



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

Magnolia

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A Practical Landscape: Martha Berry, Robert Cridland, and the Gardens at Oak Hill

By Timothy David Brown, Athens, Georgia

"I pray that I may leave the world more beautiful than I found it." – *Martha McChesney Berry*

Encompassing more than 25,000 acres, Berry College is consistently ranked among the most beautiful campuses in the world. Perched in the Northwest Georgia foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, the institution, founded in 1902 to help poor children, grew to national stature during the 1920s with the support of affluent benefactors such as Henry Ford. It thus resulted into one of America's most extraordinary Gothic Revival campuses. Today, every part of Berry College bears the signature of its founder, Martha McChesney Berry, whose resolve and strength of character enabled achievements unparalleled among her peers.

Martha Berry's love of beauty was instilled by her father, Thomas Berry, who understood the importance of aesthetics in a well-rounded education: he taught his children to appreciate the natural world around them and to see possibility in all things. Born six months after the Civil War's end, the first twelve years of Martha Berry's life were spent during a time when Reconstruction reshaped the world around her. The South had been devastated, but the Berrys thrived; in 1867 the growing family moved to Rome, Georgia, where in 1871 they purchased Oak Hill—a sizeable farm overlooking the Oostanaula River.

Propelled by intense compassion to help the poor, Martha Berry had become one of the most respected women in the world during the 1920s. A visit from Theodore Roosevelt in 1910 had garnered national attention, and the Berry Schools captured the imagination of Northern aristocrats. Early introductions among the country's elite resulted in deep friendships with people such as Henry & Clara Ford, Emily Vanderbilt Hammond, Kate Macy Ladd, and Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, Theodore's younger sister.



Photo by Crystal Linsenbigler.

State Champion Japanese Maple overlooks Oak Hill's historic Bridal Walk.

Martha Berry also met Robert B. Cridland, a Philadelphian landscape architect who had achieved success with *Practical Landscape Gardening*, an

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CALENDAR

February 20, 2018. Cherokee Garden Library Lecture and Book Launch, *Grave Landscapes: The Nineteenth-Century Rural Cemetery Movement*.

Author and preservationist Erica Danylchak will discuss her new University of South Carolina Press book co-authored with the late James R. Cothran. More information and tickets: www.atlantahistorycenter.com/lectures

April 13-15, 2018. SGHS 36th Annual Meeting in Jacksonville, FL.

Sites include The Cummer Museum and Gardens, Jacksonville's Historic Parks, Glen Saint Mary Nurseries, and Historic St. Augustine. The headquarters hotel for guests, programs, and tour departures will be the DoubleTree by Hilton, 1201 Riverplace Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32207, (904) 398-8800. Group rate is \$123 per night plus tax. To qualify, identify that you are with the Southern Garden History Society. Cutoff date for hotel registrations is March 13, 2018. More information will appear at www.southerngardenhistory.org

April 21-28, 2018. 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 since 1927, supports restoration projects statewide. Visit: vagardenweek.org

April 14-16, 2018. Colonial Williamsburg's 72nd Annual Garden Symposium: "Ordinary to Extraordinary, Creating Landscape Designs that Reflect Beauty and Awe," Learn how to create harmonious gardens that sing with creativity, as well as those that reflect personal expression and reverence for design fundamentals. Guest speakers will discuss how to integrate existing elements, effectively combine plants and hardscape materials, and create features of distinctive landscape styles. More information will be available at www.history.org email: mmoyer@cwf.org; (800) 603-0948

April 25, 2018. Cherokee Garden Library Lecture, Book and Exhibition Launch, *Seeking Eden: A Collection of Georgia's Historic Gardens*.

Staci L. Catron, Cherokee Garden Library Director, and Mary Ann Eaddy, historic preservationist will discuss their new University of Georgia Press book. More information and tickets: www.atlantahistorycenter.com/lectures

May 9, 2018. SGHS State Ambassadors Event for Georgia and Florida members. See article below.

June 17-22, 2018. 22nd 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 21-22, 2018. 12th Annual Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello.

Celebrate the revolutionary legacy of Thomas Jefferson with workshops, lectures, and tomato tastings and more. Featured speakers include Peter Hatch, Michael Twitty, Ira Wallace, and many more. Visit: www.heritageharvestfestival.com

October 19-20, 2018. 30th Annual Southern Garden Symposium and Workshops:

"The Changing Nature of Gardening," in St. Francisville, Louisiana. Featured speakers include celebrated authors Andrea Wulf, Rick Darke, and Doug Tallamy. More information will be available at: www.southerngardensymposium.com

Join your Southern Garden History friends!

Social media enthusiasts can now follow SGHS on Instagram at:

<https://www.instagram.com/southerngardenhistory/> and search for

#southerngardenhistory on Facebook and Instagram.

