



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

# Magnolia

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Winter 2004-2005

## *"To Revive the Spirit of the Time"* *Restoration of the Grounds and Gardens at Stratford Hall Plantation* *1929-1934*

Readers of the Winter-Spring 2004 *Magnolia* will recall that in 1929 the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation (now the Robert E. Lee Memorial *Association*) acquired Stratford Hall Plantation, the Lee family home in Westmoreland County, Virginia. As was noted, the Foundation immediately, and with great energy, began to pursue restoration of the plantation's grounds. Part 1 of this account briefly reviewed Stratford's history beginning in the mid-18th century, with special emphasis on what is known about the plantation's landscape and gardens during the period up to the early 20th century. Such information was of vital importance to those who were charged with restoring that landscape and those gardens. Yet it was but part of the bigger story.

Realizing the gravity, magnitude, *and* cost of the complex task that lay ahead, Stratford's founders immediately opted to seek help from the Garden Club of Virginia. Widely recognized today for its many restoration endeavors, the Garden Club of Virginia was a relative newcomer to the field in 1929. While earlier in the decade it had begun to support several Old Dominion landscape projects, it was only in 1928 that the Garden Club of Virginia ladies committed to restore the garden at Kenmore in Fredericksburg, their first major project. Equally as important, they struck upon a fund-raising strategy that remains central to their efforts: opening gardens across the state for limited periods to fee-paying visitors—what would come to be termed Historic Garden Week.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the magnitude of the Kenmore undertaking, the Garden Club of Virginia eagerly agreed when the request was made during their June 1929 annual meeting to assist at Stratford. In a letter notifying Lee Foundation president May Field Lanier of this "favorable action of the Federated Garden Clubs of Virginia," Mrs. James A. Scott of Lynchburg termed the task at Stratford "one of the biggest projects of the kind Virginia ever assumed. Truly a labor of love."<sup>2</sup> Immediately a Stratford Committee was formed, to be chaired by Hetty Cary (Mrs. Fairfax) Harrison of Belvoir in Northern Virginia. A model of dedication throughout her tenure, Mrs. Harrison attended the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation's first annual meeting, held at Stratford in October 1929, where she reported that the Garden Club of Virginia "hoped to recreate the surroundings of the Great House in such a



photo: Stratford Hall Archives

View of East Garden ca. 1936 from east chimney cluster of Stratford Great House.

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# CALENDAR

**April 3-5, 2005.** The 59th Garden Symposium at Colonial Williamsburg in Williamsburg, Virginia. This annual event, co-sponsored by *Fine Gardening* magazine and the American Horticultural Society, is a traditional rite of spring for gardening enthusiasts across the country. The 59th Williamsburg Garden Symposium will look at the multiple roles of the modern home gardener, primarily those of plantsman and designer. Lectures will discuss perennials, conifers, seasonal shrubs and trees for the home garden. Presenters will also offer tips on selecting healthy plants, plant maintenance and garden design details. For more information email [dchapman@cwfb.org](mailto:dchapman@cwfb.org) or call 1-800-603-0948 or consult Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Web: [www.ColonialWilliamsburg.org](http://www.ColonialWilliamsburg.org)

**April 13-15, 2005.** "Sub-Tropical Garden Treasures, Old and New," The Great American Gardeners Conference, sponsored by the American Horticultural Society. Highlights include visits to Harry P. Leu Gardens and the opening day of the 2005 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival. For registration information by mail: AHS, Attn. Conference Registration, 7931 E. Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, Va. 22308; by fax: (703) 768-7533; or online: [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)

**April 15-17, 2005.** "Colonial Meets Revival: Fredericksburg and the Northern Neck of Virginia," the **23rd Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society**. The meeting will be headquartered in Fredericksburg, and the first day will focus on the influence of the Garden Club of Virginia and the work of Alden Hopkins, as well as on the region's battlefield landscapes and battlefield preservation efforts. On Saturday the group will visit the landscapes of Virginia's Northern Neck, including an extended look at some of the 1700 acres that now comprise Stratford Hall Plantation, birthplace of Robert E. Lee and home to two signers of the Declaration of Independence. For more information, contact conference co-chairs Beate Jensen, head gardener at Belmont, the Gari Melchers' Estate and Memorial Gallery, [bjensen@umw.edu](mailto:bjensen@umw.edu); (540) 654-1839; or Ken McFarland, [kmcfarland@stratfordhall.org](mailto:kmcfarland@stratfordhall.org); (804) 493-1558.

**May 5-8, 2005.** *The 8th US/ICOMOS International Symposium*, Charleston, South Carolina. The theme for the symposium will be interpretation and presentation of heritage sites.

**May 14-15, 2005.** The 2005 Historic Hillsborough Spring Garden Tour, featuring many of Hillsborough's loveliest public and private gardens in the downtown area and outskirts of the town. Highlights will include Chatwood Gardens and its collection of heritage roses, 18th-century Faucette Mill, Burwell School Historic Site (with its rare Musk Rose, *Rosa moschata*), the gardens and landscape of Antebellum Burnside, the Ashe House Garden and more. This is the culminating event of the yearlong celebration of the Town of Hillsborough's 250th

anniversary (1754-2004). For more information, contact Cathleen Turner at (919) 732-7741; [alliance@historichillsborough.org](mailto:alliance@historichillsborough.org), or visit the Web site at [www.historichillsborough.org](http://www.historichillsborough.org).

**May 28, 2005.** 13th Annual Open House at Tufton Farm, the headquarters and nursery facility of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, celebrating the height of spring blossoms in Charlottesville, Virginia. The day begins at Monticello's Jefferson Library with talks by Dr. Art Tucker on the iconography of roses and Doug Seidel on spring-flowering heirlooms. The nursery is open to the public from noon until 4 p.m. and activities include a workshop on rose identification offered by the experts. For further information, contact CHP at (434) 984-9816 or visit the Web site at [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org)

**June 12-14, 2005.** "Preserving Jefferson's Landscapes and Gardens," a two-week program that uses the gardens and landscapes at Monticello and the University of Virginia for the study of the theory and practice of historic landscape preservation. Participants live on the historic Lawn of the University while attending an intensive curriculum focusing on Jefferson's landscapes and gardens. For information, contact Peter Hatch, (434) 984-9836; [phatch@monticello.org](mailto:phatch@monticello.org); [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org)

**September 29-October 1, 2005.** The 15th conference on *Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes* at Old Salem, Inc. in Winston-Salem. The Southern Garden History Society is one of the sponsors of this biennial conference along with the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), North Carolina A&T State University, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Reynolda House Museum of American Art, and Old Salem, Inc. The planning committee is co-chaired by Davyd Foard Hood, former SGHS board member, and Sally Gant, director of information for MESDA in Old Salem. For further information, contact Sally Gant at (336) 721-7361, [sgant@oldsalem.org](mailto:sgant@oldsalem.org); or Kay Bergey at (336) 721-7378, [bergeymk@wfu.edu](mailto:bergeymk@wfu.edu); or write Ms. Bergey at: Drawer F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27108.

**October 21-23, 2005.** Charleston Garden Festival, sponsored by Charleston Horticultural Society and Middleton Place Foundation. This outdoor festival opens with an evening gala on October 20th followed by daily events including lunch with a celebrity chef, an English High Tea, horticultural tours, exhibit gardens, internationally renowned garden speakers and a variety of quality vendors and exhibitors. Tickets available through the Charleston Horticultural Society and at the ticket gate the day of the event. For information, write: Middleton Place, 4300 Ashley River Road, Charleston, S.C. 29414; call (843) 556-6020 or toll free at 1-800-782-3608; or email at: [info@middletonplace.org](mailto:info@middletonplace.org)

# Stratford Hall ...

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photo: Stratford Hall Archives



Aerial view ca. 1936 taken from northeast showing various components of Morley Williams's designs, including formal East Garden and Oval Drive.

way as to *revive the spirit of the time*.”<sup>3</sup> She asked the board for “the privilege of developing the grounds in the full and complete way in ‘the grand manner of the 18th century’,” suggesting that this would require approximately \$50,000. It was also mentioned that “the landscape artist and engineer, Mr. Arthur Shurtleff,” was willing to assist and would “cut his regular charges in half as a special contribution.”<sup>4</sup>

