and provided shallow pools for wildlife. The Levien garden provides year-round flowers and gourds for cutting and drying while the small Cantwell garden was a pleasant cottage blend of roses, herbs, and drought tolerant plants. Of particular note were Angel Trumpets, *Datura inoxia quinquecuspida* in both lavender and yellow. Massive displays of a white form of Hyacinth Bean, *Dolichos lablab*, and a hedge of the white China rose 'Ducher' were showstoppers at Euphanel and Nick Goad's home. In addition to the private gardens, the McAshan gardens at Festival Hill were on tour. Under the direction of Madalene Hill these gardens continue to expand and have been featured in *Southern Living* and in *Country Gardens*. The newest addition to the garden is the Pharmacy Garden with a collection of medicinal plants from around the world.

Gartenfest programs are planned to include historical information on early Texas gardens, and at the same time provide insight into new gardening methods and ideas. Past programs have included German, Spanish, and Asian influences on Texas gardens, the use of native plants in the garden, and surveys of early Texas gardeners, nurserymen and naturalists, and horticultural organizations that have played a role in defining Texas gardens. Tentative dates for this year's program will be October 26 and 27, 2001. ⚜

Book Reviews

SAVANNAH Secret & Public Gardens, text by James A. D. Cox and photography by N. Jane Iseley. Published by Historic Savannah Foundation, Savannah, Georgia. Hardcover. ISBN: 0-9610106-2-2. [Can be ordered through HSF, P.O. Box 1733, Savannah, GA 31402 for $49.95, including shipping and handling.]

The passion for the live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century South was by no means limited to Tallahassee and New Orleans, but manifest across the region, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, where the tree was native. Following a severe hurricane in 1893 in Savannah, the city council established a Park and Tree Commission to replant the city. In 1896 the commission opined "We believe that the magnificent Live Oak and the picturesque Palmetto to be the distinct characteristic feature of our flora and should appear in every point of vantage." They sponsored the planting of both in the squares and along the streets of Savannah, and the practice has held to the present.



Secret & Public Gardens
Photography by N. Jane Iseley
Text by James A.D. Cox

In 2000, on its 45th anniversary, the Historic Savannah Foundation published a book to celebrate the gardens of the historic district, dedicating it to Mary Helen Ray, the doyenne of Savannah gardeners. Mrs. Ray, whose knowledge and enthusiasm continues to leave its mark on the city and state with which she is forever identified, penned a forward. James A. D. Cox, retired as professor emeritus of architectural history from the University of Virginia to Savannah in 1990, wrote the introduction and short sketches of some 32 gardens illustrated with color photographs by N. Jane Iseley. Professor Cox returns to the founding of the Georgia colony in 1733, and then notes the horticultural records of place made successively by John Lawson, Mark Catesby, John and William Bartram, and John Abbot, another naturalist artist, who went to Georgia in 1776, remained there for 64 years, and produced some 5,000 watercolors of Georgia's flora and fauna. Not surprisingly, the Reverend Stephen Elliott (1806-1866), who was consecrated the first Episcopal Bishop of Georgia in 1841, exercised influence on gardening in Savannah in the mid-nineteenth century when the city's squares were built out and Forsyth Park was created. He was the son and namesake of Stephen Elliott (1771-1830), an eminent Charleston lawyer and botanist who produced the classic, two-volume *A Sketch of the Botany of South Carolina and Georgia*, published in 1816 and 1824, and whose name was long honored by his daughter's gift of the Elliott herbarium to the Charleston Museum and in the organization of the Elliot Society of Natural History in 1853. In the 1940s, Laura Palmer Bell is cited by both Mary Helen Ray and Mr. Cox for her interest in old Savannah gardens, and for her association with Clermont Lee's preparation of measured drawings of those which then survived. This is a topic about which we would have liked to have read much more.

