



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

Magnolia

Publication of the Southern Garden
History Society

Vol. XXIX

No. 4

Fall-Winter 2016-17

A History of Hemp and Flax Production in the Bluegrass

Danae Peckler, Fredericksburg, Virginia

Hemp & Flax Production Compared

Along with bluegrass seed, hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) was imported to central Kentucky during the earliest years of settlement.¹ The *Atlas of Kentucky* notes “The first crop was grown near Danville [Boyle County] in 1775, and the Bluegrass Region soon became a major hemp producer.”² Hemp fibers had been particularly useful to the English in making rope, sails, hawsers, and as caulking for the seams of their wooden ships, but was also good for cordage and cloth. In addition, per historian Leland Smith:

“Hemp, unlike tobacco, could be used quite extensively by the person who cultivated it. This factor gave hemp a decided advantage in the early period... One man could raise enough tobacco to supply the neighborhood; but as hemp was used in the making of homespun cloth and yarns as well as rope and twine, there was a local need...”³

Flax culture (*Linum usitatissimum*) was also a Virginia and English tradition, transplanted to central Kentucky and typically used to make linen thread and linseed oil. A period journal kept by a wealthy Virginia emigrant and Franklin County farmer, Charles Julian (1774-1836), detailed many prevailing upper class thoughts on area agriculture. Regarding the production of flax in central Kentucky in the early-nineteenth century, Julian made several references to its use on the farm to make homespun clothes and thread, but notes that it was also used as a saleable commodity largely produced by women.⁴ Making oil from flax had some potential. Paul Henlein has observed that “About 1815, the development of the linseed-oil industry gave flax growing a big boost in the



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A Field Of Hemp - Kentucky [date unknown]. Postcard Collection (University of Kentucky)

Ohio Valley... [but] cottonseed oil of the South began to displace linseed oil [soon after].”⁵

Flax production was labor intensive and time consuming, and flax could not be manufactured on a large scale efficiently. As stated by Kentucky historian Thomas Clark, “Often it is difficult to differentiate hemp from flax production... Both fibers had local domestic significance, as indicated by the number of flax spinning wheels and looms noted in estate inventories, and the mention of linsey-woolsey fabric.”⁶ Yet flax did not have the early impact on the Bluegrass landscape as did hemp, which,

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CALENDAR

Through June 17, 2017. Middleton Place House Museum presents "Alice Ravenel Huger Smith: Sharing Her Legacy," an exhibition of her landscapes, lotus ponds, herons, egrets, woodlands, and Middleton Place from private family collections. Visit: www.MiddletonPlace.org; (843) 556-6020. A parallel exhibition Smith's landscapes, family portraits, and sketch books from private collections is on display at the Edmonston-Alston House in Charleston, SC. Visit: www.EdmondstonAlston.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 26, 2017. Garden Club of Georgia's 2017 Historic Landscape Fundraiser Event, features garden author Tara Dillard on "Modern Garden Design with Historic Inputs." Hosted by GCG's Laurel District, the lunch and lecture is on the campus of Berry College in Rome, Georgia, and includes a tour of Martha Berry's House and Gardens at Oak Hill. Pre-registration required. Visit: <http://gardenclub.uga.edu/historic.html>

April 29-30, 2017. Colonial Williamsburg's 71st Annual Garden Symposium, "Small Spaces, Great Rewards," will focus on visually designing small garden spaces to produce the greatest rewards. Speakers will share their landscaping techniques and plant choices for small gardens, patios, courtyards, and containers. From perennials to pollinators to herbs, become inspired with ideas to show your own creativity in your home garden. Visit: www.history.org email: mmoyer@cwf.org; (800) 603-0948

May 18-20, 2017. Heritage Rose Foundation Annual Meeting, "Returning to our Roots, and Planning for the Future," takes place at the Gari Melcher's Home and Studio at Belmont, near Fredericksburg, Virginia. Meeting includes trips to Monticello and the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants and the historic Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond. Visit: heritagerosefoundation.org

May 26-28, 2017. Southern Garden History Society Annual Meeting, "Roots of 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. More details on our website: www.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/bli

September 8-9, 2017. Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello. Celebrate the revolutionary legacy of Thomas Jefferson through workshops, lectures, tomato tastings, and more. Featured speakers include vegetable historians William Woys Weaver, Michael Twitty, Ira Wallace, Brie Arthur, and Tim Johnson. Visit: www.heritageharvestfestival.com

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* at: www.southerngardenhistory.org

October 21-22, 2017. The 29 Annual Southern Garden Symposium and Workshops in St. Francisville, LA. Featured speakers include Mississippi author Margaret Gratz, Monticello's Peggy Cornett, and the entertaining floral design duo Tom and Nancy McIntyre. Registration opens in April. Visit: www.southerngardensymposium.org

A History of Hemp..... (continued from page 1)

T. B. Moore notes “would yield three or four times as much fiber to the acre, with less work.”⁷ While flax persisted into the mid-nineteenth century, production was largely for the household or local marketplace.

