



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

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The LeConte Botanic Garden: From Dutch to Cape

Sara Van Beck, Atlanta, Georgia

(Editors' note: for background, please see the author's essay "Louis LeConte's Bulb Garden, 1813-1838," in the Winter 2014 issue *Magnolia*.)

The old saying goes "good things come to those who wait." Such is the case with the LeConte coastal Georgia botanic garden at Woodmanston plantation in Liberty County. Hidden away in the research files of a Georgia Southern University archaeological project were photocopies of photocopies, likely made from microfilm. Surprisingly, these photocopies illuminate the second phase of the Louis (1782-1838) and John Eatton (1784-1860) LeConte* botanic garden previously not discussed by researchers. The material also throws a brighter light on John LeConte's personal relationship with the garden, in a period when documentation of his botanic work addresses endeavors outside of Woodmanston. Fortuitously, one single page offers tantalizing evidence of the LeConte brothers' connection to the early American nursery trade in native plants.

The original notes are found in the papers of John Lawrence LeConte (1825-1883), John Eatton's son, who presumably preserved his father's materials. (Louis' family papers were lost in the Civil War). Of thirteen original pages of notes, two are dated, one a flowering list for 1819 and the other a shipment inventory dated 1822. Prior to this discovery, only a plant list dated 1813-1815 has been known to researchers. This list was attributed to John's hand.

The time frame of 1813 to 1822 coincides with John's frequent travels from his home in New York City to Woodmanston to visit his brother Louis and family. In the mid-1810s, John also regularly contacted and visited the botanist William Baldwin (1779-1819). In 1814, he went on a plant expedition in North Carolina with

South Carolina botanist Dr. James Macbride, and may have met botanist and mycologist Dr. Lewis David von Schweinitz (1780-1834) who resided in Salem, North Carolina at the time. When he enlisted in the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1818, his early duty postings to Savannah and coastal Georgia provided opportunities to visit. After marrying

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Catesby's lily or tiger lily, *Lilium catesbaei*, Curtis' *Botanical Magazine*, London, 1794.

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CALENDAR

September 17, 2016-January 9, 2017. “Garden, Art, and Commerce in Chinese Woodblock Prints,” a major, international loan exhibition at the Huntington Library, features works depicting plants, birds, and other garden elements alongside monumental accounts of sprawling, architecturally elaborate “scholar’s gardens” made during the golden age of Chinese woodblock prints, from the late sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Visit: www.huntington.org

April 22-29, 2017. Historic Garden Week in Virginia. More than 250 of Virginia’s most beautiful gardens, homes, and historic landmarks take part in the celebration of Historic Garden Week, described as “America’s Largest Open House.” This tour, organized by the Garden Club of Virginia, supports restoration projects statewide. Visit: vagardenweek.org

April 29-30, 2017. Colonial Williamsburg’s 71st Annual Garden Symposium. More information will be available at www.history.org; email: mmoyer@cwf.org

May 26-28, 2017. Southern Garden History Society Annual Meeting, “Roots of the Bluegrass,” Lexington, Kentucky. The headquarters hotel will be the Hyatt Regency, 401 West High Street, Lexington, KY 40507, phone (859) 253-1234. The room rate is \$129 plus tax. The cutoff date for reservations is April 28, 2017. See preview article page 7. More details to appear in upcoming issues of *Magnolia* and on our website: southerngardenhistory.org

June 18-23, 2017. 21st Annual Historic Landscape Institute, “Preserving Jefferson’s Gardens and Landscapes.” This one-week course

uses Monticello’s gardens and landscapes and the University of Virginia as outdoor classrooms to study historic landscape preservation. Lectures, workshops, field trips, and practical working experiences provide an introduction to the fields of landscape history, garden restoration, and historical horticulture. Visit: www.monticello.org/hli

September 21-23, 2017. 21st Conference on Restoring Southern Gardens & Landscapes, “Gardening in the Golden Age: Southern Gardens & Landscapes of the Early 20th Century and the Challenges to their Preservation,” held in Winston-Salem, NC. The Flora Ann Bynum Keynote Lecture, sponsored by the Southern Garden History Society, will be given by Sam Watters on the garden photography of Frances Benjamin Johnston. [See book review in *Magnolia*, winter 2013, Vol. XXVI, No. 1] Other speakers include Virginia Grace Tuttle, Staci Catron, and Mary Ann Eddy. Winston-Salem in the 1920s was the largest and wealthiest city in North Carolina, and a tour of its gardens and landscapes will be featured. More details to appear in upcoming issues of *Magnolia* and on our website: southerngardenhistory.org



J.B. Armstrong News Agency, Winston-Salem, NC, 1949. Collection of D.F. Hood.

The LeConte Botanic Garden:.....(continued from page 1)

Mary Anne Lawrence in 1821 and honeymooning at Woodmanston, John decamped for explorations of northeast Florida in early 1822. The couple returned to Woodmanston for winter visits for years, and over the decades “Uncle Jack” became very close to Louis’ daughters.

The 1813-1815 compendium plant list serves as the garden’s baseline collection, but also reveals how early in the garden’s life the brothers were quickly shifting the collection from “Dutch” spring bulbs to more climate-appropriate, warm-weather iris and “Cape” bulbs. These later notes bridge the first Dutch phase to John’s 1830 article on the genus *Pancratium* and his 1830s horticultural journal articles discussing amaryllids, crinum, and other Cape bulbs growing in Louis’ botanic garden.

The pages are an array of small note paper and are all in the same handwriting as the 1813-1815 list, attributed to John, save one. The notes are comprised of a list of iris flowering dates in 1819; botanical descriptions in English and Latin of *Tritonia*, *Gladiolus*, *Narcissus*, and *Lilium catesbaei*; an enticing small page of mostly undecipherable abbreviated botanical names; and a list in a completely different handwriting entitled “Plants sent to Prince 1822.” It is very hard not to speculate that the 1822 Prince list was written by Louis. As these pages fall into generally definable groups, they will be discussed as such for the sake of brevity.

All the botanical description pages are undated, but they are presumed to fall around 1819 to 1822 based on the note paper size as compared to the two dated lists’ paper. Without dates and reference to the original papers or microfilm from which the photocopies are derived, ascertaining the original sequence is problematic and will

not be attempted.

The descriptions read as if they were written while examining actual flowers, not as if copied or compiled from other botanical works. It is possible that the occasional Latin text at the bottom of an entry comes from a written source.