At this time the Massachusetts-based landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff (he changed the spelling of his last name from Shurtleff in 1930) was gaining a reputation in the region for his work at Colonial Williamsburg.<sup>5</sup> Correspondence early in the history of the Stratford project reveals that Shurcliff was being eyed for work at the Lee home as well. Indeed, he had been in communication with William Lawrence Bottomley about the subject since as early as February 1929.<sup>6</sup> In a letter to Shurcliff of April 25, 1929, moreover, Bottomley revealed that Ethel Armes, who the New York architect termed “the moving spirit in the purchase and restoration of Stratford” was apparently advocating for Shurcliff’s involvement. Bottomley reported that she was familiar with the New Englander’s work and that she believed him to be “the best person” to guide the landscape restoration there. Bottomley added, however, that the new Foundation’s lack of funds made it “impossible for them to make any contract or immediate payment.”<sup>7</sup>

The passage of one year and the success of the Garden Club of Virginia’s 1930 “Pilgrimage” were to make all the difference. By mid-summer 1930 funds were in place, Arthur Shurcliff was at work, and Ethel Armes’s wishes were being realized. Beginning in late July and ending in late September 1930 Shurcliff and his assistants undertook extensive archaeological investigations, uncovering such features as the ha-ha boundary of the lawn on the

south side of the Great House, as well as a wall later confirmed as a ha-ha that terminated the area to become known as the East Garden. In addition, his excavations proved the overall symmetrical character of the East Garden, while he also uncovered the foundations of both a curved wall near the east end of the Great House and of small octagonal structure northeast of the main dwelling. Shurcliff, who carefully recorded his findings both in survey drawings and in photographs, believed that these early discoveries had more than fully rewarded the time spent. What remained on, or under, the ground, he wrote in his report of October 8, 1930 “more than substantiated our early belief that Stratford was laid out with a generous hand and was one of the most interesting and imposing of the early places.” He went on to note his certainty that “we can say without hesitation that we are more strongly of the opinion now than before that the restoration is worthy of the devotion which has been bestowed upon it already.” Shurcliff counseled patience, however, since to achieve the most satisfactory results it was necessary “to continue our patient study of the actual facts of the old design before we attempt the restoration of the grounds.”<sup>8</sup> In her report to the Stratford board of October 14, 1930, Hetty Harrison summed up this position by recalling that “Mr. Shurcliff’s oft repeated advice is this, ‘Where we are perfectly sure, then we are treading on solid ground, solid for all time’.”<sup>9</sup> Obviously in the fall of 1930 neither Mr. Shurcliff nor Mrs. Harrison felt “perfectly sure” about the solidity of their ground at Stratford. In her October 14 report Harrison had cited a warning from Shurcliff that all involved with the Stratford project “would be liable to very severe and just criticism, if we did any work or allowed ourselves to be swayed by any theories or conjectures not fully justified by the findings, archaeological and otherwise.”<sup>10</sup>

Late 1930 and 1931 were devoted chiefly to study of the previous summer’s discoveries, along with “further researches in public and private libraries.”<sup>11</sup> Substantial time was also allowed for the examination of 18th-century landscapes and gardens similar to those at Stratford. In her pioneering work on Stratford’s

photo: Stratford Hall Archives



Archaeological trenches being dug in south lawn of Great House during the summer of 1930 under general direction of Arthur Shurcliff.

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# Stratford Hall ...

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photo: Stratford Hall Archives



Early view showing restored east ha-ha and section of north garden wall. (Lines in image due to print having been taken from cracked glass slide.)

restoration Ethel Armes recalls that “the next step...was to have made a comparative study of contemporary gardens whose owners and builders were related to or had close association with the Lees and Stratford.”<sup>12</sup> This included the nearby Northern Neck homes, Mount Airy and Sabine Hall, as well as gardens further afield at Mount Vernon and Gunston Hall in Virginia and Wye House in Maryland. Features for study and comparison included terracing patterns, walls, particularly ha-has, garden buildings, and, of course, types of plants. At Stratford itself work on the ground chiefly entailed a topographical study conducted by Henry Claiborne of the Richmond firm Claiborne and Taylor.<sup>13</sup>

Excavation was in abeyance during this period of research, reflection, and survey and only recommenced in the late spring of 1932. Supervising the project now, however, was the Canadian-born landscape architect Morley Jeffers Williams, a faculty member of the Harvard School of Design. He came well qualified, for he had spent substantial time in 1931 closely studying antebellum plantation landscapes in Maryland and Virginia underwritten by a grant from the Clark Fund for Research in Landscape Design.<sup>14</sup> Supported by a second Clark Fund grant in 1932, Williams was able to provide his services for Stratford at no charge, while the Garden Club of Virginia paid for the services of a Harvard School of Design graduate student from Colorado, Charles C. Pinkney. Aided by Shurcliff’s findings and Claiborne’s survey, Pinkney directly oversaw the excavations at Stratford that year.<sup>15</sup> The results of Williams’s and Pinkney’s efforts in June and July of 1932 were, commented Ethel Armes, “unexpectedly rich.”<sup>16</sup> Morley Williams’s subsequent report laid out findings and parameters that were quickly to be transformed into plans for restoration. In the first two paragraphs of this report Williams noted that Pinkney’s excavations had proven what had previously been surmised: without doubt the East Garden had consisted of a series of terraces. In addition to garden paths, Pinkney’s archaeological efforts had also located the north and south

boundary walls. Furthermore, Williams observed, the summer’s digging had provided conclusive evidence of a ha-ha “about four feet in height” which terminated the garden on its east end.<sup>17</sup> After summarizing other aspects of the work and warmly commending Charles Pinkney, Williams closed his report by noting cheerily that it had been his “endeavor to arrive at the truth whether pleasant or unpleasant.” Fortunately, he continued, the “truth (had) been found,” and it was pleasant. Stratford “was and will be, in all its parts, simple, quiet, and impressive.”<sup>18</sup>

On July 27, 1932, Williams presented his report to Hetty Harrison and members of her Stratford Committee of the Garden Club of Virginia, after which he was asked to prepare a garden plan. Just a few days later Williams met these ladies at Stratford to demonstrate his findings by walking through the site and examining places excavated by Pinkney. As well, Williams’s responsibilities were expanded, as he was asked “to prepare a plan for the approaches to the Mansion and the Vista to the river, in keeping with the period of the gardens, to be recommended to the Foundation for future development.”<sup>19</sup> Williams moved expeditiously, producing plans that were approved by the board of governors of the Garden Club of Virginia meeting in Warrenton on October 5, 1932. He was subsequently present at Stratford on October 13 when his plans were accepted by the board of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, which gave a “rising vote of thanks to Mrs. Fairfax Harrison and the Garden Club of Virginia” for their efforts.<sup>20</sup> In a letter to Mrs. Harrison written after her first look at Williams’s work Ethel Armes may have summed up the feelings of members of the Garden Club of Virginia as well as the Stratford ladies. Armes was “much impressed,” she observed, “with the grace, dignity and sense of spaciousness” of the Williams plans. She continued, noting that he had done “a really extraordinary piece of work and it delights one’s soul to observe the manner which he has wrought the letter of historical accuracy with the true spirit of the period.”<sup>21</sup>

photo: Stratford Hall Archives



Eleanor Roosevelt (third from right) party on south side of Great House during her 1933 visit to Stratford. The Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation’s founding president May Field Lanier is second from the right, while resident superintendent General B. F. Cheatham stands behind Mrs. Roosevelt and adjacent to the recently restored south ha-ha.

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# Stratford Hall ...