A Practical Landscape:..... (continued from page 1)

unexpectedly popular book that had undergone several reprints by the mid-1920s. Cridland's straightforward approach appealed to Martha Berry, who enlisted him to beautify her burgeoning campus with new pathways and plantings. In 1923, Cridland designed the gardens for the "House o' Dreams," a Craftsman retreat built at the top of Lavender Mountain in honor of the schools' twentieth anniversary. An intimate garden, the House o' Dreams incorporates almost every principle of Cridland's text, and the design would prove a fitting prelude to a more ambitious project: The gardens of Oak Hill.

Martha Berry had come into possession of Oak Hill upon the passing of her mother, Frances Rhea Berry, in 1927. The Greek Revival house, which had

never been plumbed or electrified, was in great need of modernization. Recognizing the home's potential to accommodate Berry College's affluent visitors, Kate Macy Ladd presented a sizeable donation to transform Oak Hill—the house, the outbuildings, and the landscape—from a nineteenth-century farm into a fashionable 1920s estate.

Never one to hesitate, Martha Berry plunged into the project with full force, and in 1928 work began on the house and grounds almost simultaneously. Coolidge & Carlson Architects of Boston was enlisted to redesign the house and Robert Cridland was asked to submit plans to transform the grounds.

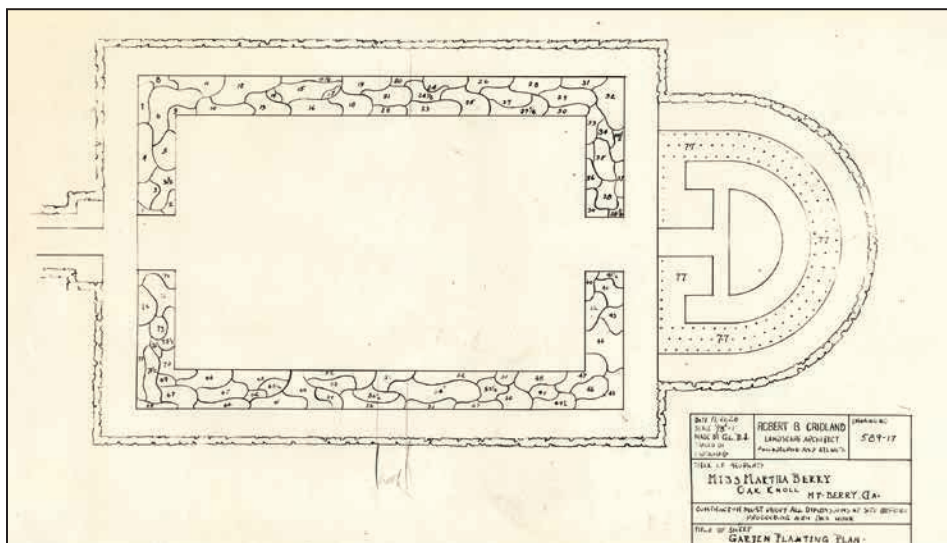
Cridland's bold new design for the Oak Hill estate

was implemented in stages, beginning with the gardens and paths surrounding the main house. He created four separate gardens, each unique—a formal garden, a goldfish garden, a sundial garden, and a hillside garden. Three summer houses provided shady respite for visitors, and walkways were laid with colorful native stone. Ponds, fountains and classical sculpture provided interest, and the entire scheme was unified by strict, geometric axes that are softened by exuberant plantings. Complementing the main gardens' geometry, Cridland designed a more rustic hillside garden on the ridge behind the house. Two winding paths on the near-vertical slope celebrate natural contours and are punctuated with flowering bulbs, a decorative water feature, and seats created from boulders found on site.

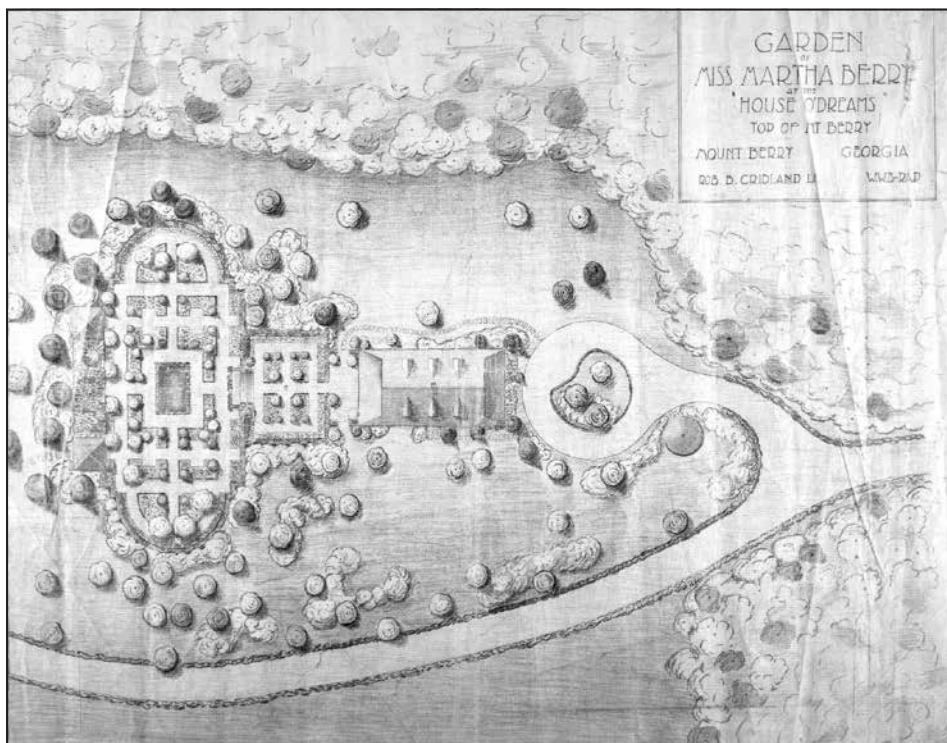
Oak Hill's entrance was relocated to the north—the gates were positioned directly across the highway from the Berry Schools' entrance, and Cridland carved a new, winding driveway so that visitors passed through a natural landscape as they approached the house. The entry drive crossed a new bridge of native stone, and sugar maples and dogwood trees were planted in abundance.