Three gladioli are described: *Gladiolus* on one sheet (in English); *Gladiolus imbricatus* (in Latin), and *Gladiolus communis* (in English) both half page descriptions on the same sheet. Both named species flowers appear on the 1813-1815 list, suggesting a long presence in the botanic garden.

Lilium catesbaei (Catesby lily) is on a sheet the same width but of shorter height than the other descriptions, and is in English. Of great interest, two variants are described based on differences of leaf morphology. Aside from the different sized paper, nothing suggests it was written in a different time frame from the rest. The Catesby lily does not appear in the 1813-1815 list.

Five *Narcissus* are described completely in Latin; the group is comprised of three tazettas (paperwhite, bicolor, and all-yellow) and two jonquils (*N. jonquilla* and *N. × odoratus*) – those best suited for the Georgia coast. Moreover, on the 1819 list of iris flowering dates is a notation that *N. papyraceus* (paperwhite) germinated on September 25. Thus, at least for seven fall seasons, the LeConte botanic garden was ornamented with paperwhites. The format and content of the descriptions do not follow the standard convention of the day, strongly suggesting they were not copied from a source text but instead written from observations of a flower at hand.

A delightful discovery is the four pages of *Tritonia*

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William Baldwin.



John Eatton LeConte.



John Lawrence Le Conte.

The LeConte Botanic Garden:.....(continued from page 3)

descriptions covering seven species, one with two variants. Most are without species designation, but those fully named are *T. deusta* (two variants), *T. fenestrata* (now *T. hyaline*), and *Tritonia* – *Ixia bulbifera*. The details recorded should provide sufficient data for a botanist to properly identify the unnamed species.

A mostly undecipherable small note sheet with the word “bed” at the top contains many *Tritonia* flower abbreviations, most with species abbreviations – frustratingly illegible - suggesting this was a much observed group of flowers by the LeContes. Other plants are similarly noted, but only two are sufficiently clear to allow identification: *Watsonia meriana* and *Antholyza aethiopica* (now *Chasmanthe aethiopica*) (*L. Bulbiferum* is scrawled down the right margin). Other notations seem to be for *Oxalis*, *Gladiolus*, and *Ixia*, and a number of the *Tritonia* species seem to be repeated on different lines – almost as if a planting plan was being sketched out.

In the Federal Era, *Tritonia* and *Ixia* were the subject of botanical study for determining their classifications. Numerous species of *Tritonia*, *Ixia*, and *Watsonia* were described and published in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* in the 1802 to 1803 period.

Nurseryman Bernard McMahon offered a number of *Tritonia*, *Watsonia* (but not *W. meriana*), and *Antholyza* in his 1806 catalog. In October 1812, McMahon sent two variants of *Tritonia fenestrata*, introduced to the United States in 1801, to Thomas Jefferson. Other fall 1812 shipments from McMahon to Thomas Jefferson name many bulbs appearing in the LeConte notes, including *Watsonia meriana*, *Antholyza aethiopica*, *Iris persica*, *Iris Xiphium*, *Gladiolus communis*, and feathered hyacinth (*Muscari comosum plumosum*).

By 1822, nurseryman William Prince offered sixty kinds of *Ixia* alone, a testament to their rising popularity. He also offered eight sorts of *Antholyza*, two sorts of *Tritonia* (rosea and coccinia, listed under *Ixia*), and *Watsonia rosea* among many others. As *Tritonias* do not appear on the 1813-1815 list, it seems the LeContes were in the second wave of

gardeners trialing these genera.

The small page entitled simply “1819” apparently was to list the flowering dates of iris, but three other plants snuck on at the end and up the right margin. From February 5 to May 17 bloomed *Iris pumila* (Feb. 5), Germanica (Feb. 21), Florentine [*I. florentina*] (Feb. 21), Siberica (April 10), Versicolor (April 15), Cuprea (April 15), Hexagonia (April 22), Tripetala (May 13), and Variegata (May 17). Interestingly, question marks appear after Versicolor and Siberica. Since John discussed the identification of Versicolor with botanist William Baldwin, it seems more plausible he was questioning the date of flowering, not the identity of the iris per se.

One of the two addendum plants at the bottom of the list is rather mysterious – Sassuri Carulea, as best as can be deciphered, blooming on June 5. As mentioned above, *N. papyraceus* was added to the right margin. The last flower shoehorned onto the page is “Amar. Sarniens” (*Amaryllis sarniensis*, now *Nerine sarniensis*), with a date of September 22. Also called the Guernsey or Jersey lily, this bulb does not appear on the 1813-1815 compendium list. Is this the vanguard bulb of the expansion into amaryllids, the luxuriousness of which was extolled by English visitor Alexander Gordon when reporting his visits to Woodmanston in 1828-1829 and in 1832? (J. C. Loudon, *The Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. VIII, 1832, 286-288.)



Particoloured Iris, *Iris versicolor*, Curtis' Botanical Magazine, London, 1787.



Carolina Pancratium, *Pancratium carolinianum*, The Botanical Register, 1825.

The page “Plants Sent to Prince 1822” is a poor facsimile at best. Its handwriting is starkly different and is presumed to be Louis’ hand, supporting evidence of the brothers working in tandem. Clearly numbered, twenty-four plants are itemized. The plant names, however, are unclear. With digital manipulation, and corroboration from the expert eye of Joel Fry, curator at Bartram’s Garden, the tentative identification of plants is:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Hypericum prolificum</i> | 12. <i>Porcelia parviflora</i> |
| 2. <i>Hypericum aspalathoides</i> | 13. <i>Pinckneya pubens</i> |
| 3. <i>Aster</i> _?_ | 14. <i>Iris hexagonia</i> |
| 4. <i>Porcelia</i> | 15. <i>Iris tripetala</i> |
| 5. <i>Pancratium</i> _?_ (possibly <i>mexicanum</i>) | 16. <i>Thalia dealbata</i> |
| 6. _?_ <i>odoratissima</i> | 17. <i>Trillium sessile</i> |
| 7. <i>Andromeda</i> | 18. _?_ <i>tomentosus</i> |
| 8. <i>Asarum arifolium</i> | 19. <i>Convolvulus speciosus</i> |
| 9. <i>Mylocarium ligustrinum</i> | 20. _?_ _?_ |
| 10. <i>Andromeda ferruginea</i> | 21. _?_ _?_ |
| 11. <i>Chamaecrops serrulata</i> | 22. _?_ _?_ |
| | 23. <i>Dracocephalum</i> |
| | 24. <i>Porcelia pygmaea</i> |