Southern historian, Walter Fleming (1874-1932) argued that “The discovery of the Blue Grass region... marks the real beginning of the hemp industry in the South.... Every kind of cloth, sheeting, bagging, carpet, cordage, paper, and other textile or tensile fabric was made of hemp, and it was taken in payment for all debts.”⁸ A quote from the Census of 1810 discusses the hemp crop of Kentucky with great enthusiasm – perhaps even bordering on propaganda:

“The ability to produce hemp is enjoyed by every state in the American Union. Soil, climate, industry, machinery, situation and the possession of capital in the shape of the raw materials, appear to have carried this branch to the greatest height in the state of Kentucky, even since the extension of the cotton culture in that quarter. The marshal reports a production in 1810 of 5,755 tons in the prepared state. But as there are made in Kentucky 453,750 yards of hempen bagging cloth, for packing cotton, and [1,991.5] tons of cordage, and much yarn... The manufacture of hemp being of the utmost importance to the supplies of the army and navy, and to public defence [sic] on the water and on the land, the United States can only be rendered perfectly *safe* and *independent* by early and effectual encouragements, to the growth preparation and manufacture of hemp.”⁹

A January 1812 article shows Kentuckians marketing hemp in both raw and processed forms by way of Limestone (the historic name of Maysville, KY), Pittsburgh, and then onto Philadelphia. While hemp was also being grown in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, “From Kentucky much of it came... in the form of spun yarn. In both forms it paid well [yarn and seed]....”¹⁰ Fleming states:

“After supplying their own needs, the Kentucky hemp growers sent large quantities to the Spaniards at New Orleans, and also shipped through Pittsburg to the East. The largest market was later found in supplying bagging and rope for covering cotton bales, and Kentucky also made much negro-cloth and canvas of hemp, using about 20,000 tons a year. Almost from the beginning these goods were made in factories.

Until 1789 ‘country linen’ figured in the local markets; but in that year the Kentucky Society for the Encouragement of Manufactures was organized, and factories were built by means of lotteries. In 1802 sixty-five of the Kentucky hemp manufacturers petitioned Congress for protection to the hemp, cordage and sail duck interests. Nevertheless, as late as 1855 the county fairs were still offering premiums for homespun hemp linen.”¹¹

A War of 1812 military requirement encouraged the federal government to purchase Kentucky hemp in the form of yarns and cordage, but after conflict’s end in 1814, hemp production declined. Prices for the crop fluctuated regularly. In 1821 it went for \$120 per ton, yet by 1825 it was down to just \$40 a ton. It rose to \$150 a ton before the Panic of 1837 then fell to \$70.¹² Experiments

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Gathering Hemp [date unknown]. Central Kentucky photograph albums (University of Kentucky).



Breaking hemp. Two men, one in foreground, house in the background. 4/5/1901. University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station (University of Kentucky).

Kentucky Digital Library.

Kentucky Digital Library.

A History of Hemp..... (continued from page 3)

with cotton fabric for sails and the increasing number of steamboats decreased the nation's demand for hemp until its resurgence around 1840.

Valued for its fibrous center, the stalk of the hemp plant was harvested and shed through a process known as rotting. Two main types used in the Bluegrass were dew rotting and water rotting. Researcher Julie Risenweber records that "Dew rotting...involved spreading the [cut] stalks upon the ground, preferably in the field in which the hemp had grown. Farmers usually did this in November, leaving the stalks to rot for a month to six weeks before collecting them for breaking."¹³ Water rotting required soaking the stalks in a stream or man-made pool or vat for a shorter period.

Once rotted, the stalks were crushed, often with a wooden hemp brake, and the fibers removed. "Once the woody hemp stalk was broken along its length," Risenweber notes, "the laborer could shake or beat off the outer 'bark' to leave the inner fiber to be 'heckled' or combed.... into bundles of 100 to 150 pounds, which were taken to some sort of shelter for weighing and storage."¹⁴ Perhaps as a way of returning nutrients to the soil, Richard Troutman observed in his thesis on plantation life in the Antebellum period that "Before leaving the fields ...workers usually set fire to the piles of shives [sic] and this presented a very picturesque scene in the deepening dusk."¹⁵

Since the growth and initial processing of hemp was done outside, buildings were not necessarily required. Bundled fibers could be taken to a local manufacturer or shipped raw; however, storing the hemp had its advantages. Similar to tobacco in having a substantial "shelf-life," hemp could be held several years until prices were favorable. Commonly, hemp was stored alongside other commodities in a multi-purpose barn or crib. "Agriculturalists preferred to store hemp in masonry buildings," noted Reisenweber, "because the fiber, but

especially the seed, was combustible with overheating, and a fire could easily consume the profit from a valuable cash crop cultivated with a large investment of time and labor."¹⁶

Buildings reserved solely for hemp storage are rare and likely date to the early-nineteenth century and Antebellum Period, like the brick "hemp barn" in Fayette County believed to date circa 1820. Another example of a brick hemp barn is at Oxmoor Farm near Louisville, although its conversion to a residence has obscured its agricultural characteristics.