Although Savannah can lay claim to the short-lived "first technical and scientific botanical garden in America," its place in garden history is secured by the handsome series of squares, planted as parks and repeated throughout the city, that distinguish its plan. Iseley's photographs convey their importance and appeal as unique gardens, public parks with a private ambience, that function as pleasure grounds for the square-side resident and visitor alike. The great accomplishment of this book, however, and the sure basis of its appeal, is the record and representation of private gardens created in Savannah in the last quarter of the twentieth century, many in the 1990s. The best, including the gardens of the George W. Mills and Hugh M. Comer houses, Mr. Cox's own garden at the Adam Short House, and the foundation's William Scarborough House, have a cosmopolitan charm created by imaginative architecture, interesting plant choices and garden furnishings that avoid the conventional. These gardens beautifully complement the lively, eclectic architecture of Savannah's houses and public buildings. Linking public and private space, they possess a spirit and appeal that draw both admiration and envy, as do the best of gardens in any climate, and prompt us to consider a visit. This spring perhaps?

— dfh, book review editor ⚜

The Once & Future Gardener: Garden Writing from the Golden Age of Magazines, 1900-1940. edited and with an introduction by Virginia Tuttle Clayton. David R. Godine, publisher. 2000. 368 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 1-56792-102-7. $40.

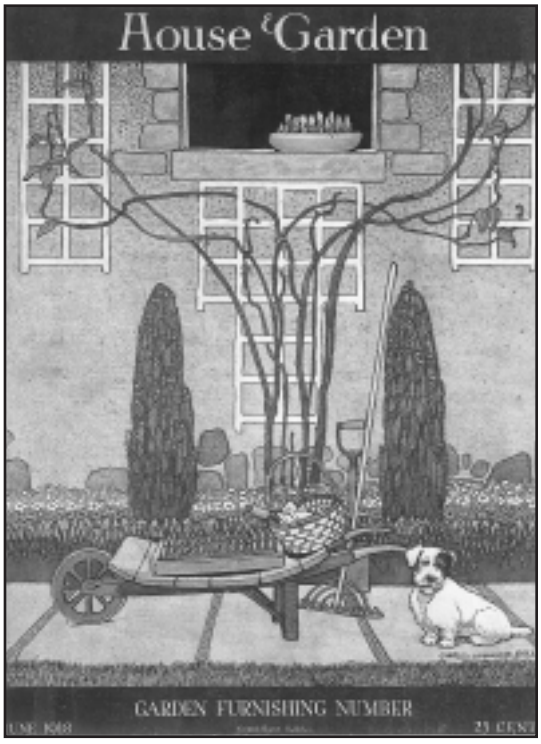
I must confess to a certain regret in the lateness of this review. *The Once and Future Gardener* caught my eye in the bookstalls of the National Gallery in Spring 2000. I received a review copy from David R. Godine and quickly began reading it, but other commitments over the summer and fall drew me away. At year's end I was not in the least surprised to find *The Once and Future Gardener* among the fourteen

continued on page 11…

books recommended by the *New York Times* as gifts for gardeners. I had already acquired several of those recommended and others since. But none in that group has proven to be the good companion that *The Once and Future Gardener* has become.

I first came to know the work of Virginia Tuttle Clayton in Spring 1990 when I was living on the Albemarle Sound of North Carolina and a friend, visiting from Washington, D.C., brought me the catalogue for "Gardens on Paper: Prints and Drawings, 1200-1900." Virginia Clayton was curator of the exhibition, then on view at the National Gallery of Art, and wrote its catalogue, which I read and enjoyed before a subsequent trip to see the show. Virtually all garden historians have come to the profession from another related discipline. An art historian and curator at the National Gallery, Ms. Clayton brings that education and experience to the service of garden history with an unusually sympathetic intelligence and critical eye for detail, design, and good writing in *The Once and Future Gardener: Garden Writing from the Golden Age of Magazines, 1900-1940.*

As she relates in the preface, the genesis of this book lay in her research for "Reminiscence and Revival: The Old-Fashioned Garden, 1890-1910," published in *Antiques* in 1990. She found, poring over magazines in the Library of Congress, documentation and illustrations for her article and much more - articles that appealed to her as a gardener, articles that contained useful information, and articles she describes as "beautifully written." In short, she entered an unprecedented and unequaled golden age of American garden writing through magazine articles published between 1900 and 1940. Some of the articles were written by those whose names are well known today and whose writings have appeared also in book form: Mrs. Francis King, Grace Tabor, J. Horace McFarland, Elsa Rehman, Louise Beebe Wilder, Stuart Ortloff, Neltje Blanchan, and Richardson Wright. Others were written by landscape architects of the period including Fletcher Steele and Ruth Dean (who both had southern clients). But, the apparent majority of articles were written by a group of gardeners and writers who excelled in other professions, as well as garden writing, and are largely unknown today. This last group held respect and appreciation in the early twentieth century for their knowledge of plants and cultivation, understanding and promotion of the garden theories and practices of the day, and their sympathy with the ambitions of fellow gardeners and readers.