Communication between Martha Berry and Robert Cridland was sometimes contentious—Martha

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Cridland's original plan for Oak Hill's formal garden included a staggering number of plantings.



Cridland's rendering for Berry's House o' Dreams is drawn in pencil on canvas.

Berry College Memorial Library Archives.

Berry College Memorial Library Archives.

A Practical Landscape:..... (continued from page 3)

Berry did not mince words when displeased. In a letter to Cridland dated April 11, 1928, she writes, "Making over my old home has been such a perfect failure that I am hoping that I shall not be so disappointed in the landscape work." Questioning the walkways, which she calls "hideous," she says she is "greatly disappointed in what has been done so far." She lets Cridland know she considers the work substandard, adding, "I think you must have left some of the work to others in your office."

Robert Cridland's responses are always patient, however, and as time passed he must have grown accustomed to Martha Berry's exacting standards. After visiting Europe in 1930, she enlisted Cridland to design the most glorious garden of all—the Sunken Garden, which occupies a natural valley and is executed in an emphatic Italian style. Planted with irises and daylilies, the Sunken Garden was ornamented with Japanese cherry trees, a gift to Martha Berry from Emperor Hirohito. Throughout the 1930s, Cridland submitted plans for Berry College as well as for Oak Hill, eventually sculpting the entire estate with ornamental ponds and a woodland trail system.

REVIVAL

Like every garden, the condition of the grounds at Oak Hill has been proportionate to the energy put forth in maintenance. Through the years, scores of photographs attest to Berry College's reverence for Oak Hill, and while periods of overgrowth reigned at various times, they are balanced by moments of meticulous precision. Twenty-first-century restoration efforts began ten years ago with a grant from the Garden Club of Georgia, which repaired the south wall of the Sunken Garden. Since 2012, the GCG has awarded three additional Historic Garden and Landscape Grants to bring the Hillside Garden, catfish pond, and stone stairways back to their former glory. With assistance from the GCG, the restoration of the Hillside Garden is almost complete.



Photo by Tim Brown

Tulips abound during early spring throughout Berry College's campus, including the gardens of Oak Hill.

A box filled with old rolls of paper turned out to contain dozens of original blueprints and landscape plans from the 1920s—the majority of which were signed by Robert Cridland himself. In addition to numbered plans, architectural renderings were also present, some hand-colored on canvas, and all, presumably, drawn by Cridland. More than 75% of Oak Hill's cultivated landscape—including all of the gardens surrounding the house—was documented in that box. Suddenly, the 1930s landscape emerged: the plans show precisely how the gardens were designed to appear during Martha Berry's lifetime. The complexity is sometimes daunting, however—for example, the modestly sized rose garden contains 292 separate plants. Indeed, every inch of the landscape was given a new purpose.

Equally pivotal to restoration efforts has been *Practical Landscape Gardening*, Cridland's own book, a veritable Rosetta Stone when interpreting the hieroglyphics of the landscape. While the garden plans state what to do, *Practical Landscape Gardening* explains why and how to do it – and provides a window into Cridland's mindset as he designed Oak Hill. Nothing, we learn, is accidental. "Every tree and shrub, every plant and plantation, should bear a definite relation, one to the other, in the general scheme," he writes. He prefers straight walkways, explaining that "straight lines always give more character than curved ones," and elliptical driveways are better than circular because they provide a "flat side next to the house so that a waiting vehicle will be standing in the proper position." *Practical Landscape Gardening* sheds light on hundreds of details relating to Oak Hill, from Cridland's opinion of concrete walks—they are "really monotonous"—to the proper color of gravel walks—red, rather than gray—and his strong words about the greatest scourge of all: "weeds are always a menace and...should be continually fought against."

Martha Berry and Robert Cridland enjoyed a long, productive friendship and together created an extraordinary work of art—today, the grounds of Berry College and Oak Hill are indeed among the most beautiful on earth. Enthusiasm from the local Rome Federated Garden Clubs, support from the GCG and the discovery of rare, original documents has provided a framework to recreate a true representation of Robert Cridland's designs and, in recent years, the gardens have begun to reemerge. An exciting project, the restoration of Oak Hill's gardens is ongoing, improving continuously as we learn the nuances and needs of the landscape. We hope Martha Berry would be gratified to know that she did, indeed, leave the world more beautiful than she found it and created a lasting legacy for future generations.