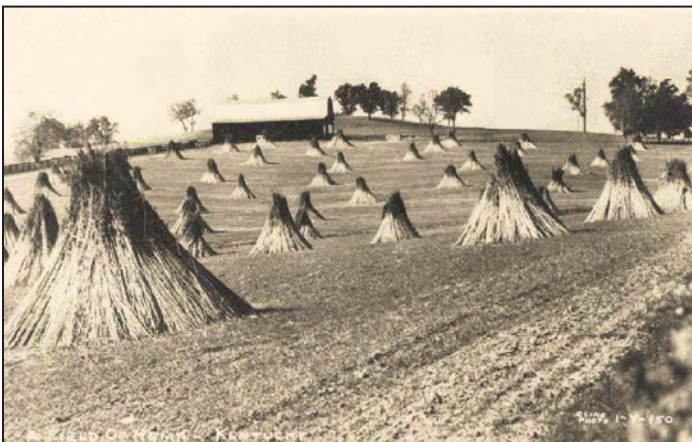
While hemp was grown on many early Kentucky farms, it became more economically significant in the first half of the nineteenth century because of an expanding interdependence between enslaved workers and hemp production. James Hopkins observed in his 1951 book on the history of hemp in Kentucky that "Without hemp, slavery might not have flourished in Kentucky since other agricultural products of the state were not conducive to the extensive use of bondsmen."¹⁸

As noted in the 1860 Census recapitulation on



Kentucky Digital Library.

Oxmoor Farm, Louisville, Kentucky - Hemp barn converted to house [date unknown], Karl Raitz Kentucky Slides (University of Kentucky)



Kentucky Digital Library.

Kentucky Hemp Field postcard [date unknown]. (University of Kentucky).



Circa 1820 Brick Hemp Barn, Fayette County, Kentucky.¹⁷

Agriculture in the United States, most hemp came from Kentucky. Antebellum hemp manufacturing was located in the Inner Bluegrass (seven counties, including Lexington and Fayette County, in the heart of the Bluegrass Region). *A New History of Kentucky*, moreover, records that “Lexington and Fayette County became the center of both hemp growing and manufacturing. In 1838 the eighteen rope and bagging factories there employed one thousand workers. Prepared for the market, the fibers brought \$70-\$112 a ton...”¹⁹

The vast majority of Kentucky’s hemp crop grew within the Inner Bluegrass totaling ninety-three percent of the statewide total. Yet not all counties within the region grew hemp, suggesting that the correlation between enslaved labor, existing manufacturing facilities, and increased transportation networks likely played a large role in its production.

Much has been made historically of the slavery and hemp connection. “A Lexingtonian stated in 1836 that it was almost impossible to hire workmen to break a crop of hemp because the work was ‘very dirty, and so laborious that scarcely any white man will work at it;’ he felt that the task was done entirely by slave labor.”²⁰

Statistics from the 1850 Agricultural Census largely affirm this connection; however, statistics from the following decade do not show such a strong correlation, revealing a drop in market value and popularity.²¹ “Unlike cattle and corn, however, which might be considered Bluegrass’ agricultural ‘staples,’ an individual farmer might turn either toward or away from the production of hemp in any given year.”²² Harrison County was a leading producer in 1840 and 1850, yet county farmers ceased planting hemp in 1860 and 1870, illustrating how farming patterns diversified agriculture practice were applied strategically in the Bluegrass.

While hemp was one “cash crop” of this era, it was undergirded by a diversified farming system that supported the everyday needs of the population; however, in 1850, Kentucky also ranked second nationally for the number of asses and mules, swine, pounds of tobacco, bushels of Indian corn and flaxseed, and value of home manufactures. In this same year, Census data indicates that the central Bluegrass Region produced thirty-two percent of the state’s corn, more than seventy-two percent of its hemp, fifty-nine percent of its rye, thirty-five percent of its hay, and thirty-five percent of its wheat. Despite the state’s 1850 nationwide high ranking in tobacco production, however, the Bluegrass Region contributed less than one percent to Kentucky’s tobacco total.

By 1860, Kentucky had fallen

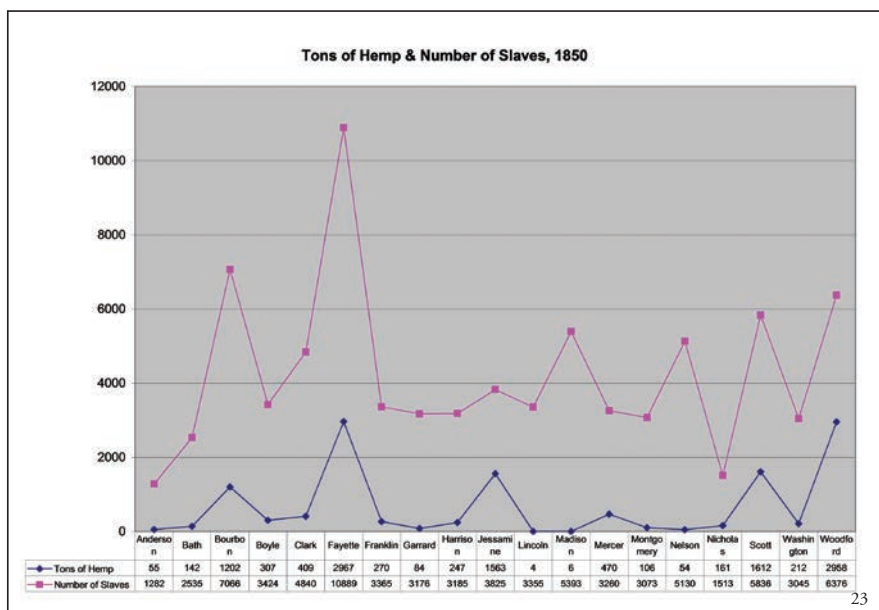
behind several other frontier states in the production of certain goods, yet rose in others. The state remained second in assess and mules, but shrank to fifth in swine. Crop production remained tied to marketable goods as Kentucky continued to lead the nation in hemp production, was the second largest tobacco producer, and was the fifth highest state in the production of Indian corn and flaxseed.