House and Garden, *June 1918*
Illustration by Clarles Livingston Bull

From thousands of articles published in the first four decades of the century, Virginia Clayton has selected fifty-nine, which she groups into six thematic chapters with a seventh catch-all chapter entitled "The Philosophical Gardener." This is no criticism, but the convention by which Mrs. Clayton could reprint eleven more diverse articles including two critical, humorous, anonymously-authored pieces on the downside of garden visiting and snobbery that have more than passing relevance today. She introduces her selections with a short essay addressing the relationship between amateur gardening and publications, the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement on English and American gardening, and the range of general interest, women's, and topical magazines that published gardening articles in the period. Alas, most of the magazines that flourished then have long since ceased publication: *Scribner's, Country Life in America*, and *The Craftsman*, among others. Some, like *The Garden Magazine*, were merged with related magazines or subsumed under new imprints, and yet others remain in publication but have lost the status of their heyday. One such, *House & Garden* under the editorship of Richardson Wright from 1914 to 1950, is arguably among the most significant in American garden history.

Virginia Tuttle Clayton chose a remarkable group of articles for her compendium, selections made for their contemporary and present-day interest, for their ability to convey the character and range of gardening in the early twentieth century, and others, but all really, for the quality of their writing. And for each she provides a biographical sketch of its author that introduces us to a new, very congenial, and appealing group of men and women who we are happy to know as friends in the garden. *The Once and Future Gardener* contains very fine writing, and the good reader will measure his or her pleasure in its pages a few articles at a time. After eight months, I have come to the book's end, and I heartily recommend it to each of you. My copy of *The Once and Future Gardener* will remain on my chair-side table to be dipped into time and again, before it goes to the shelf for reference.

— dfh, book review editor ⚜

Fall 2000 Board Meeting Held in Georgia

by Flora Ann Bynum, secretary-treasurer

At its fall meeting, the board of directors of the Southern Garden History Society voted to hold the society's 2003 annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. James G. Cothran, board member of Atlanta, will serve as meeting chair.

The meeting in May 2001 is sponsored by Tryon Palace and Gardens in New Bern, North Carolina, and the 2002 meeting will be in Natchez, Mississippi. New Orleans has been discussed as a possibility for 2004.

Mary Anne Pickins, new board member, will serve as contributing editor for *Magnolia*.

Dr. William C. Welch, publications chair, reported on the publication of *Neuveau Jardinier, New Louisiana Gardener*, a small book on gardening written in 1838 in New Orleans by Jacques-Felix Lelievre. (see report below.) Under the sponsorship of the Southern Garden History Society, the book has been translated by Sally Kittredge Reeves of New Orleans, with an extensive introduction by Mrs. Reeves. The book is being published by the Louisiana State University Press and the society is paying for color plates. Dr. Welch said it is hoped the book will be out this spring.

Photo by W.C. Welch

SGHS board members at "Boxwood" in Madison, GA

Board member Gail Griffin is developing guidelines for annual meetings; serving with her on this committee are Dean Norton and M. Edward Shull. She distributed drafts to each board member for comments.

Mr. Cothran suggested the society look into the possibility of a garden museum, to be located in a convenient area in the South. Board members Patti McGee and Davyd Foard Hood will work with Mr. Cothran on this project.

Dr. Edgar G. Givhan reported that he plans to compile all the past annual meeting programs and other materials into a notebook-type form for the society's archives.