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All involved now seemed to believe that Arthur Shurcliff's requirement of being "perfectly sure" of standing on "solid ground" had now been met, and restoration work began in earnest. Indeed, Hetty Harrison reported in October 1932 that under the direction of Charles Pinkney the east garden area had already been "terraced and graded to conform to the old levels." While this had been happening, moreover, the area had been thoroughly manured in anticipation of planting in the spring of 1933. Further, rebuilding had begun of the north and south garden walls, as well as the east ha-ha, under the direction of Herbert Claiborne, while a "complete water system" was being installed.<sup>22</sup>

Attending the same October 1932 meeting where Morley Williams presented his garden restoration plans was the acclaimed Philadelphia architect Fiske Kimball, who had been chosen Stratford's restoration architect that spring. While Kimball's domain was primarily the Great House and its complement of outbuildings, a gray area was developing relating to wall design and the construction of other garden-related structures. Correspondence ensued between these two men, as they attempted to define their respective territories. One particular feature generating controversy was the ha-ha which terminated the south lawn, this having been initially excavated by Arthur Shurcliff. Its reconstruction was to be underwritten by the Garden Club of Virginia, but a question arose as to who should prepare the restoration design. In a letter to Kimball of October 24, 1932, Williams wryly raised a question of purview:

"We had a bright student who asked a short time ago 'How long is a vista'; I would like to know 'How big is a garden' and whether your contract includes Landscape Architecture as well as Architecture."<sup>23</sup>

In a three page response, Kimball detailed the complexities of his position and noted surprise that the final written terms of his contract with the "Lee Foundation" had included "walls" along with "the main dwelling and surrounding outbuildings." Despite



photo: Stratford Hall Archives

*Eleanor Roosevelt and dog "Maggie" during 1933 tour of East Garden. She is escorted by Stratford board member Mrs. Rufus N. Garrett and resident superintendent General B. F. Cheatham. Note protective covering installed to protect recently transplanted boxwood.*



photo: Stratford Hall Archives

*Eleanor Roosevelt and dog "Maggie" during 1933 tour of East Garden. Her escort, Mrs. Rufus N. Garrett, points out features of the Morley Williams design, while to her left stands General B. F. Cheatham.*

being surprised by his broadened scope of work, Kimball was not now going to relinquish this to Williams, though he did believe the two could find a cooperative middle ground.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, confusion then ensued as to information Kimball believed Williams was supposed to share, resulting in a sharp note of November 18 to Williams beginning: "Are you mad with us, or sick, or what—that I can't get any answer to letters, telegrams, etc."<sup>25</sup> In his reply, Williams again displayed a wit not found in Kimball's correspondence, opening with: "I am not mad with you. Several things give me a 'pain'. You are not one of them,

at least not yet."<sup>26</sup>

Fortunately, nerves calmed, as each man settled into his respective set of tasks, Morley Williams working on the approach areas south of the Great House and on the Potomac River vista,

and Fiske Kimball providing designs for the south ha-ha, as well as an octagonal garden house to rise on the foundations uncovered by Shurcliff. Moreover, planting began within in the east garden, with a particular emphasis on the boxwood that was crucial to the realization of the Williams design. Charles Pinkney continued to serve as Williams's assistant on-site, while Stratford's new resident superintendent, retired General B. F. Cheatham, provided further aid, particularly in areas outside the formal East Garden.<sup>27</sup> The latter's diary provides especially valuable day-by-day information on the comings and goings of the various parties involved with the

work at Stratford and on progress all across the grounds. He gave details, for example, on the "first class water system" being provided by the Garden Club of Virginia, which was to be a system "with all copper pipe, automatic pump, 3000 gallon pressure tank, etc. to cost about \$3,000."<sup>28</sup> Relating to other aspects of landscape work, Cheatham noted on December 1, 1932, that Mrs. Harrison's committee met on site with Morley Williams, the latter reporting that "he was completing a plan for tree planting south of the house for the Garden Club of Virginia." Cheatham was to be responsible for the actual work, which was to "consist of the use of indigenous

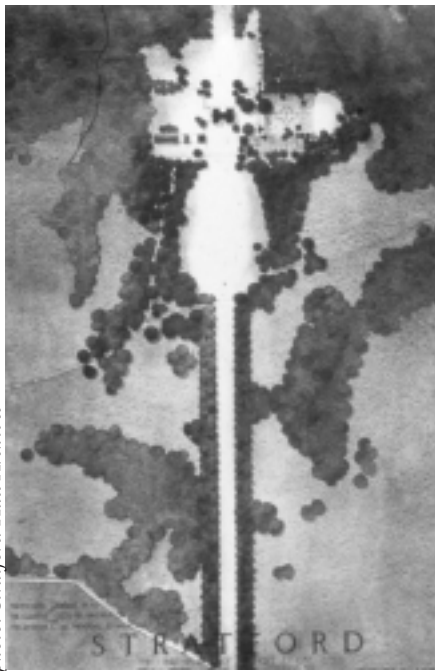
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# Stratford Hall ...

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photo: Stratford Hall Archives



Morley Williams's plan for oval drive and linear allée south of Great House. Note East Garden at upper right.

trees planted along the old road across the field, forming an oval in front of the house with a vista of a double row of poplars extending to the highway. All trees to be small (about 2 or 2 1/2") and probably nursery stock."<sup>29</sup> The general became busy on the north side of the Great House as well. The following April he recorded succinctly in his diary that "Mrs. Harrison came at noon, I took her to river end of vista, we agreed on trees to be cut."<sup>30</sup>

Within the East Garden Morley Williams and Hetty Harrison were keeping Charles Pinkney

busy, as boxwood large and small arrived on site. Cheatham's diary noted, for example, on March 27: "Mrs. Harrison here in late afternoon, truck arrived with 5 box trees which she had bought for garden." Several days later he recorded that "Mr. Pinkney planted box today and two more truck loads came."<sup>31</sup>

A landmark moment in the progress of work came on May 17, 1933, with a visit by the First Lady of the United States. Wasting few words, General Cheatham recorded: "Mrs. Roosevelt arrived driving her own car about noon; the Senate Ladies, newspaper women and other invited guests numbered 130." After lunch "under the beech trees," Mrs. Roosevelt went to see "the hams, chickens and pigs." "The entire affair went off well," the general noted, "and everyone was pleased."<sup>32</sup> One guest not mentioned by Cheatham but shown in several of the photographs taken that day was one of the Roosevelts' dogs, a Scottish terrier named "Maggie" and thus a predecessor to the famous "Falla."<sup>33</sup> Also evident in the photographs was the covering system that had been installed to protect the newly planted boxwood, a feature which appeared in various aerial photographs as well.

By fall 1933 Hetty Harrison and her Committee believed a point had been reached where the gardens could be transferred to the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation for long-term management. To assist the Lee ladies with garden maintenance the Garden Club of Virginia would provide \$540 per year, which was "the interest on government bonds," this being payable until such time as the Foundation was "financially able to assume (the gardens') upkeep." Various conditions were attached, including a requirement that changes could not be made to garden structures, plans, or plantings without the "consent of the Stratford Committee of the Garden Club of Virginia and the landscape

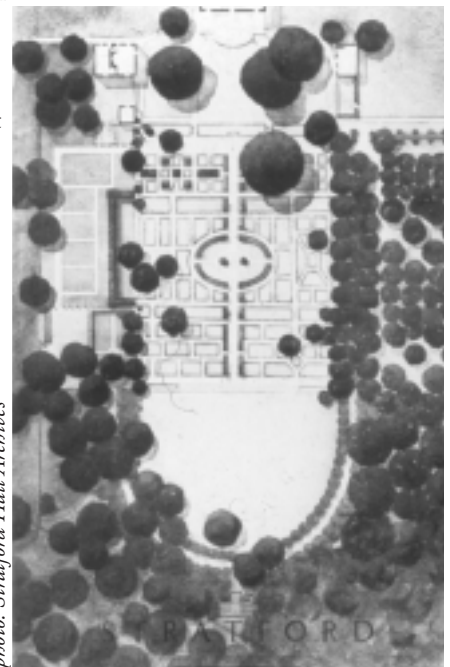
architect of the Foundation." With "deep appreciation" the Foundation's board accepted this offer, and its various conditions, on October 17, 1933, during their annual meeting.<sup>34</sup> Despite this official turnover, various tasks remained for Hetty Harrison and the Stratford Committee to complete. By early spring 1934, however, she was able to notify May Field Lanier that her committee would soon cease to function, their responsibilities to be turned over to a newly formed Garden Club of Virginia "Restoration Committee." In a letter of March 27, she reported that "the Octagon House is finished, the orchard set out, and the garden gates will be in place next week."<sup>35</sup>

Combining the talents of individuals whose names have become synonymous with the Colonial Revival movement and the tireless energies of their own members, the Garden Club of Virginia had more than fulfilled their 1929 commitment to their "labor of love" at Stratford. The work had not been inexpensive, and the amount raised for the project was impressive by any standard. By May 1934 it was reported that over \$65,000 had been devoted to the Stratford restoration project, \$5,000 of this having come from the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland. Of this, \$18,000 had been invested in bonds, and it was the interest on these bonds that was being assigned to ongoing garden maintenance.<sup>36</sup> Of course, this did not mark the end of the Garden Club of Virginia's

commitment to Stratford, and the organization retains responsibility for the East Garden to this day. Nor did the "turnover" of the gardens close Hetty Harrison's involvement with Stratford. After much coaxing by President

May Field Lanier, she joined the board of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, becoming chairman of the garden committee at the October 1934 meeting. Similarly, Morley Williams continue to serve Stratford ably, as did Charles Pinkney, the two now turning to the area west of the Great House where excavations began mid-summer 1934. The final essay on the topic of garden and landscape restoration at Stratford will discuss their work, along with the subsequent involvement at Stratford of the New York firm of Innocenti & Webel, as well as of Arthur Shurcliff's successor at Colonial Williamsburg, Alden Hopkins.

photo: Stratford Hall Archives



Morley Williams's plan for East Garden. Overhead perspective.