One of the best early sources regarding John LeConte’s botanical work is *Reliquiae Baldwinianae* (1843), a posthumous selection of letters of the botanist William Baldwin (1779-1819). John LeConte’s name appears nearly thirty times. Many of Baldwin’s letters relate John’s descriptions,

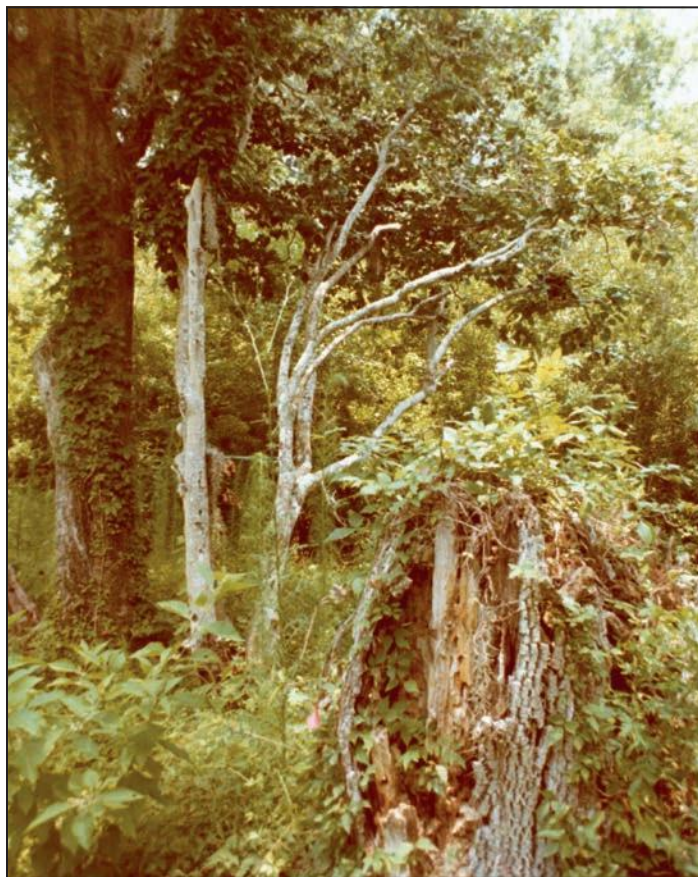
opinions, or research of plants – including John’s work with asters and porcelias, and his views on native iris. In 1818, Baldwin even wrote of John’s excitement of producing a great botanical work, which in the end was upstaged by Stephen Elliott’s 1824 *A Sketch of the Botany of South-Carolina and Georgia*. Baldwin and LeConte reviewed herbarium collections, visited, and kept in touch for years, from at least 1813 to 1818.

There is only one published letter discussing Baldwin actually visiting Woodmanston. In his letter of November 24, 1816, Baldwin wrote, “There is, on this plantation, a new and beautiful species of *Porcelia* (*Anona*, L.). It inhabits the low Pine barrens, the vicinity of Rice swamp, - and was shewn to me in May, last, by Mr. LEWIS LE CONTE.” (p.332) Baldwin then goes on to describe *Porcelia angustifolia* and discuss *P. grandiflora*, *P. pygmaea* and *P. parviflora*. In his next paragraph Baldwin moves to *Mylocarium ligustrinum*, mentioning that “it abounds here.” Whether “here” is Woodmanston or the immediate area of the Sand Hills is unclear. Regarding the genus *Dracocephalum*, in 1815 botanist Henry Muhlenberg mentions to William Baldwin that the third variety of this genus is *Dracocephalum variegatum* from Georgia (p.172).

Unexpectedly, within the archaeological project research files are a few transcriptions of letters held by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, now Drexel University. Two letters written in 1822 by John LeConte to Lewis David von Schweinitz provide insight into John’s activities after his north Florida expedition in the early spring of 1822. In April, John wrote, “I have it now in my power to give you duplicates of all our Georgia plants, but as my herbarium is not exactly at present within my reach, I must beg your patience for some time yet” In May, John reiterates, “I have also a considerable number of Georgia plants collected for me by my brother most of them new or rare, of these one has in all cases been put aside for you.”

In light of the above, many questions arise. Who did

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Woodmanston Hamilton ca. 1979 Camellia.



Woodmanston Hamilton 1979 Palm Tree.

The LeConte Botanic Garden:.....(continued from page 5)

the collecting? Were the plants from Woodmanston or from the area in general? It seems reasonable to conjecture the note was perchance not Prince's own packing slip but instead a duplicate copy made by Louis and sent to John for his records. Were actual live plants or dried specimens sent? Was this Prince's set of herbarium specimens, as what Schweinitz awaited? Why were these plants chosen? Did Prince desire these specific plants? Did John ask Louis to collect these particular plants at Prince's request?

As William Prince was a nurseryman, not a botanist, it is plausible that this is a pack list of live plants sent for Prince's nursery business. In this period Prince was actively soliciting his professional contacts such as the Carrs of Bartram's Garden for native plants. When the Carrs sent plants to Prince, dried herbarium specimens were labeled as 'specimen', live plants as 'plant' and seeds as such (Joel Fry, personal communication).

In February and March of 1822, John LeConte surveyed the St. Johns River, but never wrote about his botanical findings, possibly expecting to incorporate the data into his Southern opus. Many of the plants on the 1822 list were mentioned by William Bartram in his 1791 *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, West and East Florida*..., such as the porcelia or dwarf pawpaws (Joel Fry, personal communication). A collection of live plants from his survey work could explain why the list is only of twenty-four plants and why Prince would want starter plants for his nursery trade. However, this then begs the question as to why the packing list would be in Louis' handwriting and not John's. It is hoped the original ultimately will be located so that the full list can be deciphered and researchers can deduce the origins of the plants. The botanical descriptions of bulbs illustrates that Louis did the gardening (and much collecting for others) whilst John did the writing. How much of the descriptions were for John's own general edification and how much were part of his plan for a grand botanical work will likely never be known. But it seems reasonable to say John spent numerous hours over many visits in the Woodmanston garden, closely examining and contemplating its exotic inhabitants, perchance enjoying morning coffee with his brother, as Louis was wont to do.

*(Editors' note: for a brief introduction to the LeContes, see "LeConte Family" in the *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/leconte-family>)

Special thanks to Jennifer Hamilton Tucciarone for her diligence in collecting everything she could on the Woodmanston garden and her willingness to share; and to Joel Fry for his opinions of the 1822 list and information regarding those plants' Bartram

connections. All the project records have since been donated to Georgia Southern University, which originally contracted the archaeological project.

