

# BREAKING GROUND

*Examining the Vision and Practice of  
Historic Landscape Restoration*



*Proceedings of the Eleventh Conference on  
Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes*

*October 2-4, 1997, Old Salem, Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

# *Breaking Ground*



The historic campus of Salem Academy and College in Old Salem served as the site of the eleventh conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes. The main buildings of the college are located on Salem Square, shown above. The academy and college have led in the education of girls and young women in the South; begun in 1772 as a "school for little girls," the institution is one of the oldest in the country for women. (Photograph courtesy Salem Academy and College.)

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Old Salem,  
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North Carolina*

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This publication was developed under a grant from the National Park Service and the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the publisher and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Park Service or the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.

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Drawer F, Salem Station

Winston-Salem, NC 27108

Design and typesetting of *Breaking Ground: Examining the Vision and Practice of Historic Landscape Restoration* by Kachergis Book Design, Pittsboro, North Carolina.

### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscape Conference (11th : 1997 : Winston-Salem, N.C.)

Breaking ground : examining the vision and practice of historic landscape restoration / proceedings of the Eleventh Conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, October 2-4, 1997, Old Salem, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 1-879704-06-4

1. Historic sites—Southern States—Conservation and restoration Congresses.
2. Historic gardens—Southern States—Conservation and restoration Congresses—
- Congresses. 3. Landscape protection—Southern States Congresses. 4. Historic preservation—Southern States Congresses.

r. Title.

F210.B37 1997

363.6'9'0975—dc21

99-12458

CIP

*Sponsoring Organizations of the Conferences  
on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes*

*Old Salem, Inc.*, is a nonprofit educational corporation formed in 1950. It is responsible for the restoration of Old Salem, a Moravian congregation town founded in 1766, and for the operation of nine house museums, The Gallery at Old Salem, and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, located in the historic district.

*The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA)* is the only museum dedicated to exhibiting and researching the regional decorative arts of the early South. MESDA's collections, displayed in twenty-one period rooms and six galleries, include furniture, paintings, textiles, ceramics, silver, and other metalwares made and used in Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee through 1820.

*Reynolds Gardens of Wake Forest University*, designed in 1916 by Thomas W. Sears of Philadelphia, was donated in 1958 to Wake Forest University by the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation. The gardens and greenhouses are located on the former estate of Richard J. Reynolds, founder of the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company.

*Historic Stagville*, located in Durham, North Carolina, is a state-owned historic site dedicated to education in the social and material history of the plantation South (with special emphasis on the diverse communities of the Bennehan-Cameron plantations) and historic preservation.

*The Southern Garden History Society* was founded in Winston-Salem in 1982 as an outgrowth of the conferences on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes. Old Salem serves as headquarters for the society, which today has over six hundred members. The society functions in the District of Columbia and the fourteen Southern states.

*For information on upcoming conferences, write:* Landscape Conference Coordinator, Old Salem, Drawer F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108.

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## Introduction

Every other October the Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes conference takes place at Old Salem, located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Old Salem offers an excellent venue for the conference: this restored center of Moravian community life is famed for its pioneering efforts in the areas of garden restoration and historic horticulture. Dating back to the initial program in 1979, the Old Salem conference has covered an immense array of topics pertaining to garden history. Presentations have ranged from panel discussions on African American landscapes, to explorations of the *mentalité* of famous gardeners of the past, to practical workshops on historic plants.

In 1995, the conference planning committee began the publication of proceedings, thereby achieving a long-held goal of committee members. The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago, Illinois, along with the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, also saw the importance of proceedings. Both organizations provided grant assistance that made the first volume possible. Proceedings from "The Influence of Women on the Southern Landscape," held October 5–7, 1995, have been distributed widely. Those unable to attend the conference can now read essays that substantially echo two-and-a-half days of presentations. Participants at the 1995 conference can refresh the knowledge they gained first hand at Old Salem.

While the conference committee was involved with publication matters relating to 1995, members were also planning the 1997 conference. Looking back, everyone realized the remarkable expansion of our field since the first conference in 1979. The committee therefore decided to focus the 1997 program on the variety of theoretical approaches that guide both garden/landscape historical scholarship as well as actual "hands-on" projects

involving historic sites. Thus evolved "Breaking Ground: Examining the Vision and Practice of Historic Landscape Restoration."

Under the leadership of Darrell Spencer, then the director of horticulture at Old Salem, the committee arranged for presentations by some of the nation's leading historic landscape authorities. The result was a program held October 2-4, 1997, that included talks, tours, and a workshop which thoroughly probed the conference theme. Now, following the precedent that was established by the 1995 proceedings, the 1997 presentations are also being made available to a wider audience, this time with the assistance of a grant from the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.

It is hoped readers will agree that our conference, with its title of "Breaking Ground," truly covered an impressive area of "fertile ground."

*Kenneth M. McFarland*, for the conference committee

# *Breaking Ground*



*Rudy J. Favretti*

## *The Story of Landscape Restoration in the South*



The story of landscape restoration in the South is fascinating to me because many firsts in the field of landscape and garden restoration occurred in the South. This paper focuses on some of these.

The first significant restoration and preservation effort involving national support was at Mount Vernon, the home of George and Martha Washington. Prior to that time, there had been several individual efforts, but none of them had the planned national support of the project begun at Mount Vernon in 1853.

One such individual effort took place at Independence Hall in Philadelphia in 1784. Samuel Vaughan, an Englishman supportive of the cause for independence and a friend of many of those who signed the Declaration of Independence, was asked to draw a plan for the grounds surrounding Independence Hall. His plan was a simple one, with a central walk down the center of the grounds with secondary walks emanating from it. All of these walks were surrounded by native trees and shrubs, most of them supplied by Bartram's



Mount Vernon, Virginia, home of George and Martha Washington, was the first significant restoration and preservation effort involving national support. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

Garden, also in Philadelphia. Since that time, of course, the grounds have gone through many transformations.

Another individual effort was the purchase and preservation of Fort Ticonderoga in New York State by William Ferris Pell in 1816. He saw to it that the fort was preserved, and during the subsequent years he and his family stabilized sections of the fort. They also built a home there below the ramparts of the fort, and incidentally, the original gardens are now in the process of being restored.

Another early example of preservation was the purchase of Monticello by Uriah Levy in 1836. While he and his family made it their home for many years, they did not drastically alter the house or site.

Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia, the oldest botanical garden in



Fort Ticonderoga in New York State was an individual preservation project begun in 1816 by William Ferris Pell. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

this country, was started in 1728 by John Bartram, a Quaker farmer and self-trained botanist. It was operated after John's death in 1788 as a botanical garden and nursery by his sons William and John, and by John's descendants.

In 1850 it was purchased by Andrew Eastwick who, while he built a mansion on the site, carefully preserved the eighteen-acre tract of the original house, outbuildings, and garden. In 1891 when the property was again on the market, Thomas Meehan, himself a prominent nurseryman and city councilman, convinced the city of Philadelphia to acquire the botanical garden and make it a part of the city's park system. The council so voted, and to this day it is still part of that system, though the garden and house and outbuildings are managed by a separate association.

In the early 1980s, I was asked to develop a master plan for the restoration of the original eighteen-acre tract, as well as for the acquisition and restoration of some neighboring acres which were originally part of the Bartram farm. Incidentally, William Bartram spent many years in the South, painting and studying birds and other wildlife, and the Bartram Trail is named for him. He was author of *Travels in the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida* (1791).

As mentioned earlier, Mount Vernon was the first organized, national effort in the field of preservation, and in subsequent years it has served as an example for other projects. While this effort was begun in 1853, it was thwarted by the Civil War, so it took several years to materialize.

In 1853 Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham from South Carolina founded the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, which was chartered by the Virginia legislature in 1858. The association then purchased Mount Vernon from John Augustine Washington Jr.

The work of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association was a struggle in perseverance and intense hard work. First the ladies had to create interest throughout the country by spreading the word, then raise extensive funds, and finally begin restoring the mansion, which had fallen into disrepair, as had the outbuildings and gardens.

Over the years since the nineteenth century, the gardens have gone through several transformations as new knowledge and resources have been acquired. For example, the Orangery was re-

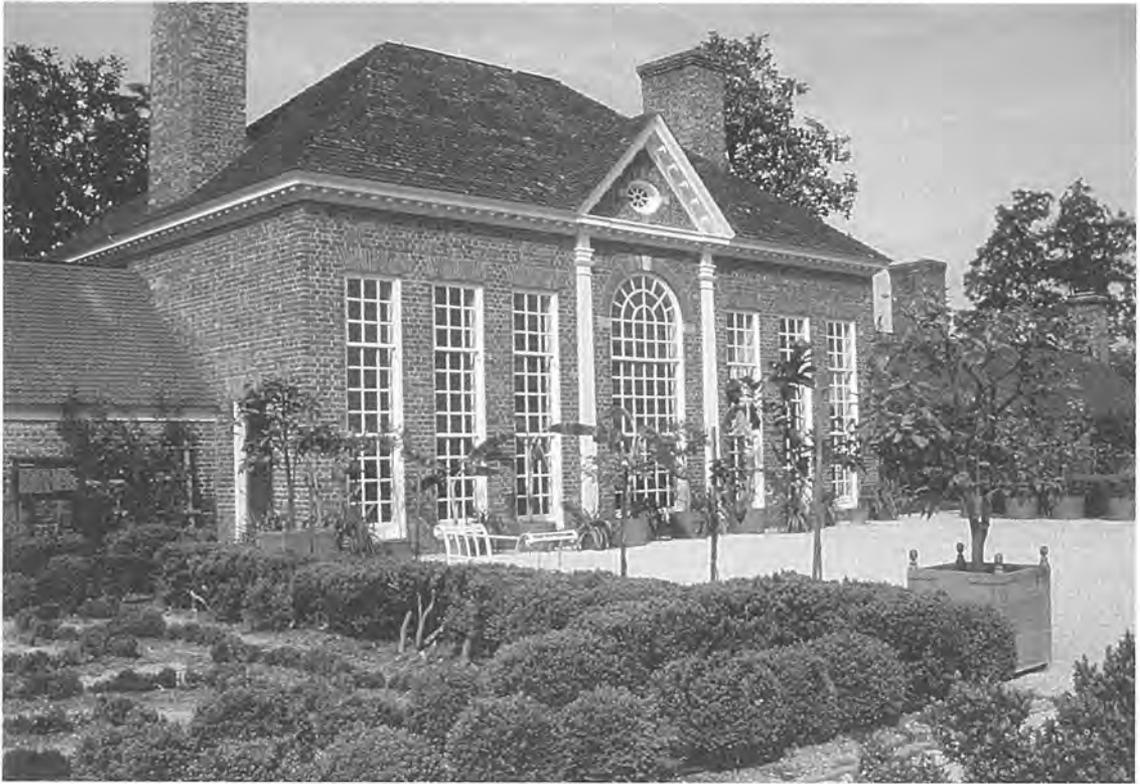


The seed house, Bartram's Garden, Philadelphia, is one of the outbuildings preserved on the original eighteen-acre tract. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

constructed according to old images in 1951, 116 years after it was destroyed by fire.

The latest garden restoration project completed at Mount Vernon was the re-creation of the Vineyard under the supervision of the horticulturist, Dean Norton, using original documents for the plan. In the autumn of 1998, the Bowling Green will be restored, complete with shrub under-plantings. The project is being sponsored by The Garden Club of Virginia.

In 1888, another significant preservation group was organized in Virginia; the group gave itself the name, The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA). Prime movers behind this organization were Miss Mary Galt and her mother. The association's first project was the restoration of the Powder House at Colonial Williamsburg. The second was the acquisition of the



The Orangery or Conservatory at Mount Vernon was reconstructed according to old images in 1951. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

Mary Ball Washington House in Fredericksburg in the early 1890s. The third major project was the acquisition of Jamestown Island, of which we are hearing much these days because of the ongoing archaeological investigations.

Since those early years, the APVA has acquired over thirty properties, many of which have gardens associated with them, such as the one at Bacon's Castle.

At about the same time that the APVA was being organized in Virginia, the Ladies Hermitage Association was born in Nashville, Tennessee, for the purpose of preserving the Hermitage, the home of President Andrew and Rachel Jackson. The garden associated with the Hermitage is significant and well-documented.

The Hermitage Ladies Association, though patterned after the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, was never as successful in its



Bacon's Castle garden was a restoration project of The Garden Club of Virginia, completed in 1989. The excavated garden is shown here. (Photograph courtesy Nick Lucchetti, archaeologist.)

national effort. Nonetheless, the association was able to acquire the Hermitage, restore and preserve it, and today it is a fine house museum and garden.

Following World War I, in 1923 to be exact, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation was formed. This group raised funds to purchase Monticello, successfully accomplishing the task in a short period of time. Until the 1980s this foundation raised all of its own funds and accepted no support from outside granting agencies. The first project was to restore the mansion, but since 1977 extensive work has been done on the restoration of the grounds. In the early 1940s, The Garden Club of Virginia sponsored the restoration of the West Lawn. We will discuss Monticello more later.

In 1926 the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg began. This project, perhaps the most famous in our country, is familiar to all of us because of its funding by John D. Rockefeller Jr. and also because of its magnitude, which encompassed a significant portion of an entire colonial city.

This one preservation effort did more to start the field of garden preservation moving than any other. In spite of the subsequent depression and World War II, people visited Colonial Williamsburg and carried home the notion of garden and landscape restoration. Also, there was extensive publicity about the project through books and features in the Sunday newspapers.

Everyone wanted to emulate Colonial Williamsburg, even on personal properties. People created vegetable, flower, and herb gardens just like the ones they saw there. The Colonial Williamsburg restoration started a trend in this country that has never stopped. The down side of this effort, however, is that the colonial revival style of garden restoration used at Williamsburg was adopted at many sites—Tryon Palace, Gunston Hall, and Middleton Place, to name just a few.

Basically, this style of restoration showed people what they wanted to see, all in pristine condition, rather than the real thing based on hard documentary evidence. It would be unfair to leave this brief discussion of Colonial Williamsburg and the colonial revival without saying that the later efforts at Williamsburg, such as the restoration of the gardens at Carter's Grove, are truer to what these gardens would have been in the eighteenth century.



The cedar allée at the Hermitage, home of President Andrew and Rachel Jackson, in Nashville, Tennessee. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

[For a thorough discussion of the colonial revival style of garden restoration by M. Kent Brinkley, landscape architect of Colonial Williamsburg, see p. 62.]

In 1922, another organization was formed in Virginia that had a profound effect on the restoration of gardens. This was The Garden Club of Virginia, an organization separate from the Garden Club of America and the Federated Garden Clubs. In 1929, seven years after this group's founding, its members began an annual event named Historic Garden Week. This event is held during the third week in April and members' gardens as well as other gardens are open to the public for visitation. Money raised during Garden Week is used for the restoration of historic gardens which are open to the public.

The Garden Club of Virginia's first sponsored restoration was Kenmore, begun in 1929. Since that time, the organization has restored about forty gardens within the Commonwealth. The proceeds from the first Garden Week were about \$14,000. Now approximately \$500,000 is raised, though a percentage of this goes to maintain a staff to organize and promote activities.

The Garden Club of Virginia has always employed a landscape architect to carry out its restoration plans. The first was Charles Gillette, who worked on Kenmore as well as several other projects. The Club's other landscape architects have been Arthur Shurcliff, who was the original landscape architect for the restoration at Colonial Williamsburg; Alden Hopkins, his successor at Williamsburg; Ralph Griswold; and now I have been The Garden Club's landscape architect for almost twenty years.

In the early years, during the practice of Mr. Shurcliff and Mr. Hopkins, many of the restorations were done in the style of the day, colonial revival. These include Gunston Hall, the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace in Staunton, Virginia, and the Adam Thoroughgood House in Virginia Beach, Virginia. In more recent years, The Garden Club of Virginia's restorations have employed the latest techniques such as garden archaeology, infrared photography, and sonar investigation in an attempt to be state-of-the-art.

Bacon's Castle is an example of a restoration employing such techniques; it was completed in 1989. Other restorations in Virginia, such as Montpelier and Maymont, have relied heavily on an abundance of archival material.



The Elkanah Deane garden, a restored garden in Colonial Williamsburg. This colonial revival style of gardening was adopted at many garden restorations throughout the country. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)



The garden gate to the terrace garden at Montpelier. This garden was a restoration project of The Garden Club of Virginia. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

In addition to having restored about forty gardens, ranging in age from the 1680s to the 1930s, The Garden Club of Virginia has also established a fellowship for a graduate student in landscape architecture to spend the summer under the guidance of the Club's landscape architect doing measured drawings for selected historic sites still held in private hands. By so doing, the Club hopes to create complete documentation of all historic Virginia gardens, not just the ones that the Club restores.

After World War II, in the late 1940s, several things began to happen which launched landscape and garden preservation on a steady, progressive course, if not a bit uphill and not easy. The National Trust for Historic Preservation was founded, and this organization began to acquire significant properties, many of which possessed large and important gardens and landscapes.

One that is well known to many of us is Drayton Hall in Charleston, South Carolina. This is a well-documented site, and the house remains almost exactly as built. There are documents, archival material, family materials, site revelations through observation, and archaeology to guide its preservation. The Trust assumed the innovative policy of simply preserving the site and interpreting it but not restoring it. Much controversy ensued concerning this policy, but it has been reaffirmed many times, and it appears to work well.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a movement to preserve and sometimes restore entire communities began to emerge. By revising existing zoning regulations or instituting new ones, as well as architectural review and the establishment of historic districts as well as other



Drayton Hall outside Charleston, South Carolina, is a preservation project of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

preservation devices, entire districts were preserved. Some of the early examples were in Charleston, Old Salem, New Orleans, San Antonio, Natchez, Annapolis, and Alexandria, to name just some. Of course, the spaces between buildings, or the landscape, also came into the picture.

Scholarship in the field of landscape and garden restoration also emerged quite strongly in the 1960s and 1970s and continues to this day. One fine example, familiar to all, is the work at Monticello where the entire mountain top was restored, based on in-depth research and scholarship. One of the earliest recent efforts was the restoration of the Grove, which began in 1977 and ended in 1980. This was followed by the restoration of the Garden Terrace, and later the orchards in the early 1980s and is still continuing.



A bird's-eye view of Monticello mountain top, showing restored gardens and orchards. (Courtesy the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation.)

For the landscape restoration at Monticello, the team approach was employed, whereby an entire group of experts worked together to come up with the best plan. The team consisted of a landscape architect, archaeologist, architect, researcher, engineer, architectural historian, geologist, and horticulturist.

This is just a quick overview. Other things have happened, too. Conferences like the one on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes have taken place, the first being held in 1979. Three years after the first conference, the Southern Garden History Society was formed as an outgrowth of these conferences.

There has been much good literature written in the form of books and articles. And organizations are producing newsletters and bulletins, such as *Magnolia*, the publication of the Southern Garden History Society.

Many historic plant centers and nurseries have been formed, the earliest being the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello, with John Fitzpatrick as first director and now Peggy Cornett. These organizations have done much to fill a large void—the lack of authentic plants—which once existed.

These have been exciting times in landscape/garden restoration. I am pleased to have been a part of them and watch them develop at least since Colonial Williamsburg—I was not here when the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association was formed!

*Rudy J. Favretti is professor emeritus of landscape architecture, University of Connecticut, from which he retired eleven years ago after thirty-three years of teaching and serving as extension landscape architect. After retirement he has continued consulting in the fields of historic landscape architecture and preservation on a full-time basis. In the South he has worked on many major projects including twenty in Virginia, among them Monticello, Bacon's Castle, Montpelier, Maymont, and Mount Vernon; Old Salem and Latimer House (Wilmington) in North Carolina; Nathaniel Russell House, Drayton Hall, and Middleton Place in Charleston, South Carolina; Pinewood, at Bok Tower Gardens, and Spanish Point in Florida; Fairview in Maryland; T. R. Pugh Memorial Park in North Little Rock, Arkansas; as well as many others.*

*With his wife Joy, he has authored several books including Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings, second edition released in 1991. Since then he has written Gardens and Landscapes of Virginia (1994),*

and collaborated with William C. Welch and Greg Grant in writing the section on English gardens for *The Southern Heirloom Garden* (1995). His latest major work is an essay on the gardens and grounds at Mount Vernon in George Washington's Mount Vernon, edited by Wendell Garrett (1998).

In July, Mr. Favretti retired as consulting landscape architect for The Garden Club of Virginia after twenty years.

In recognition of his work, Mr. Favretti has been invested as a fellow in the American Society of Landscape Architects, awarded the Merit Award from that society in 1984, an honor award from the National Trust (1982), and the Medal for Historic Preservation from the Garden Club of America (1990). Recently The Garden Club of Virginia established a graduate fellowship in his name.

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*Valencia Libby*

## *Preserving the Spirit of the Place*



An increasing number of historic gardens have been recognized and made public in recent years. Hard choices have been made about many of them regarding preservation issues. Often the most critical aspects of the design may be overlooked in the preservation process. The results are landscapes that lack character, that have lost the very qualities that set them apart from contemporary gardens, or that made them personal expressions rather than corporate statements valuable to experience. Sometimes these results happen because of insufficient time, information, or resources during the planning or restoration phase. Sometimes they happen because trustees, administrators, or staff lack the necessary commitment to or knowledge of basic principles of historic preservation. This essay explores what makes a landscape or garden unforgettable, what contributes to that special quality of place called “spirit.” Is it solely determined by the physical characteristics of the site itself; the design intentions of the creator, no matter how quirky they may seem; or the evolution of the design over

time? Let us look at a few examples where problems have occurred.

### *I. The Moffatt-Ladd House, Portsmouth, New Hampshire*

In 1763 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Captain John Moffatt, a rich merchant and shipowner, built his home on a steep bluff overlooking the harbor and his wharf. It was an elegant urban dwelling located close to the street on a comfortably-large lot that extended uphill behind the house. The property was known to have had an orchard, roses, a horse chestnut tree (which still stands), several outbuildings, and a wall in the eighteenth century. The land was terraced into a series of rises behind the house, probably during the eighteenth century, and may have been where Captain Moffatt planted the orchard. The subsequent owner, Alexander Ladd, added a pleasure garden behind the house between 1820 and 1840. He incorporated the terraces into his design and centered the main garden path on a door leading outside from the drawing room. At some later time, that door was closed off and the axial connection between house and garden lost. Little is known of the plantings or garden furnishings of that period.<sup>1</sup>

In 1900 the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America "restored" the garden, creating a beautiful but inaccurate colonial revival landscape. This is a classic problem in American landscape preservation as Kent Brinkley from Colonial Williamsburg will attest. The dilemma that those restoring the Moffatt-Ladd House face is one of interpreting the garden. The spatial layout of the Moffatt-Ladd garden is fantastic, but few of today's garden visitors are aware of the eighteenth-century spatial design. They are drawn to the flowering plants and structures of colonial revival vintage. The authenticity of the garden may have been compromised, but the visitors love it.

The problem? The lack of sufficient knowledge at the time the restoration was carried out has produced an authentic colonial revival garden, not an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century restoration. It is a very attractive place today, so what motivation is there to rectify the problem? In comparison, Hamilton House, built by a New England timber baron just upriver from the Moffatt-Ladd

House and administered by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, is a severe reminder of the formalism of eighteenth-century America's upper classes' gardens with its bare turf terraces crowning a bluff.

## *II. Kubota Garden, Seattle, Washington*

The Kubota Garden in Seattle, Washington, is a very unusual type of public garden. It is a historic landscape preserved to represent the cultural diversity of the city and the enrichment that takes place through America's immigration, and it is a neighborhood park. The garden is owned and operated by the city of Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation with additional support from a non-profit friends organization. The twenty-acre Kubota Garden is located in a suburban neighborhood of Southeast Seattle and is adjacent to a 15.6-acre nature preserve which is also owned by the city.

The Kubota Garden was built over a period of sixty years by Fujitaro Kubota (1879–1973), a native of Japan, who emigrated to the United States with his family in 1907. He founded a garden design company in Seattle, and in 1927 he purchased this property in Southeast Seattle for a nursery. Mr. Kubota searched a long time before buying his first five-acre parcel, a logged-over, swampy area with a steep ravine, a creek, and several natural springs. Only he recognized the potential of this site to be a garden. During the depression years, he kept his crew busy building a central loop road through the site, filling the swamp, planting nursery beds, and developing the “Japanese Garden.”<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Kubota himself designed this garden incorporating traditional elements of Japanese garden design (such as the bridge and lantern) into the rugged site so characteristic of the American Northwest. He erected a torii (traditional Japanese gate) at the entrance to the nursery. Customers could visit the nursery, drive in and park their cars, and wander at leisure among the display beds. Mr. Kubota added four more parcels of land to his property until he had twenty acres, and in 1940 he built a house for his family to live in.

During World War II the Kubotas were interned at Camp Minidoka in Idaho. Through the help of friends, they were able to



View of the pond and Moon Bridge in the Kubota Garden, Seattle, Washington.  
(Photograph courtesy of the author.)



View of the manmade cascade in Kubota Garden, Seattle, Washington. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

hold onto their property in Seattle, but after the war, they struggled for many years to pay the back taxes. During the 1950s and 60s, things were better, and they ran an active landscape design and nursery business. Mr. Kubota Sr. continued to expand the display gardens, directing his workers to level hummocks, dam ponds, build garden bridges and pathways, erect memorial stones, and finally in 1962 they arranged four hundred tons of rock on a steep hillside to make the waterfall garden.

Mr. Kubota envisioned his garden as a cultural exchange between his homeland and his new country. He opened it to the public and let many social groups hold ceremonies there. Furthermore, he intended to transfer the property to the city of Seattle on his death. For his efforts to foster an appreciation of Japanese culture among the American people, the Japanese government awarded him the Fifth Class Order of the Sacred Treasure, an award for distinguished military or civil merit. He was ninety-three years old at the time.

Mr. Kubota died in 1973; however, his sons needed the nursery and they continued to run it until 1980. Then the family planned to sell the property for development as a condominium project. Local disfavor and an economic downturn gave the city an opportunity to intercede. In 1981 the Landmarks Preservation Board of Seattle designated four and one-half acres of the Kubota property a "Core Garden" or city landmark where the "historical integrity" must be preserved. In 1987, the city actually purchased the twenty-acre site and adopted a master plan for its development as a public park. The garden was to be managed as an "extended American-Japanese Garden" where change could occur over time, particularly outside the Core Garden area. When a parking lot was needed for visitors and employees, for example, the city built one.

A subtle danger to the historic landscape has emerged more recently, now that the park department's horticulturist has rejuvenated many of the older garden areas. With the best of intentions, he believes that the staff should expand and "improve" the garden, according to the master plan and in keeping with Mr. Kubota's style of design. He plans to develop and plant the old nursery beds located in the Core Garden, possibly removing the concrete curbing, but these elements are within the historic core. Wouldn't it be

better to leave them as they are, a sharp contrast to the Japanese-American garden?

The Kubota Garden is a strikingly complex and beautiful garden, a fantasy compared to the suburban neighborhood that surrounds it. This particular design relies on a complex balance between the varied topography of the site, the evergreen flora that flourishes in the Pacific Northwest, and the Japanese sensibility and traditions of garden design. Can't such a garden support areas that are "underdeveloped" or peculiar-looking to contemporary visitors, now that the original designer is no more?