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# Stratford Hall ...

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## End Notes...

<sup>1</sup>Dorothy Hunt Williams, *Historic Virginia Gardens: Preservations by the Garden Club of Virginia* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1975), xi-xii, 5-8.

<sup>2</sup>Stratford Archives, Mrs. James A. Scott to May Field Lanier, undated; GARDEN RESTORATION: Correspondence, Harrison, Mrs. Fairfax, Chairman of Stratford Committee Garden Club of Virginia, Folder #3.

<sup>3</sup>Author's italics.

<sup>4</sup>*Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc., Held October 14-15, 1929 at Stratford Hall, Westmoreland County, Virginia.*, 3.

<sup>5</sup>For a biographical sketch of Shurcliff, see Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA and Robin Karson, eds., *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, "Shurcliff, Arthur Asahel (Shurtleff)," 351-356.

<sup>6</sup>For reference to Bottomley's early involvement with Stratford, see *Magnolia: Bulletin of the Southern Garden History Society*, Vol XIX, No. 1, Winter-Spring 2004, 3.

<sup>7</sup>Stratford Archives, W. L. Bottomley to Arthur A. Shurtleff, Esq., April 25, 1929, Folder A2-2a/136, "Garden and Grounds, Corres. with Chairman, Stratford Com. of the Garden Club of Virginia, 1929-1934."

<sup>8</sup>Stratford Archives, Arthur A. Shurcliff, "Report on Stratford by Arthur A. Shurcliff Landscape Architect," October 8, 1930, 2, Folder A2-2a/136, "Garden and Grounds, Corres. with Chairman, Stratford Com. of the Garden Club of Virginia, 1929-1934."

<sup>9</sup>*Minutes of the Second Council of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc. October 13th-17th, 1930, with Appendices II-XXV*, Appendix VIII, Hetty Cary Harrison, "Garden Club of Virginia, Report of the Stratford Committee to the Board of Directors of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc.," October 14, 1930, 1.

<sup>10</sup>Harrison, "Report," October 14, 1930, 1.

<sup>11</sup>Harrison, "Report," October 14, 1930, 2.

<sup>12</sup>Ethel Armes, *Stratford Hall: The Great House of the Lees* (Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1936), 504.

<sup>13</sup>*Minutes of the Third Council of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc., October 13th-15th, 1931, with Appendices I-XXX*, Hetty Cary Harrison, "Report of the Stratford Committee of the Garden Club of Virginia to the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation and Board of Directors," October 13, 1931, 2.

<sup>14</sup>For a biographical sketch of Williams, see Birnbaum and Karson, *Pioneers*, "Williams, Morley Jeffers," 455-457.

<sup>15</sup>Thomas E. Beaman Jr., "The Archaeology of Morley Jeffers Williams and the Restoration of Historic Landscapes at Stratford Hall, Mount Vernon, and Tryon Palace," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, LXXIX (2002): 350-351.

<sup>16</sup>Armes, *Stratford Hall*, 507.

<sup>17</sup>Stratford Archives, Morley Jeffers Williams, "Stratford Excavations—Summer 1932," undated, 1; Folder B2-2a/112, "Williams' and Pinkney's Report on Excavation."

<sup>18</sup>Williams, "Stratford Excavations—Summer 1932," 3.

<sup>19</sup>*Minutes of the Fifth Council, Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc., October 12th-19th, 1933, with Appendices I-XLIII*, Appendix XXVI, "Report of the Stratford Committee of the Garden Club of Virginia," October 1933, Researches." This was a one-page summary of the committee's work done up to October 29, 1932.

<sup>20</sup>*Minutes of the Fourth Council of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc., October 13th-17th, 1932, with Appendices I-XXXV*, 4.

<sup>21</sup>Stratford Archives, Ethel Armes to Mrs. Fairfax Harrison, September 30, 1932, Folder A2-2a/136, "Garden and Grounds, Corres. with Chairman, Stratford Com. of the Garden Club of Virginia, 1929-1934."

<sup>22</sup>*Minutes of the Fourth Council of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc., October 13th-17th, 1932, with Appendices I-XXXV*, Appendix III, 1.

<sup>23</sup>Stratford Archives, Morley Jeffers Williams to Fiske Kimball, October 24, 1932, Folder B2-2a/32, "Correspondence-Williams, Morley J., 1932-1938."

<sup>24</sup>Stratford Archives, Fiske Kimball to Morley J. Williams, October 26, 1932, Folder B2-2a/32, "Correspondence-Williams, Morley J., 1932-1938."

<sup>25</sup>Stratford Archives, Fiske Kimball to Morley J. Williams, November 18, 1932, Folder B2-2a/32, "Correspondence-Williams, Morley J., 1932-1938."

<sup>26</sup>Stratford Archives, Morley Jeffers Williams to Fiske Kimball, November 19, 1932, Folder B2-2a/32, "Correspondence-Williams, Morley J., 1932-1938."

<sup>27</sup>*Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc., Diary, General B. F. Cheatham, Jr., Stratford Hall, Westmoreland County, Virginia, July 4, 1932-July 31, 1939*, Volume 1, (Installment A), 13. General Cheatham registered some dismay in his entry of September 22, 1932, as he mentioned a meeting that day of the "Garden Club Committee," and noted that "it is quite evident that I am expected to keep hands off of the entire garden project."

<sup>28</sup>Stratford Archives, General Cheatham's *Diary*, Volume 1, (Installment A), 13.

<sup>29</sup>Stratford Archives, General Cheatham's *Diary*, Volume 1, (Installment A), 19-20.

<sup>30</sup>Stratford Archives, General Cheatham's *Diary*, Volume 1, (Installment B), 14, "April 27th".

<sup>31</sup>Stratford Archives, General Cheatham's *Diary*, Volume 1, (Installment B), 10-11, March 27th, March 30th.

<sup>32</sup>Stratford Archives, General Cheatham's *Diary*, Volume 1, (Installment B), 16, "May 17th".

<sup>33</sup>Information on the Roosevelts' dog "Maggie" provided courtesy of Mr. Robert Parks, archivist with the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, via telephone interview on February 14, 2005.

<sup>34</sup>*Minutes of the Fifth Council of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation, Inc., October 12th-19th, 1933, with Appendices I-XLIII*, 12-13, Appendix XXVIII. The \$540 amount would later be adjusted slightly upward.

<sup>35</sup>Stratford Archives, Hetty Fairfax Harrison to May Field Lanier, March 27, 1934, Folder A2-2a/136, "Garden and Grounds, Corres. with Chairman, Stratford Com. of the Garden Club of Virginia, 1929-1934."

<sup>36</sup>Stratford Archives, Helen Knox to Mrs. Charles D. Lanier, May 7, 1934, Folder A2-2a/13

## Members in the News

**Bill Welch's** article, "Where Friendship Blooms," for the March 2005 issue of *Southern Living* magazine, tells the story of a relic, 19<sup>th</sup>-century Burton, Texas farmhouse that he and his wife, **Diane**, rescued and restored as their country getaway, complete with a carefully designed cottage garden filled with heirloom flowers. Bill and Diane had the fragile structure moved to a four-acre site on the edge of the 20-acre ranch of long-time friends **Harley** and **Jayme Ponder**, who are also active members of SGHS.