Peggy Cornett reported that the bound issues of *Magnolia* are selling well. McClung Printing Company, publishers of *Magnolia*, is printing extra copies of some of the individual issues, of which the office has few or no copies. Therefore, when this work is completed, the SGHS office, located within the Old Salem business headquarters in Winston-Salem, will have extra copies of all individual issues of *Magnolia*.

The board meeting was held September 23rd in Madison, Georgia and was coordinated by Jim Cothran. ⚜

At Last! The New Louisiana Gardener is Being Printed

By Dr. William C. Welch, College Station, TX

The Southern Garden History Society is pleased to have commissioned the English translation of Jacque Felix Lelièvre's *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane*, along with an introductory essay to explain the significance of the little volume and its place in horticultural history. Written and published by Lelièvre in New Orleans in 1838, this pocket-sized gardening guide is now being published for the first time in an English translation.

The idea and an initial grant for the project came from Shingo Dameron Manard, a dedicated member of the SGHS board of directors for many years. The board of directors and publications committee of the society are indebted to Sally Kittredge Reeves, Archivist, New Orleans Notarial Archives, for her translation of the book and for the many hours of research she devoted to reviewing primary source material in France and in the United States for her scholarly introduction to the text. In addition, Mrs. Reeves has selected 16 beautiful color plates to provide graphic illustration for the text. [editor's note: Dr. William C. Welch of Texas A & M University assisted with editing the translation and guided the project to completion over a four-year period.]

The LSU Press has announced that the book is currently in the process of being printed and should be available this spring. SGHS members will receive information on obtaining the book from our headquarters in Old Salem as soon as possible. A review and order form will be included in the spring issue of *Magnolia*. ⚜

The "Southern Plant Lists" Project

At the Southern Garden History Society's board meeting last fall in Madison, Georgia, Gordon Chappell presented a draft copy of "Southern Plant Lists." A joint project between the SGHS and the Colonial Williasmburg Foundation, "Southern Plant Lists" is a compilation of plant lists from every era of the American South. In September the project included fifty lists, now up to sixty. While the project has included lists from every part of the South, there are several gaps, notably the Atlantic States in the nineteenth century and the Gulf States in the eighteenth century. The most helpful lists are specific to a place and a time. If you have period lists of garden plants or have questions, please contact Gordon Chappell at Colonial Williamsburg, Box 1776, Williamsburg, VA 23187 [gchappell@cwf.org].

Catron-Sullivan Becomes New Director of the Cherokee Garden Library

Last fall Staci Catron-Sullivan became director of the Cherokee Garden Library, Atlanta History Center, in Atlanta, Georgia. This library serves as the archives for the Southern Garden History Society.

Ms. Catron-Sullivan is the first recipient of the Cherokee Garden Club Research Fellowship. She is currently enrolled in the Masters of Heritage Preservation Program at Georgia State University. According to Pat Hargrett, president of the Cherokee Garden Library, "Staci brings a powerful skill set and dynamic energy to the job." She recently contributed a lead article for *Magnolia* (Vol. XVI, No. 1, Fall 2000) entitled "Jarvis Van Buren: A Brief History of Georgia Horticulturist, Writer, Nurseryman, and Builder."

Blanche Farley, who has left the Atlanta area, served as librarian from November 1993 to September 2000. Mrs. Hargrett stated that Ms. Farley's time with the library had been marked with these high points: the conversion of the library from Dewey to L. C., the acquisition of more than 2,000 books, the publication of a newsletter, inventory and appraisal of the collection, and the organized conservation of valuable books and materials.

New SGHS Membership Directory

The first membership directory for the society will soon be mailed to each member of SGHS. The directory was authorized by the board of directors as a means for closer communication between society members. It was felt that a directory would help members stay in touch with each other, locate others with similar projects, and help members become aware of those in their area who are interested in garden history.

Paula Chamblee, society membership secretary in the Old Salem office, compiled the directory from data sheets sent in by members when they paid their dues. Three notices were sent to members, the first in June, a second in August to those not responding, and a third notice in November.

"Paula has done a remarkable, extremely careful job in compiling our directory," said Flora Ann Bynum, SGHS secretary-treasurer. "We feel it will be a useful tool for our membership."

The directory is for member use only and is not for commercial distribution or use. Members who did not want their addresses given are listed by name only.