For more information about Oak Hill & The Martha Berry Museum, visit www.berry.edu/oakhill or call 706-368-6789.

David Williston: First Negro Landscape Architect

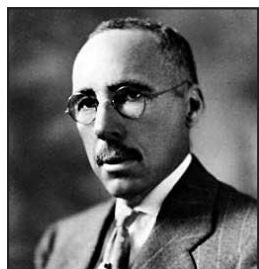
By Dreck Spurlock Wilson, ASLA, NOMA, Washington, DC

David Augustus Williston (1868-1962) acquired the descriptor “First Negro Landscape Architect” after opening his office in 1923 on the 1st floor of his LeDroit Park townhouse downslope from Howard University’s hilltop campus in the nation’s capital.¹ Williston smartly located his office in the midst of the largest cadre of Negro architects in the nation within eye-sight of Howard’s Founders Library. “Founders” reverentially refers to trustees of the First Congregational Church who founded Howard in 1867; the same denomination that schooled David back in the Tar Heel State.

The sylvan subdivision of LeDroit Park was familiar to David. He previously lived in the same neighborhood with his older brother Edward, a staff physician at Howard’s Freedmen’s Hospital while simultaneously serving as a medical officer to the Colored U.S. 10th Calvary “Rough Riders” commanded by Col. Teddy Roosevelt. Edward sent for David in 1891, paid his tuition, and enrolled him in Howard Normal School.

David’s patrilineal grandfather John Payson Williston of Northampton, Massachusetts was a rebellious abolitionist and founding member of the Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society whose King Street house above a root cellar hid runaway slaves riding the Underground Railroad to Ontario. J. P. Williston shouldered the mantle of philanthropy by generously supporting New England Congregationalists. In defiance of societal norms, John and wife Cecilia informally adopted David’s father, Frank Payson Williston. F. P. Williston subsequently received a prized appointment as a gauger for the U.S. Treasury Department. His carpet bag packed with all his worldly possessions, Frank Williston relocated to Fayetteville, North Carolina where Edward and then David and six siblings were born.

David was an 18-year-old, legacy enrollee at the former Williston Free School in Wilmington, North Carolina, built in 1866 by J. P.’s brother and David’s great uncle Samuel Williston, a fabric covered button manufacturer of Easthampton, Massachusetts. By the time David enrolled, New England Congregationalists had renamed the school Gregory



David Williston

H.U. Moorland-Spangarn
Research Center

Normal Institute after John Gregory, a business partner of Samuel Williston who probably owed him a debt. Gregory Normal Institute can lay claim to having schooled the race’s first landscape architect and the race’s first degreed architect, Wilmington’s-own Robert Taylor (1868-1942), an 1890 graduate of the Massachusetts Institute Technology. What are the odds?

Ezra Cornell’s reply to a letter received from a colored father “send him over if he is smart and can make his mark in the world” opened a pipeline from the Howard Normal School to Cornell University.² Cornell in upstate, farm strewn New York was one of the first Morrill Land Grant Act universities founded at the end of the Civil War. The

university benefitted from spoils doled-out by New York Governor Theodore Roosevelt, becoming the nation’s first, state-funded Agriculture Department in 1874. Founder and Director of the Agriculture Department Liberty Hyde Bailey sat David for entrance subject exams. David passed all nine and was admitted by Bailey to the university the fall of 1894.³ Unexpectedly, given the scarcity of coloreds enrolled at white universities during the last decade of the nineteenth century—less than a dozen—David was Bailey’s “second” race student following Jane Datcher class of 1890, who was the first female in America to earn a Botany degree. (Datcher forsook botany, instead entering Howard’s Medical School in 1893 where she walked rounds at Freedmen’s Hospital supervised by David’s brother, Edward.)

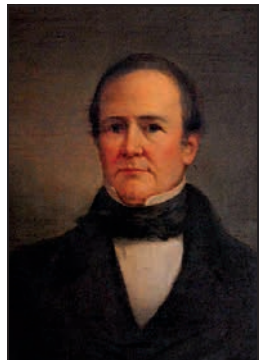
As the sole colored in the Agriculture Department,

(continued on page 6)



Bailey in forcing house.

CU Olin Library Rare Books
and Manuscripts Collection.



Samuel Williston

Williston Northampton
School Archives



1898 graduating class. David is in the rear under the arch 5th from left.

CU Olin Library Rare Books and
Manuscripts Collections.