In general, the period between 1870 and 1930 saw decreased crop diversity on average farms, at least on a commercial level. Fewer types of crops were grown for market by the end of the era, yet the amount of those harvested had increased dramatically. Crop yields had greatly improved as a result of new machinery, the increased use of fertilizers, and the availability of effective pesticides. “Of the major crops of the early farming in Kentucky, tobacco, corn, and livestock feeds remain. Hemp, formerly important, has practically disappeared. Wheat too, has become less important; in 1929 only five percent of Kentucky farmers reported growing it.”²⁴ Within the Bluegrass Region, hemp had nearly vanished by 1910, while tobacco production became commonplace. The remainder of crops widely produced in this area and era were largely used on the farm to feed livestock.

Hemp lost popularity in part because of its resistance to mechanization. Despite efforts by Bluegrass farmers and inventors to develop new tools, hemp and its various byproducts were being either totally replaced or made more cheaply elsewhere.

“By 1890 the commonwealth grew 94 percent of the all the hemp produced in the United States, but only a thousand farmers still worked those fields. Their crops yielded a thousand pounds an acre, brought an average

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A History of Hemp..... (continued from page 5)

price of \$96.82 per ton... When World War I halted imports, the crop experienced a brief revival, but by 1940 only four Kentucky farms still grew the fiber.”²⁵

In 1920, the federal census dropped hemp from its long list of agricultural inventories, only to bring it back the following decade. However, by 1930 only three counties within the Bluegrass Region grew the crop at all (Lincoln, Fayette and Woodford), and more significantly, their production was 100 percent of the state’s total that year.²⁶ The cultivation of hemp rose during World War II, but the effort was short-lived. Increased post-war availability of cheaper synthetic fibers further discouraged farmers from growing hemp. A death knell came in the 1970s federal drug-criminalization laws tied the hemp to marijuana.

Efforts to reintroduce industrial hemp to Kentucky in the late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first centuries have gained traction and resulted in new testing and research of the crop and its role in contemporary agricultural markets. A pilot program undertaken by the state’s Department of Agriculture in 2014 and continuing to the present day, allows a limited number of farmers in the state to produce hemp and prepare for the possibility of its legalization.²⁷

Danae Peckler is an architectural historian from Danville, Kentucky, who is currently employed by Dovetail Cultural Resource Group in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She has conducted cultural resource studies across the Mid-Atlantic states. A past president of the National Barn Alliance, Peckler has a Master’s Degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Kentucky.

(Endnotes)

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- 5 Paul C. Henlein, *Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley, 1783-1860*. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959), 67.
- 6 Thomas Clark’s foreword to the revised addition of Hopkins, *A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky*. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky) 1951, and reprinted 1998.
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- 8 Walter Lynwood Fleming, “Southern Hemp and Flax Production,” *The South in the Building of the Nation: Economic History, 1607-1865*. Vol. V. (Richmond, VA: The Southern Historical Publication Society, 1909). 232.
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- 11 Fleming, “Southern Hemp and Flax Production,” 232.
- 12 Richard Troutman, “Plantation Life in the Antebellum Bluegrass Region of Kentucky,” Master of Arts Thesis, University of Kentucky (1955), 88.
- 13 Julie Reisenweber, paraphrasing *American Farmer*, IV (1833), 54-55. Unpublished manuscript on file at University of Kentucky, Center for Historic Architecture and Preservation (CHAP) (2007).
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- 16 Reisenweber, unpublished manuscript, CHAP (2007).
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- 18 James F. Hopkins, *A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky*. (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1951), 4.
- 19 Lowell H Harrison and James Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*. (Lexington, KY: University Pres of Kentucky, 1997). p. 135.
- 20 Hopkins, “A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky.” 24.
- 21 “Agriculture in the United States in 1850” and “Agriculture in the United States in 1860,” *USDA Census of Agriculture Historical Archive*. Albert R. Mann Library at Cornell University and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Electronic database, <http://agcensus.mannlib.cornell.edu/AgCensus/homepage.do;jsessionid=1E4EFE55F26A67F21AA6F768DE717D5B>.
- 22 Reisenweber, unpublished manuscript, CHAP (2007).
- 23 1850 Agricultural census statistics on tons of hemp produced and total number of slaves by county in central Kentucky, *United States Agricultural Census*. Electronic document, <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusImages/1850/1850a-23.pdf>. Table generated by author.
- 24 Harrison and Klotter, 293.
- 25 Bruce Poundstone and Walter J. Roth, “Types of Farming in Kentucky,” *Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 357* (June 1935) p. 27.
- 26 Various census dates and statistics, “United States Agricultural Census.” *USDA Census of Agriculture Historical Archive*.
- 27 “Industrial Hemp Research Pilot Program,” Kentucky Department of Agriculture (2017). Electronic document, <http://www.kyagr.com/marketing/hemp-pilot.html>.