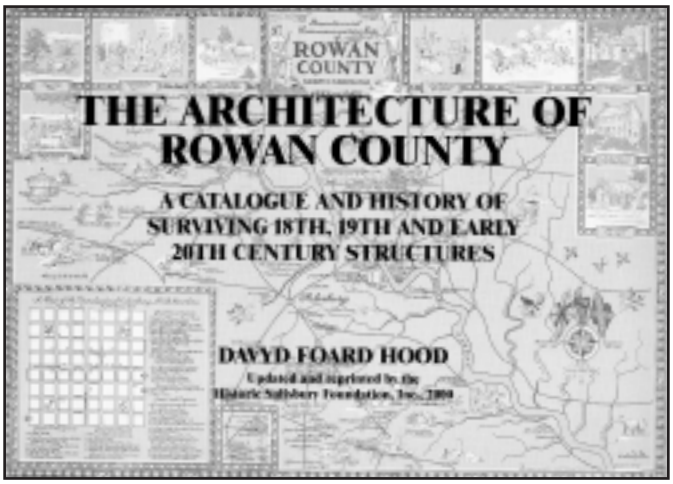
Members in the News

The February 2001 issue of *Carolina Gardener* includes a three-page feature on SGHS member **Chip Callaway** of Greensboro, North Carolina. The article, entitled "The Callaway Way, Landscape designer Chip Callaway shares his secrets for a successful landscape as well as some of his favorite plants," describes Chip as one of the country's foremost garden designers, and notes that he has done many historic gardens, including those at the Robert E. Lee mansion in Stratford, Virginia and the Alexander Graham Bell House in Washington, D. C. "He recently was tapped to help with the restoration of the Iolani Palace in Honolulu, Hawaii." The article includes a list of "Chip's Choices," his top ten favorite under-used plants.

Heirloom bulb specialist **Scott Kunst**, owner of Old House Gardens in Ann Arbor, Michigan, gave a presentation for the conference "Exploring the World of Garden Plants - Seeking the Old and the New," sponsored by Ohio State University, January 20th-21st, 2001. Kunst also was featured both in the November/December issue of *The Old House Journal* and in Tovah Martin's "Into the Garden" column for the February 2001 issue of *Victoria Magazine*, regarding his company's new museum-quality reproduction bulb forcing vases hand-blown at a 163-year-old glassworks in New England.

Of Interest

The Historic Salisbury Foundation, Inc. has recently reprinted an updated version of Davyd Foard Hood's 1983 book, *The Architecture of Rowan County - A Catalogue and History of Surveying 18th, 19th and early 20th Century Structures*. Retracing his steps of nearly 25 years ago, Hood has painstakingly resurveyed the important structures he first identified, added notable buildings missed in the earlier survey, and greatly expanded the coverage of those properties placed on the National Register of Historic Places in North Carolina. Sadly, Hood's bittersweet journey through the Rowan countryside revealed that 26 percent of all buildings written about in his first edition are now lost or in ruins. The destruction of never-to-be-recovered, architectural treasures is most pronounced in the county's rural portions. Farmhouses, barns, corncribs, smokehouses, and other outbuildings are rapidly disappearing. "Much of what has shaped my architectural conscience was gone," writes Hood, "in many instances without any visible trace left behind - except the photograph on the page and the image held in memory." For information on obtaining this book, contact: Historic Salisbury Foundation, Inc., P. O. Box 4221, Salisbury, NC 28145-4221, and Rowan County, Office of the County Manager, 130 West Innes Street, Salisbury, NC 28144.



www.southerngardenhistory.org

This is the new address on the Worldwide Web where anyone around the globe can learn about the Southern Garden History Society. For example, not only can one get the basics of the society's organization and mission, but also he or she can become a member via the online application form. Names and contact information are available too for officers and board members. Most have e-mail addresses, so if you wish to contact one or more of them over the Internet, just click that address and write your message.

The possibilities for including additional material on the website is virtually boundless. Already we have the details on both the society's upcoming annual meeting in New Bern and the Old Salem Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference. In addition, our site also will feature links to other websites that will be of interest to society members, as well as to the larger historic gardens community. Of course, we all want our website to get better and better, so please do not hesitate to make suggestions for additions and/or other improvements.