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Reliquiae Baldwinianae: Selections from the Correspondence of the Late William Baldwin, M.D. Surgeon of the U.S. Navy. With occasional notes, and a short biographical memoir. Compiled by William Darlington. Philadelphia, PA: Kimber and Sharpless, 1843.

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2017 Annual Meeting Goes to Kentucky

No region of the nation better honors the term “horse country” than the rolling terrain around Lexington, Kentucky. It’s here we will gather May 26-28, 2017 for the “Roots of Bluegrass” annual meeting, the first such Southern Garden History Society function to be held in the Bluegrass State. Frederick Law Olmsted said of Lexington that of all “Southern towns there are scarce two that will compare with it for an agreeable residence.” Olmsted also made certain to call at Ashland, home of the “The Great Compromiser,” Henry Clay.

Society members will call on the 1857 house which replaced Henry Clay’s dwelling. (The first Ashland mansion was demolished because of major structural weaknesses.) Built by Clay’s son James, the new Ashland house is complemented by gardens installed in 1950 by the Garden Club of Lexington, under the direction of landscape architect Henry Fletcher Kenney, of Cincinnati.

Another meeting highlight will be Friday dinner at Floral Hall, also known as the Round Barn at Red Mile, the latter being a nearby trotting track. Dating to 1882, the brick four-story structure initially served as an exhibit space serving Lexington’s fairgrounds. Today this grand National Register building houses a variety of items and memorabilia pertaining to Standardbred (trotting) horses,

while also offering groups such as ours a unique dining experience.

Saturday evening we’ll enjoy a tour, cocktails and dinner at Keeneland, a National Historic Landmark. Just

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Ashland at dusk.



Ashland House built 1856 by James Clay.

Images courtesy of Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate.



Ashland terrace and garden.

Images courtesy of Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate.



Immediate past president Carleton Wood at Keeneland.

Photo by Susan Halkom.

2017 Annual Meeting..... (continued from page 7)

as Floral Hall celebrates Standardbreds, Keeneland is inextricably linked to Thoroughbreds, the horses perhaps most associated with Kentucky in the public mind. Named for former site owner Jack Keene, Keeneland has been hosting Thoroughbred racing since 1936 and also features an internationally renowned Thoroughbred auction house.

Like so many American cities that boomed in the antebellum years, Lexington saw the construction of houses and other buildings reflecting the eclectic range of architectural styles then popular. One fine example is "Botherum," which will be a highlight among our tour sites. Dating to the early 1850s, Botherum was constructed by John McMurtry, the prolific Lexington architect and builder also responsible for Floral Hall. Featured in such publications as *Garden & Gun*, it is now the home of Dale Fisher and garden designer John Carloftis. The latter's attention to the Botherum grounds has drawn kudos and will surely be a memorable part of our Lexington experience. Of course, it's difficult to be in Lexington and avoid the lingering presence of Henry Clay. This applies here too as witnessed by the large ginkgo, a gift from Clay to Botherum's first owner.

Other sites to visit include historic Old Frankfort Pike, called one of the ten best scenic drives in the United States and a central Kentucky horse farm. The Sunday optional tour will include tours of Lexington Cemetery, including the Henry Clay Memorial, Gainesway and the Rosemary Verey Garden, and a walking tour of Gratz Park.

Our headquarters hotel will be the Hyatt Regency, 401 West High Street, Lexington, KY 40507, phone 859-253-1234. The room rate is \$129 plus tax. The cutoff date for reservations is April 28, 2017. Membership in Southern Garden History Society is required to register for the meeting. Members who join at the Sustainer level or above are offered early registration for the Annual Meeting.



Floral Hall, also known as the Round Barn at Red Mile.

Wikimedia Commons.



1940 photograph of Botherum, in Lexington, KY, built in 1851 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Image from the Historic American Buildings Survey or HABS.



Gardens at Ashland. Image courtesy of Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate.

"Books"

Ken McFarland, editor

Occasionally my wife, Beate, will return from work at Belmont (the Gari Melchers Home and Studio in Falmouth, Virginia) with a sack of “books,” kindly saved for us by retired Belmont docent Joyce Sterne.¹ Curiously, what this thoughtful lady terms “books” are generally called magazines. I’m not certain how far beyond our region this book-magazine terminology extends, but it certainly is not unique to one individual. These are not just any “books,” by the way, but are publications focused on American history and material culture, e.g. *Early American Life*, *Victorian Homes*, etc.

Surely *Magnolia* readers are all familiar with this magazine genre, but this latest “book batch” (especially *EAL*) reminded me of how frequently these publications contain articles of interest to Southern Garden History Society members. Present too are familiar names and places. For example, the February 2016 issue of *EAL* included an article on “Shrubs in American Landscapes” by Camilla Wilcox, retired long-time curator of education at Reynolda Gardens in Winston-Salem. Many readers know Camilla for her long connection with the Old Salem Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes conference. Her well-illustrated *EAL* “shrub history” essay offers an excellent introduction to those unfamiliar with the background of these all-important landscape components, as well as a good quick review for us in need of refresher training.

Some attending the 2016 annual meeting may have studied up ahead by reading “Rice in Early America” by Charleston-based culinary historian Robert Moss. Appearing in the August 2015 *EAL*, Moss’s piece makes highly effective use of Alice Ravenel Huger Smith’s fine watercolors which appeared in the 1936 publication *A Carolina Rice Plantation in the Fifties*. (These paintings and other Smith works are easily “Googled” if readers want a quick glance.) The author gives a concise view of

rice production techniques, discussing the riches the crop brought to some and the misery it often laid upon rice laborers. Moss also provides an insert-panel discussion entitled “Rice Revival” discussing today’s growth of the heritage variety “Carolina Gold” in South Carolina.²

Magnolia readers might also have spotted the April 2015 *EAL* article “A Showplace Garden, overlooking the history of Middleton Place and its landscape. The essay draws largely on the knowledge of Sidney Frazier, who has worked in the Middleton gardens since 1974 and is often quoted. While not an in-depth discussion, this article lays out a handy overview of Middleton Place then and now, arousing the reader’s desire to go deeper.

For some (the author included) one of the most interesting living elements in the Southern landscape



Fields Prepared for Planting by Alice Ravenel Huger Smith.

(and north of the Mason-Dixon too) is the loved/loathed Osage Orange, *Maclura pomifera*. Thus, the October 2015 *EAL* article “Dining with the Giant Sloth” provided yet another reason to be grateful to our “books” lady. As to be expected, the piece covers the various ways the tree has been used (hunting bows, live fence, fence posts, etc.) and the various names given to it (bodark, horse apple, and more.).³ It also traces the tree from a time of near extinction to a mid-nineteenth-century point when, per Monticello’s director emeritus of gardens and grounds, Peter Hatch, it was “the most widely planted tree in

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Image courtesy of the Gibbes Museum of Art/Carolina Art Association.