David Williston..... (continued from page 5)

one of three coloreds enrolled at Cornell surrounded by nearly 2,400 registrants, David's four years were uneventful. While the dean of women allowed both colored females to domicile on-campus in Sage Hall the dean of men was not so accommodating. David boarded in Ithaca from baptized coloreds rent paid by his brother. He slogged-up steep hills

toward campus since trollies refused to stop for coloreds. Professor Bailey "believed the heart of agriculture is on the farm, the heart of horticulture is in the garden, the heart of botany is where the plant is."⁴ He was the first president of the Society for Horticultural Sci-

ence, organized the first annual meeting in 1895 of the American Dahlia Society, served as the long-time editor of the *Cyclopedia of American Horticulture*, and was the key advisor to the longest serving, four-term Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture James "Tama Jim" Wilson (no relation to author). Prior to his federal appointment, Wilson taught and mentored George Washington Carver, the first colored to receive a baccalaureate degree in Agriculture in 1894 from the author's alma mater Iowa State University. Bailey, without fuss, integrated David into the department housed in Morrill Hall. David's classes were identical to his classmates.⁵ The Horticulture Lazy Boys Club, aka "Bailey's Boys," organized by Bailey one year after he admitted David, gathered at his home Friday evenings for dinners followed by lectures. Williston would forever thereafter announce to anyone within ear-shot that he was one of the original "Bailey's Boys." The photograph of the club on a field trip is fascinating for including a colored when coloreds at predominately white universities were scarce and their inclusion in mixed-race, group photographs even scarcer. The black and white photograph communicates how seamlessly *l'café au lait* complexion, like-attired David blended-in indistinguishable from other club members. The sensory currency paid toward the photographer seems congenial. After approval of his senior paper "Atmospheric Drainage," David was conferred a B. S. in Agriculture in June 1898, the second of his race so honored. It is, however, unlikely David marched in the commencement processional.

Armed with a first-rate



"Bailey's Boys." David standing 4th from left.

Photo credited to CU Olin Library Rare Books and Manuscripts Collections.



A&M College Botany Class (1898).

Photo credited to NCA&T Bluford Library Archives Catalog.

degree and confronting an America hostile to scientifically educated non-whites, Williston's next obstacle was how to make a living during Jim Crow. Unlike fellow Agriculture graduates, the USDA and its ubiquitous Experimental Extension Service, being monolithically segregated, was unavailable. Similarly, state and county governments were unavailable. It is surmised special consideration was given to Williston following graduation by his home state with a prestigious appointment at the Agricultural & Mechanical College for the Colored Race at Greensboro to teach botany, horticulture, and chemistry where he unceremoniously integrated the faculty. Before and after opening his office Williston mirrored the race's leading intellectual W.E.B. DuBois as an itinerant professor.⁶

Williston, whenever he could, offered his professional services to Congregationalist- supported colleges siting student-built buildings, grading flood-prone campuses, engineering roads which tripled as walkways, and drainage swales, designing stone entrance gateways, and planting *Pinus strobus* as wind-breaks.⁷ Williston practiced an "engineered" landscape similar to Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. and engineer Calvert Vaux's "Greensward Plan" for Central Park (1858) on Manhattan island or FLO's mule-dredged Lake Michigan flood-plain for the fairgrounds of the Chicago World's Fair (1893). Meanwhile, Williston honed his drafting skills from the International Correspondence School in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

The last extant example of Williston's Prairie Style in spirit with mid-western landscape architect Jens Jenson (1860-1951) is "The Oaks," Booker T. Washington's home (1900) on Tuskegee's campus re-planted by Williston in 1926. Spanning several decades Tuskegee commissioned Williston half a dozen times. During stints on campus Williston forged a life-long friendship with George Washington Carver.

Carver would cook Saturday evening dinners at his modest one-room home. After dinner conversations between the race's first and second conferees of an Agriculture degree—the nation's greatest agriculture scientist and one of the nation's most accomplished landscape architects—most assuredly were legendary. Howard's first, Negro president Mordecai Johnson during his Charter Day speech on March 2, 1946, mentioned a *Willistonias pyracantha* as would a friend or client or both.⁸

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Teddy Roosevelt's cousin, and the Negroes greatest friend was influential in both of Williston's most significant projects. When FDR's



Booker T. Washington's home, "The Oaks."

Library of Congress

brain-trust agreed in 1935 to green-light the first, federally financed, public housing Langston Terrace several miles east of the U.S. Capitol; Eleanor Roosevelt, an annual visitor to Howard, urged that Howard architecture professor Hilyard Robinson (1899-1986) receive the commission.⁹ And who happened to be Robinson's most frequent collaborator—David Williston. Williston graded the seventeen-acre site, which slopes down to the Anacostian Native American River wetlands, oriented mid-rise buildings containing over 200 dwelling units facing a commons, planted *Acer saccharum* along boundary streets, designed a forced-gravity storm sewer system (which still flows), terraced eight low-rise buildings to elevate them out of the floodplain, and designed a playground inhabited by sculpted sandstone animals.