### *III. Winterthur Gardens, Delaware*

Now, to a well-known example—Winterthur Museum and Gardens in northern Delaware. There are several features that are critical to Winterthur's unique design, and all of them stem from Henry Francis du Pont's original vision. First, Harry du Pont loved the woodlands and fields of his family's rural estate in the Brandywine Valley, and so he incorporated vistas of the countryside into each of his garden designs. With great foresight, he preserved a large buffer zone of open space around the museum itself, and around the entire property. The rural charm of the landscape has been well preserved by trustees and administrators, who seem to have understood and respected this aspect of the design. The second aspect is the dynamic spatial composition that Mr. du Pont created by massing trees, shrubs, and perennials to accent movement through the landscape rather than static layouts best viewed by standing in one location. This, too, has been fairly well understood and respected except for some of the newer landscape projects. The third aspect of the design is plantsmanship. Mr. du Pont selected plants for his compositions based on color, texture, and form and how well they performed at Winterthur. He chose plants from among the best introductions of his era. Since he gardened at Winterthur his entire life, or at least sixty years of it, he was constantly changing and improving the gardens; however, by the 1960s he felt that his gardens represented a high point of achievement. He wanted them maintained as he had designed them, like replaced with like, staying true to the original as much as possible.<sup>3</sup>

Few have developed the sophisticated eye that Henry Francis du Pont possessed. In 1986 the trustees were asked by an advisory committee to recognize the gardens as a historic landscape, created by a master designer. They decided not to support that recommendation, which led in time to the interpretation of Mr. du Pont's continuous additions to the gardens as *carte blanche* for "constant improvement." Winterthur has the institutional stability, the records, the professional staff, and the resources to adhere to the original designs and be an example of landscape preservation, instead of setting country club standards.<sup>4</sup>

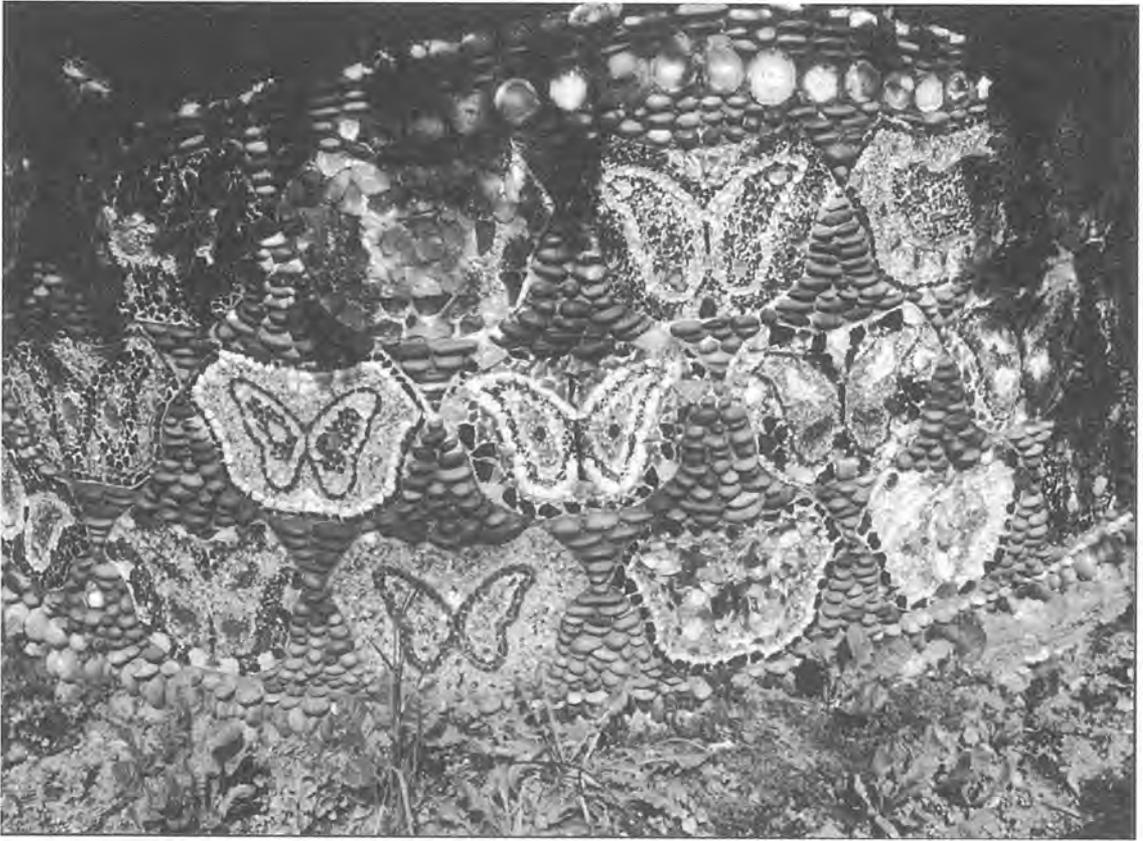
#### *IV. The Walker Rock Garden, West Seattle*

The Walker Rock Garden is a folk-art masterpiece in a middle-class neighborhood of West Seattle. Milton Walker was a resident of Seattle and an employee of the Boeing Company. In 1948 he discovered quite by chance that he liked creating with stone during a prolonged strike at the Boeing plant. He became bored with unemployment and, during a trip to Oregon, he and his wife Florence purchased a rock collection at a roadside sale for \$150. He had no plans for using the stones and no previous experience; he just liked them. Mr. Walker began setting the stones in cement, covering a brick oven in the backyard. When the strike ended, Mr. Walker went back to work and did not lay stone again for ten years. Then he built a miniature mountain and lake display in his small backyard. In the 1960s his work took off. He built pathways, walls, pergolas, and garden features. These attracted people's attention. During the winters, when he couldn't lay stone outside, he made butterfly mosaic stones in the basement and placed these either in pathways or in walls. His greatest accomplishment was the Centennial Tower which sparkles about twenty feet high above the apple trees and aluminum chairs of the backyard.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Walker continued to work on his masonry creations after his retirement from Boeing and almost until his death in 1984. Since then, his wife and children have maintained the garden, but it is unclear what will happen to it in the future. Mrs. Walker is unwell and the backyard began to slide downhill after the heavy rains of the winter of 1996, causing walls and paving to separate. Should this garden be saved? How?



View of the Walker Rock Garden terraces, Seattle, Washington. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)



View of butterfly panel mosaics, Walker Rock Garden, Seattle, Washington. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

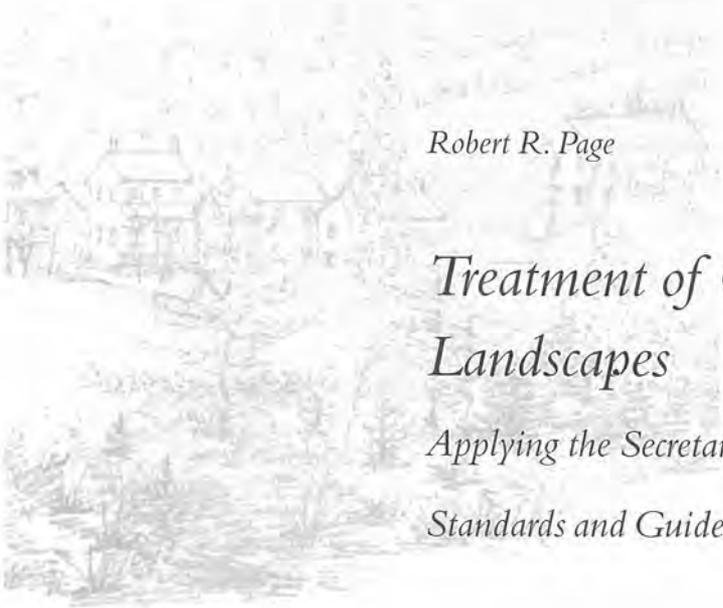
What is critical to one's appreciation of the Walker Rock Garden? Is it necessary to view it in the midst of a suburban backyard enclosed by chainlink fence to experience the uniqueness of this creation? Does one need the background of lawn, apple trees, garden chairs, and annuals to highlight the walls and tower, pathway and grottoes? If the structures alone were saved and moved to a new site, which seems sensible since the present site is inching downhill, the garden would not be historic. Catch 22.

Conclusion? We all need to be more astute, ask questions, and discuss alternatives, even if they make life more difficult. And that is what many institutions are doing, including Colonial Williamsburg.

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*Robert R. Page*

## *Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*

*Applying the Secretary of the Interior's  
Standards and Guidelines*

### *Introduction*

During the past several years, there has developed an increased understanding of the diversity of cultural landscapes in the United States and their significance to American heritage. These include estates, such as Saint-Gaudens Home and Studio in Cornish, New Hampshire; agricultural landscapes, such as the ranches within Point Reyes National Seashore in northern California; roads and trails, such as the Going-to-the-Sun Highway in Glacier National Park and the Chilkoot Trail in Alaska; and landscapes associated with different cultural groups, such as Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico which is associated with Pueblo people. In addition, there has been a growing awareness that cultural landscape preservation fosters a more holistic approach to resource man-

agement, providing an understanding of an entire property and the interrelationships among cultural and natural resources. This approach allows a historic property to be understood as a system of related resources instead of a series of artifacts. (See Figure 1)

The preservation of a cultural landscape requires ongoing management to retain or enhance the characteristics and features that contribute to its significance. Management includes undertaking a variety of physical work, or what is often referred to as “treatment,” ranging from routine maintenance to restoration.

The physical treatment of any cultural resource involves evaluating the appropriateness of proposed interventions based on their effect on the historic character of the resource. In the past, the evaluation of proposed changes, alterations, or additions in a landscape was not approached with the same level of rigor as that for other resource types. For example, where the removal of an original window from a historic building would not be considered, the



FIGURE 1. The home and studio of Augustus Saint-Gaudens is one example of the diverse cultural landscapes in the United States. Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire. (NPS, 1992)

paving over of a significant garden was often undertaken. There was no specific intent to negatively affect the landscape; such an alteration often just wasn't considered in the framework of cultural resource management.

Today, the framework for treatment of a cultural landscape is based on the principles of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. These are one set of standards within a much larger document addressing a full range of preservation activities from planning to professional qualifications. The *Standards* are intended to establish a universal preservation philosophy for all cultural resources. They have evolved from decades of preservation expertise throughout the country and are based on broad principles germinated by an international community of professionals.

As part of the growth of the cultural landscape preservation field during the past several years, the *Standards* were revised in 1992, broadening the language of the standards to include landscapes. Additionally, in 1996 a companion document titled *The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* was completed, providing specific interpretation of the *Standards* to cultural landscapes.

This paper provides an overview of the four treatments outlined in the *Standards* and their application to a cultural landscape. The individual standards are not discussed in detail. Instead, the broad philosophical basis underlying the standards is examined. This general discussion of the *Standards* is followed by three topics related to the interpretation and application of the *Standards* to the treatment of cultural landscapes: (1) defining a primary treatment for a property, (2) evaluating treatment actions, and (3) treatment considerations related to the dynamic qualities inherent in a landscape, and site management goals related to visitor use and operations.

Prior to the discussion of these topics, there are three general terms that should be emphasized when considering the role of the *Standards* in guiding treatment and management of a cultural landscape:

*Objectivity*: the *Standards* are intended to provide for objective decision-making based on an understanding of the significance, existing conditions, and planned use of a landscape. Decisions are

based on the historic record with the goal of preserving historic features, qualities, and materials to the greatest extent possible.

*Appropriateness:* the *Standards* provide a framework for evaluating the appropriateness of proposed changes to a landscape. Based on this framework, the historic integrity of a landscape is not compromised and new additions and alterations are compatible with the historic character of the landscape.

*Clarity:* recognizing the frequent need to allow change for continued use of a landscape, the *Standards* require clarity between the historic and contemporary features in a landscape.

### *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*

Treatment is defined as an intervention carried out to achieve preservation goals. As already stated, the framework for treatment of a historic property is based on the principles of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The *Standards* provide a broad philosophical approach that emphasizes identifying and respecting a cultural resource as it has survived into the present. The tenets of the *Standards* are based on the assumptions that the historic materials and features and their unique craftsmanship are of primary importance, and that they will be retained, protected, and repaired to the greatest extent possible through management. The standards apply to all cultural resources and they define four treatments: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.

*Preservation:* the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a historic property. Preservation includes initial stabilization work where necessary, as well as ongoing preservation maintenance and repair of historic materials and features. Examples include the installation of a lightening rod in a historic tree, stabilizing historic plant material that is in decline and planning for its eventual replacement, altering visitor use patterns to avoid soil compaction, maintaining a significant view or vista, and repointing historic walls.

*Rehabilitation:* the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions

while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. Examples include replacing original guard walls along a historic road with new walls that meet Federal Highway Administration standards; installing a pathway to provide universal access; and installing new facilities to support a change in use of an associated historic structure, such as air conditioning units, walkways, and parking.

*Restoration*: the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by removing features from other periods in its history and reconstructing missing features from the restoration period. Examples include removing or altering buildings from other historic periods that intrude on the spatial organization and land patterns of the restoration period; reestablishing a missing vegetation feature, such as an allée of trees; and removing a parking lot added after the restoration period.

*Reconstruction*: the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a nonsurviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location. Examples include recreating a historic farmstead by reconstructing all of its buildings, structures and land patterns; reconstructing the layout and content of a lost vegetable garden based on landscape archeology; and reestablishing a lost agricultural field with appropriate cultivars.

(Excerpted from *The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*)

Each treatment includes a series of standards to guide the physical work associated with the treatment. Collectively, the four treatments form the basis for responsible preservation practice and enable long-term preservation of a landscape's historic features, qualities, and materials. The four treatments allow for both traditional and contemporary treatment while supporting continued use.

Generally, the amount of physical intervention in a landscape increases from preservation to reconstruction. Preservation attempts to maintain a landscape in its existing state. Rehabilitation recommends some change to accommodate contemporary use.

Restoration often involves removing later additions and reconstructing missing features to depict a landscape at a particular period of time. Reconstruction replicates a nonsurviving landscape through new construction. As physical intervention increases, the standards and guidelines require more documentation and justification for treatment actions.

Any treatment of a cultural landscape should be based on sound historical research to understand its significance, the analysis and evaluation of existing conditions and integrity, and the planned use of the landscape. In addition, all treatment decisions should consider both the natural and built characteristics and features of a landscape, the dynamics inherent in natural processes and continued use, and the concerns of traditionally associated groups.

### *Defining a Primary Treatment*

Defining a primary treatment for a historic property is emphasized in the *Standards* because it ensures consistency in treatment activities. In selecting a primary treatment, each treatment action should be evaluated based on the landscape's value as a cultural resource. One goal of the primary treatment is to ensure that the historic features contained in the landscape actually existed together. A landscape's "period of significance" (defined through research) provides the best frame of reference for evaluating the congruity of treatment actions, especially those related to removal and reconstruction. A recommendation to remove or reconstruct a particular feature should be evaluated based on whether the feature was present in the landscape at the end of the period of significance.

Because of the complexity of many cultural landscapes, the primary treatment often serves as a general treatment for the entire landscape, under which a variety of actions occur (e.g., preservation of existing historic features, replication of missing historic features, and limited addition of non-historic features).

The overall level of intervention and change proposed in the landscape defines the primary treatment. Take, for example, the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site. Here restoration was selected as the primary treatment to reestablish the courtyard design

at the time of O'Neill's tenure. The restoration involved reconstructing the circulation system and terrace areas, removing later additions, and replanting vegetation.

Certain portions of the O'Neill design were rehabilitated to accommodate public access and use of the site. For example, a sub-surface grass paver path was installed to accommodate universal accessibility. This required removing some historic vegetation and changing the grade of a secondary historic walkway. In a few cases, plantings were also altered. In the lower patio of the courtyard, the loss of a significant historic tree increased the amount of sunlight in the area, requiring substitute, sun-tolerant plant material to be placed in an area that historically had been in full shade. (See Figures 2 and 3)

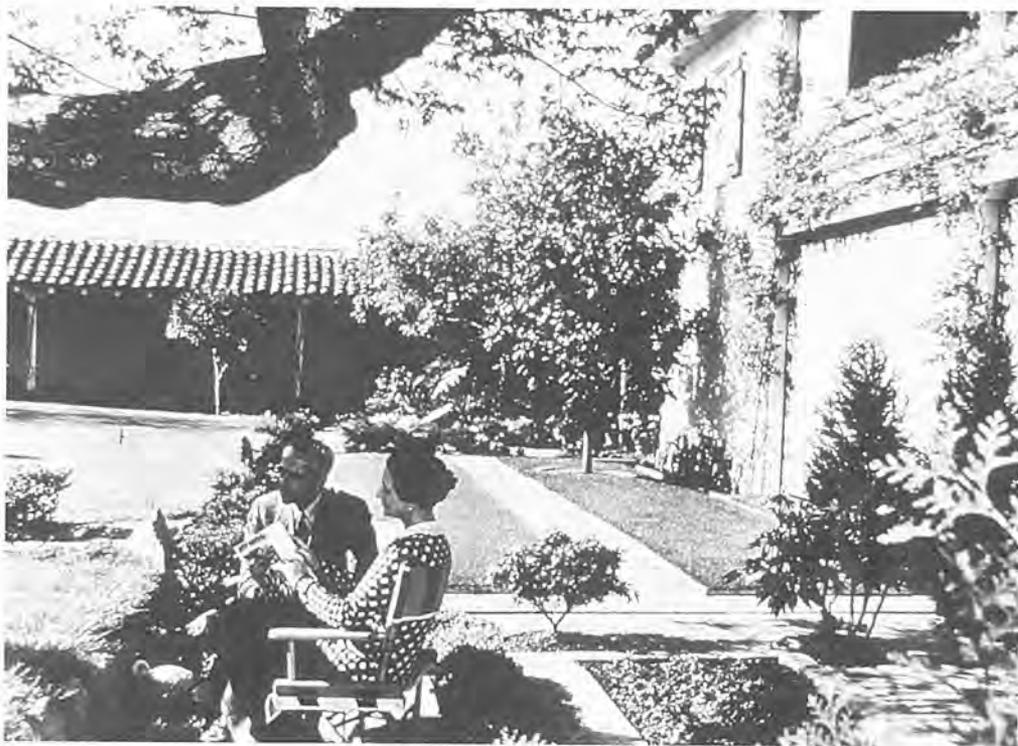


FIGURE 2. Lower terrace of courtyard at the Tao House, Eugene O'Neill's primary residence from 1937–1944. Historically, the lower terrace was heavily shaded by a large walnut tree and included shade-tolerant plants. Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site in Martinez, California. (NPS, c. 1940)



FIGURE 3. Lower terrace after treatment work. Certain courtyard features were rehabilitated based on changes in growing conditions. For example, original plant material was substituted with sun-tolerant plants based on the loss of the adjacent tree (the tree will be replanted and original plants will be installed once the necessary growing conditions have been reestablished). Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site in Martinez, California. (NPS, c. 1988)

### *Evaluating Treatment Actions*

Based on the primary treatment defined for a cultural landscape, each proposed action should be evaluated using the applicable standards and guidelines, to ensure consistency in the treatment of the landscape as a whole. The following basic process underlies all treatment actions and is followed to guide decisions about physical work in the cultural landscape.

#### *Identify, Retain, and Preserve*

Basic to the treatment of all cultural landscapes is the need to identify, retain, and preserve the characteristics, features, and quali-

ties that contribute to the significance and integrity of the landscape and, as such, are important in defining its historic character (e.g., topography, vegetation, circulation, and spatial relationships).

#### *Protect and Maintain*

After identifying the characteristics, features, and qualities that are important and must be retained in the process of treatment work, measures are taken to protect and maintain them in good condition (preventive maintenance). For example, proper pruning, fertilization, pest control, and tree cabling to maintain structural stability are measures used to protect and maintain the health and vigor of vegetation.

#### *Repair*

If the physical condition of the identified characteristics, features, and qualities is poor, then repair is recommended. For example, limited replacement in-kind of deteriorated portions of a structure in the landscape and rejuvenative pruning of overgrown plant material constitute repair of the landscape.

#### *Replace*

If the condition of a feature precludes repair, then replace the feature. The replacement is in-kind; that is, with the same form, detail, character, material, etc., as the original. If replacement in-kind is not possible for technical, economic, or environmental reasons, then a compatible substitute material is considered. Examples of in-kind replacement include replacing a brick walkway where the bricks are spalling and broken beyond repair, and propagating over-mature historic plant material for eventual replacement. An example of substitution includes replanting of an American elm with a cultivar that is resistant to Dutch elm disease.

#### *Design for Missing Features*

When an entire feature is missing, and it is determined desirable to reestablish the feature as part of the landscape's historical appearance, then a design for the missing historic feature is undertaken. If adequate historical, pictorial, and physical evidence exists to reproduce the feature accurately, then designing, constructing, and/or installing a new feature based on the information is appro-

priate. Examples include reestablishing an allée of trees along an entry drive or a series of steps leading to an overlook, based on adequate physical evidence. If there is inadequate information, the replacement reflects a new design that is compatible with the character of the landscape, yet contemporary so that a false historical appearance is not created.

Determining what is compatible, yet contemporary, is one of the most challenging aspects within the construct of treatment. The key to designing compatible features is identifying the historic character of the feature and determining a contemporary design that references the historic character in scale, detail, composition, and materials. For example, a treatment recommendation is made to reestablish a fence around a farmstead, but there is insufficient evidence regarding the exact historic design. Based on the knowledge that picket fencing was historically used, the design principles that guide the replacement might include the siting, use of certain materials, and incorporation of the vertical, uniform character of a picket fence in the design. In order to distinguish the fencing from an accurate reproduction, a contemporary design (such as a square) for the top of each picket might be chosen.

#### *Compatible Alterations and Additions*

Alterations and additions to a landscape are often needed to assure continued use. Such additions and alterations, however, do not radically change, obscure, or destroy significant historic spatial relationships, materials, and features. Alterations, additions, or related new construction are differentiated from the historic fabric yet compatible with the character of the landscape to protect its historic integrity. Examples of compatible additions and alterations include locating a new parking area for visitors outside the historic core of a landscape, installing a ramp for accessibility in a manner that is visually compatible and does not destroy historic materials, and substituting unhealthy historic plant material with disease-resistant modern varieties.

#### *Treatment Considerations*

The greatest challenge in prescribing treatment for a cultural landscape is applying the philosophical basis underlying the stan-

dards and guidelines to the dynamic qualities inherent in the landscape—a resource where change, function, and use are as significant as design and material. Following are a variety of considerations to address in defining a management philosophy, primary treatment, and specific actions to take in relation to a strategy for long-term management of a cultural landscape.

#### *Defining Type and Degree of Change*

Because of the dynamic quality of a landscape, treatment should address the type and degree of change that occurs while maintaining significant landscape characteristics and associated features. The appropriate level of change in a cultural landscape is closely related to its significance. In a landscape significant for its association with a specific style, individual, trend, or event, change may diminish its integrity and needs to be carefully monitored and controlled. In contrast, in a landscape significant for the pattern of use that has evolved, physical change may be essential to the continuation of the use. In this case the focus should be on perpetuating the use while maintaining the general character and feeling of the historic period, rather than on preserving a specific appearance. (See Figures 4 and 5)

#### *Integrity*

A primary consideration in determining treatment should be the physical integrity of the landscape; that is, the ability of a property to convey its significance. The level of integrity influences treatment decisions regarding what features to preserve, where to accommodate change for contemporary use, and where to reestablish missing features. Integrity evaluations should be based on a holistic assessment of the qualities that constitute the historic significance of a property.

Cultural landscapes are not separate systems or characteristics, but integrated, living, dynamic constructs. Focusing on the integrity of limited or singular components may obscure the real meaning or value in the landscape as a whole. Judging the integrity of biotic material should be approached with an understanding that these materials are inherently dynamic and subject to a myriad of factors which affect their growth and decline. Intentional alterations and substitutions, as well as the loss of historic plant ma-



FIGURE 4. In a historic designed landscape, such as Rancho Los Alimitos designed by Florence Yoch, change may diminish integrity and needs to be controlled. Rancho Los Alimitos, Long Beach, California (Author, 1996)



FIGURE 5. In an agricultural landscape, such as Smith Farm on Ebey's Prairie, land use is one of the primary characteristics that contributes to the significance of the landscape and, therefore, treatment needs to allow for change related to continued use. Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, Whidbey Island, Washington. (NPS, 1990)

terial due to pests, disease, or neglect, are more often the norms than the exception in the history of many landscapes. These changes may not diminish the overall integrity of the landscape. The key question to consider is whether the change is reversible. For example, an open field that has been lost to succession may easily be reinstated in the landscape.

For a landscape with multiple periods of significance, it is important to understand the relative integrity of all periods. One factor that may complicate decision-making is that certain associative meanings or cultural values related to a particular period of time might be thought of as more important than other periods of significance for which integrity can be more readily demonstrated. For example, the significance of the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site is primarily associated with the Vanderbilt family tenure. Recent research revealed the significance of a period predating the Vanderbilt tenure, as one of only five landscapes authenticated to be designed by Andre Parmentier, a Belgian-born landscape gardener and nursery owner who is a very important figure in the picturesque landscape style in the United States.

#### *Biotic Cultural Resources*

Plant and animal communities associated with human settlement and use are considered biotic cultural resources. Within a cultural landscape, biotic cultural resources are recognized either as a system (such as a forest or a wetland) or as individual features (such as a solitary plant that functions as a specimen or aggregations of plants, such as an orchard or woodlot). Biotic cultural resources are living materials that have a cycle of growth, change, and eventual death. The degree to which change contributes to or compromises the historic character of a cultural landscape, and what natural cycles influence the ecological processes within a landscape, should be understood. (See Figure 6)

In a cultural landscape, vegetation often requires constant management and intervention to retain the overall structure and appearance of the landscape. Understanding the significance of the vegetation in a cultural landscape is essential to prescribing treatment for maintaining and perpetuating it; whether the vegetation is associated with a significant event or individual, is an unusual or rare variety, or functions as part of a design or land use practice,



FIGURE 6. The Olmsted Elm is a significant specimen feature that contributes to the cultural landscape of Fairsted, Frederick Law Olmsted's home and studio, Brookline, Massachusetts. (Photograph courtesy of Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, n.d.)

will influence how it is managed and eventually replaced (such as exact genetic replacement, in-kind replacement with available nursery stock, or substitution with compatible material). For example, the preservation of a single tree in a historic designed landscape may be critical to the integrity of the overall design. In contrast, an entire woodland may have significance, so that preserving the ecological processes of the system rather than individual trees becomes paramount. Finally, determining a treatment strategy for

the biotic cultural resources within a cultural landscape involves consultation with appropriate natural resource professionals.

### *Balancing Various Resource Values*

Cultural landscape treatment involves consideration of both natural and cultural resource values, and decisions about treatment and management often involve balancing various values. All resource values related to a particular landscape should be understood prior to defining specific treatment and management goals. The relative importance and relationship of all values should be weighed to identify potential conflicts between preservation goals based on the significance of the cultural landscape, and goals pertaining to other cultural or natural resources.

Where conflicts exist, value judgements are made regarding what is preserved, compromised, or removed. An integrated approach involving the appropriate disciplines should be taken to define the cultural and natural resource values in the landscape and reconcile any conflicts. Examples of conflict resolution include providing a mechanism for allowing vine cover on a historic structure without causing damage to the structure, maintaining the agricultural use of a landscape while minimizing the negative environmental effect associated with that use, and not introducing exotic plants that can be invasive and affect areas outside the cultural landscape. In certain cases, one resource value will take precedence over another. For example, an endangered species habitat will take precedence over cultural landscape values.

### *Interpretation and Education*

Interpretation and education are essential aspects of landscape management, providing the visitor with the opportunity to experience and understand the landscape as it existed historically and as it has evolved to the present. The techniques and methods of interpretation range from self-guiding brochures, to bike and auto routes, to visual simulations. Selecting an approach for interpreting the landscape is related to numerous factors, but is most closely related to the level of integrity of the landscape and its ability to convey its historic character. Landscapes with little integrity require more interpretation to depict their historic character. In se-

lecting an interpretive technique, the effect on the physical and visual character of the cultural landscape should be evaluated.

### *Accessibility*

Historically, the needs of people with disabilities were not considered in the design and construction of places. As a result, many historic properties have features that are obstacles to equal access. Unfortunately, equal access and historic preservation have often been portrayed as antithetical, technically infeasible, and even impossible. But designing equal access to historic properties, including cultural landscapes, does not have to preclude the preservation of significant resources.

Historic preservation exists to allow experiential access to places that are considered culturally valuable or significant. In this context, the goal of equal access is to create equal access to the experience, as well as improve physical accessibility.

New features that are added to provide equal access should be designed in a manner that is compatible with the character of the landscape. These may be removable, such as the ramps installed for special events; they may involve special surfaces that are compatible with the historic character; or include more complex systems, such as a hydraulic lift. The goal is to provide the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact on the integrity of the landscape.