Oxmoor Plantation House & Garden

By Valencia Libby, Blue Hill, Maine

Alexander Scott Bullitt (1761/62-1816) purchased "The Oxmoor," 1,200 acres along the East Beargrass Creek, seven miles west of Louisville in 1782. The land was level, well watered and wooded, ideal for farming. In 1786 Bullitt married Priscilla Christian and the following year they moved into the small, square clapboard house at Oxmoor. Bullitt became a prominent lawyer who was instrumental in Kentucky's separation from Virginia in 1792. He achieved several political posts within the newly formed state, including that of Kentucky's first lieutenant governor. He gradually developed a plantation to grow both grains and tobacco. At the time of his death in 1812, he owned one tract of 950 acres and forty-five slaves. His son, William Christian Bullitt, inherited the property and increased the size of the house with a brick addition in 1829. But the property was abandoned during the Civil War and tenant farmed thereafter.

In 1906, William Marshall Bullitt (1873-1957), the fourth generation of the Bullitt family and a successful corporate lawyer, decided to reclaim the family estate. He bought a portion of Oxmoor from his uncle consisting of

about sixty-seven acres and the house, fifty-five acres of field, four slave cabins, an icehouse, a summer kitchen, and the family cemetery. Marshall Bullitt was thirty-six years old and unmarried when he moved there in 1909.

A good friend of Henry Francis du Pont of Winterthur, Delaware, Marshall Bullitt shared many common interests including a love of historic houses and gardens. When Bullitt was looking for a landscape architect to improve the landscape at Oxmoor, H.F. du Pont recommended Marian Cruger Coffin (1876-1957), a knowledgeable landscape architect based in New York. Marian C. Coffin practiced during the Country Place Era when many wealthy families were building fine estates. It was the same period that brought Beatrix Farrand fame. Coffin was successful but not as widely known as Farrand. Educated at MIT and practicing throughout the Northeast, Oxmoor was her first project in the South. She

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Photo by Val Libby.

"The Pool," statue by sculptor Nora Iasigi.



Oxmoor façade.

Photo by Val Libby.



Photo by Val Libby.

The double perennial border culminated in a terrace with three interlocking circles formed by brick paths. (2014)

Oxmoor Plantation.....(continued from page 7)

visited the site several times to create a plan that would unify and beautify the landscape near the house. Bullitt wanted to improve the path that led from the house to the tennis court, and Coffin designed a color-schemed double perennial border backed with boxwood. The focal point for the border was a mature, slightly off center pecan tree. She defined the areas near the house with additional borders culminating in a terrace with three interlocking circles formed by brick paths. This area was planted with

roses; and a "colonial style" wooden arbor marked the entry between terrace and orchard. Coffin also realigned the entrance drive leading to the front of the house to create an elegant allée. Bullitt had Coffin's 1911 design implemented with very satisfactory results.

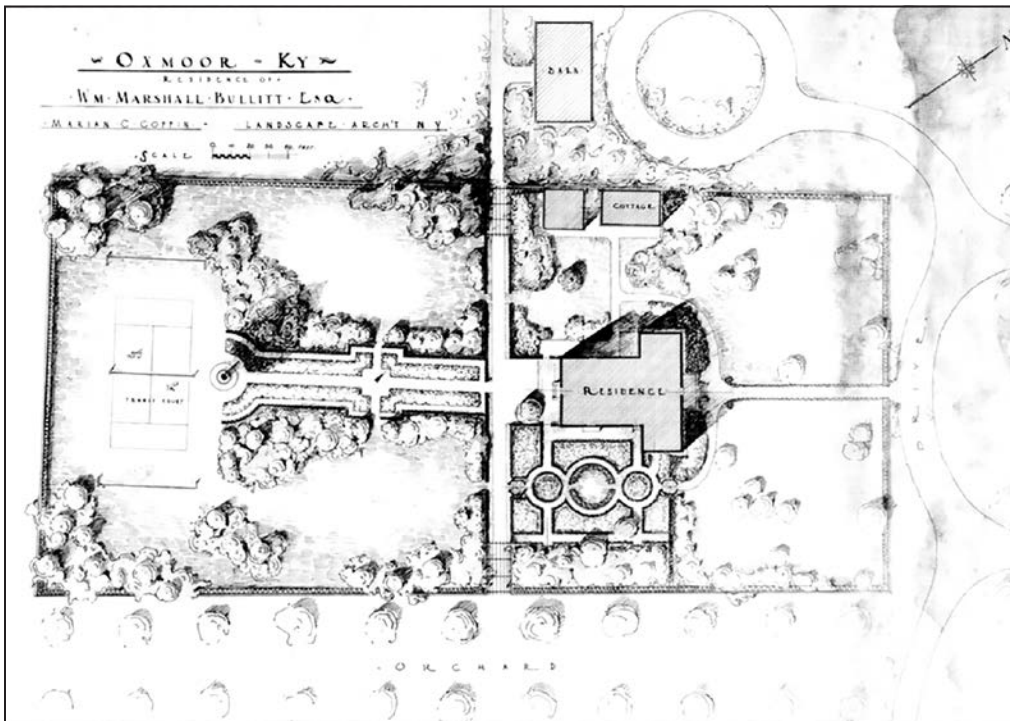
Meanwhile, at a party at Winterthur, Marshall Bullitt met his future wife, Nora Iasigi (1881-1976), whose father had been the Turkish consul to Boston. Nora Iasigi grew up in Boston where she had become good friends with

H.F. du Pont's sister, Louise du Pont Crowninshield.