Books.....(continued from page 9)

North America.” Why was it once nearly extinct? The article suggests the large herbivores (e.g. the giant sloths referenced in the article title) that once feasted on the fruit had been hunted to extinction, thus leading the trees to drop large quantities of “oranges” to rot on the ground... as they yet do.

Some readers will have seen these articles, perhaps having been given their own pass-along magazine copies. Others may wish to check local libraries for back issue. In any case, they offer a good means of supplementing essays found in *Magnolia* and other garden/landscape-specific publications, especially for those among us who can never get enough about bodarks.

**Magnolia articles are typically composed in a more scholarly appropriate third-person form. The personal experience nature of this piece, however, seemed to call for first-person prose.*

Book Review

The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume IX, The Last Great Projects, by Frederick Law Olmsted (Author), and David Schuyler, Gregory Kaliss, and Jeffrey Schlossberg (Editors) | Johns Hopkins University Press, January 2015 | ISBN-10: 1421416034; ISBN-13: 978-1421416038 | list price \$110

The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Supplementary Series, Volume 2, Plans and Views of Public Parks

by Frederick Law Olmsted (Author), and Charles E. Beveridge, Lauren Meier, and Irene Mills (Editors) | Johns Hopkins University Press, April 2015 | ISBN-10: 1421410869; ISBN-13: 978-1421410869 | list price \$74.95

The publication of *The Last Great Projects*, volume nine of *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, by The Johns Hopkins University Press, marks a milestone in the history of landscape architecture in the United States. It also represents the capstone of a commitment made by the publisher to The Frederick Law Olmsted Papers Project, which was organized in 1972 through the leadership of Charles Capen McLaughlin (1929-2005).

Having also hired Charles Eliot Beveridge as an

(Endnotes)

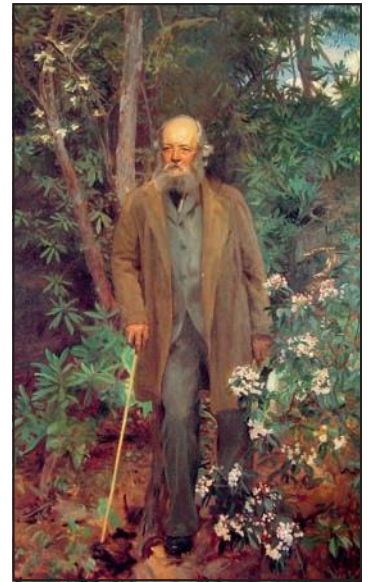
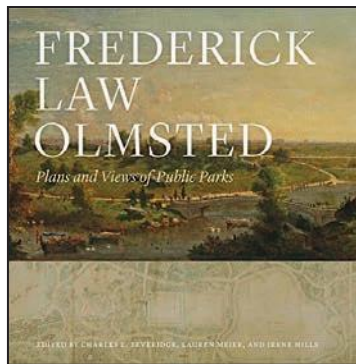
- 1 Mrs. Sterne is a life-long resident of Stafford County and served as a Belmont docent from opening day in 1975. She and her now-deceased husband have been a fount of stories about Falmouth in the early twentieth century.
- 2 Available for order online, including from Historic Charleston Foundation; annual meeting speaker David Shields chairs the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation.
- 3 “Bodark” is derived from the French *bois d’arc*, or “bow wood.”

Illustration: “Fields Prepared for Planting” from the series *A Carolina Rice Plantation of the Fifties* by Alice Ravenel Huger Smith. Courtesy the Gibbs Museum of Art

<http://gibbesmuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/85E868AD-3443-4475-B32B-386808813792>

editorial assistant in 1972, Charles C. McLaughlin saw *The Formative Years, 1822-1852*, the first volume in the series, to publication in 1977. *Volume II, Slavery and the South, 1852-1857*, followed in 1981. In 1983 *Volume III, Creating Central Park, 1857-1861*, appeared as the first of seven, culminating in the present volume, that addressed both the writings and many, great works of the man at the forefront of his profession. The editors of *Creating Central Park*, Charles E. Beveridge and David Schuyler, have continued their association with The Frederick Law Olmsted Papers Project to the present, with Mr. Beveridge succeeding his mentor as the senior editor. For *The Last Great Projects*, David Schuyler was joined by Gregory Kaliss, as co-editor, and Jeffrey Schlossberg as assistant editor. This combination of longevity and expertise has produced a book of great appeal, intelligence, and poignancy.

Readers who approach these pages will already know Olmsted’s work in Chicago for the World’s Columbian Exposition and at Biltmore for George Washington



Frederick Law Olmsted, portrait by John Singer Sargent, 1895.

Vanderbilt to be among his greatest works, occupying his energies and hours in the closing years of a legendary career. The letters and writings published in this volume reflect his attention to every level of detail in the planning, design, grading, construction, and planting required for these projects. Other texts document his continuing commitment to public park and parkway projects, particularly in Boston and metropolitan areas of New York State, which involved revisits and expansions of earlier work and the incorporation of new areas and facilities into larger, more expansive municipal park systems. Among the new park projects, the call to Louisville, Kentucky, is cited by the editors as the most significant. "Aside from metropolitan Boston and New York, no urban area provided more sustained work for the Olmsted firm." Louisville's Iroquois Park, Cherokee Park, and Shawnee Park, together with Kenton Place and Logan Place, reflect his genius and the critical collaboration of two associates in his firm, Henry Sargent Codman (1864-1893) and Charles Eliot (1859-1897). Olmsted visited Louisville seven times between May 1891 and June 1894 in a demanding schedule of travel that characterized these years. Olmsted and his Brookline-based firm also undertook private estate, residential park, and institutional work during this period.

Letters, memoranda, and reports written by Frederick Law Olmsted, together with valuable annotations and endnotes, comprise most of this book's 1,000-plus pages. The context of these documents is established in an excellent introduction, following lists of texts and illustrations, and followed, in turn, by short biographical sketches of seven principals who figure in this period. Henry Sargent Codman, Charles Eliot, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957), and John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) were all members of the Olmsted firm. Two architects, Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846-1912), Director of Works for the World's Columbian Exposition, and Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895), the designer of Biltmore House and many of its support buildings and structures, were professional colleagues in these closing years. George Washington Vanderbilt (1862-1912), as the editors confirm, "was the most important private client of Olmsted's career." Five seminal writings, including Olmsted's essay, "On Andrew Jackson Downing and American Landscape Gardening," appear in Appendix I. A chronology of Olmsted's life, work, and travels, between 3 April 1890 and 3 December 1895, when he settled with his wife and daughter at Crossway, a (rented) cottage in Lympstone, England, follows as Appendix II. Lists of textual alterations and plants comprise, respectively, Appendices III and IV.