### *Maintenance and Sustainability*

Hands-on field managers carry out the majority of preservation work associated with cultural landscapes. All treatment decisions should be made with a consideration and understanding of maintenance issues to ensure that the proposed treatment is accomplished and maintained over time. There are a variety of considerations for evaluating the sustainability of a proposed treatment. Is there an existing maintenance capacity to support the treatment decisions and, if not, what changes are needed? Have the cost and feasibility of implementing and maintaining the treatment been adequately considered and discussed with management? Should priority be placed on preserving extant historic fabric over reconstruction of missing features?

### *Health and Safety*

Alterations to the cultural landscape are often required to meet contemporary health and safety codes and regulations. The alterations may affect the character of the landscape. When such changes are required, they should be designed to minimize visual impacts, damage, or loss of historic features and qualities. For example, stone guardrails along many national and state park roads and parkways are significant historic features and contribute to the road as a cultural landscape. Raising the height of the guardrails meets the contemporary safety guidelines but significantly alters the physical materials and form of the walls as well as the views, wayside developments, and scenic qualities inherent in the original design of the road. Therefore, alternatives should be considered that both improve the safety of the roads and preserve the historic character. (See Figure 7)

### *Conclusion*

In light of the theme of the conference *Examining the Vision and Practice of Landscape Restoration*, it is appropriate to conclude with a few key points regarding landscape restoration. First, research and treatment of a property should be approached holistically. All cultural and natural resource values should be understood prior to defining specific treatment and management goals, such as restoring a landscape or a feature within it. Research efforts should be coordinated and sequenced to ensure that decisions are not made in isolation from one another. Each proposed action should be evaluated to ensure consistency in the treatment of the landscape as a whole.

Take for example the treatment of the landscape at Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site in Atlanta, Georgia. Early research efforts were focused on individual buildings in the district. Based on this research, a decision was made to rehabilitate several buildings, restoring the exterior of the buildings to their earliest construction dates. Subsequent research regarding the landscape and the district as a whole defined a period of significance that extended into the late 1930s. Unfortunately, the prior rehabilitation of the buildings had resulted in the removal of many



FIGURE 7. Guardrails are a significant feature of many historic roads. However, proposals often call for replacing the walls to meet contemporary safety guidelines. Treatment of the walls needs to balance resource preservation with current health and safety issues. Mount Rainier National Park, Washington. (NPS, 1997)

features that existed during this period of significance. For instance, the rolled roofing that was still extant on many structures when the National Park Service acquired the property, and was a feature of every house during the historic period, was removed. In addition many of the small-scale yard features were lost, such as shrubs, planters, walks, and fencing. Also, inaccurate features were added, such as modern varieties of plants, sodded lawns where there were historically swept yards, and contemporary chain-link fencing for security. Based on the recent landscape research and an understanding of the historic character of the entire district during the historic period identified, recommendations have been made to correct these earlier actions.

Second, any decision to restore a landscape to a particular period in time needs to consider the values associated with the entire history of a property, along with what currently exists in the landscape. Take for example Augustus Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire. Subsequent to the death of Augustus Saint-Gaudens in 1907, the Saint-Gaudens Memorial was established to care for the property (1919). In 1928 and 1929, and again in the 1940s, the trustees of the memorial had the flower garden to the rear of the house simplified and redesigned. These designs were the work of Ellen Shipman, a prominent landscape architect and herself a trustee of the memorial. If restoration of the garden is considered today, the question is to what period do we restore? Decisions such as this cannot be made lightly because once we remove those latter additions, the original features are lost forever.

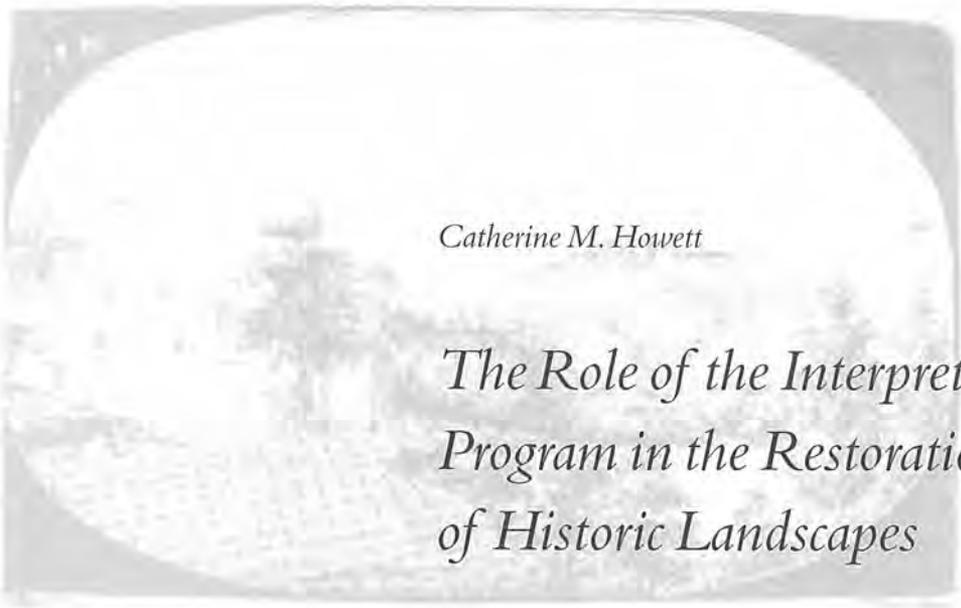
Third, the most important difference between the treatment of landscapes and other cultural resources is the dynamic quality of the land—it continually changes and grows. Recognizing this quality reveals the fallacy of trying to freeze a landscape at a particular moment in time. Therefore, the application of policies and standards for restoration, or any other treatment, of the landscape involves managing change over time.

Finally, it must be understood that there is no single answer to a specific management or treatment issue. The basis for all decisions should be a comprehensive understanding of what is significant about a particular landscape—what gives the landscape its unique sense of place? Is it the original material that remains, the association with a significant person or event, its artistic design, or a combination of factors? In addition, consideration must be given to a variety of other site management goals, such as visitor access and interpretation. And when conflicts exist, management involves making judgements about what is best.

*The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* guide decision-making about physical work in a cultural landscape based on a philosophy that has been applied to cultural resources since the 1930s. The *Standards* and *Guidelines* do not provide answers. They provide the framework for determining an appropriate solution to a specific situation. Therefore, each cultural landscape and

each situation needs to be considered individually. All of the values associated with a historic property should be taken into account in the decision-making process.

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*Catherine M. Howett*

*The Role of the Interpretive  
Program in the Restoration  
of Historic Landscapes*

There is a subtle and (I hope) nicely subversive argument lurking within the staid-sounding title of this essay. The title implies a reversal of the usual way in which we understand the process that leads to an interpretive program for a historic site. It is customary to presume, is it not, that first the property must be renewed in appropriate ways—the National Park Service defines these alternative strategies as preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or reconstruction—and then, with the renewal in place or at least well mapped out, an interpretive program must be developed that will articulate the key points—the narrative or storyline—by means of which the history and significance of the site will be explained to the visiting public.

I hope to suggest that both in theory and in practice the work of interpretation instead begins, and properly so, from the moment of conception—and, if this language sounds rather too reminiscent of the debate that rages between right-to-

lifers and free-choice advocates, so be it. Metaphorically speaking, ideas and intentions—concepts and goals—constitute the fertile seedbed of human action in and on the physical world, and where historic sites are concerned, the gestation of an interpretive program begins precisely at that instant in time at which a passionate soul—a lover most often, though occasionally, I suppose, someone simply driven by an unseemly lust to exploit history for profit—finds a receptive audience for the notion that a particular place—wherever it is, and *whatever* it is—possesses significant historic value, and hence ought to be saved for the benefit of people living today, and for future generations.

Think about what happens next—the necessary explanations required to justify the money, time, and work that the project of rescuing the site will require, the marshalling of a set of convincing answers to the questions, why is it historic? and why should it be saved? In however preliminary or primitive a form, the answers to these questions constitute the first draft of an interpretive program that may not be fully developed until years later.

Most passionate lovers of historic landscapes have found themselves involved at one time or another in helping to frame such justifications for the rescue of a threatened property. They are familiar with the challenge to one's powers of persuasion, and the strong feelings—the energetic personal and emotional commitment—that attend such efforts to make others recognize the importance of the cause. They know how important it is to capture the imaginations of an audience of readers or listeners, helping them to see beyond the often dismal realities of the present to the time when the place in question, recaptured from the past and from the threat of ruin or loss, has been restored to its rightful place within the community—a community that in most cases is now much wider and more diverse than the historic one. Without doubt, the success of such projects usually depends first upon the quality of the narrative argument that galvanizes commitment to the preservation effort, and subsequently upon the quality of the narrative presented to visitors. (I use the term “narrative” here in its fullest sense, referring not just to written or spoken texts, but to images, sound, material artifacts, and the physical environment itself, all of which may contribute to an interpretive program.)

We admire and remember the good examples—artful interpre-

tations of historic sites that command our attention and respect, opening mind, eye, and imagination to fresh insights into times, places, lives, and ideas otherwise lost to us. We deplore and hope to forget the bad examples—the weary docent droning his or her way through a canned recitation of events, names, and dates; or just as bad, the too-slick film or slide orientation, borrowing its style from commercial advertizing to provide us with the “fast past” equivalent of fast food. Worst of all, though, are not dusty display cases or naive, amateurish interpretive efforts—on the contrary, some of these may stir in us a peculiarly intense awareness of the entropic realities of human history—but rather the interpretation so crisply cut and dried, so tritely factual and efficient, that nothing is left to engage our imaginations, to prompt thoughtful reflection, and certainly never to challenge or trouble us. Often the very look of a carefully “restored” building, garden, or landscape is so devoid of the ambiguity and complexity of living places that it will strike the visitor, although perhaps not consciously, as all too easily comprehensible, an oversimplified and sterile cliché that masquerades as historic text.

What has gone awry in such places? I believe that it is often the narrative, the interpretive program, that has failed to infuse the physical renewal of the site with a conceptual structure that will allow the place and its history to take on life and meaning for visitors. We all know that a good story well told has the rhetorical power to move us profoundly, even to change us in some lasting way; but such a narrative must be carefully crafted to stimulate the intellectual and emotional engagement of its audience, and not simply their passive reception of information and assent to historical “facts.”

There are currently two quite different philosophical approaches to the question of how best to educate the lay public through experience of the artifacts of material culture—of which historic landscapes are, of course, important examples. Michael Ettema, who has served as curator of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan, distinguishes between a *formalist* perspective, which sees the educational mission of the museum or historic site as essentially the transmission of accurate information about the past by means of curatorial conservation and interpretation, and an *analytic* perspective that shifts the pri-

mary educational task away from the presentation of concrete information about people, places, events, or objects, in favor of a more contextual, abstract, and subjective exploration of cultural factors—ideas, values, and social mores—that may illuminate the historical record and its material remains. Most institutions, Ettema maintains, remain committed in their interpretive programming to the formalist perspective, although the analytic approach is particularly favored by a new generation of scholars within the academic community, who see it as—to use Ettema’s term—“enabling,” because it is an educational strategy that allows students, and people generally, to see the relevance of the past to their own lives in the present. Thus it is frequently the case that academic consultants, as well as the professionals trained by them who work in museums, will argue for this more holistic way of thinking about the past; for them, the “great people and events of history are just the tip of the iceberg, beneath which float the conditions and relationships through which people lived their lives . . . includ[ing] such things as social relationships, economic systems, the structure of work, the distribution of wealth, and the state of technology.”<sup>1</sup>

The illustration that Ettema offers of the older, object-centered and formalist approach to interpretation is germane to our concern with the interpretation of historic landscapes. He points to Plimoth Plantation in Massachusetts, a “living history” museum which seeks to recreate in quite fastidious detail the material conditions of settlers in the Plimoth colony during the year 1628. Administrators of this facility have supported exhaustive research efforts to document the actual speech, dress, buildings, furnishings, foods, agricultural methods, and daily lives of the colonists—“complete,” as Ettema observes, “with the filth, hard labor, lack of privacy, and all the other conditions of life in the wilderness in the seventeenth century.”<sup>2</sup> Visitors are allowed to touch, even to handle or use, the objects displayed (they are reproductions of the historic types), while costumed museum interpreters converse with them as if the interpreter’s only knowledge of the world were limited to what the original settler whose character they are recreating would have known or cared about in 1628.

Obviously the interpretive program of the Plimoth Plantation can hardly be accused of romanticizing history, or of focusing too

much on the lives and possessions of a wealthy or powerful elite. The strategy has been, instead, to convey vividly, and with as much fidelity to the historic record as possible, the physical and sensory texture of the lives of ordinary people coping with realities that would seem brutally harsh and limited to most Americans today. But it is precisely the preoccupation with these facts of history, to the exclusion of any analysis of what we might learn from the lives, beliefs, and aspirations of these colonists beyond the simple fact of the difference between their world and that of our post-industrial society, that makes the interpretation formalist in Ettema's terms. Even beyond its formalist nature, he argues that such an approach to interpretation is essentially materialist in its preoccupation with the physical reconstruction of a historic environment rather than with analysis of the ideas and values those physical forms embody, or the meanings or questions they might resonate even for people living today. History museums, according to Ettema, too often merely validate our culture's preoccupation with material consumption, either by celebrating the arts and crafts of a historic past through nostalgic invocation of the simpler and better lives of our forbears, or, as in the case of Plimoth Plantation, by invidious comparison of the primitive past with our own much higher standards of material well-being.

Philosophic debates of this sort are being carried on not just within museum circles, but within the discipline of history itself, as well as within the international and interdisciplinary discourse that has come to be described simply as "critical theory." Since such discussions are obviously relevant to the interpretation of historic sites, it may be useful to look back for a moment at the landscape preservation issues that seemed most pressing when this series of conferences was begun, and then examine the implications for historic landscape interpretive practice of some of these new and quite radical challenges to our traditional understanding of the nature of history and historic narrative.

I had just begun my teaching career at the University of Georgia when the first of these conferences on restoring Southern gardens and landscapes took place in Winston-Salem, eighteen years ago. That conference brought together a group of people interested in the landscape history of this region and anxious to share their own experiences in restoring or renewing historic properties

with others involved in similar projects. The Southern Garden History Society was subsequently conceived as an organization through which this desire to learn, and to exchange knowledge of regional landscape history and good preservation practice, might be channelled. A good deal of exciting research and archaeology was being conducted at places like Monticello, Historic Annapolis, Old Salem, and elsewhere around the country, yet the historic preservation movement was still primarily identified with building conservation and restoration or urban renewal efforts in neighborhoods and downtowns. Even the criteria being used to nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places seemed not to accommodate historic landscape values with any degree of precision or completeness.

This was also the time, historically, when more and more people, lay and professional, had become aware of the ongoing critical reappraisal, by architectural historians and preservation professionals, of the historicity of the Colonial Williamsburg Restoration. A ripple effect from these discussions shook the foundations of historic properties across the country, whose administrators found themselves increasingly beleaguered by questions probing the legitimacy of decisions made years before related to everything from acquisitions to structural changes, from paint colors to garden design. Box-bordered "colonial" herb gardens that had been a source of pride at a number of historic house museums were suddenly being viewed as a potential source of embarrassment. Looking back at those years, it does seem that historic landscape design and preservation had entered a new era, one that demanded higher standards for scholarly research and documentation, and more attention to issues of authenticity, both in the historic materials themselves—sites, structures, or objects—and in the interpretive narratives that explained those materials to the visiting public.

All well and good, and a source of enthusiastic interest and pride to increasing numbers of people here and abroad, as witnessed by the exponential increases, year by year, in the numbers of conferences and symposia devoted to topics in landscape history, to say nothing of the number of books being published on these subjects. Not surprisingly, this expansion of interest and increased emphasis on education and more rigorous standards of historicity have also given rise to the development of courses and

programs within universities, more specialization by professionals, and a broadening of career opportunities in landscape history and preservation. These latter developments represent, of course, a form of institutionalization within the areas of our concern. For that matter, the birth and growth of an organization such as the Southern Garden History Society, with the accompanying expansion of its outreach and publication efforts, must be seen as evidence of precisely this trend. Among the most significant indicators of this tendency to impose formal structures on theory and practice, however, has been the energetic development by the National Park Service of a series of publications that seek to codify terminology, definitions, and a typology of acceptable design options for the treatment of cultural and historic landscapes.

It is easy enough to understand the appeal of this movement toward more formal organization and classification, since two decades ago there seemed to be little consensus about the meanings of terms or what constituted enlightened practice—either in writing about landscape history, or in deciding how a historic property should be renewed. In the interest of imposing order on what often seemed chaotic, we upheld the idea that landscape history and historic landscape preservation were separate but allied intellectual *disciplines*, since they each represented a distinct body of knowledge and traditions of practice. The problem is—and I am simply proposing that this may occasionally be the case—that in our eagerness to improve standards of performance within both of these domains we fail to remember and properly appreciate the nature of a discipline as a living, growing, and changing discourse over time—something more akin to one of those rowdy debates in the British Parliament, perhaps, than a choral performance of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* in a concert hall. Remember that the word discipline has a less propitious alternative meaning associated with punishment, with “control gained by enforcing obedience or order.” I am convinced that historic landscape preservation, as the discipline is practiced in this country, has reached a point in its evolution at which—precisely *because* we are now institutionalizing standards—we must reexamine the assumptions we have made about the possibility of arriving at a level of historic “truth” or “fact” in the design and interpretation of historic properties that is analogous to what we understand as “proof” in the sciences. How

valid is the assumption that a combination of archival and archaeological evidence, when properly analyzed, will provide a reasonable guarantee that the preservation option we select as best for a historic property, or the narratives through which we educate the visiting public, are grounded solidly in “hard” objective knowledge rather than “soft” subjective interpretation?

A growing body of scholarship within the disciplines of history and critical theory has strenuously challenged such assumptions during the same period in which we have been busy pursuing an ideal of rigorous fidelity to the historic record based on the accumulation of evidence. I do not mean to suggest that we have been hopelessly naive, or worse, fools; the challenges to the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg made clear, after all, the degree to which well-intentioned but culturally biased interpretations of history are built into the decision-making process. And more recently, certainly since the publication of *The Past is a Foreign Country* in 1985, the geographer David Lowenthal has played devil’s advocate, mocking the earnestness with which academics and professionals involved in preservation decry as “false or bizarre” interpretations of the historic past that simply do not reflect the current orthodoxy, when it should be obvious to all that such multiplicity of perspective is an inevitable consequence of the fact that it is impossible ever fully to know, much less to recreate, the historic past. Like personal memory, communal or popular memory is continually being reshaped and reinterpreted as time passes. Why then, Lowenthal asks, should preservation attempt to segregate “a tangible past required to be unlike the present”?

*Such segregation conflicts with our awareness of reality. The things that surround us all have a past, and are recognizable because we share that past. With the relics we preserve, as with the memories we cherish, we live simultaneously in present and past. And while preservation formally espouses a fixed and segregated past, it cannot help revealing a past all along being altered to conform with present expectations. What is preserved, like what is remembered, is neither a true nor a stable likeness of past reality.<sup>3</sup>*

However unsettling Lowenthal’s critique, it is actually less profound in its implications than the contemporary critical discourse on memory and history from which it draws. Postmodern cri-

tiques of history accuse modern history—the roots of which may be traced back at least as far as the Enlightenment—of fetishizing the past, using methodologies that claim a kind of scientific truth and literal reality for data and analytic interpretations that are, in fact, narrative inventions. French scholarship since the 1960s—best known outside the academy, perhaps, in the work of the philosophers Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida—has been the well-spring of much of this revisionist thinking about the nature of history as collective memory.

But I must speak first to the example of an earlier school of French historians, the *Annalistes*, who were the first to challenge traditional historical writing as being not documentary and factual, as was presumed, but inherently “dramatizing” or “novelizing.” These scholars proposed to reform historical study by substituting for the traditional narratives of political history a more systematic, objective—and therefore “scientific”—aggregation and analysis of data having to do with the social history of ordinary people rather than powerful elites.<sup>4</sup> One need not be familiar with these conceptual sources to recognize their influence in far-reaching changes to exhibitions and interpretive programming at museums and historic properties during the recent past. Let me offer just two examples of this new consciousness within the familiar world of Southern history.

I quote first comments, published in 1989, of Edward Chappell, director of the Architectural Research Department at Colonial Williamsburg, who played a leading role in the implementation of the agricultural slave-quarters project at Carter’s Grove:

*It is crucial for a history museum to show some of the range of human experience within its chosen period and location. Much of the social meaning of costly chairs arranged prom-fashion around the edges of a room can be grasped by museum visitors if equal attention is given to households that had few chairs or no chairs at all. With social perspective comes understanding of relationships between different types of people in the the period. Otherwise, exhibitions teach about chair arrangements and nothing else.*

*. . . To venerate fine craftsmanship and elite design while ignoring the lives of those who lacked such amenities may be well and good for an art museum, but for a history museum to follow suit consistently is irresponsible.<sup>5</sup>*

My second illustration comes from a review of the conference *Southern Landscapes: Past, Present, and Future*, held at the University of Mississippi in Oxford a year ago. Although the reviewer had much to say in praise of the conference, he took issue at some length with what he perceived to be an ideological perspective focused too exclusively on versions of the past interpreted “‘from above,’ from the point of view of those who hold the reins of power,” rather than “‘from below,’ from the point of view of those at the bottoms and margins of the social order.” He made clear his sense that “with the advent of cultural criticism as a discipline . . . no longer can we imagine that comprehensive understanding of our culture and its artifacts will be achieved by articulating only the ‘upper-side’ of the American experience. No longer can we retain credibility when we represent our world by assuming as universal the experience of *Rhetts* and *Scarlets*.”<sup>6</sup>

I cannot imagine, frankly, that anyone associated with our discipline remains unaware of how much this emphasis upon what one might describe as “other people’s stories,” or “the *other side* of the story as it has been conventionally presented” is shaking up the advisory boards and administrations responsible for policy and programs at historic museums and historic sites. Bear in mind that these are fundamentally issues having to do with interpretive programming, with those narratives that we put together to make sense of whatever part of the past we seek to understand. The effort at Plimoth Plantation described earlier, with its piling up of gritty visual data showing how common folk survived in a seventeenth-century settlement, is, in a sense, analogous to the methodology that the *Annales* historians had advocated—at least in the way that both seek to provide a lot of information about the lives of ordinary people, with rigorous objectivity, free of interpretive bias.

Under the influence of Michel Foucault, however, both the theoretical claims to objectivity and the positivist methodology of the *Annalistes* were seriously challenged. The *Annalistes* had indeed offered alternative histories of the past, but they continued to think of the past itself as a single reality that had some kind of existence outside of our interpretations of it. Foucault tried to show that *all* historical narratives are nothing more than rhetorical constructs:

*For Foucault, to represent something is always to present it in a certain way and for a particular purpose. "Representation" in this sense is not . . . the carefully realistic presentation of reality, the attempt to mirror it. Rather, representation in the Foucaultian sense refers to a discursive practice that cannot and does not faithfully mirror what already happened, but which, in narrating "reality," constructs it.*<sup>7</sup>

Interpretation, in other words, is the only history there is. Hayden White, the historian whose 1973 publication *Metahistory* placed him at the center of this discourse, could claim more recently that many historians now accept the view that "narrative discourse, far from being a neutral medium for the representation of historical events and processes, is the very stuff of a mythical view of reality, a conceptual or pseudo-conceptual 'content' which, when used to represent real events, endows them with an illusory coherence and charges them with the kinds of meanings more characteristic of oneiric [i.e., dreaming] than of waking thought."<sup>8</sup> This is quite a startling statement, but we must be careful not to misunderstand what White is saying. His use of the word "myth" should not be taken to mean that the historians he is describing believe that all representations of history are devoid of what we would understand as "truth-content," or that they are "pure" inventions, hopelessly flawed, or outright lies. Rather, history is "mythic" in the way that it communicates with those living within a given culture—at least those who are the audience for the myth—by embodying their understanding of the world and giving expression to ideas and strong feelings that they hold in common.

It is important to understand another aspect of Foucault's thinking that has relevance to this description of historic narratives, namely his fascination with those connections, suggested earlier, between the idea of a discipline and the process of institutionalization. Moreover, Foucault was especially interested in institutions that imposed "a regulative form of control over . . . an evolving body of knowledge and critical practice."<sup>9</sup> That brings us to Jacques Derrida, the French philosopher who has had such a remarkable influence on contemporary architectural theory. Building on the notion that the narratives we frame today have been profoundly determined by a set of assumptions and values

ratified by institutions representing cultural and political power, Derrida called for vigilant and continuous *deconstruction* of these narratives—which is to say, he asks for commitment to a painstaking analytic task of close examination and questioning meant to uncover the implicit meanings and messages—the cultural myths, in other words—encoded in the language and rhetoric of all narratives, including historical texts. And for Derrida and those who accept his insights as valid, the built world is itself a kind of “text.”

A historic landscape, then, is a text that can and should be carefully read, and its multiple meanings deciphered. We are, of course, already familiar with the idea that landscapes express meanings and values, and that those who study them develop an educated eye that recognizes what their designers or makers wanted to communicate to others; we do it all the time. Derrida would respond, however, that there are also hidden texts, and meanings “between the lines” that we do not perceive, perhaps do not wish to perceive. Twelve years ago, I published an essay on the iconography of regional landscape form in the South in which I attempted, in a preliminary way, something like a deconstruction of certain landscape types common in the South; my aim was precisely to link those familiar types with well-recognized mythic “readings” of Southern history and culture.<sup>10</sup> I am mindful now of the extent to which my examination of Southern landscape tradition was largely celebratory, stopping short of asking harder questions of the sort that a more probing critique will demand. The new history calls us, in a sense, to contest the myths of our cultural past, and the interpretations enshrined in a canon of historic, literary, and built-world texts.

Where are we now, then, we passionate lovers of historic landscapes, as we become aware that the ground on which we have been standing is beginning to move? One thing is certain: neither formalist nor analytic approaches to interpretive programming are responsive to the more profound understanding of historical narratives that the new criticism validates. The formalists have been blind to the need to interpret historic artifacts within the complex social and cultural matrix that shaped their making and their multiple layers of meaning—meanings in the past, but also now. The analytic school runs the risk of being so obsessed with making us

appreciate the sociocultural context of these same artifacts, underscoring their relevance to concerns of our own day, that reading lengthy wall texts threatens to replace the experience of looking closely at historic objects and landscapes, bringing to that task not just what we can grasp intellectually but also a fresh eye and the play of our imaginations. Both educational styles expect visitors to be passive receivers of historic information, rather than actively engaged participants in making sense of a past that they experience personally and imaginatively, and question critically.

Both camps, in other words, share the illusion that accumulating enough information or documentary support is the best way to make history clear and comprehensible. In the interest of exercising some control over the chaos of possible interpretations of the past, and thereby making it accessible and useful according to some narrow definition of what education is about, interpretive programs become very literal and factual. But how can the myths, the poetics of past cultures and of our own, find expression through information, through the literal? How can we arrive at historic truth merely through facts, or through a politically correct, officially sanctioned reading of history? History can only be made real and relevant in narratives, in images and stories, that imaginatively select and heighten, interpret and transform—creating and communicating a reality infused with the spirit of the past but at the same time grounded, without illusion, in the concerns of the present. We are about to turn the corner into a new millenium, and it does not take much imagination to see that two decades from now, interpretive programs for historic places will be dramatically different in character from those we know today. How might their substance, form, and style be different? That is for us to decide, but we must remain tolerant of the debate that is the life-blood of discourse, and open to risk-taking experimental projects. I offer a warning borrowed from Oscar Wilde—poet, playwright, and provocateur of the nineteenth century—that has timely relevance, I think, to our discipline at the juncture in history at which we find ourselves: “[We] have sold our birthright for a mess of facts . . . and if something cannot be done to check . . . our monstrous worship of facts, Art will become sterile and beauty will pass away from the land.”<sup>11</sup>

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#### ENDNOTES

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*M. Kent Brinkley, FASLA*

## *Interpreting Colonial Revival Gardens in Changing Times*

A topic which poses a major challenge for those of us who work with historic designed landscapes for either large, outdoor living history museums, or a single, historic house museum is, “*How can we coherently interpret existing colonial revival era gardens given the fact that our perceptions about these re-created landscapes have changed greatly over time?*” This paper will first review the research that served as the basis for the colonial revival gardens at Colonial Williamsburg. Secondly, I will look at how colonial revivalism influenced period-style gardens. I will then examine ways that Colonial Williamsburg portrays and interprets these landscapes today. I will conclude with some suggestions to aid you in interpreting your site.