SGHS president **Jim Cothran** is receiving two awards this spring. The National Garden Clubs, Inc. is presenting their "Award of Excellence for 2005" to Jim for his many contributions of national significance in landscape architecture and urban planning. Additionally, his book, *Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South*, will receive the Georgia Historical Society's 2005 "Lilla M. Hawes Award," which cites significant works on Georgia local and county history published in 2004. The award, named in honor of the GHS director from 1948-1976, will be presented at the Society's 166th annual meeting in April.



## Ruth Knopf Receives 1830 Award

At its Founders Day Annual Meeting, held January 10, 2005, the Charleston Horticultural Society (CHS) presented its prestigious "1830 Award" to SGHS member Ruth Knopf.

The award honors exemplary service and creative vision in the field of horticulture and is given to individuals or entities whose commitment to botanical pursuits has enriched the greater Charleston horticultural community. It is given annually in recognition of the organizations distinguished predecessor, the Horticultural Society of Charleston, which was established in 1830 and continued in existence to roughly 1860. Its constitution and bylaws still exist from its incorporation by the South Carolina Assembly, as do speeches by Joel Poinsett and Rev. John Bachman.



*Flora Ann Bynum (left) admires Ruth Knopf's "1830 Award." Photo by Patti McGee*

## SGHS Loses Two Veteran Members

Two dedicated, long-time members of the society will not be present for this year's annual meeting in Fredericksburg. Dr. Edgar G. (Ed.) Givhan died November 15, 2004 in Montgomery, Alabama. Ed was a leader of the medical community in Montgomery, having served as president of the medical staff of Montgomery Baptist Hospital (1974-75), president of the Montgomery County Medical Society (1076), and consulting physician for the Alabama Medicaid Program (1982-1986). Ed was a charter member of the Southern Garden History Society in 1982, and was elected to the second board of directors in 1984. For several years in the early days of the Society, Ed's office handled the printing and mailing of the society newsletter, and his office handled the society's mailing lists until 1991. He served as president of SGHS from May 1988-1990, and at the time of his death was an honorary director of the Society. He was chairman of two annual meetings: the Montgomery gathering in 1986, and the 1995 meeting in Mobile, Alabama. Ed and his wife Peggy hosted several board dinners and meetings in their Montgomery home and at their farm. Ed and Peggy also coauthored a book, *France—Gardens and Historic Sites, A Southern Traveler's Guide*, published in 2003.

Decca Gilmer Frackelton died December 18, 2004 at the age of 83. Decca was a lifelong gardener with a primary interest in azaleas and boxwoods, and was a member of the American Boxwood Society for over 20 years, serving as its president and, at the time of her death, chairing the membership committee. Her love of history, preservation, and genealogy led to memberships in the Rappahannock Committee of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, the Prestwold Association, and the Southern Garden History Society. She was a long-time regent of the Kenmore Association, now known as the George Washington's Fredericksburg Foundation.



# Preserving Charleston's Landscape Legacy

By James R. Cothran, Atlanta, Georgia

Often described as “a city set in a garden,” Charleston, South Carolina has a rich garden tradition dating back to Colonial times. Charleston became the center of gardening in the southern colonies, and some of the county's finest houses and gardens were built outside the city along the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. Wealthy planters who had acquired their wealth in agriculture or trade in the Carolinas and the West Indies developed these large estates, known as plantations. Prominent among these early plantations were Crowfield, Middleton Place, Drayton Hall, and Magnolia on the Ashley, and Mulberry, Medway and Middleburg on the Cooper. Fine houses and gardens were by no means confined to the grand plantations outside of Charleston but were equally prominent in the city as well. Plans of many of Charleston's early town gardens have been preserved in the records of property transfers in documents known as the McCrady Plat Books. In almost every instance, these early town gardens were laid out in simple geometric patterns of square and rectangular beds.

Shortly after the American Revolution houses built in Charleston began to depart from the established colonial style to vernacular structures known as the “single house.” These long, rectangular, freestanding structures were specifically designed to adapt to Charleston's narrow lots and semitropical climate. The single house was typically built with its gable end facing the street and its rooms strung out in a straight line in order to obtain cross ventilation. The single house featured porches, known locally as piazzas, that extended the entire length of the house on the south or west side. In late afternoon and evening, piazzas caught the cool, refreshing ocean breezes and became delightful outdoor living spaces. An outer door that opened onto the piazza traditionally overlooked a small, patterned garden. Pleasing views of Charleston's small, patterned gardens were afforded from the piazza from which their layout could be easily observed and enjoyed year around.

The destructive effects of the Civil War (1861-1865) had a tremendous impact on Charleston's plantations and city gardens alike. While many of Charleston's finest plantations, including Middleton and Magnolia, suffered tremendous damage and destruction as a result of the war, the city's town gardens were greatly impacted as well. Shortly after the war, a northern reporter described Charleston as “a city of ruins, of desolation, of vacant houses, of widowed women, of rotting wharves, of deserted warehouses, of weed-filled gardens, of miles of grass-grown streets, of acres of pitiful and voiceful barrenness.” Thus, Charlestonians found themselves in a state of poverty with little in the way of financial resources to rebuild their homes or maintain their gardens. Charleston suffered for many years under what has been appropriately described as genteel poverty, a time that left little in the way of financial resources or the luxury of time for the pursuit of gardening and horticultural interests.

It was not until the early 1900s when economic conditions improved that a renewed interest in Charleston's town gardens began to emerge. This movement was greatly influenced by northerners who began to buy Charleston townhouses and low-country plantations in the 1920s and 1930s for use as winter retreats. It was during this time that Loutrel Winslow Briggs

(1893-1977), a New York landscape architect, first visited Charleston and began practicing landscape architecture in Charleston during the winter months and in New York in the summer. Many northerners who had bought Charleston homes enlisted the services of Mr. Briggs to assist with the design of the gardens and grounds of their newly acquired properties. One of Briggs' first commissions in Charleston was in 1929 for Mrs. Washington Roebling, widow of the famous engineer who supervised the construction of New York's Brooklyn Bridge. In addition to this early commission, Loutrel Briggs also became involved in the design of gardens and grounds of other Charleston properties, including numerous Low-country plantations, including: Mulberry for Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Chapman of New York (1930), Rice Hope for Senator J.S. Fraulighuysen of New Jersey (1932), and Mepkin for Henry and Clare Booth Luce (1937).

Loutrel Briggs was born 12 December 1893 in New York City and after graduating from Cornell University in 1917 with a degree in rural art (landscape architecture), became head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the New York School of Fine and Applied Art, until he opened an independent practice of landscape architecture the city in 1921. Briggs demonstrated an exceptional ability to handle a variety of landscape architectural projects that encompassed a wide range of commercial,

institutional, governmental, and residential designs. Representative projects included school grounds, government housing, college campuses, churches, cemeteries, suburban and rural estates, and numerous small gardens. Of all his projects, Loutrel Briggs appears to have gained greatest satisfaction and pride from his small garden designs.

During his more than fifty years of practicing landscape architecture, Briggs designed over a hundred small gardens in the Charleston's historic district. The design of these small town gardens presented many challenges due to their odd, erratic shapes and physical constraints imposed by limited space. Briggs' ability to work within these tiny spaces resulted in many creative and aesthetic designs. Loutrel Briggs, above all others, is credited with establishing what is generally known today as “Charleston's garden style.” In the design of Charleston's small town gardens Briggs adhered to certain design principles that proved to be tremendously effective throughout his career. He



*A garden in Charleston, from William Bryant's Picturesque America - vol. 2 (1874).*

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# Preserving Charleston's Landscape Legacy

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believed that each space and its surroundings should be carefully considered in determining the design of an individual garden. Briggs also believed that if at all possible a garden should be visible and easily accessible from the house to establish a clear interior/exterior relationship between the house and garden plan. His desire was to create a garden that served as an outdoor room.

With the increased loss of many of Briggs' finest town gardens within recent years, as a result of changes in property ownership, poor maintenance, and natural disasters, local preservation groups began to search for ways of curtailing this growing trend. In the spring of 2003, the Historic Charleston Foundation, in concert with James Cothran, FASLA, (an Atlanta landscape architect and author of *Gardens of Historic Charleston*) sponsored a workshop at the Foundation's headquarters to highlight important contributions made by Loutrel Briggs to Charleston's landscape legacy. Organizations invited to participate in the workshop included representatives from Historic Charleston Foundation, South Carolina Historical Society, the Preservation Society of Charleston, Charleston Horticultural Society, the Charleston Garden Club, as well as landscape architects from several Charleston offices. In addition to heightening local interest in the career and contributions of Loutrel Briggs, the workshop also sought to encourage a collaborative effort by participating organizations and individuals to assist in the identification, documentation, and preservation of Briggs' gardens.