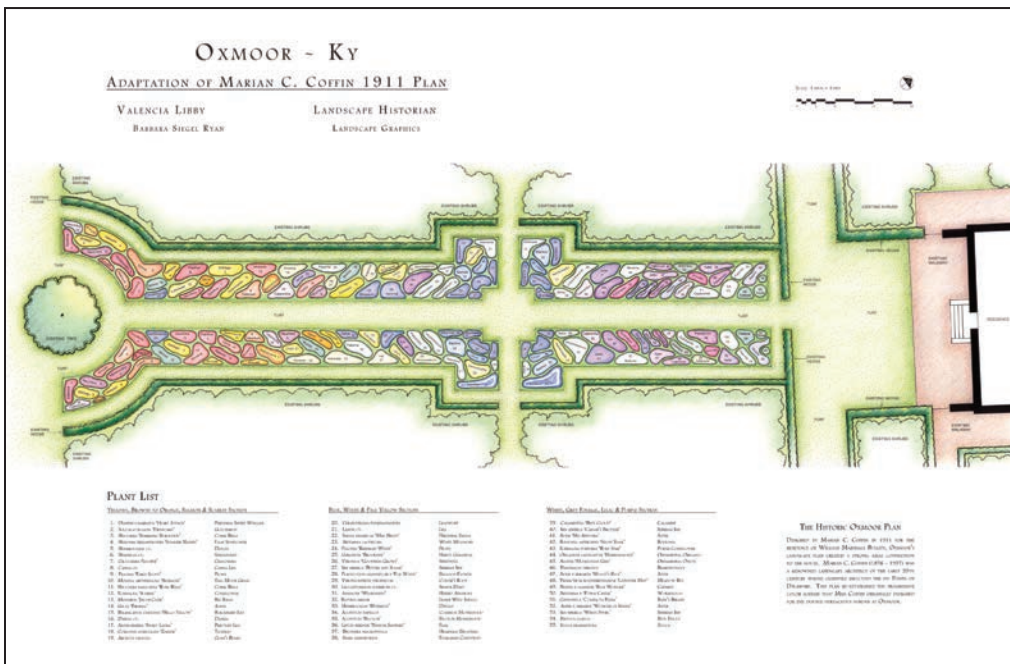
In 1913 Marshall Bullitt married Nora Iasigi with Henry F. du Pont as best man. They made Oxmoor their primary residence. Nora was a sculptor and she made a studio from one of the outbuildings. Her sculpture, "The Pool," still graces the garden.

The couple continued to expand and improve the house into a sizable mansion by adding two wings and a second story. They also created the finest private library in Kentucky. Given that commercial development was inevitable so close to Louisville, Marshall Bullitt saw the need to plan for Oxmoor's future preservation. When he died in 1957, his widow and his son, Thomas Walker Bullitt (1914-1991), oversaw the finalization of a comprehensive master plan. The plan protected 172 acres surrounding the mansion, gardens, and entrance drive under a state preservation and conservation easement. Following his mother's death in 1976, Thomas W. Bullitt contracted an arrangement with The Filson Historical Society to take over the property after the lifetime tenancy of his second wife, Kay Stammers Bullitt (1914-2010). This plan was actualized in 2010.

Thomas Bullitt's niece, Nora Leake, contacted the author



Marion C. Coffin's original 1911 plan for Oxmoor.



Adaptation of Marion Coffin's 1911 plan for Oxmoor, produced by Landscape Historian Valencia Libby and Barbara Siegel Ryan, Landscape Graphics.

in 2006 seeking help with the restoration of Oxmoor's gardens. I had been identified by Samuel Thomas in his history as an authority on Marian Cruger Coffin. Nora Leake and her sister Nina Richardson invited me to join them in Kentucky to take a look. It was my first visit to Kentucky and I was very impressed with the beauty of Oxmoor's rural setting. My in-depth knowledge of Marian Coffin's work and her design intentions aided my approach to the landscape renewal. They then commissioned my work and closely oversaw plan development. They requested that maintenance demands should be as low as possible in the future and that any recent garden "accretions" that did not contribute to the overall beauty of the site be removed. I chose to "recreate" rather than restore the color schemed plantings that Coffin and Bullitt had planned in 1911 with a selection of sturdy perennials and annuals and newer rose cultivars. (Suitable additions have been made to the borders since I worked on the site.) My colleague Barbara Siegel Ryan drafted the final plan, which today is displayed in the original 1791 section of the old home that overlooks the garden.

Three Louisville professionals greatly aided the re-creation work. Samuel W. Thomas, Oxmoor's historian, advised on all aspects of the physical history and use of the site. Richard T. Wolford's landscape design and

construction company prepared the site, sourced the new plants, and carried out installation; and Larry Robinson, who has been the gardener at Oxmoor since 1995, took charge of all details. With Larry's constant care, the renewed gardens have thrived and continue to be the asset that we all wanted to achieve in 2006-07.