The colonial revival movement had its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. The interest in the colonial period was a nostalgic turning back to a simpler time in our national past, a reaction to cultural and social forces at work in American life:

burgeoning growth, poverty and urban crime, social upheaval and the Civil War, the onset of the Industrial Revolution, and massive waves of immigration from abroad. Its popularity grew and continued well into the twentieth century.

Colonial revivalism really began with an interest in preserving the homes of great figures and the scenes of major events in our colonial past. Women figured prominently in this effort, and the restoration of Washington's Mount Vernon, begun in the 1850s, became America's first major historic preservation project. Independence Hall's restoration followed a few years later.

After the close of the 1876 United States Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, the colonial revival movement gained considerable momentum in the United States.<sup>1</sup> In the 1880s, another group of patriotically-minded women in eastern Virginia created the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, or APVA, to preserve such Southern colonial landmarks as the crumbling seventeenth-century church tower at Jamestown and an equally derelict and threatened early-eighteenth-century Powder Magazine structure in Williamsburg.<sup>2</sup>

Once these secular shrines were restored and opened to the public, attention soon turned to the landscape setting. The task facing early landscape architects to design period-style gardens was much more formidable than what faced their architectural counterparts. Comparatively little surviving, original landscape features remained on these sites from which to begin this work.

This was the state of affairs in 1928, when Arthur A. Shurcliff of Boston was hired as landscape architect for the Williamsburg restoration. Because of his lack of knowledge of Southern colonial landscapes, he immediately began efforts to educate himself about how eighteenth-century gardens were designed in the colonial Chesapeake region of the South.<sup>3</sup>

Beginning in 1929, Mr. Shurcliff conducted an intensive study of what he called the "Southern Places." He subsequently visited most of the great old Tidewater Virginia plantations such as Shirley and Westover, as well as smaller farms. His extensive notes, detailed measurements, and numerous photographs were used to eventually create a collection of forty-three scaled, finished plan drawings, one for each of these sites. This study revealed design elements that these sites had in common and which might also have

been replicated on a smaller scale within urban, colonial towns like Williamsburg.<sup>4</sup>

Arthur Shurcliff also traveled to England to study design precedents and surviving eighteenth-century garden features for potential use at Colonial Williamsburg. Early site furniture, ornaments, topiary forms, fences, and other old construction details were copiously photographed and sketched for possible replication and eventual use in Williamsburg.<sup>5</sup>

Surviving maps and plans of gardens in the sister colonies of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia were also examined, including surviving plot plans for urban residences in Charleston, South Carolina, dating from about 1787. These gardens were apparently laid out as multiples of squares and rectangles, intended to function neatly within a larger, gridded, urban town plan. This straightforward bed arrangement apparently economized on workable space.

Lacking specific evidence for most sites in Williamsburg, Mr. Shurcliff relied on square and rectangular garden layouts shown by eighteenth-century French map maker, Claude Joseph Sauthier, in his circa 1769 recording of several nearby North Carolina towns. "Several of these plans also show so-called "Quincuncial," or five-part garden layouts. A square or circular area in the middle of the garden divides the plan layout into five separate planting beds.

This five-part layout was a common layout for smaller, urban Chesapeake gardens of this period and is the plan replicated in a generic way in Arthur Shurcliff's colonial revival gardens in Williamsburg.<sup>7</sup> In 1932, Mr. Shurcliff convened a visiting advisory committee of top fellow landscape architects in the country. For over a decade this group met periodically in Williamsburg to review Mr. Shurcliff's research and to critique his conclusions about how the colonial revival gardens of Williamsburg should be designed.<sup>8</sup>

In 1942, Arthur Shurcliff retired as an active consultant but remained as a part-time advisor until about 1954. His successor, Alden Hopkins, a former Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, became the first "Resident Landscape Architect," just after World War II. His assistant, Donald H. Parker, started work for Colonial Williamsburg in 1948 and eventually succeeded Mr.

Hopkins upon his death in 1960. Mr. Parker retired in October, 1985.

Neither Mr. Hopkins nor Mr. Parker felt inclined to “re-invent the wheel” while they worked for Colonial Williamsburg. Their design works were based upon what Mr. Shurcliff had learned earlier. Both men applied this research to their own independent practices as consulting landscape architects, thereby extending the colonial revival design aesthetic of Williamsburg throughout the rest of Virginia and the Middle Atlantic region.”

Mr. Shurcliff and his contemporaries did not have established procedures or methodologies to guide them, so they literally “wrote the book” on how to approach historic landscape design work. When viewed today in the context of their day, the results of their efforts are truly stunning and have stood the test of time. Neither Mr. Shurcliff nor his colleagues called their work “colonial revival.” Their ultimate objective was to re-create the reality of a long-lost past at each individual site and to make it as authentic as possible.

Historic preservation professionals at that time did not question the accuracy of the garden re-creations that were being completed. These gardens were regarded as “state of the art” for many years. The fact that the designers’ work reflected their focus on the colonial elites was not called into question until recent years. It is disturbing today to observe that the major presumption within historic sites and house museums is that colonial revival era gardens are usually “incorrect” and therefore have little interpretive value for us today.

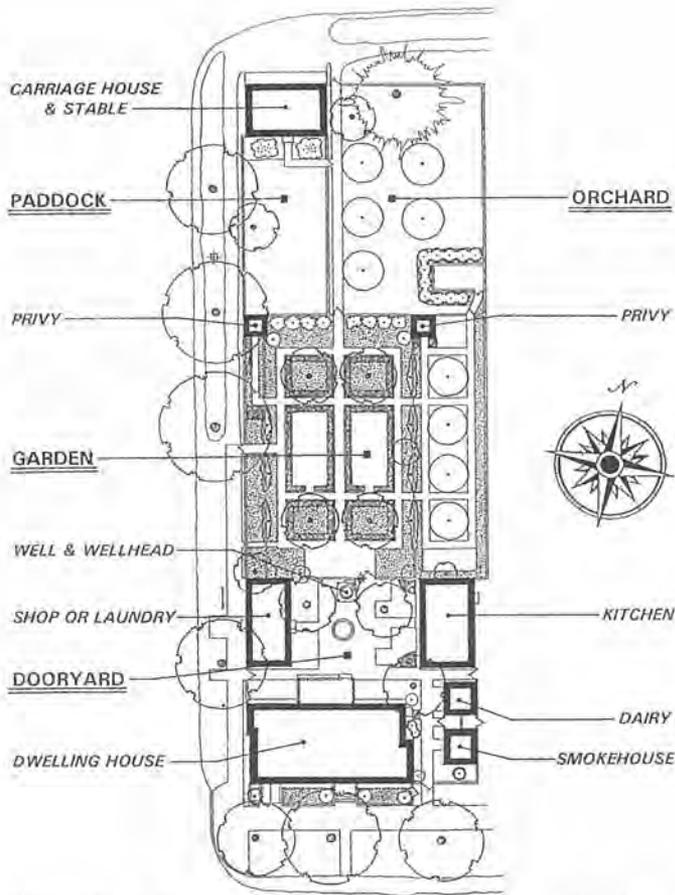
I disagree with the notion that the early pioneers who were re-creating lost colonial gardens got their work “all wrong.” Admittedly, they did, often indiscriminately, use period garden plan layouts in a randomly “generic” way and sometimes placed gardens on sites where such features had never historically existed. However, at least some of what they learned from their considerable research about Southern colonial site/garden layout conventions was probably accurate. Our current perceptions of the accuracy or inaccuracy of a re-created garden lies in the material choices, the degree of richness in the detailing that was employed, and whether the resulting composition is consistent with what we know about the original site owners. Many of the general research

findings of the pioneer landscape architects concerning the design of urban colonial gardens were valid then and still have validity today. Their efforts and findings back then still continue to influence our on-going work in this field even today.

The following points are generally accurate for most smaller prototypically middle-class urban gardens of the colonial Chesapeake region: We know that most urban colonial Chesapeake sites and gardens were typically fenced—primarily to keep animals out, to define boundaries, and perhaps also for privacy in some cases as well. Urban sites usually consisted of one or more rectangular lots. Williamsburg lots were typically rectangular in shape and were 5 × 16 poles (82½ ft. × 264 ft., or a half-acre) in size.

On a typical half-acre urban lot, there appears to have been a common way that properties were developed and ordered by owners. Today, we call it a “hierarchical subdivision of space and uses.” The site plan of Williamsburg’s William Prentis House will help illustrate this concept (see plan drawing, Figure 1). The dwelling house typically fronted on the street, with little or no front yard. Behind the house was the “door” or service yard, around which were located several outbuildings. Most of the outdoor domestic chores were performed here—the firewood for cooking and heating was chopped and stacked, and water was drawn from a well for washing, cleaning, cooking, and drinking. While a small shade tree or two might be present, few (if any) flowers or shrubs would likely be found there. Sometimes these yards were swept clean daily. A central walk from the rear door of the house led to a fence that separated the dooryard from the garden. Beyond the garden and accessed by the same central walk was either a small fruit orchard, or a fenced paddock for livestock. One could also find a stable or carriage house at the rear of the lot, accessible to an alley or back street. Occasionally, as with the Prentis lot, one might find both features side-by-side.

Most urban, colonial Chesapeake gardens of the middle class had several recognizable, common features. First, the walks or paths usually ran straight and at right angles to one another, although occasionally other layout patterns were seen. Most urban gardens were laid out as a series of squares and/or rectangles and were typically subdivided equally by a main path or walk leading to the rear of the site. This main walk was bisected by cross-paths to form the gridded layout. Parallel walks at each side of the main



**WILLIAM PRENTIS HOUSE (circa 1740 - reconstructed)**  
 Duke of Gloucester Street, Williamsburg, Virginia

FIGURE 1. Site plan of William Prentis House, Colonial Williamsburg, showing functional use areas on urban colonial lots typically subdivided by fences. (All illustrations courtesy Colonial Williamsburg.)

walk left a generous area (usually 3–6 ft. wide) to serve as perimeter beds, adjacent to boundary fences.”

In middle-class gardens, perimeter bed areas probably contained a wide assortment of flowering, culinary, and medicinal plants, while the central, square beds were commonly raised or bordered by wooden edging material and were largely devoted to vegetables and other food crops. Only the wealthiest people could afford the spatial luxury of having ornamental “pleasure” gardens that were completely separate from their kitchen gardens.

Just as there was a variety and hierarchy of spaces, so too was there a hierarchy of fencing types used around different spaces. Today, we forget that during the colonial period, fences were, first and foremost, utilitarian in purpose. Functionality was the primary concern, with aesthetics being a secondary consideration; however, some finely-crafted fences were certainly built during the period primarily for the gentry. If used, finely-detailed, carefully-crafted pierced-stringer and decorative picket fences were commonly placed near the front of the property, usually around the house and dooryard. This was where gentry owners wanted to present a conspicuous display of their wealth and taste to their neighbors and other passing strangers.<sup>11</sup>

In order to keep small animals out of ornamental plants and food crops, the garden was typically enclosed by a plainer, vertical board or “paled” fence. While the heights, craftsmanship, and board spacing of these fences varied widely, four- to-five-foot heights were common, and taller fences of six feet or more were not unknown. Orchards and pastures were most often enclosed by either post and rail fences or “zig-zag” fences. Durable, rot-resistant woods such as chestnut, cedar, cypress, and black locust were frequently used.

Walks were constructed of whatever materials were at hand, including forms of non-organic trash. In the colonial Chesapeake, walks were constructed from “marl” or fossilized seashells, compacted sand, “bank-run gravel” (a modern name for a mixed, heavy clay and gravel material), or bricks, which were typically dry-laid in dirt or sand.

Today we think of brick as our top choice for a walk due to its durability and ease of maintenance, but bricks were hand-made and very expensive in the eighteenth-century South. Not everyone could afford them and, even if one could, one still re-used them, especially if they became broken. In fact, the most common type of brick walk found today in Williamsburg archaeological excavations are ones with randomly-placed, broken “brickbats” in them; however, some patterned brick walks were also constructed to a limited degree.<sup>12</sup>

In 1962, a major shift in thinking occurred. Colonial Williamsburg began to look for ways to infuse more authenticity into the 174-acre Historic Area. The initiative began with critical com-

ments from a few visitors, as well as an internal concern over the “sameness” of appearance in our gardens. At that time, it was recognized that our gardens all looked exactly like the product of one organization and of one aesthetic. All gardens then were maintained to the same high standard of appearance.<sup>13</sup> From a casual viewing, our visitors got the distinct, nostalgic impression that everyone in eighteenth-century Williamsburg must have been wealthy. Most visitors probably never questioned what they were seeing.

By the mid-1960s, there was general agreement within the organization that our uniformly high-maintenance standards and visual presentations had created and were, in fact, helping to perpetuate such fallacious notions about life in our colonial past. It was recognized that the re-created landscape really reflected more of the nostalgic leanings and gentry biases of the colonial revivalist view of colonial American history than it did about any perceived historical reality of a colonial town that was peopled by all social and economic classes.

In 1965, a new policy designed to vary the standards and extent of maintenance performed in individual gardens was applied to our landscape in order to show more variety in its appearance. The graduated-maintenance policy was implemented largely because of the growing recognition that the town’s original gardens were created and maintained differently by many different people rather than by one large entity alone.<sup>14</sup> The new landscape maintenance policy was a step in the right direction; however, its impact on the gardens was subtle and ultimately did not go far enough in creating noticeable visual differences. The reason for this outcome was that the policy was based entirely upon the physical character of each individual colonial revival garden, rather than upon what was known about each site’s original owners and, more importantly, what kind of garden(s) the owners might have once had there.

By critically analyzing what occurred within Colonial Williamsburg gardens from 1934 to 1974, it is not my intention to be unappreciative of the significance of my predecessors’ work. Many years of additional research have better equipped us today to view their efforts with more contextual clarity. We might critically say that the major failing of their colonial revival aesthetic in present-

ing a vision of the past was that their re-creations did not come close to reflecting the diverse nature of colonial society nor the human qualities that certainly influenced horticultural pursuits in the eighteenth century just as they still do today.

In re-creating “period-style” gardens today, designing the ground plan layout is relatively easy compared to the other components. Much of the guesswork comes when deciding how a garden should look in the third dimension—primarily the level of detail to use and what the “look” and character of its plantings will be. One of the noticeable hallmarks of colonial revival gardens is that the original designers chose to interpret them with richer detailing and more ornamental materials than those used during the true colonial period. This was the prevailing landscape aesthetic at Williamsburg from the mid-1930s until about 1980.

To people who lived in the Chesapeake region during the eighteenth century, the presence of such rich materials and detailing would have been instantly recognized as conspicuous signs of an owner’s affluence, taste, sophistication, and elegance. Everyone certainly could not afford to create and maintain such fine gardens.

The colonial revival viewpoint served to obscure the fact that, like its English antecedent, early America was a very class-ridden society. Despite some obvious cultural differences from their day to ours, people in the eighteenth century were no different from people today. The affluent, middle, and poor classes of people certainly existed in that society as in ours today, and the materialistic distinctions between these groups were sharply and visibly drawn for all to see. The gardens that members of each socio-economic class might have laid out and maintained would not have been the same. There would have been a wider range of maintenance standards and varying degrees of detailing, which would have been impossible for eighteenth-century people to miss noticing. There can be little doubt that they would have raised their eyebrows if they had seen the pristine, studied perfection of our re-created gardens today.

Beyond class lines, a person’s occupation and whether one had the time to devote to gardening pursuits were also factors which determined the extent and character of garden development.

These same factors also have a bearing on our abilities to indulge in such pursuits today. Finally, the intangible and elusive elements of the individual owner's personality inevitably came into play.

The early garden restorations lack those basic "human" elements, typological variety, and visual diversity in their design, detailing, and presentation. In teaching popular history today, we recognize that to portray these facets of the society-at-large breathes new life into our interpretations. These are ingredients of the elusive "reality" of colonial America that were missing at our historic sites for so many years, and which we now think can finally help us to make the past seem more tangible and compelling for our visitors.

It was not until the 1970s that a new national focus upon social history, or the history of the people making up a society, began to be taught at major universities, and to be implemented into museum curricula. This new social history focus was the catalyst that eventually caused museum professionals to question the accuracy and the appearance of gardens at historic sites. Until that time, few within the history museum profession questioned their accuracy or basis in documented fact.

What we have witnessed in recent years is an evolution in interpretive focus away from what was a male, gentry-biased perspective, to a more democratic, multi-cultural, societal viewpoint in our interpretation of colonial American history. We have also witnessed a marked shift in the perceptions of historical accuracy as it concerns our predecessors' work. New multi-cultural interpretive themes conflict with the pre-existing colonial revival sites/gardens, which typically reflect only the gentry presence and influence.

A new passion for making broad, sweeping changes occurred before there was scholarly recognition that colonial revival gardens are historical documents of their time and worthy of preservation. Colonial Williamsburg was not immune to this desire to "correct" what had been done before, often with mixed results.

The fact that Elkanah Deane was a coach and harness maker in eighteenth-century Williamsburg raised the question of how plausible was his site's garden design by Mr. Shurcliff when it is related back to Deane's occupation, his low social station, modest economic means, and the short time that he owned the site before he

died.<sup>15</sup> Mr. Shurcliff interpreted this garden as being an elaborate, rectangular ornamental garden with three quincuncial parterres edged with dwarf English boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa'). It also contained a bosque of large littleleaf linden trees (*Tilia cordata*), extensive flower borders, and several layered boxwood topiaries placed symmetrically around the perimeter of the garden.

In the late 1960s, my predecessors concluded that the re-created Deane garden was far beyond anything that Elkanah Deane would have been able to have. As a result of these determinations, they did what they called "toning down" the garden by removing all the topiary figures except for one at each of the garden's four corners, removing the larger of the two flower borders and replacing it with turf, and removing the dwarf box which had edged the internal portions of the beds within the three parterres.

One cannot help but feel today that what resulted from a well-intentioned effort was most unfortunate. For all of their carefully-considered efforts, the "toning down" did not ultimately make the garden any more representative of a craftsman's garden. The garden now lacks the degree of design integrity it once had. It is no longer a pristine colonial revival garden, nor is it any more authentic in appearance. It is a hybrid falling somewhere in between. This site can serve as an example of our need to resist the temptation to "work around the edges" of a garden in our zeal to achieve greater degrees of authenticity. We need to be circumspect when we question the need to change, but when we do decide to take major action, we need to act decisively.

Despite our concerns today for plausibility and verisimilitude, we are also challenged by the preservational concerns of dealing with the natural aging of our colonial revival gardens. Because they are made up of dynamic, living materials, gardens are very fragile and ephemeral cultural-art forms. The size, age, and condition of the plant materials in the garden can have a profound impact upon its appearance over the course of time.

Every site and existing condition is unique. The answers to tough questions concerning preservation issues must be based solely on "situational ethics;" that is, what is appropriate for that particular garden or site alone. What we may do today at Colonial Williamsburg for a specific garden may not be equally appropriate

for another historic site and vice versa. We can seek advice from and compare notes with our peers, we can standardize potential treatment options, but in the final analysis each museum must face difficult ethical, management, and remedial landscape treatment decisions on its own.<sup>16</sup>

Does Colonial Williamsburg plan to eventually re-design all its colonial revival gardens? The short answer is, "No." We have one of the best collections of colonial revival gardens in one place in the entire United States. Their stylistic identity, advancing age, and historical context within the American historic preservation movement argue for their continued care and preservation. Because we have a collection of colonial revival gardens, for the last twenty years or so Colonial Williamsburg has broadened the range of garden types we display.

Surviving documentary and new archaeological evidence from several recent excavations makes a very strong case for the increased number of kitchen gardens we now have in our Historic Area. The presence of such gardens also serves to visually reinforce an important point to our visitors that Southern colonists had to grow most of what they ate, or else had to buy their produce directly from someone who did. Because of this reality, the cultivation of an urban garden for growing food for the table was as important to eighteenth-century town dwellers as having a few beds of favorite, colorful, ornamental flowers.

While there is still much for us to do today to improve our interpretive programs, we now have a more evenly balanced landscape than we had before that better portrays the wider range of horticultural endeavors as they were practiced by the diverse colonial society. A visitor can now see everything from the refined, mannerist, Dutch-Anglo-style gardens at the Governor's Palace to the simpler backyard subsistence gardens without any visual or stylistic pretensions whatever, except merely to produce food for the table.

We now sense that the bent towards a high-styled, rosier view of our colonial past, as envisioned years ago, was too ornate and high-toned. Yet we realize that one could just as easily go too far in the opposite extreme in an effort to remedy this situation. The word, "authenticity," as used by historic sites, is only a relative term. There are degrees of relative accuracy to the past, in pattern

and/or volume, but absolute authenticity simply does not exist. What daily life was actually like in the colonial period is now gone forever. What is retrievable by us today via archaeology are merely the fragmented pieces of that past. Thus, the colonial revival aesthetic as it was applied to gardens is just one interpretation of what colonial gardens might have once looked like.

Our work today is, after all is said and done, still just another interpretation. Fifty years from now, our successors will surely view our current efforts in a critical way and will come up with their own interpretations of what a colonial town and its gardens once looked like. For this reason, no one presently at Colonial Williamsburg seriously advocates reducing our town to the absolute reality of the way it must have really been. As we continue to strive for accuracy, we must also temper our presumptions of possessing the final, authoritative word on what constitutes “authenticity” with a dose of reality and a generous measure of humility as well.

Colonial Williamsburg has taken a moderate stance in presenting a more accurate overall landscape setting, one which is both believable and imparts the suggestion of eighteenth-century reality without being offensive to modern-day sensibilities. We are always seeking to find the right balance between reasonable plausibility and contrived neatness while teaching why and how our forebears ultimately made the transition from British colonists to Americans.<sup>17</sup>

In March 1996, we opened and are interpreting a colonial garden and nursery, where we grow and sell plants that were known in eighteenth-century Virginia. Commercial landscape nurseries first began operation in this country around the mid-eighteenth century, and soon became important sources for new plants being introduced into everyday use. Our objective is to tell the significance of this major horticultural influence at our new site.

Costumed gardeners explain to visitors the cultivation methods and common tools that were used in eighteenth-century gardening, including those of professionally-trained gardener tradesmen who came to the colonial Chesapeake from England, Scotland, and France and who helped to spread common gardening knowledge and introduced new plants into common usage.

To accomplish these objectives, we have documented various



FIGURE 2A. Engraved illustration from Mortimer Huxley's *History of Gardening* (1742) showing a gardener screening the straw from dung.



FIGURE 2B. A gardener at Colonial Williamsburg's Colonial Garden and Nursery screens straw from dung following eighteenth-century practices (photograph taken in 1997).

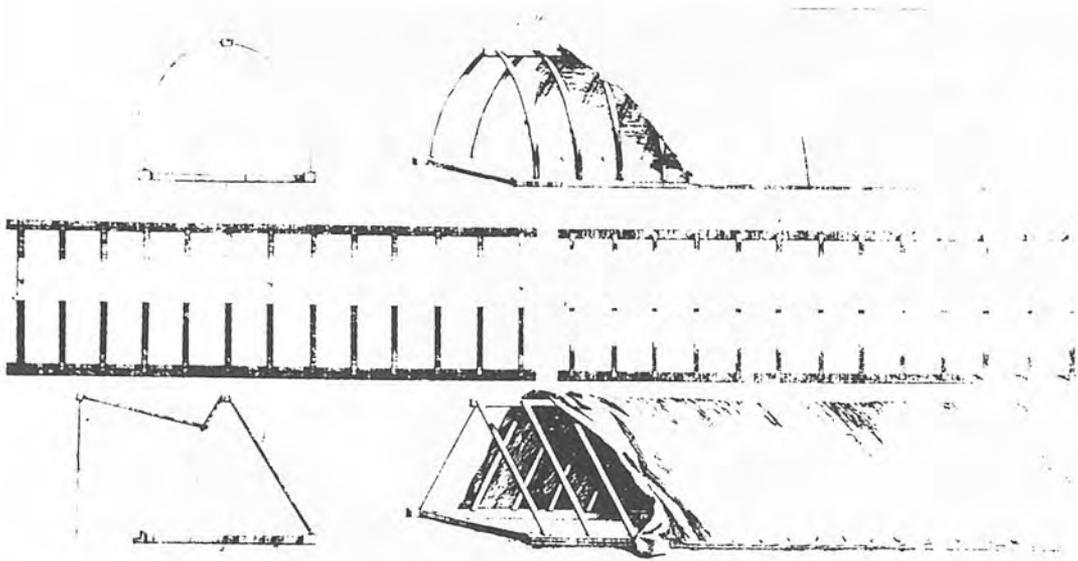


FIGURE 3A. Diagram for building a paper cloche or shade. Philip Miller's *Gardener's Dictionary*.



FIGURE 3B. Oiled paper cloche built by Colonial Williamsburg garden historians (following Phillip Miller's diagram above).

eighteenth-century tools that were used, and how they were used to complete daily tasks. The accompanying illustration (Figure 2B) shows a gardener following a sketch taken from Philip Miller's *Gardener's Dictionary* as he performs the task of screening the straw out of stable dung before using it to fertilize the garden planting beds. In another illustration (Figure 3A), we see a diagrammatic print for constructing a paper cloche, and beside it is a photograph of one that our gardeners built for our interpretive site by following these directions. This is oiled paper placed on metal hoops over a wooden frame and was used as a shade to protect melons from the hot sun.

Pro-active interpretation of the landscape is the key to success in attaining this moderate presentational objective of suggestive realism. Years ago, the gardens of Colonial Williamsburg served as a form of "window dressing" for the town's architecture. We realize now that to merely maintain/preserve these landscapes under-utilized the teaching potential that is latent in period-style gardens. Interpreting the many layers of period gardens, however, is not for the timid. This task can be quite complicated, but it can be done coherently, if one has an interpretive plan to guide one's efforts.

When we say nothing to visitors about why a period garden is there, why it looks the way it does, it leaves them to draw their own conclusions about the garden's significance, which may or may not be correct. This situation, in turn, allows for the attachment of sentimental meanings by visitors rather than ones that are factually-based upon the functionalism of the garden, how it would have contributed to life lived in the house, or the ingenuity of the owner in responding to site problems.<sup>18</sup> When we rely solely upon a passive display, visitors will almost certainly miss the important visual clues such a garden can provide about the original creator's economic means, social class, and lifestyle. A skillfully crafted, active historical interpretation can put emphasis upon what the garden meant to its eighteenth-century creator, and can prevent visitors from focusing, instead, upon what the re-created garden means to them today in purely nostalgic terms.

*How can we more accurately portray life at our historic sites when we feel we are constrained by the presence of a colonial revival garden or landscape setting?*

A. Active interpretation is the key. Compare specific similarities/contrasts of what garden(s) you have with current ideas about “authenticity.” While explaining what colonial revivalism is and how it came about makes interpreting a landscape more complex, it can also provide opportunities to show visitors ways of seeing and thinking about the landscape which most have never thought about before.

B. You can still talk about authentic colonial landscape design practices. Focus on what we call The Four P’s: **the Place**, the geographical area or context of the site; **the People** who originally lived there, and when; **the Plants** then available and now currently used within the re-created garden; and finally, **the Principles of design** that were used in the layout of the entire site as well as the garden(s).

Some other related discussion topics include:

- spatial organization—how/where various spaces on sites were usually sub-divided;
- typical garden design layouts used in the South during the eighteenth century;
- the overall richer detailing seen in the separate pleasure and kitchen gardens of the gentry during that period;
- simpler layouts and detailing of middle class gardens, typically placed within a smaller, more confined, non-segregated space;
- the presence of professional vs. amateur gardeners, and ways in which horticultural knowledge was spread as the eighteenth century advanced;
- increasing plant availability and its potential impact upon the appearance of gardens as the eighteenth century progressed;
- the range of design components including paving and fences, and typical fence types intended to enclose particular types of spaces.