To facilitate the objectives of the workshop, it was recommended that the newly established Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) that is directed at preserving, protecting, and interpreting America's significant and threatened historic landscapes, serve as a model for the proposed effort. Established in 2000, the HALS program is based on two existing historic resource documentation programs: the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER). Similar in purpose to these existing programs, the HALS initiative represents a combined effort between the American Society of Landscape Architects, the National Park Service, and the Library of Congress to document America's historic landscapes. While presently awaiting federal funding and the development of guidelines that will define implementation standards, the HALS program encourages partnerships at local levels which can be carried out in the "spirit" of the HALS program.

Following a consensus of workshop attendees to participate in a survey/documentation program of Briggs' gardens, Historic Charleston Foundation agreed to serve as the coordinating organization for this effort. Assumption of this role required the Foundation to establish guidelines and procedures for carrying out the project including: identification of gardens designed by Loutrel Briggs; development of a survey form for garden documentation; coordination of volunteers, and contacting property owners identified as having a Briggs garden. The Foundation also agreed to serve as a repository for visual and written survey material, with the understanding that all material collected and compiled as a results of the project would be available to property owners, landscape architects, garden

historians, and the public.

Following the development of three independent survey teams, comprised of a lead landscape architect, horticulturists/garden specialists, a photographer, and assigned volunteers to assist with the survey process, several prominent Briggs gardens were selected for initial documentation. One of the most important of these was Emily Whaley's Church Street garden. Designed by Briggs in 1941 this small town garden has, over the years, received international recognition for its imaginative design and creative horticultural display. Described by the late English garden writer, Rosemary Verey as a "dream garden," the Whaley garden has been featured in such notable publications as *The American Woman's Garden* and *Caroline Boisssets' Town Gardens*. Other notable gardens included in the early survey efforts included a garden designed in 1947 for Mr. and Mrs. James Hagood on Meeting Street and the Wilcox garden on King Street, designed by Briggs in 1951. The garden of the Washington/Gibbs house, designed for Mrs. Washington Roebleing in 1929, was also documented in the initial survey. Not only was this the first garden in Charleston Briggs designed, but it also represents one of the largest and most historic gardens in the city.

A year and a half following initiation of the Briggs project, many milestones have been achieved. In addition to the successful documentation of over ten Briggs' gardens, extensive archival material (surveys, plans, photographs, etc.) has been assembled and cataloged. In addition, two lectures on Loutrel Briggs and tours of his gardens have been sponsored by Historic Charleston Foundation during its annual Spring Festival of House and Garden tours; several newspaper and magazine articles have been written on Briggs work in Charleston, and a public television documentary on Charleston Gardens has been produced that featured a number of Briggs designs. Each of these efforts and activities has created greater public awareness of Loutrel Briggs and his contributions to Charleston's garden heritage. Most recently, the South Carolina Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects received a challenge grant from the National ASLA office to sponsor a weekend charette to document selected Briggs' gardens. This event included participation by students and faculty from Clemson University's Landscape Architectural program, several local/regional landscape architects, and representatives of Historic Charleston Foundation.

While the Briggs survey project represents a local initiative that will provide both immediate and long-term benefits, it also serves as a prototype for similar efforts in other locations throughout the country - whether the threatened landscapes are gardens, parks, squares, estates, battlefields, etc. Additionally, it is hoped that the project will encourage greater support and federal funding for the HALS program. As noted by the HABS Foundation, that until public funding for the program is secured, the immediate focus is to establish partnerships to assist with further program development. Partnerships between HALS, private landscape architectural firms, academic institutions, and like-minded preservation organizations will benefit all parties, and establish long-term relationships that will help foster and encourage landscape preservation efforts.

# Hills & Dales Estate in LaGrange, Georgia: *It all started with a line*

By Bill Black

In the archives of Hills & Dales Estate, there are several files of correspondence that passed between Fuller E. Callaway in LaGrange, Georgia and Neel Reid of Hentz & Reed Architects, in Atlanta between 1913 and 1916. These letters



*Neel Reid designed the Fuller E. Callaway home and located it on axis with the existing Ferrell Gardens.*

describe Callaway's vision of the home he wanted for himself, his wife, their two sons, and their extended family. Callaway wrote: "Above all, I want it to embody every convenience that is possible to the situation and to our means. I do not want it to become a burden to Mrs. Callaway." He goes on to specify a few items, and asks for "built-in vacuum cleaning and all such conveniences as are possible to one of moderate means."

But Reid also had one other design factor to consider when laying out the home's footprint: the boxwood gardens that had been lovingly cultivated since 1841 by the property's previous owner, Sarah Coleman Ferrell. As an ambitious and well-mannered young boy, Fuller Callaway had spent many hours in the gardens with Sarah Ferrell. He shared her religious beliefs, and respected the boxwood sculptures depicting church pews, a circle of boxwoods representing an offering plate with gold flowers symbolizing coin offerings, and a harp with lines of



*The recently completed Hills & Dales Estate Visitor Center features educational exhibits about the history of the Ferrell and Callaway families.*

alternanthera for strings. He treasured the carefully trimmed boxwood which spelled the word "God," and a unique planting of boxwood which forms a cluster of grapes, representing the bounty from the land of Canaan described in the book of Numbers.

To fulfill Callaway's vision, Neel Reid quickly discovered that on the south side of the property, a line of sight could be drawn that went from an existing sunken garden, across several stone terraces, across another round planting bed, to the crest of the hill where the Callaway home would be built. The line now ends on the center set of French doors in the home's living room. That physical relationship with the garden established, the rest of the design fell into place on an east-west axis, overlooking wide terraces to the north that were suitable for farming.

On the east, Reed added a columned portico which gives visitors their first view of the home as they drive up a serpentine road. Along the north side of the home is an elegant portecochere, and a Palladian window that illuminates the twin



*Visitors enjoy the formal boxwood gardens and historic mottos in Ferrell Gardens located at Hills & Dales Estate.*

stairwell. Limestone quoins firmly anchor the corners of the building, which is clad in stucco. It is a stunning example of Georgian-Italian architecture, but the subtly elegant interior, with Circassian walnut paneled walls in the living room, a coffered plaster ceiling in the dining room, and a smaller marble floored dining room, is scaled for a family.

Hills & Dales Estate is widely regarded as one of Reed's most important commissions, and established him as one of the founders of "The Georgia School of Classicism." Les Cole, a noted classically trained architect from Montgomery, Alabama, who designed the recently completed Hills & Dales Estate Visitor Center, had this to say about the home's design: "The architectural detail and craftsmanship of the projects designed by early 20th-century architects like Neel Reid, is what has defined their vitality nearly a century later."

In the gardens, Fuller's wife Ida eagerly assumed responsibility for the care of the existing plantings, and added the Callaway family mottos: "St. Callaway" and "Ora Pro Mi" meaning "pray for me" in Latin. At Neel Reid's suggestion, Ida

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# Hills & Dales Estate

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added a stone fountain on the line-of-sight axis near the house, and a small garden pool with a curved stone bench in the sunken garden. As she often said: "My heart is so full of the love of flowers –God's smiles on earth- and of my interest in everything that grows."

Stewardship of the gardens continued in 1936 with Fuller E. Callaway, Jr's wife, Alice. Although the young mother of two was initially overwhelmed with the task of maintaining the well-known gardens, she became a knowledgeable and accomplished horticulturist. She kept a daily diary of her successes and failures in the garden, and hosted many special events and gardening tours over the years. She is quoted as having learned,

"patience, perseverance, and acceptance" in the garden.

Upon Alice Callaway's death in 1998, the estate was gifted to Fuller E. Callaway Foundation, and as expressed in her will, the home and gardens are now open to the public. According to Jane Alice Craig, a Foundation Trustee and granddaughter of Fuller and Alice Callaway, "The Foundation Trustees and family are extremely excited to be opening Hills & Dales Estate to visitors. My grandparents would be very proud that the public will be able to enjoy the wonderful Neel Reid architecture and experience the beautiful Ferrell Gardens which have been over 170 years in the making."