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The Worm Tree: The Arcadian Gardener

Greg Grant, Center, Texas

Though I grew up with catalpa trees, I never had an appreciation for them until our late fearless founder Flora Ann Bynum came calling while researching the subject for an Old Salem landscape restoration project. Seeing catalpas as fine specimens in respected European botanical gardens didn't hurt either.

Our native southern catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides*)



Photo by G. Grant.

Southern Catalpa in flower.

was once highly regarded as an ornamental tree in the Southern landscape; a long and handsome double row on the Palace Green at Colonial Williamsburg attests to the tree's former glory. Unfortunately, the southern catalpa is seldom planted these days and is sometimes considered a weed tree. Like many American natives, it is more revered in Europe than it is at home.

"Catalpa" is a Latinized version of a Cherokee Indian name, and it was in Cherokee country that the naturalist Mark Catesby discovered this species in 1726. Some people in rural areas to this day even refer to the tree as a Catawba tree. Catesby introduced the plant to gardens in America and England, and included an illustration of it in Volume 1 of the work he published in 1731, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*. In this book he wrote:

"This tree was unknown to the inhabited parts of Carolina until I brought the seeds from the remote parts of the country. And though the inhabitants are little curious in gardening, yet the uncommon beauty of this tree had induced them to propagate it and 'tis become an ornament to many of their gardens and probably will be the same to ours in England."

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The Worm Tree:.....(continued from page 9)

There is some evidence that catalpas were planted at the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg as early as 1737, and there is a reference in a journal from 1782 to the catalpas at the palace. Those growing there today were planted after 1930 as part of the restoration.

Eliza Lucas (later Eliza Pinckney) mentions in a 1743 account of William Middleton's gardens at Crowfield near Charleston, South Carolina "...a large square boleing [sic] green . . . with a walk quite round composed of a double row of fine large flowering Laurel and Catulpas which form both shade and beauty..."

A nursery advertisement in a 1789 Baltimore, Maryland, newspaper listed "Catalpa Flower-tree" for sale. And George Washington is known to have planted two catalpas at Mount Vernon in 1785.

The Moravians in Salem, North Carolina (the area of Winston-Salem known today as "Old Salem") obviously prized the catalpas, as their records mention this tree a number of times. They mention the planting of catalpas on the square in 1782; the planting of a double row running from the Girls School to the Parish Graveyard in 1809 and 1815; in the graveyard itself in 1820; a catalpa being struck by lightning in front of the Pottery in 1809; and so on.

The southern catalpa has a limited natural range, and is thought to be native only to western Georgia, western Florida, Alabama, and eastern Mississippi. It has large, broad, heart-shaped, light green leaves that end in a tapering point. In late spring the showy flowers appear in large pyramidal clusters. Orchidlike and ruffled on the edges, the blossoms seem to be all white at first glance, but closer scrutiny reveals yellow striping and purple-brown spotting inside the flowers. A few weeks after the flowers are gone, long, thin, green, beanlike pods hang in clusters all over the trees. It is occasionally available in a dwarf form, a golden leafed form, and one with variegated foliage, which I once lugged back from the Royal Horticultural Society's Wisely Garden nursery in England.

The other American species of catalpa is the northern or western catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*), which is native to the Mississippi Valley from Indiana to the Gulf and is more cold hardy. It is more common naturalized in East Texas where I live, while southern catalpa is more common in landscapes. I like to think of it being native in East Texas but it's probably not. When settlers began moving into the northern catalpa range, they thought this belonged to the same species as the southern catalpa. However, Dr. John Ashton Warder of Cincinnati, Ohio, the publisher of *The Western Horticultural Review*, recognized the new trees as a distinct species, and published the first description of the northern catalpa in his magazine in 1853.

Distinguishing the two species is difficult, especially when the trees are young and not in flower. Even foresters sometimes confuse the two. The northern catalpa is a

much taller tree, growing straight up like a hickory, and may reach a height of one hundred feet. The southern species has a much broader crown, and at maturity may measure sixty feet tall. In addition, the southern catalpa starts branching very low on its central trunk, so that its heavy, stout branches form a loosely rounded crown. Its bark is dark-grayish, thin and scaly, while that

of the northern catalpa is thick and ridged. But for the amateur the easiest distinguishing mark of the northern catalpa is that it blooms two weeks earlier than the southern catalpa. Flora Ann first pointed this out to me. Though both species are beautiful, I'm more partial to the northern catalpa (despite the name) because of its stately height and habit. Both are native and widely naturalized in the South, however.

Neither is common in the nursery trade, but both species are easy to transplant, especially bare-root when dormant. They grow rapidly, and a large catalpa in full bloom is a magnificent sight.