C. Don’t be afraid to talk about colonial revivalism as it impacts your site today. What is the current design of your garden(s) based upon? Many interpreters seem ashamed to talk about “inaccurate” gardens for fear of inviting criticism from visitors. One has to be willing to stretch a little in order to make this kind of program work. Here is where interpretive planning/on-going training enters into the picture. Interpreter training is vital to your success.

These issues have to be discussed openly between your trainers and interpretive staff if you want them to do the same with your visitors. If properly grounded in their period of focus, and if they are comfortable talking about colonial revivalism among other staff members, adding new themes to their repertoire is not going to be beyond their capabilities. At Colonial Williamsburg, we've made real progress in this area over the last few years, but we still have more work to do with our staff to achieve more consistency and coherency in our overall efforts to interpret the landscape. Interpreters who have been properly trained should not hesitate to address colonial revivalism's impact upon their museum's landscape, nor should they feel embarrassed to discuss valid reasons for its retention, such as:

- how the process of American historic landscape preservation influenced outdoor museums;
- how authenticity standards have evolved over time;
- how new archaeological techniques/technologies have helped to shape those perceptions.

There are alternative ways to interpret what might have been on your site originally besides relying upon a physical re-creation of a garden: brochures, an artist's rendering/drawing, or a computer-generated axonometric rendering of the site, showing different treatments at different times in the site's history, etc. We have only just begun to explore the potential of video-imaging and computer technology as it might apply to the museum and historic preservation fields.

One final cardinal rule: don't apologize for what you do or do not have! Your museum has inherited what was left to your stewardship by your predecessors. Your challenge is to make your landscape setting work for you.

There are no easy answers in dealing with a colonial revival landscape, but preservation should always be considered first. Before you elect to make any radical changes to a colonial revival garden, explore all other alternative avenues first. Ask yourself, "Do I have enough new information or evidence which is compelling and convincing enough to warrant major changes?"; "Am I using all of my existing resources in the most effective ways to fulfill my site's mission/purpose?" If you can honestly say yes to

both of these questions, only then should you consider undertaking additional time, staff involvement, and expense to make major site changes. We must direct our actions to do what is proper for our house sites and museums. Our actions should be based ultimately on the primary mission of the museum or house site that each of us serves.

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*Mr. Brinkley joined the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in 1985. He is responsible for site and landscape design, historical landscape and garden history research, and also assists with in-house landscape interpretive education for the 174-acre living history museum. He is co-author of *The Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg*, published in 1996 and now in its second printing. Mr. Brinkley's research, writing, teaching, and lecturing efforts have helped to advance the landscape architectural profession within the United States, and in 1998 his peers recognized and honored him for these accomplishments by electing him as a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. William Butler, "Another City Upon a Hill: Litchfield, Connecticut and the Colonial Revival," *The Colonial Revival in America*, edited by Alan Axelrod. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company for The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum. 1985), 19-20.

2. Nancy Elizabeth Packer, *White Gloves and Red Bricks: APVA 1889-1989* (Richmond: The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. 1989), 3, 9, 21.

3. Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. "The Colonial Revival and the Public Eye: Williamsburg

and Early Garden Restoration," *The Colonial Revival in America*, edited by Alan Axelrod, 55.

4. The ink-on-linen original drawings of Shurcliff's "Southern Places" study collection are today housed in the Architectural Drawings Archives of the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Research Library, Bruton Heights School Education Center, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (cited hereafter as "JDR, Jr. Library, BHSEC, CWF").

5. Shurcliff's original glass plate slides and printed photographic albums produced during these research trips to England are today housed in the Audio-Visual Resources Collection, JDR, Jr. Library, BHSEC, CWF.

6. Sauthier Map Collection housed in the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

7. The use of squares, rectangles, and quincuncial designs for the design of gardens also appears vividly on a late eighteenth-century map by Warner and Hanna of the city of Baltimore and its environs. A few of these garden plans are reproduced in Barbara Wells Sarudy, "Nurserymen and seed dealers in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake," and "A late eighteenth-century 'tour' of Baltimore gardens," *Journal of Garden History* vol. 9, no. 3, 1989, 113-114. See also 118, 126, 131, 133-135, 137.

8. The landscape architects who served at various times on this advisory "visiting" committee until the end of World War II included such notables as Henry V. Hubbard, Warren H. Manning, Bremer W. Pond, Gilmore D. Clarke, A.D. Taylor, Rose I. Greeley, Fletcher Steele, Richard Schermerhorn, Markley Stevenson, and Charles F. Gillette. Arthur Shurcliff, "Landscape Architect's Report 1928-1943" (unpublished, restricted manuscript), CWF Department of Archives and Records.

9. Dorothy Hunt Williams, *Historic Virginia Gardens: Preservations by the Garden Club of Virginia* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1975), see foreword by Ralph E. Griswold. See also Rudy J. Favretti, *Gardens and Landscapes of Virginia* (Little Compton, RI: Fort Church Publishers, Inc., 1993), 2.

10. Arthur A. Shurcliff, "Relationship of Virginia Place Plans to their European Precedents and the Peculiar Characteristics of the Virginia Places which Identify them as Such," in "Landscape Architect's Report 1928-1943" (unpublished, restricted manuscript) in CWF Department of Archives and Records, 30-32.

11. Barbara Wells Sarudy, "A Chesapeake Craftsman's eighteenth-century gardens," *Journal of Garden History* vol. 9, no. 3, 1989, 141-152. First published as "The Gardens and Grounds of an eighteenth-century Chesapeake Craftsman" (M.A. Thesis, University of Maryland, College Park), 1988.

12. At Colonial Williamsburg, original, random brickbat walks have been excavated at the Brush-Everard House, the Alexander Craig House, Wetherburn's Tavern, and the Mary Stith Shop, just to name a few sites.

13. Internal Memo to Carl Humelsine, President of Colonial Williamsburg, from A. Edwin Kendrew and J.W. Harbour, dated May 2, 1962, re: "Appearance of the Restored Area," original filed in CWF Department of Archives and Records.

14. Ibid. An attachment to the above memo outlines this proposed policy for landscape maintenance. A more detailed outline of maintenance implied by each level or grade of garden is listed on a sheet entitled, "Garden Classification," dated February 23, 1966 (copy in the author's office files), original in CWF Department of

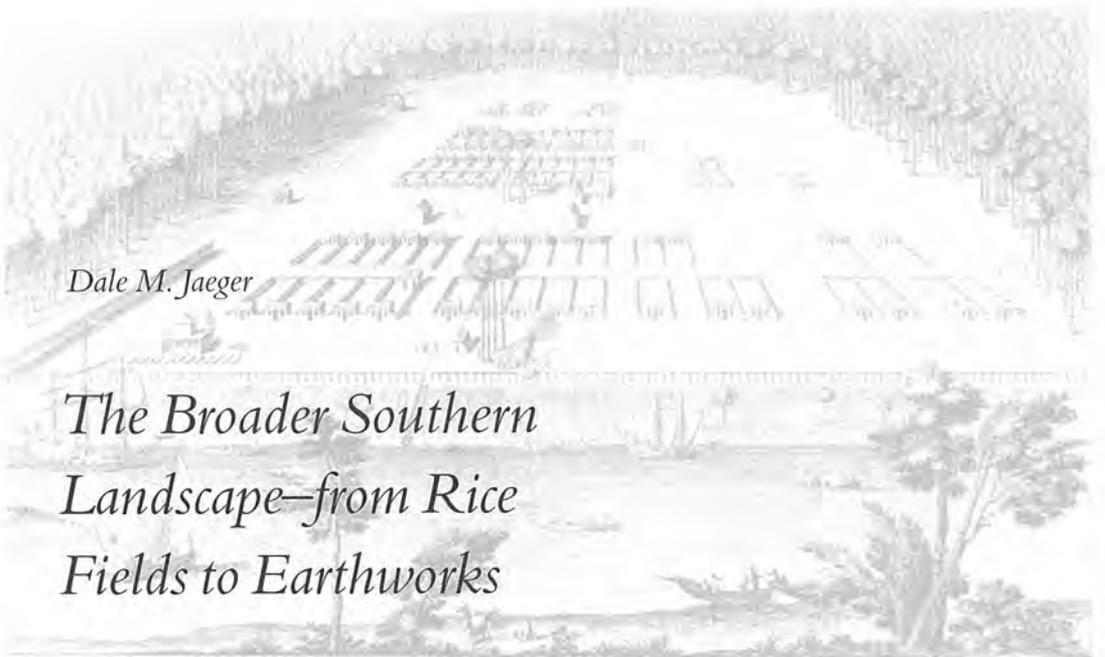
Archives and Records. Internal discussions about maintenance standards and the desired overall appearance of the Historic Area continued on this tack into the late 1980s.

15. House History File for Elkanah Deane Property (Block #30-2, Bld'g. #1A), JDR, Jr. Library, BHSEC, CWF.

16. For guidance on potential treatment options see Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1996).

17. Called many things, including "benign neglect," "controlled neglect," and "studied shabbiness," this policy began to be implemented in about 1980. While this can be a very effective interpretive visual technique to apply to a landscape, from the author's perspective, it demands a very high degree of vigilance in order to prevent excess deterioration, which can happen quickly. Without very specific guidelines to define where, how, and to what extent it will be applied, too often its application quickly becomes a randomly subjective process, with predictably variable results. In the author's view, Colonial Williamsburg, arguably, has been only moderately successful in managing this policy since its inception there about seventeen years ago.

18. John Sales, "The Philosophy and Practice of Garden Preservation," *APT Bulletin* vol. XVII, no. 3 & 4 (1985), 61-64.



*Dale M. Jaeger*

## *The Broader Southern Landscape—from Rice Fields to Earthworks*

This presentation focuses on project experiences during twenty years of historic landscape work at locations throughout the Southeast. Many of these projects have explored landscapes that were influenced by major events and activities. This discussion has been organized to highlight two major occurrences, including rice culture in South Carolina and the Civil War in several Southern states. Though certainly dissimilar, rice culture and the Civil War share parallels in the rich heritage of technological and cultural advances. These historic landscape efforts have first identified the distinctive features of these sites, recommended an array of preservation approaches to conserve these landscapes for future generations, and explored ways to interpret these unique sites to the public. The following presentation has been organized in a case study format.

## *Rice Culture Resources*

Rice was introduced into South Carolina in the Charleston area just prior to 1685 (Sally, 1919). By 1700 it was a major export crop of the state. It was subsequently introduced into Georgia and North Carolina, and these three states were the center of the United States rice industry until the early 1900s. Traces of rice culture are still evident in the Southern landscape today.

### *Colleton County Historical and Architectural Inventory, Colleton County, South Carolina*

Located directly southwest of Charleston, South Carolina, Colleton County, established in 1682, offers a unique opportunity to explore the region's former rice culture. The rice plantations of Colleton County were documented as part of a countywide cultural resource survey between 1992–1995. The Walterboro-Colleton Chamber of Commerce and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History sponsored the project. The survey documented twenty plantation sites totaling over 50,000 acres. These properties are located in a section of South Carolina's coastal plain, known as the ACE Basin.

The name ACE refers to the three major rivers comprising the watershed that is situated between Charleston and Beaufort counties; these rivers are the Ashepoo, Combahee, (pronounced Com'bee), and Edisto rivers. The ACE Basin comprises approximately 350,000 acres and is one of the largest undeveloped estuaries and associated wetlands on the East Coast. The natural resources within the ACE Basin have been inventoried and their importance recognized through the ACE Basin Project, a cooperative effort between landowners and private and public conservation agencies to protect these important habitats through the donation of land and conservation easements. To date over 120,000 acres within the ACE Basin have been preserved through a variety of land conservation techniques. The cultural resource survey of Colleton County was an effort to document the significant cultural resources of the ACE Basin.

Colleton County has been the site of a variety of agricultural activities, including the cultivation of rice, indigo, cotton, and corn. Dairies and cattle-raising enterprises are other uses that have

impacted the agricultural landscape. The production of rice has been by far the most significant agricultural activity. Rice cultivation extended over two hundred years, moving from inland swamps to tidal fields. Networks of earthen banks, canals, and linear ditches comprise former rice fields. Few water control structures, such as the trunks, survive from the early period of rice culture. Constructed of wood, most of these structures have deteriorated or have been replaced over time, but the technology remains the same. Trunks built today are replicas of the original design.

Inland fields, contained within successional swamps, are usually only detectable by on-site inspection. Inland fields were dependent on the water availability of the watershed. Cross banks were built to impound the water upstream, and water control structures were added at strategic locations to allow water to flow into the fields. Ravenwood Plantation offers one of Colleton County's best examples of inland rice culture. The 150 acres of inland fields at Ravenwood are contained within six fields. The age of these fields and the time that has elapsed since their productive use is evidenced by the maturity of the vegetation now growing in the banks. The Ravenwood fields reflect the handmade character of



Rice Trunk, Whitehall Plantation, Colleton County, South Carolina. (All illustrations courtesy of the author.)



View of Inland Fields at Ravenwood Plantation, Colleton County, South Carolina.

the African American workforce who likely designed and built them (Wood, Littlefield, and Porcher). The scale of the banks within these fields contrast with the character of the tidal fields where earthmoving equipment has been enlisted in recent years.

Tidal fields are visually more obvious than inland systems. An aerial view of the region today features a network of rectangular grids situated along major river systems. Tidal fields occur within a narrow band through Colleton County, approximately ten miles in width. These plantations are located upriver where tidal influence without the intrusion of salt water made rice production possible.

Post-Civil War rice production in South Carolina never reached a level even half that of the antebellum years. Several factors, including loss of slave labor, hurricanes, and competition from other states, brought about the eventual end of rice production by the 1920s. The adaptation of these rice plantations into hunting preserves began in the 1890s and extended into the 1930s. The new plantation owners in many cases arrested the successional processes that had begun to occur in the abandoned fields by repair and maintenance of the existing dikes and water



Tidal-influenced Former Rice Fields at Caw Caw Interpretive Park, Charleston County, South Carolina. These fields are now managed to promote wildlife habitat and provide seasonal viewing opportunities for future visitors to this regional park, now under construction.

control structures. This proved to be a positive development for the preservation of these properties, as the new owners were eager to restore the old rice fields and water management systems in order to attract wildlife. Many of these historic plantation tracts have remained substantially intact, while others display additions by these new owners, such as entrance gates and drives and formal gardens.

The formal gardens at Bonnie Doone Plantation were added to the site by the owner, A.H. Caspary, in 1932 in conjunction with the construction of the main house. The garden features serpentine walls, brick-lined pathways, iron gates, a water feature, and camellia plant materials. Benito Innocenti, a prominent landscape architect from New York, was the designer of the garden. Camellia shrubs from Alabama were shipped to the site via a railroad siding at Yemassee. Local residents remember vividly the construction of this garden. One of those who observed the garden's creation was Robert Marvin, the son of Boonie Doone's plantation manager. It

is an interesting parallel that Robert Marvin later became a landscape architect. In private practice in Colleton County, Mr. Marvin today provides landscape design services to a number of plantation owners.

One of his most notable contributions to rice plantation landscapes has been the creation of the “sun pocket” garden, including one at White Hall Plantation in Colleton County. Oriented precisely fifteen degrees east of south and constructed of brick, these gardens capture the intensity of the sun, allowing Northern owners, who typically visit during the winter, to use the garden year round.

White Hall Plantation also illustrates another interesting adaptation by the Northern owners. Once-productive rice fields in close proximity to the main house structures remain filled with water and serve as ornamental ponds.



“Sun Pocket” Garden at Whitehall Plantation, Colleton County, South Carolina. The orientation and use of masonry material for “Sun Pocket” Garden by local landscape architect Robert Marvin allows year-round use of exterior space.

Oak allées define the majority of plantation entrance drives and span several centuries in the life of these plantations. The oak allée at Bluff Plantation is one of the county's earliest. It appears to date from this plantation's heyday in the early 1800s. Nathaniel Heyward, a former governor of South Carolina and one of the region's most successful rice planters, was the owner of Bluff, named for its promontory location. Governor Heyward was buried in his former rose garden in 1851. Today, only the cemetery and the oak allée remain. In recent times, the site served as the childhood home of Forest Gump in the movie of the same name. The oak allée figured prominently in the "Run, Forest, Run" scene.

Plantation owner Felix du Pont planted the oak allée at Combahee Plantation, extending over a mile into the site from the county road, approximately seventy-five years ago. In that same period, another oak allée was planted at Beech Hill Plantation, the only site to have survived the Civil War with the main house intact. This allée was planted at Beech Hill by Cleveland Sanders in 1920 after his return from World War I; his son Berrien returned from the second World War and added two interior rows of palmettos. This two species allée is a unique feature in Colleton County.

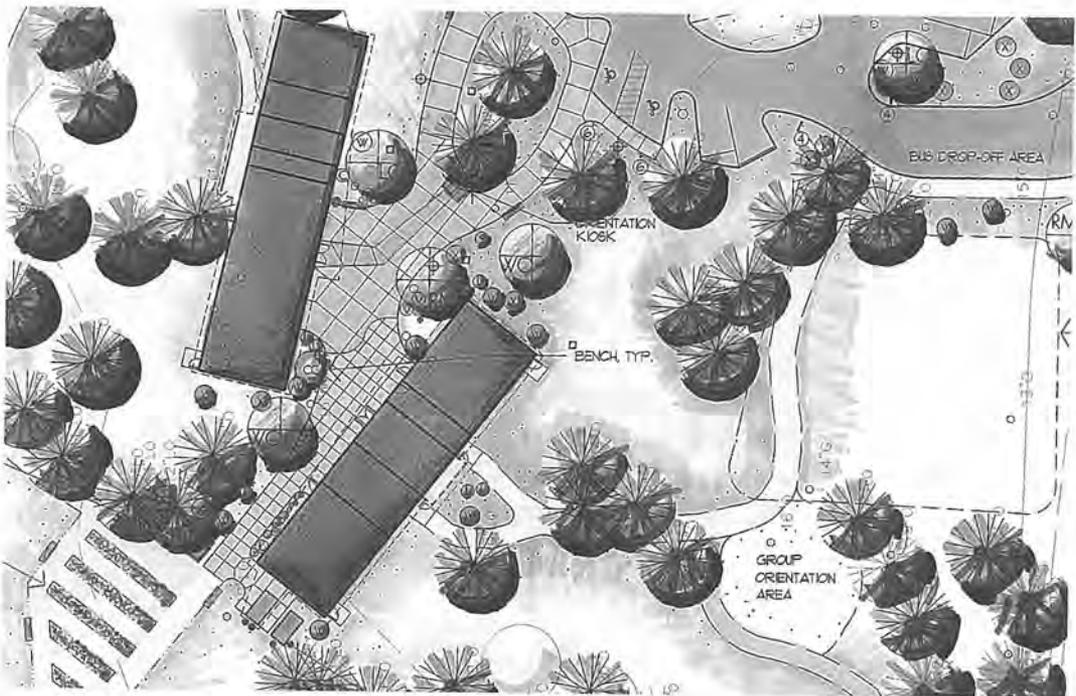
#### *Caw Caw Interpretive Park, Charleston County, South Carolina*

The proposed Caw Caw Interpretive Center in Charleston County, South Carolina, will soon offer the public an opportunity to explore the region's rice heritage. This approximate 650-acre parcel, situated on U.S. Highway 17 west of the city of Charleston, is currently being developed as a cultural and natural interpretive park. With over one-half the site classified as a jurisdictional wetland, the site, historically known as Tea Farm, is a veritable web of rice culture elements—canals, dikes, drainage ditches, quarter drains, and water control structures. Rice cultivation at Tea Farm is believed to have utilized an inland system originally. Today it is augmented with a tidal system that allows brackish water into existing impoundments, enhancing the habitat for wildlife.

The natural elements of the site are as impressive as the cultural elements. Rice fields at Caw Caw offer seasonal viewing of numerous species of indigenous and migratory waterfowl. Alligators,

bald eagles, wood storks, kites, ospreys, turkeys, white-tailed deer, otters, foxes, egrets, herons, ibis, and various species of ducks comprise the wildlife found at Caw Caw. It is estimated that 138 of the existing 900 pairs of wood storks, an endangered species, live and/or feed at the Caw Caw site. A bald eagle's nest, situated on an adjacent site, can be viewed from Caw Caw. The site contains 351 identified plant species within eleven major plant communities. These plants represent approximately one-seventh of all plant species that occur within the South Carolina coastal plain.

In the master planning for this park a Sensitivity Model was developed that allowed the simultaneous evaluation of the site's cultural and natural aspects. The site was classified into the following zones: (1) Preservation—areas of particular ecological and/or cultural sensitivity or rarity to be preserved in a natural condition; (2) Conservation—areas not critical to the ecological balance or cultural preservation, but which contain features of landscape and/or watershed significance; and (3) Reservation—areas most suitable



Interpretive Center Site Plan at Caw Caw Interpretive Park.

for development. The master plan utilized the Sensitivity Model to ensure that the site is developed and managed in a manner that promotes conservation and diversity, creates sustainable systems, and protects the resources for future generations. The phase one \$3 million development program, now underway, includes infrastructure such as water, electricity, and roads, an interpretive center and classroom space, and a trail system. Plans are to open to the public in the fall of 1999.

### *Civil War Resources*

Civil War engagements occurred over large expanses of the Southern landscape in networks that were organized into campaigns. The "Atlanta Campaign" and "Sherman's March to the Sea" are campaign examples in Georgia. Troop movements and the location of the various skirmishes and battles were heavily influenced by natural resources, particularly topography and vegetative cover.

Over the past several years, there has been a national interest in the preservation of our nation's historic battlefields. Perhaps this interest was fostered by the popular *Civil War* series on public television. Recognizing the endangered status of unprotected Civil War sites, Congress established the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission in 1991. An inventory of Civil War sites was conducted and the commission developed a list of priority sites and resources. The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) within the National Park Service (NPS) provides funding for studies that promote the protection of these priority sites. The Civil War Trust, through funds raised in the sale of commemorative coins, now provides funds for battlefield acquisition.

In the Civil War Sites Advisory Committee Assessment, 384 principal battles and 10,500 conflicts were considered. The historical significance of each encounter was evaluated based on its role in the war as well as in individual campaigns. Battles occurred in twenty-six states, many outside the Southeast, such as Idaho, North Dakota, Minnesota, Colorado, and New Mexico. A majority of the battles did occur within the Southeast. Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, and North Carolina were the site of more than fifteen battles each, while Tennessee experienced thirty-eight bat-

ties. Virginia was by far the leader with approximately a third of the total or 123 battles occurring there.

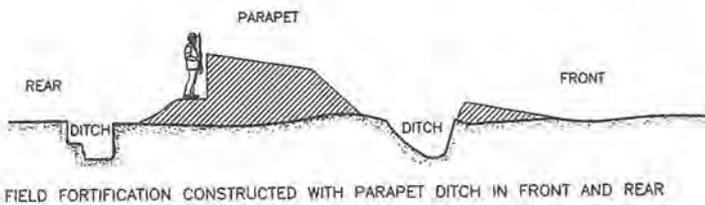
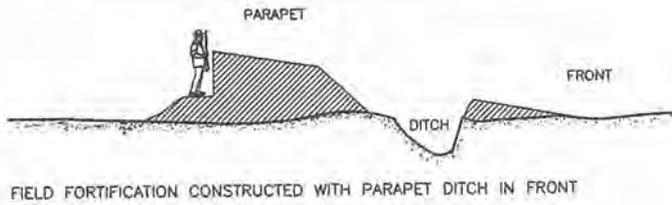
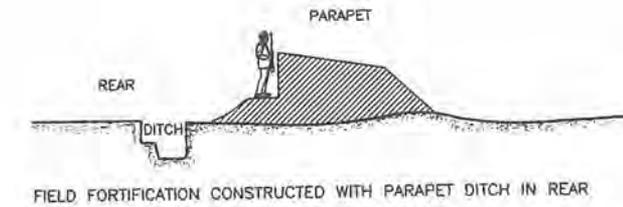
*Dobbins Park, Cobb County, Georgia*

Identification of extant resources is always the first step in battlefield protection efforts. The appreciation of these resources has increased with the establishment of a national program. As an example, an early 1980s project at a site known as Dobbins Park has resulted in the preservation of previously unrecognized trenches and rifle pits. At the outset of the project, the client, the Cobb County Parks Department, suggested that earthen features on this site were likely the result of recent military exercises from the adjacent Dobbins airfield. An archeologist on the planning team corrected this assumption by identifying these sites as Civil War entrenchments and part of Johnston's Line, which had been previously documented at other locations in the county. Recognizing the significance of the features, a topographic survey of the site documented the precise location of the trenches. Though the county park originally planned for this site was never realized, an executive golf course was later constructed. The topographic data was utilized in the golf course design and the entrenchment preserved as out-of-bounds areas within the course.

*Earthwork Stabilization from The Siege and Battle of Corinth, Alcorn County, Mississippi*

Alcorn County, Mississippi, which includes the city of Corinth, contains one of our nation's most valuable collections of earthworks. Earthworks are defined by the National Park Service as "any manmade earthen structure for military defense." The earthworks associated with the Civil War evolved from principles established in the Napoleonic wars through the writings of D.H. Mahan, a West Point graduate, in his 1836 publication, *A Treatise on Field Fortifications*. Earthworks can be organized into several prototypes depending on their form, such as redans, lunnettes, or bastions.

The Stabilization Plan for the earthworks at Corinth has been funded by a grant from the ABPP. The intent of the Corinth plan is to build on past and current efforts in earthwork management



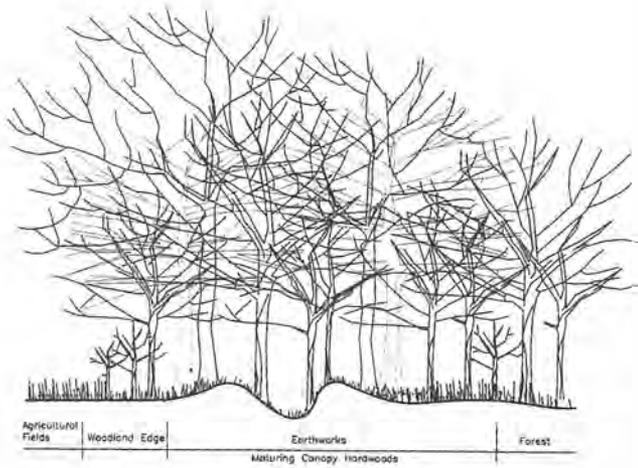
Three Earthwork  
Types in Alcorn  
County, Mississippi.

by the NPS. The 1989 *Earthworks Management Manual* by Andropogon Associates, Ltd. and an upcoming update, *Earthworks Landscape Management Field Handbook* by Darrell Morrison, FASLA, and staff members within the NPS were two publications that provided general guidelines for this study. An additional effort by the NPS to map the extant earthworks in Corinth using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) provided detailed information about the existing earthworks. The predominant types of earthworks found in the Corinth/Alcorn County area were identified through the GPS study. The presence of a ditch and the location of the ditch in relation to the parapet were used to establish three basic types of earthwork conditions.

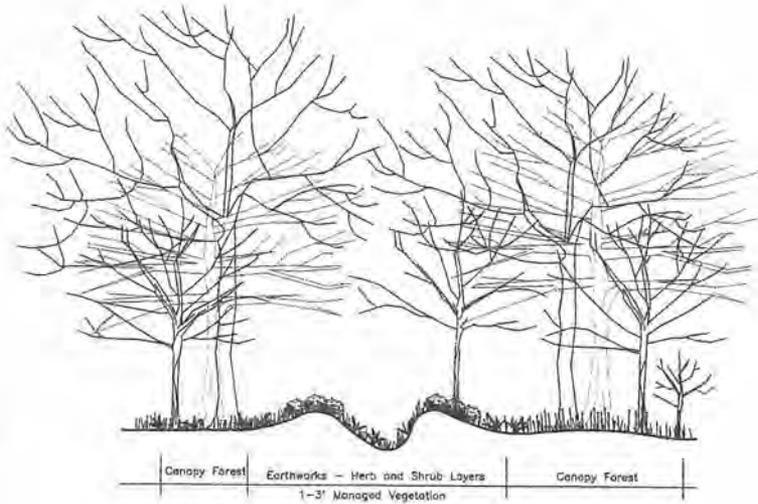
The approximately six miles of earthworks still intact in the Corinth community today represent only twenty percent of the original fortification. Almost half of the extant earthworks are situated under a forest canopy, which is considered the best condition for earthwork preservation. The earthworks are located within fourteen individual sites. Over one-half of the sites are in public

ownership through the efforts of the Siege and Battle of Corinth Commission, which has acquired nine of these sites for future public use and interpretation. A follow-up ISTEIA project is also providing funds for a bikeway system to connect the various earthworks and other Civil War-related sites.