In 1939, FDR ordered the War Department's Army Air Corps to train Negroes to test their mental acuity and pilot ability. FLOTUS again intervened insisting Robinson be sole-sourced the RFP for a training camp and airfield outside Tuskegee. The Corps' obstructionism manifests itself in the unrealistic one-week deadline they gave Robinson to submit a fee proposal. Robinson asked fraternity brother Charles "Chief" Anderson the first, Negro commercial licensed pilot to fly him over the 1,700-acre site. What Robinson observed was a rutted flood-plain that seemingly disappeared over the horizon with thousands of foot-hills shoe-laced with creeks. And who was the most experienced at dewatering sites than the Cornelian whose terminal paper was "Atmospheric Drainage"? Williston prepared rough-and-fine grading blue-prints, sited hangars, barracks, and control tower and engineered 4-5,000lf asphalt runways. Robinson & Williston got the 99th Pursuit Squadron aka "Tuskegee Airmen" airborne in record-time escorting all-white pilots flying B-24 bombers in soirees over Western Europe never losing a B-24 to the Luftwaffe.

Oft-quoted Booker T. Washington offered "the world honors the sticker never the quitter."¹⁰ To David Williston a well-deserved honor as the first Negro landscape architect.

[Dreck Spurlock Wilson, ASLA, NOMA, editor of *African American Architects A Biographical Dictionary*



Langston Terrace rendering by Williston.



Tuskegee Airmen.



Airfield.

1865-1945, Routledge, (2004), is a licensed landscape architect and Associate Professor in the College of Engineering and Architecture at Howard University. This paper was presented at the Restoring Southern Gardens & Landscapes conference at the Old Salem Gardens and Museums, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, September 23, 2017.

Endnotes

- 1 The author, who is African American, uses the words "Negro" and "colored" to be historically in context.
- 2 James Atwood to Ezra Cornell, 2 July 1868, Cornell University Olin Library, Division of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Ezra Cornell Papers, Box 30/16.
- 3 David passed entrance exams in English, Geography, Physiology, American History, Arithmetic, Plane Geometry, Elementary Algebra and Plane Trigonometry.
- 4 Andrew Rodgers, Liberty Hyde Bailey, A Story of American Plant Sciences, N.Y.: Hafner Publishing, 1965, p. 112.
- 5 David's First Year classes were: French, English, Chemistry, Zoology, Botany, Physics, Horticulture, Etymology and Dairy.
- 6 Williston was Professor of Agriculture at Agriculture & Mechanical College for the Colored Race, Greensboro, NC 1898-1900; Lincoln Institute, Jefferson City, MO 1901-02, Fisk University, Nashville, TN 1907-09 (overlapping with DuBois), Tennessee Agricultural & Industrial State College, Nashville 1930-31 and Lane College, Jackson, TN 1945-46.
- 7 Campuses touched by Williston include: Atlanta University 1926, Howard University 1939, Catholic University of America 1940, Lane College 1945, Tuskegee Institute 1947; Alcorn Agriculture & Mechanical College 1950, Tennessee Agriculture & Industrial State College 1954 and Philander Smith College 1958.
- 8 No such red berry cultivar is listed in Standardized Plant Names. Parenthetically an application to the USDA from a Negro would not have been accepted.
- 9 In 1987, as Director of Public Housing for the District of Columbia, the author nominated Langston Terrace Dwellings to the National Register of Historic Places the first and to date only public housing project on the Register.
- 10 Louis Harlan, *The Wizard of Tuskegee*, NY: Oxford, 1986, n.p.

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The author, Dreck Wilson, (center front row) surrounded by landscape architecture students from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University who attended his lecture.

John Lee Pratt's Chatham Manor

Judith B. Tankard, Boston, Massachusetts

Frances Benjamin Johnston's iconic photographs of Chatham Manor in 1927 (featured in *Gardens for a Beautiful America* by Sam Watters) capture a moment when the famously lush gardens dazzled with color. It must have been a source of pride for Ellen Shipman, who designed the gardens in 1921 for Col. Daniel Devore and his wife, Helen. Fastidious about including maintenance notes on her detailed planting plans, Shipman was renowned for helping her clients keep their gardens looking perfect and often helped them find trained gardeners. Little is known, however, about the fate of most of Shipman's gardens as they age, but fortunately for Chatham, we have some answers. A family photo album belonging to the subsequent owner provides a unique chapter in the life cycle of a Shipman garden.

In 1931, John Lee Pratt (1879-1975) and his wife, Lillian Thomas Pratt (1876-1947), then in their mid-fifties, purchased historic Chatham Manor in Fredericksburg, Virginia, as a retirement home along with a nearby working farm. John Lee Pratt, a former vice-president of General Motors Corporation and a philanthropist, was one of America's wealthiest men. The Pratts assembled over 250 photographs of the house, gardens, and grounds in all seasons as well as family outings, such as yachting expeditions along the Rappahannock. Pratt's prize-winning cattle and racehorses as well as generations of family dogs are also featured. Even though the Pratts had no children, the album is filled with snapshots of happy children playing in Shipman's gardens, enjoying the lily pond, and romping in the lush flower borders. Other family members (and later nurses) dutifully pose throughout the gardens. Winter scenes of Chatham show record snowfalls covering mounds of boxwood, the parterres, and the garden ornaments.