Lastly, we are all indebted to Amber Neal our web designer from Raleigh, North Carolina. Amber worked hard to get everything "up and running," and she will continue to both maintain and upgrade our site. Thanks are due also to those who provided Amber with advice and material to input. - kmm, associate editor

Heirloom Flowers E-Group

A Worldwide email discussion group is available for scholars, collectors, and gardeners with a passionate interest in historic ornamental plants. Its members welcome discussion of all historic ornamentals — trees, shrubs, vines, perennials, annuals, bulbs, and indoor plants — and their history, documentation, identification, current sources, cultivation, and preservation. Participation in this group is by invitation only. For information, contact Scott Kunst of Old House Gardens at: OHGBulbs@aol.com

Joining is free and simple, and if you decide after a bit you're not interested it's easy to unsubscribe. To join, send any email message to HeirloomFlowers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com<mailto:HeirloomFlowers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>, and follow the directions that are emailed back to you. Don't worry about Spam -- Yahoo! Groups doesn't sell or share email addresses.

Book Review

THE LIVE OAK TRAIL, by Carolyde Phillips O'Bryan. 156 pages. Casebound. ISBN 0967414601 $24.95

Little is ever as it seems, and we know that axiom appertained when the Southern Garden History Society visited Tallahassee in 1997 for the 15th annual meeting. Many were no doubt familiar with the rich, lush landscape of the Florida capital, stretching north to Thomasville, and dominated by the seemingly endless live oaks, lining streets and roads, planted in avenues as approaches to houses humble and grand, and spreading their broad limbs above the lawns and across lots in neighborhood and country alike. The scene we savored and, frankly, took quickly for granted was in part indigenous. Its survival, however, and much of our pleasure owed not simply to native plants renewed generation after generation, or to the hand of landscape architects and city planners who appreciated the value of this majestic Southern tree, but in large part to the work of a small band of (mostly) women and men who valiantly worked to protect Tallahassee's historic trees in the 1930s, held Live Oak Trails in 1940 and 1941, and instilled a civic pride in a distinctive emblem of the Southern landscape that persists to the present.

The story of this fascinating episode in Southern garden history is told in a charmingly old-fashioned book, which is part memoir, part family history, and part the account of a movement that galvanized and met success during one week in December 1938. Carolyde Phillips O'Bryan relates the simple story of a group of friends, led by her aunt Caroline Croom Edwards Elliot (d.1966), who challenged the grant of a permit to cut an aged live oak, across from the Capitol lawn, for a filling station driveway. Protests at a meeting of the Tallahassee City Commission on Tuesday, 13 December, failed to gain a reversal of the permit. Undaunted, Mrs. Elliot organized a larger protest meeting, to be held at her home the following Thursday afternoon, which gained editorial support in the city's *Daily Democrat* on Wednesday, the 14th.

> As representatives of Tallahassee's civic clubs prepared to meet this afternoon to plan defense action for the trees surrounding the capitol, the Associated Press carried the story of the fight to save the trees in dozens of daily newspapers serving the citizens of every section of Florida. The Associated Press story puts the people of the state on notice that the citizens of Tallahassee are awake, that the community appreciates the capitol, that the civic forces of the capital city are aroused to action. Under these circumstances, the meeting this afternoon - one of the most important community efforts in a decade - must not and cannot fail.

The meeting did not fail. Early on Friday, the 16th, the *Florida State News*, Tallahassee's morning newspaper, provided readers a full report on the Thursday assembly just hours before a 9:00 a.m. meeting of the city commission. Friday evening the *Daily Democrat* reported success on two fronts: the permit to remove the tree was rescinded; and the commission proposed "the formation of a city planning board to rule and advise on all matters of zoning and beautification in the future."