In 1997 The Johns Hopkins Press published *Writings on Public Parks, Parkways, and Park Systems* as Volume 1, *Supplementary Series, The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*. The Press published *Frederick Law Olmsted, Plans and Views of Public Parks* in 2015 as the second volume

in the *Supplementary Series*. Edited by Charles E. Beveridge, Lauren Meier, and Irene Mills, it is a splendid compendium of working drawings, plans, graphs, period photographs in both sepia and black and white, some few colored presentation drawings, and a reproduction of William Merritt Chase's painting of Brooklyn's Tompkins Park. They represent the work of Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm in thirty-one cities. The parks and parkways of Boston are accorded the most extensive coverage, followed by that given to Central Park and others in New York City, Brooklyn, and Buffalo, and in Chicago for both the design and the redesign of the exposition grounds and other parklands. Four studies and two finished drawings represent Olmsted's proposals for Mount Vernon Square in Baltimore, dating to 1876. Olmsted and his firm began their work in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1891. This most important of the Southern work beyond the grounds of Biltmore is represented by plans and photographs of Cherokee, Iroquois, and Shawnee parks, and city parkways, and plans and related drawings of squares and places.

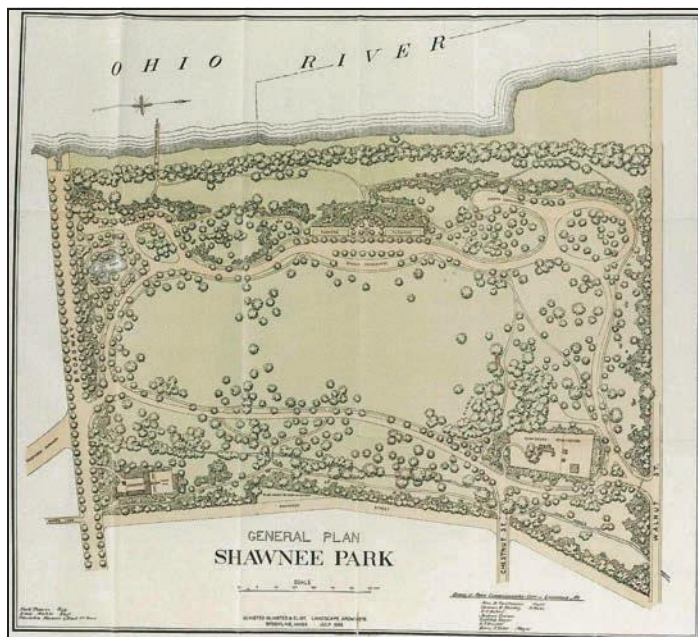
Altogether, these images provide a valuable visual reference for readers of the published papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, whether in the nine-volume series just con-

(continued on page 12)



Vanderbilt mansion at Biltmore April 1924.

Library of Congress.



Plan for Shawnee Park in Louisville, KY.

From *Plans and Views of Public Parks*, p. 374.

Book Review..... (continued from page 11)

cluded or the 1997 volume of writings on parks, parkways, and park systems. They also stand alone as an overview and a fractional record of the extraordinary wealth of records held at the Frederick Law Olmsted Historic Site in Brookline, in the Library of Congress, museums, libraries, municipal archives, and other institutions, which docu-

ment the work of a man forever above equal in his profession in the United States.

Davyd Foard Hood
Isinglass
Vale, North Carolina

Reviewer's Note

Southern Garden History Society members who attended the 2003 Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference, "A Genius and His Legacy: Frederick Law Olmsted in the South," will remember the fine presentations made by Charles E. Beveridge and Lauren Meier, two of the three editors of *Frederick Law Olmsted, Plans and Views of Public Parks*, and that of Arleyn Levee, a scholar of the Olmsted firm and the careers of John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

Having served on the planning committee for the 2003 conference, I approached this review with pleasure. I also brought a larger professional interest to my reading of *The Last Great Projects*. This was my second reading of the published papers relating to Biltmore. In 1963, when the Biltmore Estate was designated a National Historic Landmark the designation was made only for the estate's national significance in the area of Conservation, as the site of the first school of forestry in the United States. Mention of Frederick Law Olmsted was limited to a few sentences in the original designation document.

In 1979, following the death of Cornelia Vanderbilt (1900-1976), George W. Vanderbilt's only child, her two sons, George and William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil, legally set apart their previously undivided interests in the assets of the estate, its buildings and grounds into separate individual holdings. William A. V. Cecil received title to some 6,800-plus acres on which stood the mansion and its many outbuildings and dependencies, together with gardens, fields, pastures and woodlands. In short, this holding comprised virtually all of the historic estate resources built, developed, cultivated and planted during George Vanderbilt's life. The remaining part of the estate's 12,000 acres, largely woodlands with valuable development potential, and other assets became the property of George Cecil.

In about 2000 I was engaged by The Biltmore Company to reconsider the history of the estate and its significance in American history. My long hours of research and writing produced a new designation report that restated the estate's significance in the area of Conservation and expanded recognition to include Biltmore Estate's National Historic Landmark significance in the areas of

Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Social History. "The Biltmore Estate: Additional Documentation and Boundary Reduction" was formally designated on 5 April 2005. The work provided me with the opportunity to see many parts of the estate that were then not accessible to the public, some of which have since been restored and now figure in its presentation.

I also had the rare privilege of visiting the Vanderbilt Mausoleum on Staten Island where Olmsted and Richard Morris Hunt first collaborated in the service of the Vanderbilt family and in the oversight of George Washington Vanderbilt. In 1884 William Henry Vanderbilt had commissioned Richard Morris Hunt to design the mausoleum, but he died in 1885 before the work was completed. In 1886 George W. Vanderbilt engaged Frederick Law Olmsted to design the grounds of the mausoleum.

Frederick Law Olmsted would remain in George W. Vanderbilt's employ until declining health and mental incapacities forced his retirement and the end of a legendary career. The editors conclude "Olmsted's last day in the (Brookline) office was apparently August 6, 1895; according to one firm employee, on that day Olmsted dictated the same letter to Vanderbilt three times without any memory of having done so." Biltmore was a concern to Olmsted to the very end, and a subject of the penultimate paragraph of his letter of 19 September 1895 to his partners, John Charles Olmsted and Charles Eliot, accepting his retirement.