If catalpas have today lost their fame as an ornamental tree for Southern gardens, they are still beloved by fishermen as a source of catalpa (often pronounced "catawbie") worms, which are prized as freshwater bait. Harvesting catalpa worms with my Papaw, Eloy Emanis, was a particular treat for me growing up. He would even freeze them in milk jugs of cornmeal for later use. The worm is a three-inch-long, greenish yellow caterpillar vaguely similar to the tobacco horn worm, and when mature it exhibits distinctive, horizontal green and black stripes. It is the larva of the catalpa sphinx moth and feeds exclusively on catalpas. Their appetite matches their size, and an infestation of catalpa worms may defoliate a tree entirely—fortunately, the tree soon recovers, rapidly producing a new crop of leaves. This potential annual defoliation bothered sweet Flora Ann, but I assured her it was natural and a wonder of evolution with the caterpillars gaining toxic alkaloids from the tree to make them distasteful to the birds and the tree setting seed for reproduction thanks to the moth that produced the worms.



The catalpa tree and the bastard Baltimore from Mark Catesby, The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands (London, 1731-43 [1729-47]) I.

I'll never forget seeing the first defoliated catalpa tree full of long "beans" in Longview, Texas and wondering how the homeowner trained green beans into a tree. I'll also never forget smoking a catalpa bean (an historical folly for mischievous Southern boys) with my naive brother-in-law and still not being forgiven for the lingering "camp fire" taste in his mouth!

[Editor's note #1: Thomas Jefferson was a fan of the Southern catalpa, and planted them in a shrubbery on the slopes of Monticello as early as 1771. Later,

in 1789, he planted catalpas among his arboretum of "pet trees" in the upper grove. During my childhood in Southern Pines, North Carolina, I also tried smoking catalpa bean pods, which I called "Indian cigars." PLC]

Editor's note #2: A student of Jefferson, Ken McFarland, had catalpa trees in his yard on Old Chapel Hill Road in North Carolina. He harvested the worms and sold them to local fishermen for five cents each, which was a lot back then. (Some fishermen insisted said worms had to be turned inside out to really be effective!) He also sold red worms for much less per worm. Ken was aided by his mother, who would only touch said "Catawba" worms, as we called them, with tweezers. KMM]

In Print

The Public-Spirited Beatrix Farrand of Mount Desert Island, by Roxanne Brousse | Beatrix Farrand Society Press, 2016 | Hardcover editions available through www.beatrixfarrandsocietyshop.org | \$40 for members | \$45 for non-members | \$5 shipping

In anticipation of the Centennial of the National Park Service and Acadia National Park, the National Park Service planning team hired Rieley & Associates, landscape architects in Charlottesville, Virginia, to evaluate the current conditions of Acadia's carriage road system and to ascertain their history and relative importance. The subsequent Carriage Road Study compiled by Will Rieley and Roxanne Brousse became the basis for establishing the national significance of the collection of broken-stone roads that wind through forests, along ponds, and up mountains, providing access to sweeping vistas of the spectacular ocean, lake, and woodland views that make Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park such a desirable destination. Restoration of the carriage roads became a centerpiece of the park's General Management Plan. In the process of their research, Rieley & Associates discovered the substantial role Farrand played through her long and close collaboration with John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In response to the Beatrix Farrand Society's desire to further address Farrand's contributions to the park, Brousse produced this monograph, which not only discusses Farrand's involvement in the design of Acadia's carriage roads, but also her relationship with the Rockefellers, and how their collaboration influenced her later work in designing the estate of Robert and Mildred Bliss at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.

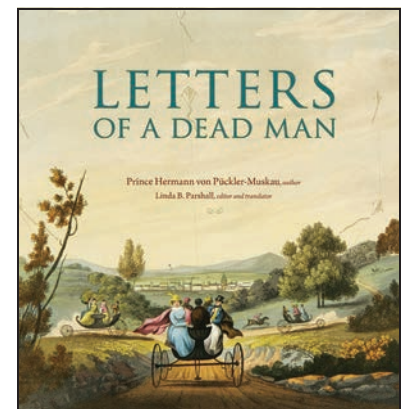


Brousse reveals Farrand to be an early proponent of native plantings as reflected in her plant list (included in the appendix) from which she chose and expertly placed trees and shrubs to frame views and heal the landscape following the park's construction. Nurserymen and foresters who contributed to the process are also acknowledged.



Letters of a Dead Man, Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, edited and translated by Linda B. Parshall | Harvard University Press, 2016 | ISBN: 9780884024118 | List price: \$75

In 1826, Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau embarked on a tour of England, Wales, and Ireland, with the plan to transform his estate into a vast landscape park. For over two years, Pückler's letters home conveyed a vivid, often quirky, and highly entertaining account of his travels. From the metropolis of London, he toured the mines and factories of the Industrial Revolution and visited the grand estates and spectacular art collections maintained by its beneficiaries. He encountered the scourge of rural and urban poverty and found common cause with the oppressed Irish. With his gift for description, Pückler evokes the spectacular landscapes of Wales, the perils of transportation, and the gentle respite of manor houses and country inns. Part memoir, part travelogue and political commentary, part epistolary novel, Pückler's rhetorical flare and acute observations provoked the German poet Heinrich Heine to characterize him as the "most fashionable of eccentric men—Diogenes on horseback."





Southern Garden History Society

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*SGHS Fall 2016 Board meeting report available at
<http://southerngardenhistory.org/events/fall-2016-board-meeting>*

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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.

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Institution or Business	\$100
Joint	\$60
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