The study recommended several types of vegetative cover as the best method of stabilization. The type varied depending on the degree of interpretation desired. The hardwood forest was de-



EXISTING CONDITIONS OF TYPICAL TRENCHES



PROPOSED REFORESTATION

Stabilization Recommendations for Earthworks at Corinth/Alcorn County, Mississippi.

terminated to be the best vegetative cover; it also allows visual detection of the earthwork. However, windthrows can occur which displace soil and destroy the earthwork; therefore, it is recommended to eventually eliminate mature canopy from earthworks and protect them from further deterioration by the canopy of the surrounding forest. Tallgrass and shortgrass meadows were suggested as appropriate to areas where pedestrian circulation is not encouraged and the protection of a forest canopy is not feasible. A dedicated walking area was suggested to discourage pedestrian circulation on the earthworks.

*Resaca Battlefield Preservation Plan,  
Whitfield and Gordon Counties, Georgia*

The Battle of Resaca was fought May 14 and 15, 1864, in northwest Georgia. It was one of twenty-eight principal battles fought in the state and was the first of nine major battles in the Atlanta Campaign. The battlefield was listed by the U.S. Department of the Interior's American Battlefield Protection Program as a priority site. A matching grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, and the Georgia Civil War Commission funded the Resaca Plan.

The plan analyzed existing conditions; identified significant Civil War resources, particularly the battlefield; identified threats and opportunities for preservation of cultural and natural resources; delineated critical areas worthy of protection; and identified methods for protection. Community participation was an important component of the study, making the plan an action strategy with widespread local support.

The planning approach for this project involved evaluation of both the cultural and natural resources of the study area. One of the key components of the inventory and analysis phase was looking at patterns of property ownership and prioritizing land parcels based on their historic significance and integrity. That is, what role did the site play in the battle and how much had the site changed since that time? Attitudes of property owners also had to be considered in making recommendations for protection and interpretation. The analysis was effective in determining the location of the principal engagement, the zone of the battlefield designated

as the "Critical Planning Area." A major recommendation was to acquire this area for future use as a public park.

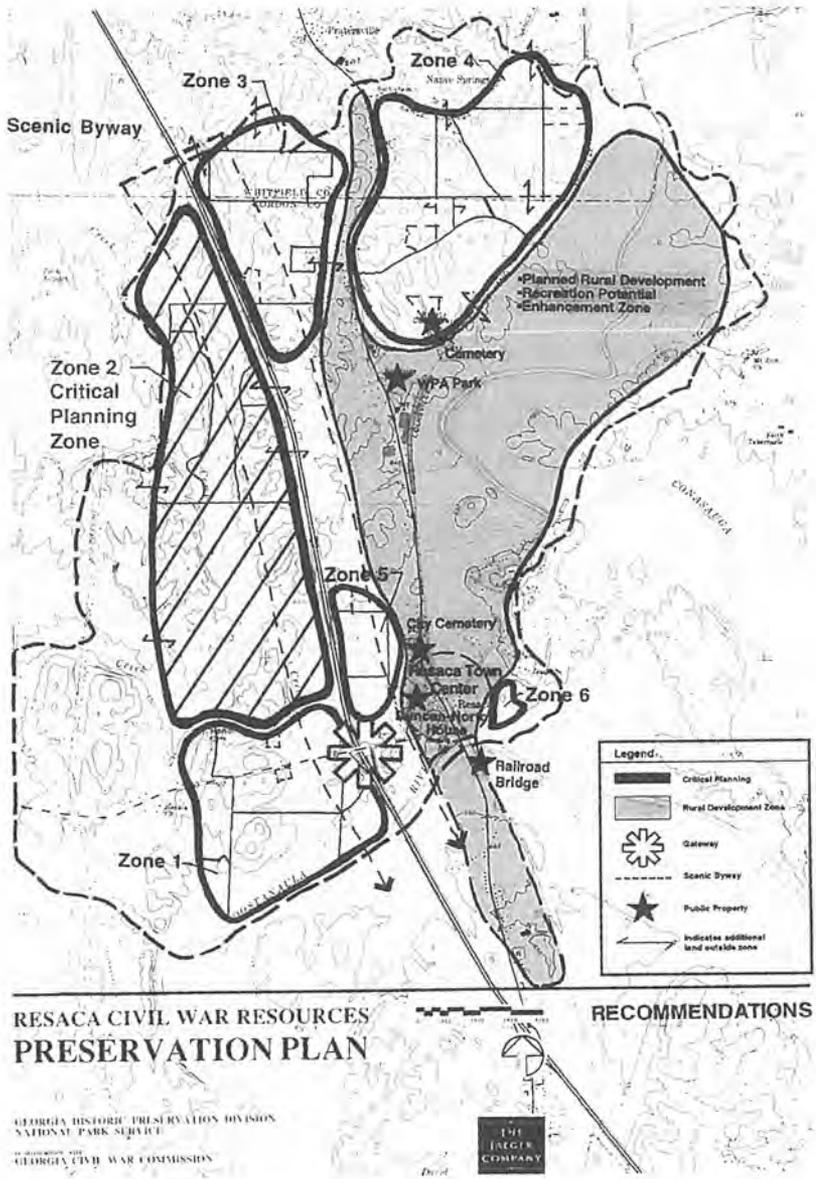
In addition, the study considered how surrounding areas, not specifically the site of engagements, could be improved to complement a future military park. A scenic corridor designation was suggested to visually protect the I-75 corridor from future billboard signs. A "Planned Rural Development Enhancement Zone" was also proposed as an overlay district to existing zoning. A series of enhancement projects was outlined for this zone as well as heritage tourism strategies.

As a direct result of the findings of the Resaca Plan, a local "friends" group has been established and efforts are underway for the creation of a state park. The Georgia Civil War Commission has received over \$2 million of the \$3 million needed to purchase approximately 1,200 acres of pristine farmland, formerly the site of the Battle of Resaca. These funds have come from the state of Georgia and the Civil War Trust. Once the acquisition is complete, Resaca will become an important link between Chickamauga National Military Park and Kennesaw National Battlefield Park in the interpretation of the Civil War and particularly the Atlanta Campaign of 1864.

#### *Grant Park Master Plan*

Grant Park, a 131.5-acre tract of land with numerous large oak trees, rolling topography, and picturesque stone walls and gates, is a rare public green space for the city of Atlanta. Grant Park's history begins with the donation of the land for the park to the city of Atlanta by L.P. Grant in the 1880s. A constant throughout Grant Park's existence is its importance as a natural public landscape. This was the basis for the Olmsted firm's Master Plan created for the park in 1904. The Olmsted firm was the company responsible for the design of Central Park and many other noted parks throughout this country. Firm founder Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. is considered by many the greatest park designer of all times.

From the beginning Grant Park has been appreciated for its interesting topography, natural springs and streams, and lush vegetation. Grant Park provides the opportunity for the preservation of not only an important historical landmark but also the necessary natural open spaces required in our cities.



Recommendations of the Resaca Battlefield Preservation Plan. The findings of the Resaca study were illustrated through a Recommendations Map of the project area, which was divided into a series of zones. For each zone, appropriate actions were suggested for preservation and protection. A major recommendation of the study was the public acquisition of Zone 2. This zone, termed the Critical Planning Area, contained the original, intact battlefield and is slated to become a state military park.

A master planning study is now underway to guide future improvements at Grant Park. The intent of the plan will be to reflect the “spirit and intent of the original Olmsted Brothers design” while responding to contemporary needs. A \$2 million infrastructure improvement program is planned for the park with a special emphasis on stormwater management.

In inventory and analysis studies for the master plan, potential Civil War resources within the site were assessed. The Fort Walker Southeastern Salient of Atlanta’s inner line of fortifications erected during the summer and fall of 1863 is the only visible remains of a former ten and one-half mile earthwork system. Located in the southeast corner of the park on its highest summit, the existing fortifications at Fort Walker are ten feet higher than the adjacent grade.

Fort Walker has long been a hidden resource within the park. Visitors to the adjacent Cyclorama, where the Battle of Atlanta is recounted daily, typically do not realize that a tangible link to the Civil War past is less than a five-minute walk away. In the new master plan for the park, Fort Walker is designated as an interpretive site. An existing playground in close proximity to the earthwork will be relocated and inappropriate vegetation removed. The vegetation treatment recommended in the earthwork study for Corinth and Alcorn County, Mississippi, entrenchments will be applied here.

The Atlanta skyline remains in view from the salient today. John C. Olmsted described it in 1903 as “one of the most enjoyable spots in the park” with a “remarkably fine view of the city, including the State House dome and some of the tall office buildings.” Olmsted’s suggestion that “trees in the valley, which would otherwise in time obscure this view, should be kept cut back” still holds true today.

*Dale M. Jaeger is principal of The Jaeger Company of Gainesville, Georgia, a firm specializing in historic preservation, landscape architecture, and planning. She received her master’s degree in landscape architecture from the School of Environmental Design, University of Georgia, and her B. A. degree from Brenau College. The Jaeger Company assisted Wake Forest University in the restoration of Reynolda Gardens. The firm, with Ms. Jaeger’s involvement, has also worked on a number of other historic landscape efforts at locations throughout the Southeast.*

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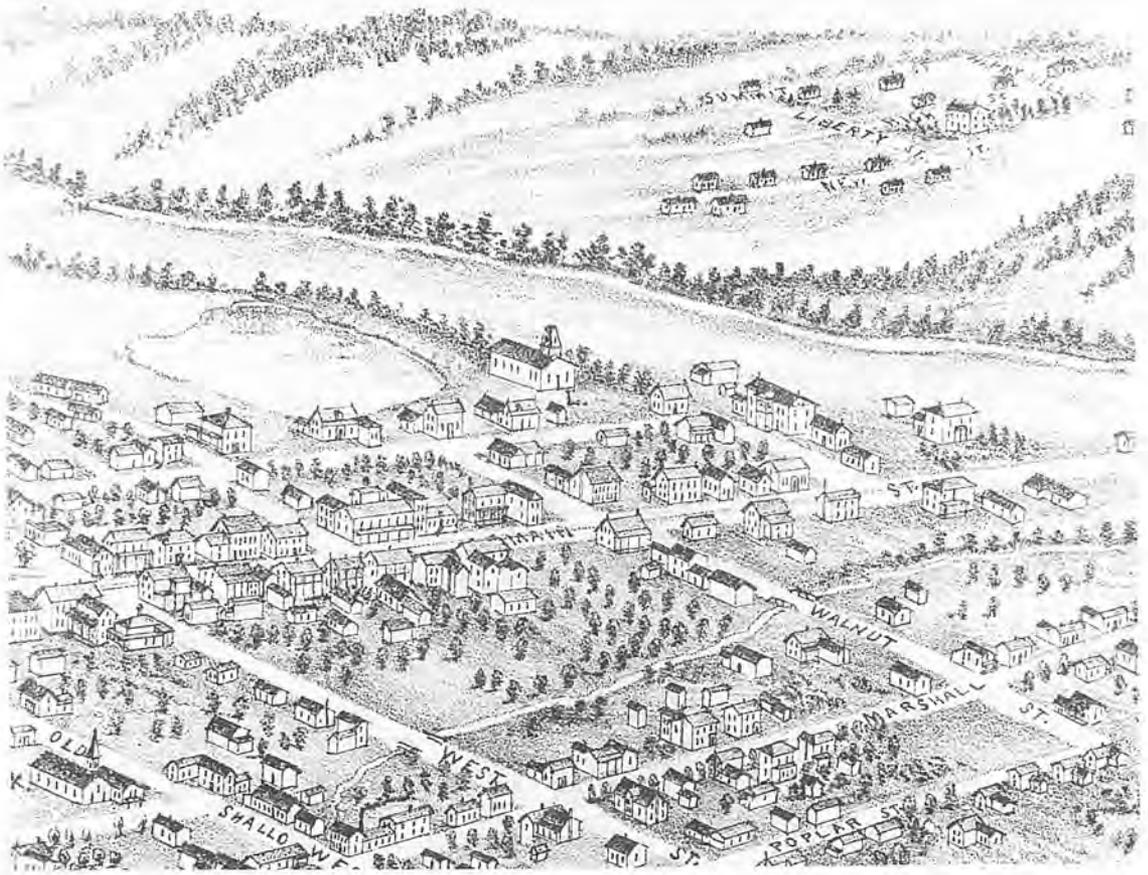


*Gene Capps*

## *Historical Sketch of the Happy Hill Landscape*

Happy Hill, located across Salem Creek from Old Salem just southeast of downtown Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is the city's oldest African American neighborhood. The hillside on which it is situated was first cleared for a three hundred-acre farm by the Moravians in 1768, two years after they founded Salem. From its inception, Salem was planned as a church-governed trading center with food supplied to the tradesmen and their families by several large farms or "plantations" near the town. The so-called "plantation beyond the Wach" was planned to supply Salem with dairy products, eggs, vegetables, and grains. For many years the farm was leased to a series of European American Moravian farmers. The farm had dwindled to one hundred acres when Dr. Friedrich Schumann moved there with his enslaved "Negro" family in early 1816. This was the beginning of the documented history of Africans and their descendants on this land.

In 1872, after resistance by townspeople in Salem, the Moravian Church began selling lots on



From a Roger and Stoner 1891 *Bird's-eye view of the Twin Cities, Winston-Salem, North Carolina* showing Happy Hill in the upper right corner. St. Philips Church can be seen in the center. (Photograph from Old Salem, Inc.)

the former Schumann farm. Thirty-eight 100' x 200' lots were laid out with a selling price of ten dollars each. Although Salem authorities suggested the settlement be called Liberia, the *People's Press* reported on February 19, 1874, that "several building lots were laid out east of this place and beyond corporate limits, some of which have been taken by colored persons. New Liberia alias 'Happy Hill' is growing to be a village. Several houses have been recently erected."

This community was one of the first in the South where those previously enslaved could purchase a plot of land. Many of the African Americans who moved to Winston in the late 1800s for



William McLeod standing in front of his home on Liberia Street. c. 1935. Notice the stand holding plants in tin buckets and the more formal twig planter on the porch. (Photograph courtesy of Dr. William McLeod.)

jobs in tobacco manufacturing were housed in shanties near the factories and railroads. Several would later “move up” to Happy Hill, where they could own their own home. In the early 1950s much of this sense of pride in ownership would be reversed when subsidized rental housing was built, landlocking the original settlement. Even with the encroachment of apartments, a railroad, a state highway, and several utility lines, however, the original Happy Hill still survives.

Old Salem, Inc., is presently involved in a long-range project to document the history of Happy Hill through the collection of oral histories and early photographs. Directed by Mel White, Old Salem’s director of African American programs, twenty-three individuals have been interviewed so far and nearly one thousand photographs have been copied and catalogued. In early 1998 a major exhibit at The Gallery in Old Salem, *Across The Creek from Salem*, brought the community’s rich history to public awareness for the first time.

At present no major effort has been made to document the landscape history of Happy Hill. Luckily, most of the photographs that have been archived were made outside, but the photographs in almost all instances were made of people with little concern for including landscape features. A casual survey of the photographs suggests that the landscape history of Happy Hill from 1872 up to the present follows that of many working-class neighborhoods in the South during that same period.

Few of the photographs date from the 1800s, but those that are extant combined with oral and written history indicate that outbuildings such as chicken houses, outhouses, barns, and sheds, dotted the late nineteenth-century landscape. Most houses had vegetable gardens; some land was farmed or used as pasture. In photographs, weeds and grasses flourished around houses, outbuildings, and swept yards. Occasionally there are brick and stone paths leading across dirt yards to front doors.

Photographs dating from the early years of this century, a period from which many more photographs are available, show that more ornamental plants begin to appear in some yards, but they are often like sentinels standing alone or with only a few other plantings. (It should be noted, however, that in grainy black and white photographs it is often difficult to distinguish ornamentals

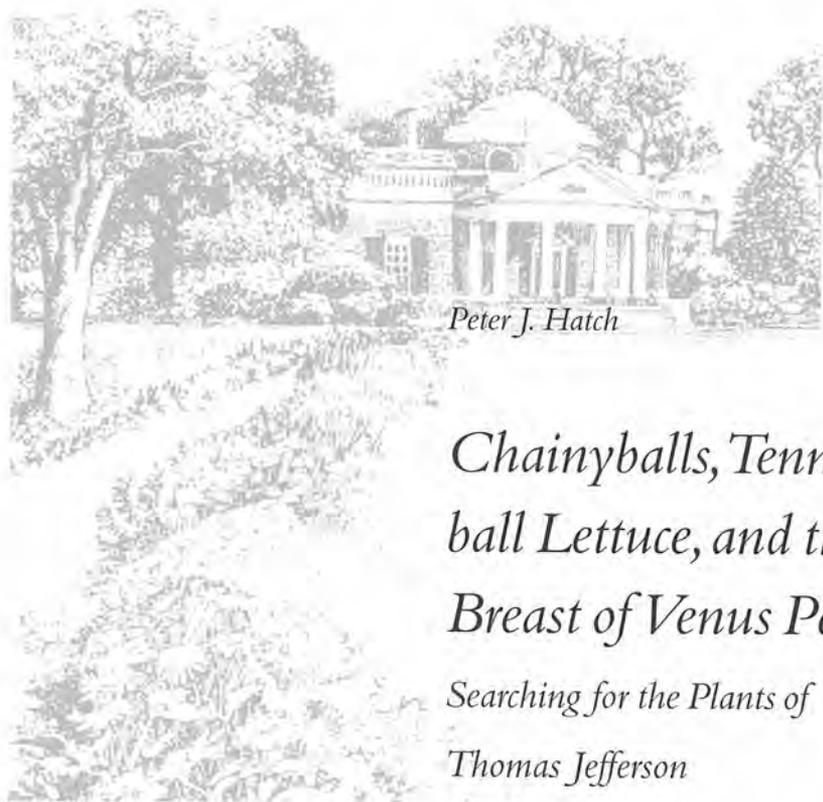


C. 1930 photograph of a street in Happy Hill. Small frame houses, including single and double shot-guns, dirt streets, and gardens would have been found throughout the Happy Hill neighborhood. (Photograph courtesy of Old Salem, Inc.)

from weeds.) Wooden flower boxes, tin buckets, and cook pots planted with house and yard plants show up on a few porches, on stoops, and occasionally under trees.

The homes of more affluent residents in the 1930s and 1940s have foundation plantings, clipped hedges, and more cultivated grass yards. In a few photographs, flower gardens are obvious. These generally have flowers and shrubs planted at random over a wide area. Only a few concrete yard ornaments are visible.

*Gene Capps is vice-president and director of interpretation for Old Salem, Inc. He joined the Old Salem staff as director of education and interpretation in 1971 shortly after receiving his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has served on the Old Salem landscape restoration committee since its inception in 1972 and has been involved in the planning of all Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes conferences. Although he has been a student of Happy Hill's history and an active supporter of its recognition, much of the information presented in this article represents the work of researcher S. Scott Rohrer and Old Salem's director of African American programs, Mel White.*



*Peter J. Hatch*

## *Chainyballs, Tennis- ball Lettuce, and the Breast of Venus Peach*

*Searching for the Plants of*

*Thomas Jefferson*

All Southerners know the chinaberry (*Melia azedarach*). It is a child's tree that grows quickly with a mathematical regularity and an umbrella-like branching habit. In the winter its skeletal shape is like a child's stick drawing, happily ornamented with pendulous clusters of grape-size berries. In 1783 Thomas Jefferson planted sixteen in the Monticello Grove, which was partly an ornamental forest but also a collection of what one eighteenth-century visitor described as Jefferson's "pet trees." Personal tours of the house and grounds included a rambling survey of the curious and exotic botanical subjects so abundant at Monticello.

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, which now owns and operates Monticello, began re-creating the Grove in 1978. We planted the six-

teen chinaberries as Jefferson had specified—in a formal, circular pattern at the edge of the West Lawn—and the trees, purchased from a Tennessee nursery as six-foot poles, at first thrived. The regular pattern was broken, however, by a substantial European larch (*Larix decidua*), that now occupies the precise location where Jefferson had once planted an earlier chinaberry. The larch is no infant, but rather, as a boring and tree ring count proved, a stoic survivor of an 1816 planting. This original larch, despite being classified as a conifer, loses its needles during the winter and looks very much like a dead pine tree; in fact, one can still see the scar where over-zealous groundsmen had begun cutting the “old dead pine.” Still, the survival of the larch confirmed our suspicions that the chinaberry was not hardy as far north as Charlottesville, that Jefferson’s trees had simply succumbed to the cold and had been replaced. And indeed, in a vivid re-creation of living history, the following winter brought a paralyzing blast of arctic air that killed fourteen of our dear chinaberries.

As most Southerners know, the chinaberry is not a rare tree; worldly plantsmen would call it a “weed” or a “trash” tree, and indeed one finds it naturalized throughout the Southeast, along fence rows, beside shacks—wherever human settlement seems forsaken and the cultivated world abandoned. It is a tree so scorned that, despite our initial successful location of a nursery source, by 1981 there was not a nursery in America to supply new stock. The nearest colonies of wild chinaberries are in North Carolina, so I called two friends, Al and Susan, both attorneys who live across the state line in Warren County, to suggest a week-end devoted to the collection of wild chinaberries. Although initially Al did not understand what I was after, my description suddenly struck some primal Southern memory. “Chainyballs,” he roared, “you want some chainyballs, boy.”

That Saturday we drove the roads of Warren County, surveyed the edges of bleak winter fields, and visually combed every chicken coop, abandoned dog pen, and brush-infested bottle pile. Unfortunately, most of the prospective trees were too large to transplant. By mid-afternoon we had only seven gaunt specimens, two or three of them nicely shaped with abundant fibrous roots, but the rest were either a rootless mass of small suckers or else large, ungainly trunks of splintered branches.

When we returned to Al and Susan's home, Al received a phone call from an indigent client wanting to get out of jail. Al grudgingly agreed to help, and in a rush of brilliance, suggested his services could best be remunerated with sixteen chainyball trees. We all laughed. If we had searched every chicken coop in Warren County, combed every abandoned dog pen with the hawk eye of Monticello's professional horticulturist, where were these undiscovered, transplantable chainyballs? And yet, next morning the trees arrived—straight trunked, bundled neatly, and well rooted.

The chainyball story illustrates the uneasy relationship of gardening to history, the tension between landscape horticulture and historical restoration, the dilemmas faced by a historic gardener. For the sake of historic accuracy we planted a "weed tree," a brittle pestilential nuisance, in defiance of all modern horticultural and design dictates. Moreover, it was a tree that died for us exactly as it had died for Jefferson. The chainyball story also demonstrates the legitimacy of and even the necessity for accurate historic plantings. Imagine the chainyballs, a child's stick tree with its pendulous cluster of berries, in the foreground framing this classic image, this American shrine. Might this not alter, in some subtle way, a historic judgment of Jefferson himself?

Jefferson's interest in horticulture extended far beyond the casual efforts of a Virginia gentleman tastefully decorating his table and estate. The geographic origins of the plants grown at Monticello attest to the reach of his gardening imagination from the Mandan corn and Arikara bean discovered by Lewis and Clark, to the thirty-five varieties of *vinifera*, or European grape, grown in the experimental vineyard; from the upland rice Jefferson smuggled home from France, to exotic flowering trees recently introduced from China, such as the mimosa, golden rain tree, and yes, the chinaberry. When Jefferson wrote "the greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its culture,"<sup>2</sup> he assumed the role of an aggressive plantsman, and Monticello became an experimental station of new and unusual introductions from around the world. Probably no early American gardener wrote about his garden as much as Jefferson. His Garden Book is a remarkable document, detailing a lifetime of sowing cabbages, harvesting peas and manuring asparagus, sketching

dreamy visions of romantic grottoes, and concisely recording the culture of 250 vegetable and 170 fruit varieties.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Jefferson was crazy about gardening.

When Jefferson referred to his “garden,” he, like most early American gardeners, was referring to his kitchen or vegetable garden. The Foundation committed itself to the restoration of the eight-acre garden and orchard in 1979. To complement the ample documentation of the site provided by Jefferson’s records, an archaeological crew was employed to trace original fence lines, uncover the garden’s vast retaining wall, and look for other details that would enable the restoration to begin. A remarkable discovery was the exact location of fifty-eight of the original orchard trees, discernable by the dark stains in Monticello’s red clay soil, the planting pattern nearly identical to one drawn by Jefferson in 1778.<sup>4</sup> The use of archaeology in the landscape raises new challenges and dilemmas for the gardener. A restoration of the orchard demanded not only replanting in the precise, newly unveiled locations, but also the retrieval of the specific variety of fruit Jefferson himself planted.

Other Virginia estates, much less fussed over than Monticello, vividly retain the genius of the early nineteenth-century landscape. An example is Bremo, which was constructed in the 1820s by an acquaintance of Jefferson, John Hartwell Cocke, along the James River forty miles south of Monticello. Here the original garden wall surrounds age-old boxwood-bordered parterres, which are still slightly elevated and so define the flowerbeds. Bulbs and vines still bloom after 160 years. Original trees—massive, scarred, and battered about, some half-dead—suggest a garden long undisturbed by man. In 1817 Cocke sent a slave to collect specimens of the Marseilles fig at Monticello. Jefferson had brought the fig from France in 1786 and described it as “incomparably superior to any fig I had ever seen.”<sup>5</sup> The current residents claimed the Marseilles fig still survives by the original stable at Bremo, thriving in a southern-exposed sanctuary and flourishing through the efforts of gardeners, who yearly would pin the long fig branches to the ground, cover them with straw, and so ensure that this tender shrub would be unscathed by the Virginia winter. In return for the fig, Cocke had sent Jefferson some scuppernong wine, “of delicious flavor,”<sup>6</sup> and five days later Jefferson noted the

planting of five scuppernong vines in his vineyard.<sup>7</sup> Both the Bre-mo fig and grape are now at Monticello; unfortunately the fig proved not to be the Marseilles. Nevertheless, the grape is a living scion of Jefferson's horticultural imagination, its retrieval the most exciting and satisfying of historic plant exploring.

The process of locating Jefferson's fruit and vegetable varieties, even his flowers, involves the initial step of identification. Jefferson's personal nomenclature for a plant type could be descriptive, although often unrelated to the specific names described in the fruit and vegetable literature of the nineteenth century. When Jefferson referred to "Balyal's soft November peach" in his Garden Book, he was alluding to a very late-bearing, freestone variety that had come from one of his workmen, Abraham Balyal. One could never find such a variety listed or described in William Coxe's *A View Toward the Cultivation of Fruit Trees* published in 1817 and the first American pomological work with varietal descriptions.<sup>8</sup> About sixty percent of the fruit varieties and twenty percent of the vegetable varieties grown at Monticello were described in the literature. The identification of the variety is essential not only to focus on and pursue the plant but, ultimately, to verify that the variety to be restored to the gardens of Monticello is indeed true in name. The Bre-mo fig which turned out not to be Marseilles is an example.

The first apples planted in America were either unique, named English varieties that had been grafted and transported with great difficulty, or else seedlings of these prized varieties whose evocative names often ended with "pearmain" (like a pear), "codlin" (a hard, green cooking apple), "pippin" (the original tree grew from a pip, or seed), or "russetin" (a distinct flaking of the skin). When planted alongside each other, the seedlings thrived while the grafted English sorts suffered, perhaps from the heat and humidity, perhaps from the neglect of growers who were only tolerant of quick, uninterrupted growth. Every seedling apple is in fact a new variety. The only true means of propagating a fruit tree, of duplicating the parent variety, is by asexual means, budding or grafting. Middle-class farm orchards before 1800 were usually planted with seedling trees, partly because it was more economical but mostly because the variations of the ensuing apple were irrelevant when cider production was the goal. Apples in the gentleman's fruit gar-

den, another distinct form of fruit-growing that was influenced by the Old World example, were grafted. But it was the variability, and the resultant desirability of the seedling apples that accounted for the first stirrings of serious horticulture in America during the eighteenth century. These seedling apples, discovered and named on middle-class farms throughout the heartland, ultimately defined a distinctive form of New World horticulture relatively untinged by the European example: the Old World fruit garden planted with European pears, plums, apples, and apricots.