## Book Reviews

*Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the Present Day*, editors Nicholas Alfrey, Stephen Daniels, and Martin Postle, Tate/Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 2004, \$60, ISBN: 1-85437-544 X (hardcover); 1-85437-502-4 (paper)



*Gardens of the Arts and Crafts Movement: Reality and Imagination*, by Judith B. Tankard, Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 2004, 224 pages, 155 illustrations, hardcover, \$50, ISBN: 0-8109-4965-2



*Old Time Gardens* by Alice Morse Earle, with a new introduction by Virginia Lopez Begg, University Press of New England, 2005, 550 pages, paper, \$19.95, ISBN: 1-58465-418-X



Of the several books that have come our way recently, three have gained notice, and they merit recommendation for the pleasure they will give readers, whether casual perusers or those with a scholarly interest in garden history. Two of the authors, Virginia Lopez Begg and Judith B. Tankard, are members of the Southern Garden History Society.

*Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the Present Day* is the catalogue for a show of the same name, which opened in London in June 2004, coincident with the bicentennial of the Royal Horticultural Society. It traveled to Belfast and is on exhibit at the Manchester Art Gallery, now through 15 May 2005.

Instead of presenting documentary views of existing or lost English gardens, known in plans, prints, engravings, and other media, the show takes another point of view. It presents gardens as imaginative places, whether earthly or cerebral landscapes, created by artists on paper, canvas, board, etc., or film as in the case of Derek Jarman's garden at Dungeness photographed by Howard Sooley.

This approach honors an extraordinary license, that of artists who transcend every constraint to create gardens, grounds, borders, landscapes, and horticultural efforts that defy time, space, season, and the vicissitudes, which affect the endeavors of other mortals wielding hoe or spade. Well-intended, but unsatisfactory color schemes never frustrate the painter's brush. Here, instead of yet another garden album wherein places ranging from Chatsworth to Stowe and beyond have insisted that artists record their greatness, we have alternative garden views. These may be gardens created anew, in paint and watercolor, or others based on known places enhanced by the imagination and poetic license. But all are destined to inspire the gardener in each of us, whether simply to appreciate or to imitate on our own grounds.

Essays by the show's three curators, Nicholas Alfrey, Stephen Daniels, and Martin Postle, together with others by Brent Elliott



"The Hoe Garden Nursery," 1955 by Stanley Spencer (Plymouth City Museums and Art Gallery)

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"Autumn," c. 1951 by Charles Mahoney (Elizabeth Bulkeley private collection)

heightened respect, or others, such as Stanley Spencer whose "garden pictures," dismissed by him and others as "potboilers," gain deserved prominence in an already celebrated body of work,



"The Artist's Garden at Luggers Hill, Broadway" after 1912 by Alfred Parsons (private collection)

Cedric Morris, the Scottish painters Arthur Melville, William York MacGregor, and Edward Atkinson Hornel, together with Douglas Percy Bliss, Charles Ginner, C. Eliot Hodgkin, John Shelley, and Adrian Berg are artists of rising reputation on both sides of the

Atlantic.

The book and the exhibit continue with a section entitled "Representing and Intervening" addressing work of the late twentieth century and today introduced by Mary Horlock's essay. Here, too, are important surprises, including the art of Marc Quinn, Graham Fagen, Sarah Jones, and David Rayson, who were born in 1959 or later, and again, George Shaw, whose nostalgic paintings harken back to those of a century earlier but leave us aware of what has passed, changed, and lessened the British landscape. A concluding section provides brief accounts of ten artists' gardens including those of Charles Mahoney, Messrs. Parsons and Hornel, Barbara Hepworth, Ian Hamilton Finley, and Cedric Morris who gardened at Benton End where he conducted an art school with his partner Arthur Lett-Haines.



Not unexpectedly the works of Helen Allingham, Ernest Arthur Rowe, and both Alfred and Beatrice Parsons also appear as illustrations in Judith B. Tankard's *Gardens of the Arts and Crafts Movement*. In its pages she becomes another in the series of writers who have turned again and again to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century gardens of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, walked their paths, admired their borders, and returned to their desks to write thereof. As Ms. Tankard notes, Arts and Crafts gardens "were intertwined with the house like ivy growing on a wall, blurring the distinctions between indoors and outdoors." Native stone, seen in the elevations of houses, was laid up by local craftsman in vernacular patterns and utilized for garden walls, paths, pools, pavilions, summerhouses, and dovecotes. Indigenous trees, shrubs, and vines, old-fashioned flowers, orchards and nut alleys, topiary, and clipped yew hedges were favored. And everywhere roses in billowing mounds and on trellises.

Arts and Crafts gardens have enjoyed many descriptions, but they could be as easily defined by an evocation of William Morris's garden at Red House, Bexley Heath. Dating to the construction of the pioneering house, designed by Philip Webb in 1859 and situated in an existing orchard, it is acknowledged as the first Arts and Crafts garden. J. W. Mackail wrote of the gardener and his garden in a biography of Morris (1834-1896), *The Life of William Morris*, published in 1899.

In his knowledge of gardening he [Morris] did...with reason pride himself. It is very doubtful whether he was ever seen with a spade in his hands; in later years at Kemscott his manual work in the garden was almost limited to clipping his yew hedges. But of flowers and vegetables and fruit trees he knew all the ways and capabilities. Red House garden, with its long grass walks, its mid-summer lilies and autumn sunflowers, its wattled rose-trellises inclosing richly-flowered square garden plots, was then as unique as the house it surrounded. The building had been planned with such care that hardly a tree in the orchard had to be cut down; apples fell in at the windows as they stood open on hot autumn nights.

Judith Tankard's work, following David Ottewill's *The Edwardian Garden* of 1989, is the latest celebration of these remarkable gardens and grounds, which garnered acclaim and

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publication in their own time. *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, the earliest and still a foremost work on the Arts and Crafts garden, was written by Gertrude Jekyll and Lawrence Weaver and published in 1912. Miss Jekyll was then in the thick of her renown partnership with the architect Edwin Lutyens, designing gardens and landscapes for the houses he produced, while Lawrence Weaver was serving as architectural editor of the magazine "Country Life." *Gardens for Small Country Houses* was reprinted in 1981, and again in 1997 in a handsome new edition under the title *Arts and Crafts Gardens*. The splendid black and white photographs of the original edition were supplemented by contemporary color photographs of many of the same houses and gardens, period watercolors and paintings by Allingham, Rowe, and Elgood and works by both Lilian and Theresa Stannard, artists who curiously failed to be included in *Art of the Garden*.

Ms. Tankard traces her interest in this important group of gardens to a seminal visit in 1965 to Standen, the great house by Philip Webb. She also capitalizes here on her research for books on Gertrude Jekyll and other writings between that visit and this book, some forty years apart. I, too, have been to Standen, and like her came away inspired and exhilarated. But one also departs Standen, like some few other houses and gardens represented here, humbled, struck by its beauty and that rich combination of architecture, gardens, and furnishings that make it a remarkable, seamless whole when so many other country places are the sum of parts. While she qualifies her choices as "a highly personal selection of houses and gardens of the Arts and Crafts era," she in fact represents the long-acknowledged best of the period, and she enlivens her narrative with appropriate illustrations from "The Studio" magazine. Under its founding editor, Charles Holme, who lived in two landmark Arts and Crafts houses, the magazine was the chief promoter of Arts and Crafts architects and designers. These classic Arts and Crafts places include both Red House and Kelmscott, the successive homes of William Morris, Fouracre by Ernest Newton, Leasowes by Ernest Gimson, Rodmarton Manor by Ernest Barnsley, Tirley Garth by Charles E. Mallows, Drakestone Manor by Oswald P. Milne, together with the great Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll collaborations at Munstead Wood, Deanery Gardens, Marsh Court, Goddards, and Folly Farm. These newly-made houses and gardens are joined by a fascinating group of country places that represent the remaking and remodeling of older houses in the Arts and Crafts mode. Gravetye Manor, the brilliant house and garden of William Robinson, Brickwall, an 1873 remodeling by George Devey, Upper Dorval House, beautifully crafted and enlarged by Ernest Barnsley, Showshell Manor, the handsome collaboration of H. M. Ballie Scott and Charles Paget Wade, and Clough Williams-Ellis's Plas Brondanw, the long-time ancestral effort described as "one of the best preserved Arts and Crafts gardens in Britain," comprise this collection.