The fervor of the week's activities had a longer history and more far-reaching results. It also reflected a long-held affection for the live oak throughout the Lower South that gained expression with the formation of The Live Oak Society in 1935 at New Orleans and the registration of landmark trees. Mrs. Elliot and her friend Blanche Covington attended a meeting of the society in 1936. Citizens in Tallahassee had demonstrated a regard for trees nearly a century earlier. Following a disastrous fire in 1843, the city council had passed an ordinance to protect newly planted trees from damage by horses and wagons. In January 1860 the Tallahassee City Council ordered the planting of 200 live oaks along the city streets. Many of those trees, others older and younger, appear in an appealing collection of early-twentieth-century documentary photographs reprinted here, evoking a city's character we appreciated at the end of the century. Mrs. O'Bryan identifies three organizations that proved to be important stewards of the Tallahassee landscape: the Tallahassee Improvement Association of the 1890s; the Tallahassee Woman's Club organized in 1903; and the Tallahassee Garden Club, formed in 1926, which enlarged its scope in 1928 with the creation of garden circles. Mrs. Elliot was a charter member of the Oleander Circle. Having saved that one critical tree, Mrs. Elliot and her colleagues undertook larger advocacy and promotional efforts, organizing an appreciative tour of the city's live oak plantings and avenues, old houses, and gardens in a celebration that became the Live Oak Trail on 6 June 1940. The second trail, held over two days in April 1941, was an even greater success. Mrs. Elliot's scrapbook, documenting these events and found after her death, records a passionate commitment to the preservation of place.

Although the Live Oak Trail as an event was effectively ended by World War II, and gains by leaders were sometimes offset by important losses, the dense, shaded landscapes we enjoyed in 1997 proves the success of their accomplishment. After the war, the proposed widening and commercial redevelopment of residential Calhoun Street prompted an even fiercer civic debate. An injunction to prevent the wholesale cutting of Calhoun Street's trees, gained by Mrs. Elliot and others, was eventually upheld by the Florida Supreme Court in May 1947. But the decision came too late for dozens of trees already felled in the dark of night. The romantic, and once typical, Southern scene represented by a photograph of Calhoun Street before its nineteenth-century houses were pulled down and its trees cut, is lost. But the character of the city survives in other neighborhoods and along its avenues where a preservation ethic forged in the late 1930s still holds sway.

Davyd Foard Hood
Isinglass, Vale, North Carolina

Publications Available Through SGHS

Bound set of Magnolia back issues. Includes Vol. I, No. 1 (Fall, 1984) through Vol. XIV, No. 4 (Winter/Spring 1999), with index. $50.00, includes postage and tax. Checks payable to SGHS.

Individual back issues of Magnolia: $5.00 each, including postage and tax. Checks to SGHS.

Proceedings of the conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, held in Old Salem, with SGHS as a sponsor: **Breaking Ground: *Examining the Vision and Practice of Historic Landscape Restoration*** (1997 proceedings), $12.95 (add 6% sales tax for NC orders) plus $3.95 postage.

The Influence of Women on the Southern Landscape (1995 proceedings), $10.00 (add 6% tax for NC orders), plus $3.95 postage. Copies of both proceedings can be mailed together for $3.95. Checks payable to Old Salem, Inc.

Magnolia Essays, "The Residential Work of the Olmsted Firm in Georgia,1893-1937," by Lucy Lawliss, published l993. $3.00, includes tax and postage. Checks payable to SGHS.

Send orders to Kay Bergey, publications secretary, SGHS, c/o Old Salem, Inc., Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108. Tel. (336) 721-7378.

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 (336) 721–7328

www.southerngardenhistory.org

Magnolia grandiflora reproduced by courtesy of Rare Book Division, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library.

Editor:
Peggy Cornett
Monticello, P.O.B. 316
Charlottesville, VA 22902
(804) 984-9816
Fax (804) 977-6140
pcornett@monticello.org

Associate Editor:
Kenneth M. McFarland
Stratford Hall Plantation
Stratford, VA 22558
(804) 493-1558
kmcfarland@stratfordhall.org

Book Review Editor:
Davyd Foard Hood
6907 Old Shelby Road
Isinglass, Vale, NC 28168
(704) 462-1847
Fax (704) 462-2491

Deadline for the submission of articles for the spring issue of Magnolia *is March 30th .*

Southern Garden History Society
Old Salem, Inc.
Drawer F, Salem Station
Winston-Salem, NC 27108