In 1926 a publication of the Department of Agriculture, *Nomenclature of the Apple*, listed nearly 19,000 varietal names that had appeared in American publications during the nineteenth century. The colorful and evocative names reflect the unique flavors of another era—Northern Spy, Winter Banana, Westfield Seek No Further, Sheepnose, Black Gilliflower. What a contrast these are to the bland names of today's newest varieties—Spartan, Empire, Freedom, and Red Delicious. Many of the older varieties have disappeared from commercial production because their appearance does not match the expectations of the public, who want a big, red, shiny apple. Many older varieties only bear every other year or are particularly susceptible to diseases like scab or mildew. With the introduction of cold storage facilities, the esteemed keeping qualities of some, the Roxbury Russet for example, became irrelevant. Still, there is no better image of the homogenization of American life than the story of the evolution of the apple. Old apples even taste better. Their aromatic flavor endures like a good memory.

There are numerous collectors—organizations, state institutions, and private individuals—of old apple varieties.<sup>9</sup> These collections have been inspired by both the apple's association with early American culture and the fine flavors of older varieties. However, the ultimate value of these repositories may lie in the broad base of varietal characteristics that, through future breeding efforts, may provide resistance to some potential virus that could someday threaten the apple industry. The Hewe's Crab for example, was the most important horticultural cultivar in eighteenth-century Virginia. This small, maverick apple was a cross between the traditional apple of pomology and the native Southern crabapple, *Malus angustifolia*. It has no value as a dessert apple and

was cultivated exclusively for its cider-making qualities, a feature especially admired at Monticello where it was the essential ingredient in Jefferson's cider. Because of its New World bloodlines, the Hewe's is an extremely hardy tree with a vigorous and robust growth habit. It survived the decline of cider production by functioning as a rootstock upon which to graft less vigorous and hardy dessert apples. Certainly it has value in the breeding of future apple varieties, but the Hewe's Crab also offers a good example of a rather simplistic Darwinian theory on the persistence of older varieties—that the fittest survive.

The Taliaferro (pronounced "Toliver") apple rivaled, then later supplanted the Hewe's Crab as the primary cider variety at Monticello. Jefferson described it as "the most juicy apple I have ever known," and praised its cider, which was "more like wine than any liquor I have ever tasted which was not wine."<sup>10</sup> He recalled the discovery of the apple by a Major Taliaferro of Gloucester County "in a large old field near Williamsburg where the seed had probably been dropped by some bird."<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, Jefferson never described the apple itself, and it was not until 1835 that William Kenrick, in *The New American Orchardist*, described the fruit as "the size of a grape shot, or from one to two inches in diameter; of white color, streaked with red; with a sprightly acid [taste]."<sup>12</sup> After walking the abandoned peanut fields of Tidewater, Virginia, tasting white apples that were not juicy, juicy apples that were mostly red, even visiting land once owned by the ubiquitous Taliaferro family, I have concluded that this apple has disappeared. While the vigor of the Hewe's ensured its preservation by modern breeders, the propagating zeal of Southern cider connoisseurs has sadly passed, and perhaps with it the Taliaferro apple.

Just as the apple is a superb image for the diversity of early American life, so was the peach an early symbol for the fertility and abundance of the New World. Peach trees, introduced into Florida by Europeans and carried north by American Indians, escaped so successfully from cultivation that some naturalists regarded them as a native plant.<sup>13</sup> Descriptions of the peach tree's precocious place in the eighteenth-century landscape suggest it was one of the South's first weeds.<sup>14</sup> Travelers marveled at early orchards so slippery with fallen peaches that walking through them was impossible.<sup>15</sup> As with the apple, early peach orchards had many func-

tions: peach brandy was a popular liquor, peaches were commonly fed to hogs and other livestock, and Jefferson used this vigorous-growing tree as a hedge, even as a firewood source. Because there was no need to duplicate the qualities of the parent variety when firewood or peach brandy was the goal, orchards were easily planted with peach pits. The resulting peach would occasionally possess meritorious qualities, which were then preserved through naming the variety and propagating the offspring by budding and grafting. Unfortunately, American peach varieties have not survived like apples, and Hedrick observed in 1950 that only four varieties known prior to 1900 were still in cultivation.<sup>16</sup> Mr. Hedrick perhaps exaggerated, but because peach trees only live, at best, twenty years, and since it seems more difficult to discern the qualities, especially the appearance and taste, of one peach from another, we have been fortunate to revive ten early nineteenth-century varieties in the restored South Orchard at Monticello.

Many of Jefferson's peaches were European in origin, and some had been sent by Philip Mazzei, an Italian statesman-agriculturist that Jefferson had persuaded, at least temporarily, to settle on land adjacent to Monticello in 1774. One of Mazzei's peaches, sent from Italy in 1806, was the Poppa di Venere, the Breast of Venus, among Jefferson's favorites and one that he rather unabashedly referred to as the "teat peach."<sup>17</sup> I was eager to find descriptions and illustrations of the Breast of Venus and other Italian peaches, and I was aware of a copy of the lavishly illustrated *Pomona Italiana*<sup>18</sup> by Giorgio Gallesio in the rare book room of a local library. I approached the curator timidly. Although I was not seeking chainy-ball trees, I was a smudge-fingered gardener wanting to peel back the delicate bindings of one of his precious volumes. The curator agreed and I spent the day with Mr. Gallesio. In the descriptive text accompanying the illustrations, Gallesio noted that many of the fruits were drawn from Mazzei's Tuscan orchard, including the Breast of Venus, and—who knows, a holy coincidence—were perhaps the very same fruits and scions relayed to Jefferson in 1806.

One can only sympathize with the ordeal of transferring plants across the ocean in the early nineteenth century. Poor packing techniques, pirates, naval blockades, and the indignities of delayed communications continually frustrated Jefferson. Many of the geographic, horticultural, and bureaucratic obstacles persist to the

present day. My collecting appetite was duly stirred by Gallesio's luxurious illustrations, and while the Poppa di Venere peach has disappeared from cultivation in America, I found a source at an experimental fruit station in Italy. Their staff responded to my request for scion wood and initially seemed to understand the elaborate procedures for importation—unless the plant or bud-stick can be certified virus-free, the U.S. Department of Agriculture must quarantine it. Only a limited number of commercial varieties are so certified however, and so the Breast of Venus required quarantine period in the USDA's Beltsville, Maryland, nurseries.

Still, there was a serious flaw in our Italian-English communications, and the initial shipment of bud-sticks was addressed to Monticello rather than to the USDA. The package arrived in New York, where an officious customs officer called to notify me that our scionwood was promptly to be incinerated. The next year I dealt with a French nurseryman, who forwarded our scions appropriately to Beltsville—but during May, when the station's necessary root stock had all been used. It was the third year before all procedures went smoothly; the forms arrived from Beltsville officially announcing at first delivery, then propagation, and finally—low and behold—that the young trees were indeed established in the quarantined nursery. Nine years passed until the quarantine of the Breast of Venus peach was lifted (the delay was attributed to government budget problems), and in the summer of 1993 Monticello gardeners finally received the scion wood and propagated the plants. In 1995 these trees began bearing; after fourteen years of searching and waiting, the fruit proved not to be the Breast of Venus. We have not only commiserated with Jefferson's own struggles with stocking his orchards but also learned two great lessons of gardening—persistence and patience. The search, however, continues.

Deciphering Jefferson's personal names for varieties, then tracing the evolution of these names to the present, is a key to the puzzle-solving process so necessary in the location of what Jefferson called his "precious fruits." For example, he received cuttings of a peach named "Carolina Canada" in 1807. This was certainly the cultivar, Kennedy Carolina, named for a Mr. Kennedy who discovered a choice seedling in South Carolina. By 1817, William Coxe had renamed it "large yellow pine apple," and by the turn of

the century it was the Lemon Cling, still commercially available today. In some cases, the older varieties have not changed or disappeared, but their names have been altered to accommodate the passing fancies of the consumer public. Both the “black plumb peach of Georgia” and the “blood” peach were sent to Monticello. Coxe illustrated the identical type as the “Cherokee,” the same peach we now know as the Indian Red or Blood Cling.

The Spanish first brought the Blood Cling to Florida and Mexico in the sixteenth century, and it gradually migrated northward. Its ability to come true from seed, an exceptional attribute among fruit trees, was partly responsible for its seemingly spontaneous presence among seventeenth-century Indian tribes in the American Southeast. European explorers were astonished by the existence of such an Old World fruit thriving in the American wilderness. Just as the Hewes’ Crab has survived because of its robust growth and cold hardiness, so has the Blood Cling persisted because it will reproduce without the aid of propagators—qualities irrelevant to a choice fruit fancier, yet perhaps important in future breeding. As well, both the Blood Cling and the Lemon Cling are oddball fruits, surviving partly because of their unusual shape, taste, and coloring. The only nectarine variety grown in the nineteenth century and still available today is the Violet Hative, a purple-skinned curiosity.

Establishing and sustaining the lives of Jefferson’s “precious” varieties presents both problems and dilemmas. The Newtown Pippin is still commonly offered in the trade, so when we were planting the orchard we simply ordered fruit trees from a reputable commercial source. Six years later the trees began bearing. They were not Newtown Pippins. When informed, the nurseryman seemed genuinely saddened and wondered “whether after all these years I’ve been doing more harm than good.” I commiserated with the man’s blunder, although we had lost twelve years in the maturity of the orchard. It is a common practice for American nurseries to sell stock that is not true to name. Their carelessness is encouraged by the casual ignorance of the American garden consumer. As early as the seventeenth century, John Parkinson, the great English herbalist, wrote: “It is an inherent quality almost hereditary with most of them [commercial nurseries] to sell any mean and ordinary fruit for whatsoever rare fruit he [the con-

sumer] shall aske for: so little they are to be trusted.”<sup>19</sup> The only defense, especially when dealing with historical varieties, is to use pomological descriptions to properly identify the plant you seek.

### *Tennis-ball Lettuce*

*In the neighborhood where I was a boy, they cultivated a certain exquisite watermelon which weighs about a hundred pounds; they have now lost the seeds. The same thing happened to a type of lettuce superior to all others. People will follow the fashion, in their food as well as their clothing, and interest has obliged the cultivators to adjust to this . . .*

—Philip Mazzei to Thomas Jefferson, 1805

Mazzei’s lament describes the plight of today’s historic seed savers. Unlike fruit trees, which often live for hundreds of years, most vegetables are annuals, and their seed has a restricted viability. When Jefferson wrote “I am curious to select only one or two of the best species or variety of every vegetable,” he was describing the scientific process so essential to his experimental garden. The proliferation of varieties enabled him to selectively eliminate inferior types, so he could declare of the Carnation cherry that “no other type deserves the name cherry,” or that the Arikara bean “is one of the most excellent that we have had. I have found one kind only superior to them, but being very sensibly so, I shall abandon the Ricaras.”<sup>20</sup> Just as Jefferson would discard an inferior bean, so have many other vegetable varieties been lost over the last 150 years, overlooked often because of inferior taste, lack of productivity or resistance to disease, or more recently, an inability to adapt to mechanized methods of culture, harvesting, or transportation. Other older varieties are the lost parents of our modern hybrids, and their genetic character lies buried within the super-bred varieties of today’s seed catalogues.

The issue is further complicated by the lack of documentation as to the character of early vegetable varieties. While McMahon, Jefferson, and other writers and gardeners give us names, there were no varietal descriptions until the publication of Fearing Burr’s *The Field and Garden Vegetables of America* in 1863.<sup>21</sup> Again, one of the pitfalls of attempting to describe and locate Jefferson’s vegetable varieties lies in his personal nomenclature. He often list-

ed varieties according to the person from whom he received the seed ("Leitch's pea"), its place of origin ("Tuscan bean"), or a detailed physical characteristic such as color ("Yellow carrot") or season of harvest ("forward pea"). There is no local literature that describes "Leitch's pea," and should someone give us what he called "Leitch's pea," there is no way to verify that his is the same as Jefferson's. We often compromise with vegetables and are pleased to restore any nineteenth-century variety to the garden.

As with fruit trees, early Americans relied on European vegetable seeds, varieties that at least one author, U.P. Hedrick, suggests had changed little since classical Rome. Jefferson acknowledged the reliance on European stock in a letter to a Parisian friend in 1786: "We import annually from England to every part of America garden seeds of all sorts. You may judge therefore that these & what we raise from them furnish garden vegetables in good perfection. The only garden vegetable I find here [in Paris] better than ours, is the turnip."<sup>22</sup> Certainly, these European varieties were altered as they adapted to the New World soil and climate, as superior strains were selected and annually replanted, harvested, then selected again. But it was not until the boom of plant breeding in the latter half of the nineteenth century that distinct American varieties were developed that supplanted the earlier European types. Large commercial seedhouses employed plant breeders, and the ensuing competition resulted in famous strains—from Henderson's bush lima bean to Ferry's Extra Early Tom Thumb pea. Still, many older varieties were merely slapped with a new name. The Long Green cucumber became the Improved Long Green and the Blue Prussian pea became the Alaska, so named after a steamship that could cross the Atlantic in the same number of days in which the pea would come into bearing.

The English pea was probably Jefferson's favorite vegetable. He grew seventeen varieties, many of them adapted for early planting and quick growth—two features that, when compounded by the favorable southern aspect of the garden itself, provided Jefferson with a clear advantage in the neighborhood pea contests. Whoever brought the first English pea to table in the spring would host a community dinner, which of course included a feast on the winning dish of peas. That Jefferson won the pea contest only once cannot be blamed on the varieties he grew, varieties no longer in

our Burpee's catalogue but renowned among nineteenth-century gardeners for whom the first spring pea relieved a long, dreary winter diet. The names of the Jefferson varieties were legend—Charlton Hotspur, Early Frame, Leadman's Dwarf, Spanish Morrotto, Blue Prussian, Early Pearl, Early May, Marrowfat—but aside from their frantic (Hotspur) early spring growth, older pea varieties are considered mealier than our present varieties and perhaps better suited for split pea soup than as the centerpiece of a gentleman's table.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the evolution of these varieties, their ultimate demise and replacement by superior strains, has been accomplished by unceasing selection, by continually choosing, for example, the tenderest pea in the row and repeating the process until consistent quality enables a seedsman to name the variety itself.

Although our Monticello pea collection is noteworthy, it is difficult to ascertain its precise synonymy with the original cultivars. The Charlton Hotspur, for example, was the pre-eminent pea in America (and in England) before 1800, when its popularity was replaced by the Early Frame—a process duplicated at Monticello. By the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Prince Albert became the most popular variety, Fearing Burr felt the three were virtually identical.<sup>24</sup> So, our possession of the Prince Albert seems a satisfactory substitute. The Leadman's Dwarf was one of the very few vegetables technically described in McMahon's *Calendar*, yet it is considered identical to the Dwarf White Sugar still offered by commercial seedhouses. The Blue Prussian, also originating in Europe, is described as the father of the Alaska, perhaps the most popular pea now grown in family gardens. The Blue Prussian has been re-introduced from Ethiopia, and we obtained seeds through the Seed Savers Exchange. The Early May is still listed by a Canadian seedhouse, yet it is difficult to verify its antiquity. The Champion of England is another variety in our collection, although there is no documentation verifying that Jefferson grew it. It was the first wrinkled pea introduced into America that is still grown today. U.P. Hedrick analyzed the problem in *The Peas of New York*:

*The introducer of a new variety sustained his claims of superiority by comparison . . . with some of the deteriorating strains of the parent variety;*

while other growers, who were fortunate enough to have carefully selected strains of the parent variety to compare with its offspring, pronounced the latter no improvement; and relegated the new name to the list of synonyms. This process, repeated through three centuries . . . has given us a multitude of synonyms . . . for varieties practically identical.<sup>25</sup>

In many ways, the study of the evolution of vegetable varieties is the study of names and synonyms. Controversial plant patenting legislation enacted by Common Market countries has been justified as both a means of protecting seed breeders and as a way to systematically define the proper name for a specific variety. Critics like Laurence Hills, director of the Henry Doubleday Foundation, the English equivalent to the Rodale-directed organic gardening movement in America, have said that the legislation has banned “the Goyas and Rembrandts of the kitchen garden” in an effort to impose uniformity of variety names.<sup>26</sup> Defenders claim that only obsolete synonyms are banned. All would concur that older varieties have had their names altered to meet marketing demands and consumer tastes.

Jefferson’s yearly cultivation of the tomato was a reflection of the sophistication and experimental nature of his gardening efforts. He credited a Williamsburg physician, John de Sequeyra, with introducing it into Virginia as early as 1745. It was de Sequeyra who linked tomato consumption with longevity and even immortality.<sup>27</sup> Although the stories of the early rejection of the tomato are legend—the actual feast on a genuine fruit before incredulous courthouse audiences—Bernard McMahon was able to say the tomato was “very much admired” as early as 1806. Certainly by the late 1830s it was becoming a standard item in many kitchen gardens. Jefferson’s “large Spanish” variety was probably the type grown for centuries in southern Europe and distinguished by the heavily lobed, ribbed, almost convoluted shape of the fruit. The Large Red, a variety that shares the characteristic lobed and ribbed effect (William White in *Gardening for the South*, 1859, described it as “patty-pan shaped”<sup>28</sup>), was virtually the only large culinary tomato variety in America prior to the late 1850s. Breeders then developed a new variety, the Trophy, which crossed the smoother, small-fruited, so-called “cherry” tomato with the large patty-pan-shaped Large Red to develop the fruit we so

cherish today. The varietal names, Large Red and “large Spanish,” are obviously fuzzy terms, and when we received seed of the Large Red from the Seed Savers Exchange the resulting tomatoes did not match the description given by William White or Fearing Burr. So our goal has been a large, heavily lobed tomato, characteristics found in the red strain of the Ponderosa, still popular yet introduced late in the nineteenth century.

Jefferson was primarily a vegetarian and ate meat only “as a condiment” to his meals. Lettuce was a major component of his diet and some years he planted it every two weeks through the growing season. We obtained seed of the Tennis-ball, a French variety that eventually became our Boston type, from the National Seed Storage Laboratory in Fort Collins, Colorado, a repository of what is called “vegetable germ plasm.” We planted it in the garden and our Executive Director, using a Jeffersonian superlative as only a Monticello scholar could, officially announced that “this is the finest lettuce I have ever tasted.” Before I could halt the rapacious band of lettuce thieves, the tidy rows of Tennis-ball lettuce had disappeared. I did not object to our employee’s right to a delicious vegetable, but there were now no plants left to form seed, obviously a necessary ingredient for the regeneration of our Tennis-ball lettuce. I had saved a small sample at the bottom of the seed packet for disasters such as this, but it was late in the season when the second crop of plants began flowering. I brought them into our greenhouse, and while the seeds eventually formed, they were small, sparsely filled, and ultimately of little use due to the transplanting shock and the weakened winter light. Instead of admitting my failure to the Seed Bank (it was in some ways a loan, the interest being the return of the seed) I found a surrogate to reapply for more Tennis-ball lettuce. Our efforts were eventually successful, our seed crops became more plentiful, and we soon offered seed through the Seed Savers Exchange.

### *The “Painted Ladies”*

*Nothing new has happened in our neighborhood since you left us; the house and the trees stand where they did; the flowers come forth like the belles of the day, have their short reign of beauty and splendor, and retire like them, to the more interesting office of reproducing their like. The Hy-*

*acinths and Tulips are off the stage, and Irises are giving place to the Bel-ladonnas, as these will to the Tuberoses, etc.; as your mama has done to you, my dear Anne, as you will do to the sisters of little John, and as I shall soon and cheerfully do to you all in wishing to you a long, long good-night.*

—Jefferson to Anne Cary Randolph, 1811

It is difficult to generalize about the character of early American garden flowers. However, Jefferson's own image, the flower garden as theater, the flowers themselves as the "belles of the day," provides us with a choice image for defining the nature of these plants. There were florists' flowers grown at Monticello—the belles of the day that were highly refined cultivars much fussed over by centuries of European breeding. There were also exotic species plants, many only recently discovered and yet to be "improved" by horticultural selection and breeding. Jefferson also grew local wild flowers and introduced them into the cultivated stage of the garden as a study collection and representation of New World natural productions.

The Jefferson family bond was strengthened through the gardening process. Years after Jefferson's death, Ellen arranged the stage, defined the players, and recounted the performance in a poignant reminiscence of flower gardening at Monticello:

*I remember the planting of the first hyacinths and tulips, and their subsequent growth. The roots arrived, labeled each one with a fanciful name. There was Marcus Aurelius, and the King of the Gold Mine, the Roman Empress, and the Queen of the Amazons, Psyche, the God of Love, etc., etc., etc. . . . Then, when spring returned, how eagerly we watched the first appearance of the shoots above ground. Each root was marked with its own name written on a bit of stick . . . and what joy it was for one of us to discover the tender green breaking through the mould, and run to grand-papa to announce that we really believed Marcus Aurelius was coming up, or the Queen of the Amazons was above ground! Then when the flowers were in bloom, and we were in ecstasies over the rich purple and crimson, or pure white, or delicate lilac, or pale yellow of the blossoms, how he would sympathize in our admiration, or discuss with my mother and elder sister new groupings and combinations and contrasts. Oh, these were happy moments for us and for him!<sup>29</sup>*

The evocative names—Queen of the Amazons, the King of the Gold Mine—suggest the presence of what were either tulip or hyacinth cultivars at Monticello, species highly refined through selection and breeding by skilled European plantsmen. The are the “belles of the day,” florists’ flowers that, according to J.C. Loudon in his *Encyclopedia of Gardening* (1825), “acquired a magnitude, succulence, and conformation of parts which render them widely different from what they are in their natural state.”<sup>30</sup> Jefferson obtained his collection of florists’ flowers from Bernard McMahon’s Philadelphia nursery, which provided nearly half of the flower species grown at Monticello. They included striped, multicolored, and fringed tulips, double-flowering hyacinths in a rich array of colors, a silver-striped form of crown imperial lily (*Fritillaria imperialis*), six varieties of *Primula auricula*, “a beautiful variety of *Crocus vernus*, of very early bloom; flowers white inside & beautifully striped outside,”<sup>31</sup> and “a beautiful polyanthus” (probably *Primula x polyanthus*). Double flowered forms of tuberose, anemone, and wall flower were also cultivated at Monticello.

Urban American nurserymen sold thousands of recently imported horticultural cultivars. Peter Crouwells and Company, a Philadelphia seed house that advertised in the *Virginia Journal and Alexandria Gazette* in 1786, offered 600 sorts of hyacinth, 400 varieties of tulips, and 600 cultivars of double anemone. While most American nurserymen, and even authors such as McMahon, would specify the names of fruit cultivars, it is indeed unfortunate that we have so little documentation regarding the names of these florists’ flowers. Although McMahon would discuss the “properties of a fine variegated striped carnation” and Peter Crouwells would list “600 sorts of hyacinths,” one must refer to English sources for the names and illustrations of these “belles of the day.”

The names of herbaceous flower cultivars were often as elusive, even as perishable, as vegetable varieties. To avoid the issue Phillip Miller would often preface his descriptions of florists’ flowers by saying, as he did with the tulip: “It would be to little purpose to enumerate the several varieties of these flowers, since there is no end to their numbers . . . and as there are annually a great variety of new flowers obtained from breeders, those which are old . . . are thrown out and despised.”<sup>32</sup> The most commonly used cultivar name, “Painted Lady,” was applied to varieties of sweet pea, sweet

william, carnation, cottage pink, and even a form of scarlet runner bean during the early nineteenth century in England. As early as 1754 Miller would describe the “Painted Lady” sweet william not so much a strict cultivar but as a general “sort” of *Dianthus barbatus*: “This Sort seldom rises so high in the Stems as the common Sort; but the Flowers have a great Variety of bright Colours in them.”<sup>33</sup> However, in the 1768 edition of *The Gardener’s Dictionary* the “Painted Lady” has flowers “of a very red or scarlet colour.”<sup>34</sup> By 1791 the “Painted Lady” is illustrated in Curtis’ *Botanical Magazine* as a white-eyed, bi-colored flower with a handsome, though muddied, purple color.

At Monticello we now grow a close image of the “Painted Lady.” We have selected seeds from sweet william flowers that duplicate the Curtis illustration, and while the progeny are variable, we hope they will achieve a certain stability over the next few generations. The *Botanical Magazine*, started by William Curtis in London in 1787, is an essential resource for identifying the character of early American flowers. The oriental poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) illustrated by Curtis in 1788 has a blaze-scarlet flower with a black blotch, and according to other authors, was a species undeveloped though much of the nineteenth century. We can duplicate the original cultivated poppy, the form first introduced into American gardens, by perusing modern catalogues and selecting a matching image—in this case, a variety known as “Big Jim.”

Robert Furber’s *Twelve Months of Flowers*, 1730, was essentially a nursery catalogue that lavishly illustrated English florists’ flowers of the early eighteenth century, from the ‘Indian Queen’ *Ranunculus* to the ‘Love Master’ *Auricula* and ‘Pantaloon-striped’ polyanthus. Today one can only hope to duplicate most of these flowers with modern equivalents, although some cultivars have persisted. Many are curiosities, such as the ‘Jack in the Green’ primrose, the ‘Hens and Chickens’ English daisy, or—heaven forbid—the green-flowering *Plantago lanceolata* ‘Rosularis,’ a close cousin to our broad-leafed plantain, the lawn weed. English hobbyists have “rediscovered” and rechristened old cultivars, such as the pink, but this rediscovery process usually involves a successful matching of today’s garden flowers with images from artists such as Furber or from botanical illustrations from Parkinson, Gerard, Curtis, or others.<sup>35</sup>

The flower gardens at Monticello also served a scientific function for Jefferson. They comprised a botanical study collection of native wildflowers, and in fact, forty percent of the flowers grown at Monticello were North American natives. Species such as blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*), yellow stargrass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*), Mayapple (*Podyphyllum peltatum*), and spotted wintergreen (*Chimnaphila maculata*) were hardly treasured florists' flowers, but rather represented Jefferson's horticultural museum of local botanical curiosities. Wildflowers cultivated at Monticello, such as the cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Virginia blue bell (*Mertensia virginica*), and Atamasco lily (*Zephyranthes atamasco*), will always be prized in European, especially English, herbaceous borders for their striking blossoms. Other native plants, today relatively unknown, also graced the Monticello flower garden. The American larkspur (*Delphinium exaltatum*) and American colombo (*Swertia caroliniana*) are not only botanical rarities native to the Southeast but present an impressive horticultural display as well. Other North American natives arrived at Monticello by way of the Lewis and Clark expedition, which was sponsored and supported by Jefferson. Bernard McMahon sent to Monticello seeds of the yellow fritillary (*Fritillaria pudica*, the "Columbian lily" to Jefferson) and possibly the Texas bluebonnet (perhaps *Lupinus texensis*, Jefferson's "Lewis pea").