The photographs date from 1931 until 1947, the year of Lillian Pratt's death. At some point the album was given to Anne Barber Bruin (1886-1971), the Pratts' long-time housekeeper, who brought it with her when she retired to Hagerstown, Maryland. In the 1970s it was given to the architectural historian John Franklin Miller, who was then affiliated with Hampton National Historic Site in Towson

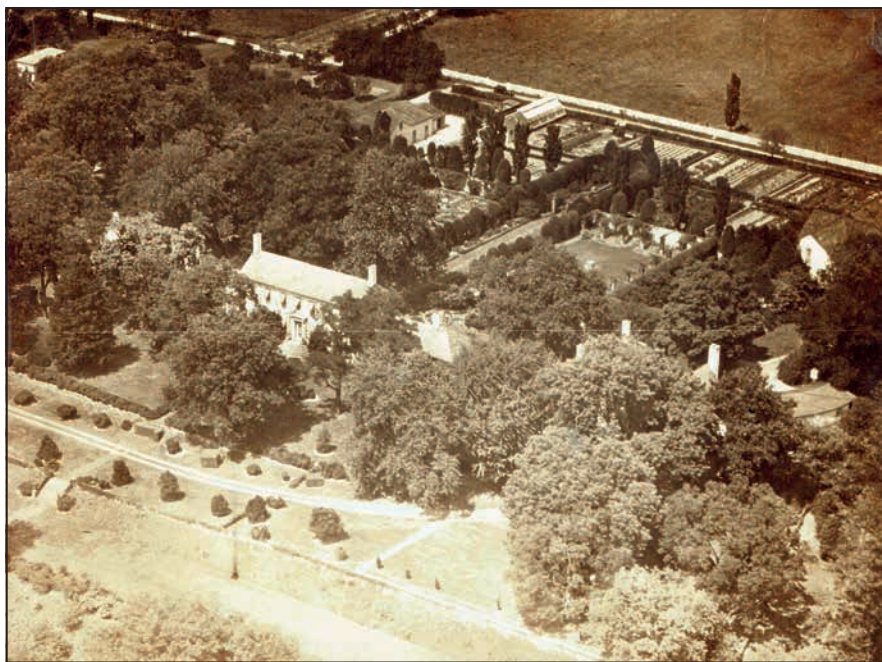
(also shown in the album) and interested in historic preservation. (Miller later spearheaded the restoration of Shipman's garden at Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens in Ohio.) When Miller learned I was working on a new edition of my book on Ellen Shipman, he generously gave me the album. Its final home is the Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center. A companion album of the Devore-era gardens is at the College of William and Mary Special Collections.

Rumor has it that John Lee Pratt was not a great fan of Shipman's labor-intensive gardens. He felt that the endless stream of garden visitors and curiosity-seekers detracted from his privacy, especially after 1938, when the gardens were featured on the Garden Club of Virginia's Historic Garden Week tour. As early as 1931, he contacted the prominent landscape architect Charles Freeman Gillette



Lillian Pratt and artist, 1940.

Photo by Judson Smith.



Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, Virginia, 1937.

Photo by Judson Smith.

(1886-1969) for planting plans for the parterre garden featuring yellow and blue flowers, but nothing may have come of it. In 1943, he contacted Gillette again, stating that his gardener had left to go into war service and there was no one with any knowledge of managing the greenhouses (shown in the album) or trimming the hedges. After Lillian Pratt's death, Gillette simplified the gardens in 1954, calling for the complete removal of Shipman's famous parterres and other labor-intensive beds along the axial walk as well as replacement of the curvilinear stepping stone paths (shown in the album) with flat, rectilinear stepping stone paths. Twenty-one years later, Pratt bequeathed Chatham Manor and its drastically changed grounds to the National Park Service, now part of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Plans are currently underway to reinterpret the gardens at Chatham Manor with the goal of a restoration to an earlier era.



Thanks to John Franklin Miller for presenting me with the album

and Christopher M. Beagan and H. Eliot Foulds of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service, Boston, for scanning the photographs and for sharing a draft of the *Cultural Landscape Report for Chatham*, a magnum opus that will play an essential

role in the rehabilitation of one of Ellen Shipman's most important commissions.

A revised edition of landscape historian Judith B. Tankard's 1998 classic, Ellen Shipman and the American Garden, is forthcoming in February 2018.



Lillian Pratt and artist, 1940.

Photo by Judson Smith.



Children playing in lily pond in front of summerhouse, 1930s.

Photo by Judson Smith.



Chatham in spring, 1938.

Photo by Judson Smith.



Pergola with iris, 1936.

Photo by Judson Smith.



Walled garden in winter, 1939.

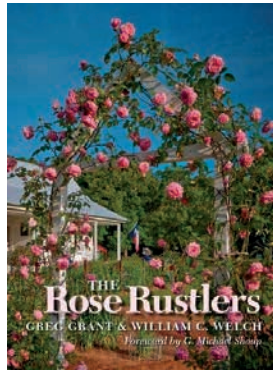
Photo by Judson Smith.