"I hope it will not be thought necessary to send me to an institution. I hate institutions. But I don't see how I can live at home and not be interested in your works or refrain from giving advice. In fact it will almost be a killing thing to me not to visit Biltmore. I fear that it will break my heart. But I shall pray for & try to pursue Christian resignation."

In September 1898, Frederick Law Olmsted was committed to McLean Asylum in Belmont, Massachusetts, where he died on 28 August 1903.

Davyd Foard Hood

The Grid and the River: Philadelphia's Green Places, 1682–1876, by Elizabeth Milroy | Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016 | hardcover, 464 pages | ISBN: 978-0-06676-9, list price: \$64.95

The Grid and the River is the product of Professor Elizabeth Milroy's quest to understand the history of public green spaces in William Penn's Philadelphia, whose vision was a "greene country towne, which will never be burnt & always wholesome." Milroy traces efforts to keep Philadelphia "green" from the time of its founding to the late nineteenth century. In this monumental work of urban history, she chronicles how patterns of use and representations of green spaces informed notions of community and identity in the city. In particular, Milroy examines the history of how and why the district along the Schuylkill River—including Fairmount Park, the Philadelphia Zoo, and the city's extensive woodlands and waterways—came to be developed both in opposition to and in concert with William Penn's original designations of parks in his city plan. Focusing on both the history and representation of Philadelphia's green spaces, and making use of a wealth of primary source materials, Milroy offers new insights into the city's political and cultural development and documents how changing attitudes toward the natural environment affected the physical appearance of Philadelphia's landscape and the lives of its inhabitants.

Among the book's many accolades, Henrietta Verma of the *Library Journal*, extolls its broader scope: "Though it considers one aspect of a particular city in a particular period, this work will be more widely beneficial than its title suggests. . . . Meticulously researched and painstakingly documented, Milroy's study creates a blueprint for historical works and scholarly presentation."



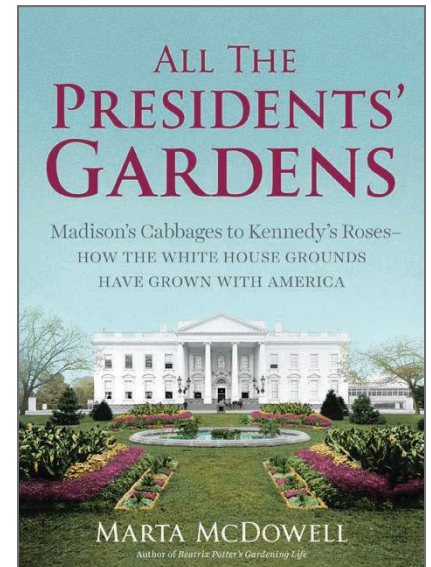
All the Presidents' Gardens: Madison's Cabbages to Kennedy's Roses | How the White House Grounds Have Grown with America, by Marta McDowell | Timber Press,

2016 | hardcover, 336 pages | ISBN-10: 1604695897; ISBN-13: 978-1604695892 | list price: \$29.95

From the moment a spade broke ground for the new presidential mansion, the eighteen acres that surround the White House have been a backdrop to history. Wars, territorial expansion, economic booms and busts, the growth of agriculture and industry, the changing tides of taste and fashion—all have been

mirrored in the lawns, trees, shrubs, and flowerbeds that serve as the nation's "First Garden." In her new book, *All the Presidents' Gardens*, garden historian, best-selling author, and SGHS member Marta McDowell traces how the White House grounds have grown with America, from Madison's cabbages to Jackie Kennedy's iconic rose garden. McDowell shares stories of Lincoln's goats, Ike's putting green, Amy Carter's tree house, and much more, as well as the plants whose favor has come and gone over the years and the gardeners who have been responsible for it all. Scott Kunst of Old House Gardens Blog, writes: "Marta sets this special place's history into the much larger story of American gardening and shows us how new plants and technology along with deep-seated cultural changes and the whims of fashion have all played a role in its constant evolution." Through partnerships with Dumbarton House and the Chicago Botanic Garden, The Garden Conservancy presented programs at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC and the Chicago Botanic Garden, in which McDowell traced the evolution of the White House grounds — from George Washington's obsession with collecting trees to Michelle Obama's kitchen garden. The book also includes an informative appendix listing the plants, planting dates, and cultural notes.

A consummate researcher on unconventional garden history topics, McDowell's previous books from Timber Press include *Emily Dickinson's Gardens* and *Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life: The Plants and Places That Inspired the Classic Children's Tales*, which appeared in the spring 2014 issue of *Magnolia*.



Remembering Ryan Gainey

Staci L. Catron, Cherokee Garden Library Director

On July 29, 2016, the world lost one of its greatest gardening talents, Ryan Gainey. An international gardening star, Ryan was a charismatic, inexhaustible, and brilliant garden designer and horticulturist. He was also a master showman, poet, visionary, and unapologetic original. Ryan changed the face of garden design in America, combining his love of the rural South with a sophisticated design aesthetic. In his four-decade career, he shared his love of plants, design, and beauty with dozens of mentees, hundreds of clients, and countless visitors to his two-acre garden in Decatur, Georgia.

Born in Hartsville, South Carolina on August 27, 1944, Jennings Ryan Gainey developed an insatiable interest in the natural world from a young age. One of five siblings, his parents were Ruth Catoe Gainey and Cecil Wilson Gainey. Family members and teachers in his rural community fostered his love of plants and nature. From 1962 to 1967, he studied horticulture and landscape design at Clemson University under Professor F. W. Thode and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters by Coker College in 1995. He has authored four books, *The Well-Placed Weed: The Bountiful Garden of Ryan Gainey* (1993), *The Well-Set Table* (1996), *The Weekly Weeder* (2009), and *The Gathered Garden* (2012). His work has been featured in dozens of gardening magazines and books in the United States and abroad.

Ryan moved to Atlanta in the 1970s and began the first of many garden enterprises. He brought with him a deep respect for his own roots and appreciation for the people who gardened on this land for centuries. Not content with a local or even regional perspective, he delved deeply into studying garden design from around the world and brought those lessons home to shape the gardens he would create here. Ryan designed both public and private gardens around the world from Atlanta, Georgia and Knoxville, Tennessee to East Hampton, New York to Provence, France. Varying in scale and style, his garden designs showcased his gift of integrating home and garden layered with romantic nuances of the past in balance with twenty-first century needs. His discerning eye, unconstrained by cowardice, resulted in breathtaking designs.