Ms. Tankard re-crosses the Atlantic and concludes with American houses and gardens and a brief mention of the Craftsman movement promoted by Gustav Stickley through "The Craftsman" magazine from 1901 to 1916. Green Gables, an extraordinary house and garden by Charles Sumner Greene in Woodside, California, stands apart and above most American places of this era. It represents an important American example of the Arts and Crafts era when genius presided in the garden.



The image of "wattled rose-trellises" at Red House is one that would surely have appealed to Alice Morse Earle, a New England antiquarian, the author of *Old Time Gardens* and *Sun-Dials and Roses of Yesterday*, and a woman who is arguably the nation's first garden historian. Alice Morse (1851-1911), born in Worcester, Massachusetts, was educated at the Worcester Classical and English High School and the Gannett Institute in Boston. In 1874 she was married to Henry Earle and afterward made her home with him and their children in Brooklyn. In the summers she returned to Worcester to spend weeks in her childhood home, which remained the residence of her sister Frances Clary Morse, whose *Furniture of the Olden Time* was published by Macmillan in 1902.

Between 1891 and 1903 Alice Morse Earle produced sixteen books, at least one in each year, beginning with *The Sabbath in Puritan New England* in 1891 and concluding with *Two Centuries of Costume* in 1903. Macmillan published *Old Time Gardens* in 1901, and reprinted it in 1902 when the house published *Sun-Dials and Roses of Yesterday*. *Old Time Gardens* was reprinted four times between 1904 and 1928 by Macmillan. Forty years later, in 1968, it was reissued by Singing Tree Press. Although *Old Time Gardens* did not enjoy the success of Frances Clary Morse's *Furniture of the Olden Time*, which was reprinted seventeen times between 1903 and 1947, it was immediately influential and encouraged a new generation of American garden writers, many also women, who produced dozens of garden books in the 1900s and 1910s. It has since assumed iconic status as the first American garden history. Now, in 2005, it has been reprinted in a paperback edition by the University Press of New England with a new introduction by Virginia Lopez Begg.

Ms. Begg provides a biographical sketch of Mrs. Earle, a short account of her writings, and an insightful, engaging précis of *Old Time Gardens*. She notes that Alice Morse Earle repeatedly thanked her parents for "a childhood spent in a garden," a place she would enjoy until the end of her life. It was laid out on the grounds of an old nursery and the family's house, like William Morris's, was surrounded by older fruit trees. Her father Edwin Morse became a member of the Worcester Horticultural Society in 1862, and both Mrs. Earle and her younger sister Frances (1855-1933) remembered their parent's garden-making, over-laying the nursery grounds with their own plants, paths and borders. As we have seen, this was a process followed by William Morris and other Arts and Crafts gardeners.

The memory of hours spent in her family's Worcester garden, her parents' exchange of seeds and plants with their neighbors, and the pleasures of walking through Worcester admiring the gardens of friends, neighbors, and no doubt those of a few strangers were memories that remained with Alice Morse Earle through life.

This richness of recall, and hours spent in the company of others who had shared some degree of her own horticultural good fortune, continually inform Mrs. Earle's observations through the pages of *Old Time Gardens*. A number of these gardening friends, it would appear, were fellow members of the National Society of Colonial Dames. Research and a wide-ranging correspondence confirmed and enlivened her authority as a writer and historian. She was knowledgeable of the past, ever a memorist, but as Ms. Begg notes, little drawn to the sentimental. And, she produced the manuscript of *Old Time Gardens* at a time when important advances were made in photography and its use in commercial publishing. *Old Time Gardens* is the first American garden book

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## Book Reviews

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that makes lavish use of photographic illustrations. She graciously credited her band of photographers, a roster that included J. Horace McFarland, then enjoying a rising reputation as America's best known horticultural printer and publisher.

Those who already know *Old Time Gardens* will be grateful for this new compact, portable edition and appreciate all that Virginia Lopez Begg writes in her fine introduction. Others, coming to this classic for the first time, will likewise and have the pleasure of meeting anew one of the legendary figures in American garden history. Often when one writes of others, one defines oneself. So it was in 1902 when Alice Morse Earle reviewed a reprint of John Dando Sedding's *Garden-Craft, Old and New*, which Judith Tankard cites as having "laid the foundation for Arts and Crafts gardens in the early 1900s."

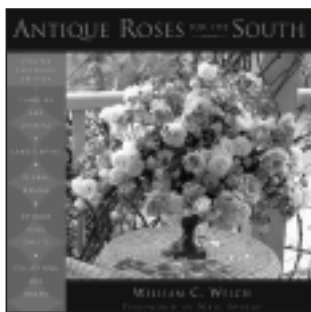
He loved the old gardens for qualities which I have ever felt and loved in them, as tangible shapes of our ancestors; as embodiments of ancient worth and stability; as evidences of a devotion to one's native land and one's home soil, and interest in and effort to beautify it.

Readers of *Old Time Gardens* will sense this conviction on its every page and in the countless writings that Alice Morse Earle and *Old Time Gardens* inspired.

Davyd Foard Hood, Book Review Editor  
Isinglass, Vale, North Carolina

In addition to "Art of the Garden" in Manchester, visitors to England this spring should know of three other shows of interest. The first is "The Writer in the Garden," at the British Library, which opened in November and continues through April 10, 2005. The Victoria and Albert Museum is mounting a major show. "International Arts and Crafts Exhibition," which opens March 17 and runs through July 24, 2005. In addition to the exhibition catalog of the same name, a companion book, *Arts and Crafts Gardens* (ISBN 1-85177-448-3), by Wendy Hitchmough, is being published. And finally, an exhibition on the gardens at Hatfield House opens on April 21 at the Museum of Garden History. Hatfield House, a redbrick Jacobean palace twenty miles north of London, was the former home of the Dowager Marchioness of Salisbury, and has been called one of the ten best gardens in Britain. Lady Salisbury, 82, is considered Britain's high priestess of historic garden design, and her book, *The Gardens at Hatfield*, is being published by Frances Lincoln in April 2005.

*Antique Roses for the South*, by William C. Welch, Taylor Trade Publishing, 2005, paper, \$24.95.  
ISBN #1-58979-103-7



A new, updated edition of the popular *Antique Roses for the South* has been released in large paperback form, and will be welcomed by rosarians, historians, and gardeners alike for its wealth of relevant material about old roses and their selection, sources, and care.

Bill Welch's interest in the surviving old roses, many times unnamed and unattended in cemeteries and old landscapes, was instrumental in creating the present-day demand for these tough and time-tested survivors. He first began by noticing the handsome and lasting qualities of the 'Old Blush' China roses that had been part of his own family's gardening heritage in Central Texas, and took cuttings from the unknown 'Maggie' and the double form of *Rosa palustris scandens*, which still grew at the site of Diane Welch's grandmother's home in North Louisiana. The found rose "Natchitoches Noisette," for instance, was collected from the American cemetery in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Chapters include narratives on the searches for forgotten heirlooms roses, the garden history of early cultivars, landscaping with old roses (including lists of plants by

outstanding characteristics such as fragrance, height, color, type, and hip characteristics), and the use of roses in floral arrangements. There are contributions from S. J. Derby and the late Margaret Sharpe, as well as material on rose crafts such as potpourri, waxed roses, and dried roses.

Numerous color illustrations make this an excellent reference book to carry in the field or in the nursery for identification purposes.

—Cynthia W. Mueller, College Station, Texas

## In Print

*American Household Botany: A History of Useful Plants 1620-1900*, by Judith Sumner, Timber Press, 396 pages, hardcover, \$27.95, ISBN: 0-88192-652-3

Celebrated author Judith Sumner rescues from the pages of history the practical experience and botanical wisdom of generations of Americans. Crossing the disciplines of history, ethnobotany, and horticulture, Sumner underlines a part of the American story often ignored or forgotten: how European settlers and their descendents made use of the new and unfamiliar plants they found, as well as the select varieties of foods and medicines they brought with them from other continents. This book contains a wealth of original research and insight, of interest to historians, herbalists, home gardeners, and ethnobotanists. Judith Sumner, Ph.D., teaches medicinal botany at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University and at the Garden in the Woods, the botanic garden of the New England Wild Flower Society in Framingham, Massachusetts.

## Publications Available Through SGHS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Life membership	\$1,000 (one time)		

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