Book Review

The Rose Rustlers, by Greg Grant and William C. Welch
| Texas A&M University Press | Softcover flexbound | 248
pages, 1 B&W, 216 color photos | ISBN- 978-1-62349-
544-2 | List price \$30

These early rustlers mined old cemeteries where hardy roses were planted long ago to honor loved ones who once adored their flowers. They also traipsed politely into the small-town yards of green-thumbed gardeners who generously shared cuttings from plants that were often passed down from their mothers and grandmothers.

G. Michael Shoup



In the last quarter of the twentieth century, sharp-eyed rosarians across America picked out lost roses in the landscape and sought to save them from obscurity. Nowhere was this more organized or more colorfully active than across Texas, where a small group dubbed themselves the Texas Rose Rustlers.

Two leaders of that group, both longtime active SGHS members, have set down a personal recounting of those days with their companions as they roamed along

fencerows, through cemeteries, and into yards, saving and bringing back alive these special roses.

Dr. Bill Welch and his friend and colleague Greg Grant tell how they each came to be expert rosarians, share their tales of rustling old garden roses, and list their favorites. We meet other dedicated rosarians such as Pam Puryear, to whom the book is dedicated. Rules of rose rustling are set out since the process continues to this day.

Once again the duo of Welch and Grant give us a fascinating and educational book that belongs in every southern gardener's library. Beautifully illustrated with over two hundred color photographs, this book will easily pack along and serve as a reference to those who, like Bill and Greg, hope to seek out and save lost roses across the South. For those who want a good armchair read, nothing could be as warmly and personally written. We also get a peek into their own home gardens over the years, with companion plants highlighting the heirloom roses they propagated from cuttings gathered and nurtured. At the end of the book is a list of Earth-Kind roses that are pest-tolerant and outstanding in the landscape plus a list of nine Rose Rustlers with their favorite roses. Retail sources are given for those of us who prefer to have our roses shipped to us at home.

Susan Haltom, Jackson, Mississippi

State Ambassadors Program

Expanding opportunities for fellowship and educational outreach has been a focus of the SGHS board and long-range planning committee. To that end the State Ambassadors Program launched in 2017. Consisting of a representative or ambassador in each member state, the ambassador's role is to plan one event a year in their state or region that fits our educational mission and provides an opportunity to meet with members outside of the annual meeting. The function can be as simple as providing a gathering spot for members to attend an event already being held in the region, such as a lecture, garden tour, or other related activity.



Ced Dolder and Barbara Atkins

Four events occurred in 2017. The first, organized by State Ambassador Randy Harelson, took place in Point Coupee Parish, Louisiana in conjunction with the Bartram Trail Conference held in Baton Rouge. The second Ambassadors program took place in Georgia near the Alabama and Tennessee borders. Because of its location, the Georgia state Ambassadors, Lee Dunn and Ced Dolder, included members in all three states in their invitation to an event in Rome, Georgia. Several Alabama members made the

trip to Georgia, along with others, to receive a private tour given by then-director Tim Brown of Oak Hill at Berry College, Martha Berry's Cridland designed landscape and gardens. (See article on Oak Hill in this issue.) A variation on the theme was the engaging summertime program held at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley hosted by Virginia State Ambassadors Perry Mathewes and Jane White. Alabama members of the SGHS were invited this fall, along with surrounding states, to a private luncheon in the garden of SGHS member Cathy Adams, followed by a visit to the Birmingham Botanical Garden. Members from both Mississippi and Alabama attended the event.

Looking ahead to May 9, 2018, Georgia and Florida State Ambassadors are partnering for an event at Pebble Hill Plantation in Thomasville, Georgia. Once again SGHS will be supporting The Garden Club of Georgia's annual Historic Landscape Preservation fundraiser by featuring past SGHS President Staci Catron and her co-author Mary Ann Eaddy launching their new book *Seeking Eden: A Collection of Georgia's Historic Gardens*, (University of Georgia Press, April 2018). The book is an update and expansion to the early twentieth-century publication *Garden History of Georgia 1733-1933*. For registration information, contact Susan Bennett at (478) 476-8228; waynebennett@bellsouth.net, or SGHS board member Lee Dunn, lee@dunnshouse.com.

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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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The society's membership year is from **August 1—July 31**.
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Individual	\$40
Student	\$15

***Contact the membership coordinator if you would like to pay more than \$500 via credit card.**

For more membership information, contact:

Virginia Hart, SGHS Administrator

Post Office Box 15752

Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27113

Phone (336) 770-6723

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Deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of Magnolia is December 31, 2017.

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Editor:

Peggy Cornett

Monticello, P.O.B. 316

Charlottesville, VA 22902

(434) 984-9816

Cell (434) 465-5297

pcornett@monticello.org

Editor Emeritus:

Kenneth M. McFarland

814 Marye Street

Fredericksburg, VA 22401

(540) 760-9337

kennethm.mcfarland@gmail.com

Associate Editor:

Staci Catron

Cherokee Garden Library, AHC

130 W. Paces Ferry Rd., NW

Atlanta, GA 30305

(404) 814-4046

scatron@atlantahistorycenter.com

Book Review Editor:

Davyd Foard Hood

Isinglass

6907 Old Shelby Rd.

Vale, NC 28168

(704) 462-1847

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