Ryan generously shared his knowledge with others, mentoring dozens of young people in the gardening world for decades, many of whom have thriving gardening businesses of their own today. He was a regular speaker to gardening groups locally and nationally. He was also a voracious communicator, giving public lectures to



Ryan Gainey, gardener extraordinaire.

Photography courtesy of the friends and family of Ryan Gainey.

audiences of all sizes. He also wrote and called gardening friends—old and new—from all over the United States to share plants, ideas, and, often, wickedly funny stories.

Ryan shaped the palette of our gardens. Sometimes it was as simple as sharing a plant he had saved from his own garden. Sometimes by recognizing the sterling qualities of a plant that had naturalized itself at the side of the road, he connected that plant to a grower who would make it available to the gardening world. And sometimes all he needed to do was to remind us of plants that had fallen out of favor, but still deserved a place in our gardens.

Ryan was also legendary in his ability to envision and orchestrate major events for raising monies for Atlanta charities. He fashioned luxurious and memorable parties, including the patron parties for the High Museum of Art, Swan House Ball for the Atlanta History Center, the Opera Ball for the Atlanta Opera, and the Garden of Eden Ball for the Atlanta Botanical Garden. He also designed delightful gardens for the Southeastern Flower Show for

many years, reaching a broad, public audience.

Ryan had the unique gift of opening new worlds to others through his deep knowledge of and intense passion for horticulture, gardening, and design through the expansive lens of garden history and literature. He reveled in following in William Bartram's footsteps, exploring the botanical art of Basilius Besler, studying the landscape designs of Gertrude Jekyll, reading the words of Russell Page, dissecting the history of arcane words, and tracing the layers of a plant's past. It is no surprise that his interests and encyclopedic knowledge of garden history led him to the exquisite collections of the Cherokee Garden Library. He devoted his time and talent to the library for many years, serving on the library's board, creating romantic floral experiences for the library's events, being a renowned keynote speaker, and donating beloved books, botanical prints, and papers to the library's collections.

In the last years of his life, Ryan expressed his creative genius not only through projects with his clients, the charitable organizations he supported, his writing, and his own garden in Decatur, but also his rural home in Lexington, Georgia near the nursery, Goodness Grows. He had an uncompromising devotion to his friends—

including his beloved dogs—his clients, his mentees, and the gardening community at large. His generosity was boundless and could come quietly through the sharing of a seedling or wildly through a floral design of epic scale. His exuberance, genius, and remarkable work ethic led him to become one of the best gardeners of our time.

In his last book, *The Gathered Garden*, Ryan included a poem he had penned after reflecting on the great garden of life:



Life is a picture puzzle

Each day of our lives is a piece of that puzzle

Death is the final piece that completes the picture

Eternity is putting those pieces together again

Heaven is that puzzle becoming complete

The picture is a garden we call Eden.

— Ryan Gainey

Member in the News

Mrs. Whaley's Garden, visited during the 2016 annual meeting in Charleston, SC, is featured in the August/September "Collector's Edition" issue of *Garden and Gun* magazine in John Kessler's article "A Southern Literary Garden." The garden is tended by the new head gardener, and SGHS member **Paul Saylor**.

Peter J. Hatch, Director Emeritus of Monticello's Gardens and Grounds, was awarded the George Robert White Medal of Honor by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society at its 177th annual Honorary Medals Dinner, October 20, 2016. Peter, who previously received the Mass. Hort. Society's Thomas Roland Award in 2004, was honored this time with the Society's highest honor for individuals who have contributed to excellence in horticulture.

October 13, **Peggy Cornett**, Curator of Plants at Monticello, was recognized by the Garden Club of America during its annual meeting in Charlottesville, Virginia, with the Zone VII 2016 Horticulture Commendation. The award was presented for her horticultural expertise, generosity in sharing her knowledge, and dedication to the preservation of Thomas Jefferson's botanical legacy.

The October 25 edition of **Scott Kunst's** Old

House Gardens Heirloom Bulbs Blog recently featured SGHS's newly revamped website at: <http://oldhousegardens.com/blog/>. Scott, a longtime member and friend of SGHS and consummate resource for rare and historically significant heirloom bulbs, plans to retire in 2017 after twenty-four years of shipping from his mail-order catalog in Ann Arbor, MI. (See his September 1, 2016 blog post.) Scott, who started his business as a cottage industry out of his garage, plans to "pass the torch" to his talented and well-trained staff to carry on "OHG's commitment to preserving the best of the past, to delivering bulbs of the highest quality, and to treating you like a friend." We can only hope that Scott will continue writing and sharing his knowledge of and enthusiasm for historic bulbs and garden history during his well-earned retirement years.

Editor's Note:

In the Winter 2016 issue of *Magnolia*, page 10, Caroline Harrington's name was misspelled. This correction has been made to the PDF edition, which appears on the SGHS website, <http://southerngardenhistory.org/magnolia/>



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Awards and Scholarships

The **Flora Ann Bynum Award** is the highest award bestowed by the Southern Garden History Society. It is not awarded annually, but only occasionally to recipients who have rendered outstanding service to the society. Nominations may be made at any time by any member. The award will usually be presented at the annual meeting.

The title **Honorary Director** (Board of Directors) may be bestowed on individuals who have rendered exceptional service and made significant contributions to the society. Nominations for Honorary Director are made to the President by current Board members and are approved by the Board of Directors.

The **Certificate of Merit** is presented to a member or non-member, whose work has advanced the mission and goals of the society. Awarding of certificates will be approved by the Board of Directors and will usually be announced at the annual meeting.

Society **Scholarships** assist students in attending the society's annual meeting and are awarded to bona fide students enrolled in college and university majors relevant to the mission and goals of the society. The scholarship provides a waiver of registration fees plus \$500 to assist with travel and lodging.

Details, requirements, and directions for submitting applications are posted on the SGHS website: www.southerngardenhistory.org. For those without internet access, a copy of this document can be mailed. Contact Virginia Hart, SGHS Administrator.

Annual Membership Dues

The society's membership year is from **August 1—July 31**. The membership secretary will mail renewal notices in the summer for the 2016-2017 year. Membership categories:

Benefactor	\$500
Patron	\$250
Sustainer	\$125
Institution or Business	\$100
Joint	\$60
Individual	\$40
Student	\$15

For more membership information, contact:

Virginia Hart, SGHS Administrator

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Memberships can now be made electronically on our website!

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Deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of Magnolia is December 15, 2016.

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