McMahon's *Calendar* appealed to Jefferson because it was the first major work to deal with the unique problems of American gardeners, especially the continental climate that prohibited the use of so many European and English techniques and plants. It was in the *Calendar* that American gardeners were first urged to comb the local woodlands and fields for "the various beautiful ornaments with which nature has so profusely decorated them." Wildflowers were particularly suited to the mid-to-late summer months when early American gardens, so dependent on European cool-weather plants, "are almost destitute of bloom."<sup>36</sup>

A majority of the flowers grown at Monticello were cultivated in their species form, unimproved from their natural state. These were the parents of the florists' flowers or "Painted Ladies," and aside from the North American wildflowers, many had only recently been introduced into cultivation. Jefferson raised a geranium plant along with roses and his pet mockingbird in the bright

recessed cabinet in the President's House, now the White House. As he was about to leave the presidency for retirement at Monticello, Margaret Smith asked for the geranium: "I cannot tell you how inexpressively precious it will be to my heart. It shall be attended with the assiduity of affection and watered with tears of regret each day as I attend it."<sup>37</sup> Jefferson responded by saying that he could not "give it his parting blessing more effectually than by consigning it to the nourishing hand of Mrs. Smith. If plants have sensibility, as the analogy of their organization with ours seems to indicate, it cannot be but proudly sensible of her fostering attentions."<sup>38</sup>

In the now famous 1801 Rembrandt Peale portrait of his brother, "Rubens Peale with a Geranium," an early nineteenth-century geranium is illustrated. Like Jefferson's White House geranium that had been "neglected latterly," we see a sparsely flowering, leggy, perhaps even sickly plant. However, the "Peale geranium" is a species plant, *Pelargonium inquinans*, an unimproved south African native and parent of our modern race of bedding plants. Although grown as early as 1714 by Bishop Henry Compton of London, the *Pelargonium* was considered only a curiosity until it achieved the qualities of a proper bedding plant—a dwarf habit, fuller and more richly colored flowers—later in the nineteenth century when Victorian tastes demanded a carpet of color. Today, as grown in the flower gardens at Monticello, the "Peale geranium" hardly presents an impressive floral display. However, its occasional simple, single red blossoms enable us to interpret the evolution of American garden flowers—from wild species plants recently discovered and introduced into the garden, to highly refined and developed florists' flowers carefully bred into "Painted Ladies", the belles of the day.

A summer flower garden of species annuals, such as at Monticello, has a decidedly different effect from the bedding-out schemes many visitors expect in a Southern garden. We are not necessarily offended when visitors comment on the "wildflower garden." The heliotrope, which Jefferson described as "a delicious flower . . . the smell [of which] rewards the care,"<sup>39</sup> was introduced into France from Mexico in the middle of the eighteenth century. By the time Jefferson was sending home seeds from Paris in 1786, garden forms had probably not yet improved. Philip Miller's *Fig-*

ures of the Most Beautiful, Useful, and Uncommon Plants Described in the Gardener's Dictionary, 1760", depicts the species form. It is a tall lanky plant, very much like the "Peale geranium," four to five feet high with very pale blue flowers. The species heliotrope is radically different from the squat, scentless, violently purple forms cultivated in bedding schemes since the age of Victoria.

The species forms of French and African marigolds were obtained for the garden from an assistant curator at an important English botanical garden. The African marigold was immediately successful, with its unwieldy habit and unusual single flowers, but the French marigolds never germinated, and I was forced to request more seed. Accompanying the second shipment was a scolding letter from the assistant curator. First of all, he said, I had neither dated nor signed my request. Furthermore, the French marigold "is such an easy plant that a child ought to be able to germinate the seed." The French marigolds are now doing well. Their sprawling, vine-like habit and single lemon flowers are an excellent representation of an unimproved species flower.

There were other species flowers grown by Jefferson at Monticello that have now been improved dramatically, including the pansy (once the Johnny-jump-up, *Viola tricolor*), peony (*Paeonia officinalis*), gladiolus (*Gladiolus communis*), and many daffodils and roses. While many of these species plants are difficult to find in cultivation today, others are widely successful, even weedy, reminders of early American flower gardening. Jefferson grew the bouncing Bet (*Saponaria officinalis*), perennial pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*), cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), and blackberry lily (*Belamcanda chinensis*), which today are the denizens of abandoned lots and railway wastelands. They are the "belles of the day" gone wild, and like the chinaberry, are promiscuously reseeding the forsaken landscapes the human community has left behind.

Unlike fruit trees or vegetables, many flower species are likely to escape from their cultivated plots, to become naturalized in the wild places about a historic site, to regenerate and prosper without the aid of gardeners. Tassel hyacinths, the Florentine tulip, blackberry lilies, and hollyhocks still grow wild at Monticello and are living descendents of Thomas Jefferson's gardening sensibility. They grow now in a sensitive habitat, perhaps not threatened by dams or bulldozers but by weedeaters, excessive maintenance, and

stuffly assistant curators. These plants are important. The chinaberry and Breast of Venus peach reflect so intimately the gardening pursuits and the landscape interests of Jefferson himself. The Hewe's crab and Taliaferro apples were indispensable ingredients of what was once a national luxury. The "Peale geranium" and the "Painted Lady" sweet william represent the stylistic forms of the early nineteenth century. Older varieties are more primitive in some ways—genetically akin to their wild ancestors, native plants that have persisted without man's efforts and have survived nature's pestilential attacks so successfully. The genetic diversity found in a collection of undeveloped species and heirloom varieties may some day offer a cure to some devastating agricultural virus. These plants might stop hunger. They might save our lives. "Let's go down and hunt us some chainyballs."

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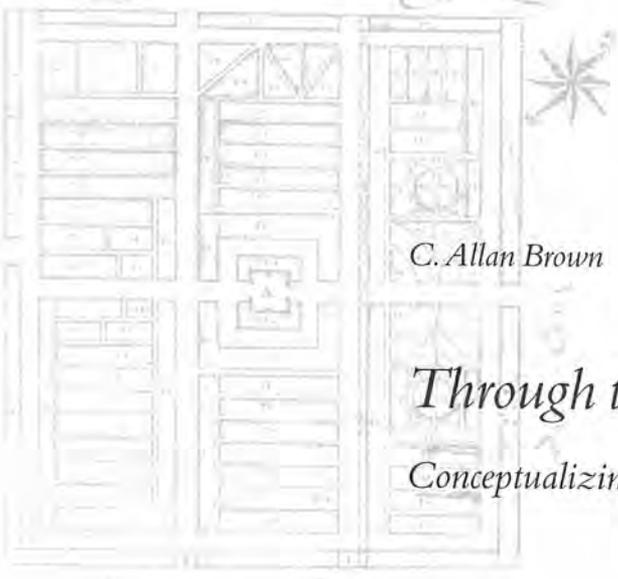
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HORTUS MEDICAE  
Academiae Medicae Lipsiensis



C. Allan Brown

## *Through the Mind's Eye*

*Conceptualizing Historic Landscapes*

Restoration is always a sham to some degree. Even if one could replicate the exact appearance of a specific building or landscape at a particular moment in the past, the broader physical setting and, more significantly, the cultural context will have changed. It is commonly understood that the meaning of a museum artifact is altered by its very exhibition, yet that inherent irony is not routinely acknowledged in historic preservation theory and methodology. How buildings and landscapes, as well as isolated objects in a museum display, were, and are, perceived then becomes the essential issue. (Figure 1). Though no two individuals ever have quite the same experience of reality, the impressions of observers from clearly distinct cultures (separated by time and space) may be worlds apart. Thus, interpretation is necessary for a fuller understanding of the original cultural meaning of an artifact, structure, or site.

Historic landscapes manifest individual and societal values just as tangibly as do architecture or the utilitarian and decorative objects that fill inte-

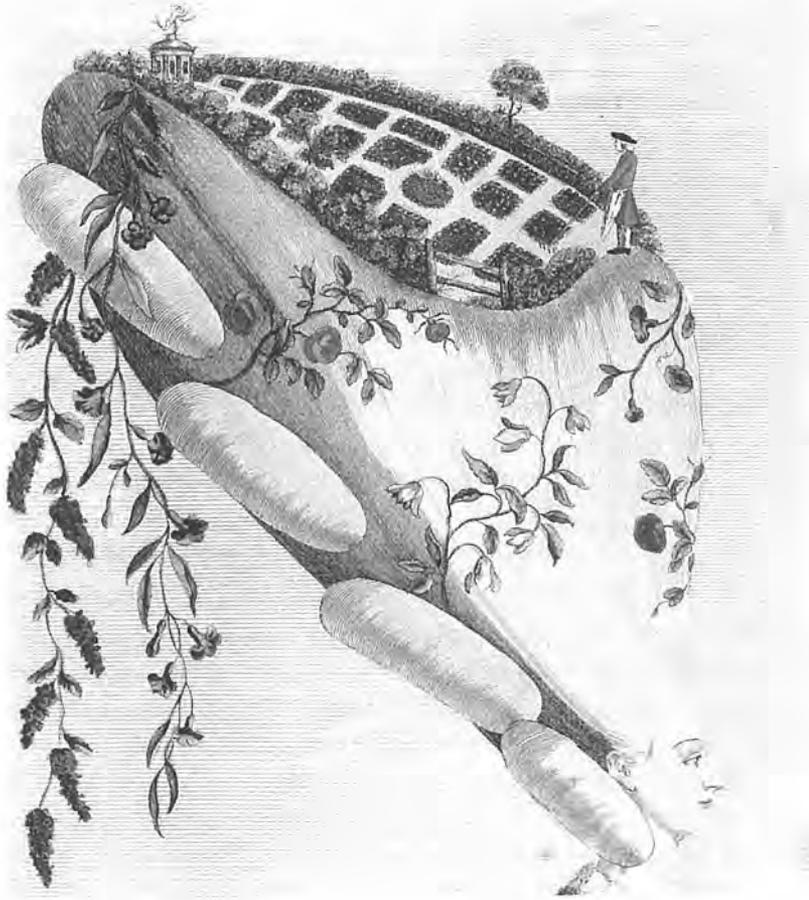


FIGURE 1. Detail from "The Flower Garden," engraving by Matthew Darly, 1777 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

rior spaces. Too often, historic "gardens" in America are regarded either as purely productive in character or, conversely, as only ornamental; and "grounds" are simply settings for buildings. Yet designed landscapes address fundamental questions of man's relationship to his environment more directly than does any other creation of culture. They reflect our most deeply-held attitudes about "nature"—whether to exploit it, idealize it, abstract it, or become subsumed within it.

Reconstructing conceptualizations of past realities should be the ultimate goal in interpreting historic landscapes. How were such gardens and grounds envisioned by their makers? How were they seen by those who daily lived, or regularly worked, on the

sites? How did they affect visitors on perhaps a single occasion? This brief essay outlines approaches to answering those questions by asking an even more basic one: How do we know what we think we know about historic landscapes?

In order to examine the relevant issues with some degree of specificity, I shall draw upon one of the most substantial bodies of records available for interpreting historic gardens and grounds in early America—the voluminous papers of Thomas Jefferson and related documents. Yet even such a copious collection of manuscripts is incomplete. About 18,000 letters written by Jefferson survive.<sup>1</sup> However, it is known from various sources including his own “Summary Journal” of correspondence (a 656-page register of virtually every letter he wrote or received for over forty years), that many other letters do not survive. For example, one reference informs us that, about 1771, he wrote a “Romantic, Poetical” description of the Monticello landscape in the “Miltonic Stile,” in a letter that is now lost.<sup>2</sup> Surely more than a few of those fugitive letters contain information pertinent to Jefferson’s frequent gardening pursuits. On the other hand, sometimes there are glimpses of landscape projects in Jefferson’s extant letters for which no further information can be found. One such instance was his mention in a letter written from Washington, while president, of a several-week visit to Monticello in March 1803, chiefly “for the purpose of planting trees, in order that they may be growing during my absence.”<sup>3</sup>

A major lacuna are the four numbered pages missing from Jefferson’s “Garden Book” (approximately 6 per cent of the entire manuscript), evidently containing notations from c. 1809, a particularly important period of renewed gardening activity at Monticello and Poplar Forest.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, despite his deserved reputation for meticulous record-keeping, there are sporadic lapses throughout his garden memoranda.<sup>5</sup> The result is that today we have only a fragmentary picture of Jefferson’s gardening activities. Sometimes, pronouncements have been made on his supposed interests or practices that have been based on rather flimsy evidence. One of the old canards of Jeffersonian garden lore is that he did not like boxwoods, the hallmark of historic Virginia gardens, when, in fact, no expression of approval or disapproval has been documented in the vast archive of his papers.<sup>6</sup> Absence of com-

ment does not prove a negative opinion. Nor does the lack of a surviving record for Jefferson planting boxwoods. For that matter, there is no clear documentation of his having planted tulip poplars (one of his avowed favorite trees) at Monticello, although it is almost inconceivable that he did not.<sup>7</sup> In our efforts to reconstruct the appearance and arrangement of historic landscapes, we must utilize available written records with the full awareness of their inevitable incompleteness.

Beyond revealing actualities of a historic landscape, the written record also provides insights into the intentions of the designer and to the manifold impressions of others. Thus, Jefferson informed us in 1806 that he “destine[d]” to improve the grounds of Monticello “in the style of the English gardens”;<sup>8</sup> of course, determining whether or not he achieved that is an entirely separate matter. His “pet trees, and improvements of various kinds,” were only mildly noteworthy to a visitor in 1817 from England itself.<sup>9</sup> Yet Jefferson’s overseer, Edmund Bacon, was delighted by “the walks, and borders, and flowers, that I have never seen or heard of anywhere else.”<sup>10</sup> Isaac, a slave, evidently was most impressed by the “monstrous large” kitchen garden rather than the aesthetic amenities of Jefferson’s would-be “English garden.”<sup>11</sup> The motivations and life experiences of a commentator must be considered when assessing the significance and verisimilitude of the observations.

But ultimately, which is more important, actuality or intent? What is more essential to understanding a site: to recover the designer’s dream for it or to document the remnants of a perhaps only partly-realized scheme? Certainly the validity of a visitor’s experience today is not diminished if one is unaware of the designer’s own concept; every site is susceptible to a multitude of subjective “readings.” However, in order to appreciate the original cultural meaning of a historic landscape, the conceptual basis for the design must be fully examined.

A primary obstacle to the better understanding of historic landscapes in America has been an insufficient comprehension of earlier design theories and a lack of appreciation for the particular meanings of certain now-archaic terms associated with the designing of gardens and grounds. In some cases, as with the word “wilderness,” the usage has changed dramatically over time. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the term was used by garden

designers to signify dense plantings of trees and shrubs penetrated by walks laid out in geometrical patterns (usually a network of diagonals), along the outer reaches of a garden.<sup>12</sup> That was precisely the manner in which Jefferson used the term a century later; about 1804, he sketched just such a diagonal network of paths intended for the mountainsides of Monticello.<sup>13</sup> (Figure 2). For Jefferson, the gardening signification of the term had not yet been eclipsed by its broader meaning of an untouched natural setting. Carl R. Lounsbury's *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape* (1994) has redressed much of our misunderstanding of unfamiliar terminology, but its main emphasis is on architecture; an ongoing project at the National Gallery of Art promises to be even more thorough in its treatment of gardening terms.<sup>14</sup>

The visual record, especially before the advent of photography, is just as problematic as the written one. To begin with, there are relatively few views or plans of American gardens dating prior to the late eighteenth century. As surprising as it may seem, no eighteenth-century depictions of gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia, are known to exist, except for the two famous images on the c. 1740 "Bodleian plate" and the barest of outlines delineated on several town surveys.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, there are no extant eighteenth-century views of the Monticello gardens and grounds.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, with one or two questionable exceptions, the earliest surviving depictions date from the very end of Jefferson's lifetime. By then, c. 1826, overgrowth, neglect, and attrition, not to mention changing tastes in landscape design and landscape representation, likely lent those scenes a rather different aspect than they had exhibited throughout most of his residence there.

As any true gardener can attest, within a very short span of time, a planting composition can appear radically altered from the original intention. The dynamic growth of plants poses unique problems to historic landscape restoration; and successive replantings often make it very difficult to disentangle one arrangement from another. Because of the scarcity of early plans and views of American gardens, much of our conception of American tastes in landscape design, prior to the widespread influence of the "picturesque" in the nineteenth century, has been filtered through, and obscured by, later imagery.

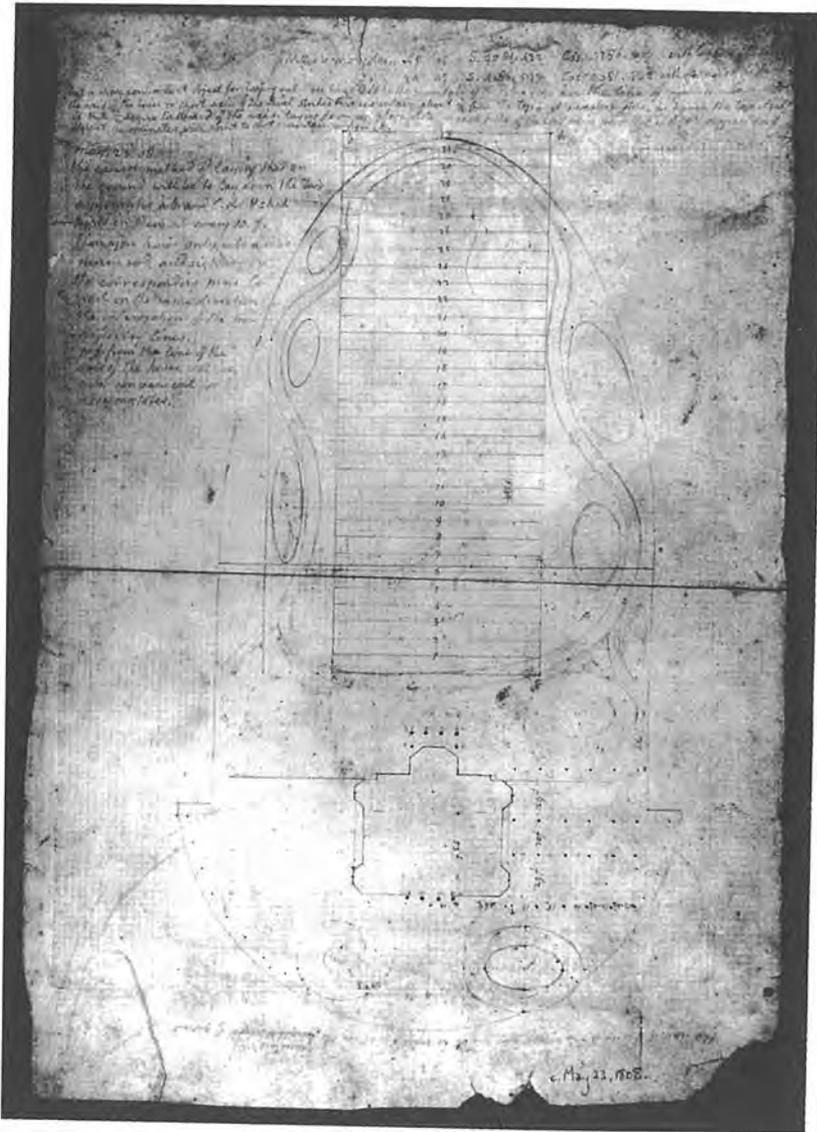
garden is levelled, and stone for the wall will be got out of the  
 garden itself in digging, aided by that got out of the level in  
 front of the S.W. office, the old stone fence below the stable, and  
 the lower wall of the garden, which is thicker than necessary.  
 the ground between the upper & lower roundabouts to be laid out  
 in lawns & clumps of trees, the lawns opening so as to give  
 advantageous catches of prospect to the upper roundabout.  
 Vista from the lower roundabout to good portions of prospect.  
 Walks in this style, wind--ing up the mountain.  
 The spring on Montalto either to be brought to Monticello by pipes  
 or to fall over steps of stairs in cascade, made visible at Mon-  
 ticello through a vista.  
 a fish pond to be visible from the house.  
 a level round-about from the Thoroughfare to circumscribe  
 the garden grounds.  
 the North side of Monticello below the Thoroughfare roundabout  
 quite down to the river, and all Montalto above the thoroughfare

FIGURE 2. Notes and sketch from Thomas Jefferson's memorandum, "General ideas  
 for the improvement of Monticello," c. 1804-05 (Coolidge Collection, Massachusetts  
 Historical Society, Boston).

Visual impressions, like verbal ones, reflect the particular inter-  
 ests and capabilities of the observer. One artist may be concerned  
 with creating a literal record of a scene; another may consciously  
 exaggerate or edit features to his own liking. Design drawings  
 present yet another set of issues, especially as to whether a specific  
 composition was, in fact, implemented or perhaps remained (all  
 or in part) a proposal. Close inspection of Jefferson's landscape  
 design drawings reveals that many of them contain erasures and  
 evidence of redrafting, further complicating our understanding of  
 their chronology. It is apparent that, in at least one case, he revised  
 a design drawing more than a decade after first composing it.<sup>17</sup>  
 (Figure 3).

Moreover, the casual character of his freehand sketches can be

FIGURE 3. Study by Thomas Jefferson for developing the summit of Monticello, begun in the early 1790s and amended as late as May 1808 (Coolidge Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston).



misleading; one should compare the information that they are intended to convey with the more careful drafting of his hard-lined drawings. Too, one must recognize the difference between a site plan and a survey, which typically eliminated much detail, concentrating on edges, courses, and boundaries. The substantial collection of Jefferson's landscape plans chronicles his constant rethinking of site relationships. What was perhaps most characteristic of

the Monticello grounds throughout Jefferson's lifetime was their incompleteness in execution, as he continually formulated new schemes and made further adjustments to old ones. But how can a landscape "restoration" communicate that probing tentativeness of ideas and the concurrent evolution of form?

Historic landscapes, much more than most old buildings, are palimpsests, partially erased and written over in layer upon layer of cultural expression. Moreover, the organic processes of growth, degeneration, weathering, and erosion proceed despite the best efforts of human intervention. The ephemeral nature of landscapes, by comparison with the seemingly static condition of buildings, reminds us of the futility of attempting to freeze them in time.

When evaluating the physical evidence of a site, one must constantly keep in mind the sequential alterations that inevitably occur. Surviving remnants should be analyzed for the patterns that they suggest, but such features should not necessarily be accepted just as they are found—roads and paths wander, fence lines shift, ground levels rise and fall, slopes erode, water courses become diverted, and plants often grow well beyond their once-intended limits. Within only a few years of Jefferson's death, the landscape of Monticello had suffered "depredations"—flowers and shrubs had been dug up and carried off by curio seekers, the Scotch broom that had clothed the hillsides had been burned and gullies formed in the red clay of the exposed slopes, the wooden terraces and fences near the house already had commenced to ruin, and rows of corn had been planted right up to the very edge of the front yard.<sup>18</sup>

Confirmation of the dating of existing features above ground, as well as the discovery of other traces still evident only below the surface, is often made possible through archaeological investigation. Landscape archaeology, by contrast with "historical archaeology" which traditionally has focused on the excavation of building foundations, is a relatively new field and requires specialized interpretive skills.<sup>19</sup> Many of its findings are based on subtle variations in soil color and texture. Although landscape archaeology sometimes yields dramatic results (as in the wholesale uncovering of the seventeenth-century garden at Bacon's Castle in Surry County, Virginia), digging at Monticello occasionally has failed to

find evidence of otherwise well-documented features such as certain road surfaces or specific planting patterns.<sup>20</sup> Fundamentally a scientific endeavor, the landscape archaeologist's reading of the soil, like the historian's reading of documents, relies on interpretation as well.

The basic process of conceptualizing historic landscapes results, then, from a synthesis of the documentary record (extant words and images) and the surviving physical evidence (vestiges above and below ground). The conflation of this information should bring us closer to past realities. (Figure 4). Yet it usually requires

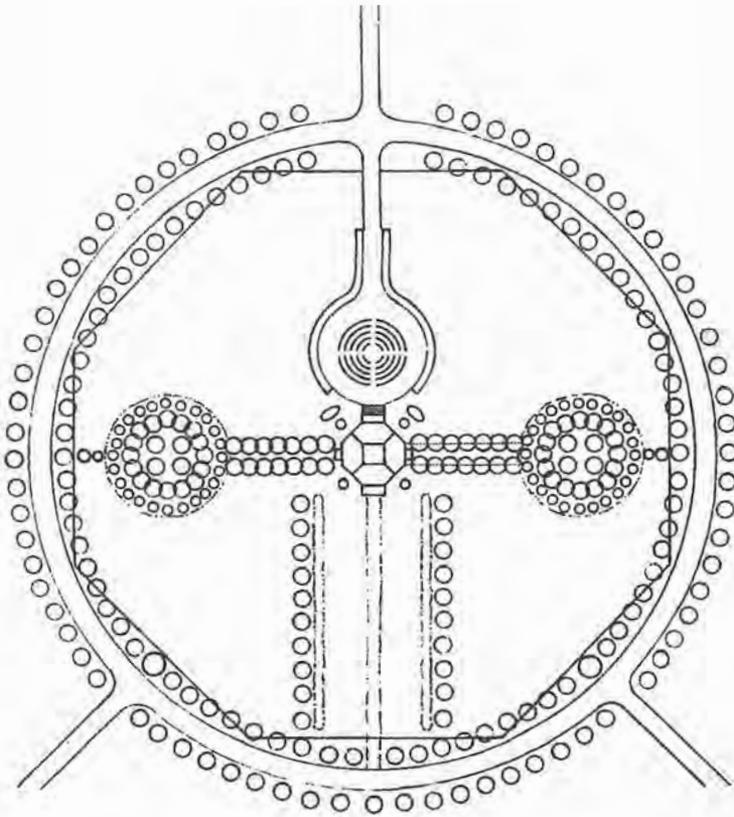


FIGURE 4. Composite site diagram of Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, c. 1806–1823; conceptual reconstruction by C. Allan Brown, based on documentary sources, existing features, limited archaeology, and interpolation/extrapolation (Drawing by the author).

informed speculation to create a fuller picture, through interpolation (filling the gaps between isolated items of information) and extrapolation (projecting a likely extension of information based on identified patterns). Such reasoned conjecture should be derived from a familiarity with analogous examples and through an understanding of relevant design methodologies. We must resist the positivist trap of dogmatically insisting on tangible proof for each and every detail, or else we shall be reconstructing a much-reduced reality.

According to Voltaire's famous aphorism, history is the lies that historians have agreed upon.<sup>21</sup> Today, it is well recognized that our understanding of the past is constantly shifting as new information and insights are brought to light. We must continually question the assumptions that we have inherited through received traditions. American landscape history as a subject of specific inquiry has its origins in the late nineteenth century, especially as associated with the development of garden clubs and with the awakened interest in the early culture of our nation that has become known as the "colonial revival."<sup>22</sup> Arising as it did, out of late Victorian life with its avid horticultural fascinations, the early emphasis of such studies was on plants and planting design.<sup>23</sup> By the mid-twentieth century, a few professional cultural historians began to broaden the perspective so that now the full range of relevant issues are under scholarly investigation.<sup>24</sup> The challenge for the future will be to recover "conceptualizations" of the past, if we are to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings that have informed American landscapes.

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*Subsequently, as a fellow in landscape studies at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D. C., he conducted further extensive research into eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century garden design theory and practices. This material will be published in a forthcoming book on Jefferson's landscape designs.*

## ENDNOTES

1. See John Catanzariti, "'The Richest Treasure House of Information': The Papers of Thomas Jefferson," *Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives* 21 (Spring 1989), 39–55.
2. "Mrs. Drummond" to Thomas Jefferson, 12 March [1771], in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd et al., 27 vols. to date (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950–), 1: 65–66.
3. Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, 21 February 1803 (Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California). Jefferson visited Monticello from 7 March to 3 April; see Edwin Morris Betts, ed., *Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book, 1766–1824, with relevant extracts from his other writings* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1944), 282. The letter was not included in Betts's compilation.
4. See Betts, *Garden Book*, caption to plate II (opp. page 3). The missing pages were numbered 33–34, 37–38.
5. For example, Jefferson's entries in the *Garden Book* lapse for the years 1770, 1776, 1780, 1784–1789, 1796–1801, 1807–1808, 1825–1826.
6. See Edwin M. Betts and Hazlehurst Bolton Perkins, *Thomas Jefferson's Flower Garden at Monticello* (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1941), 5.
7. Jefferson's 1807 reference to planting "Laurodendron" (Laurel or Rhododendron?) at Monticello may have been intended to refer to *Liriodendron tulipifera* (Tulip Poplar); he recorded planting "liriodendron" at Poplar Forest in 1812. See Betts, *Garden Book*, 334, 494. Jefferson considered the white oak (*Quercus alba*) to be "the only tree with us [in America] which disputes for pre-eminence with the Liriodendron"; Thomas Jefferson to the comtesse de Tessé, 26 October 1805 (Missouri Historical Society).
8. Thomas Jefferson to William Hamilton, [?] July 1806 (Library of Congress).
9. See Francis Hall, *Travels in Canada, and the United States, in 1816 and 1817* (London, 1818), 225–31.
10. See James A. Bear, Jr., ed., *Jefferson at Monticello* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967), 46. Bacon related that he had been born "within two or three miles of Monticello"; *ibid.*, 39.
11. *Ibid.*, 12.
12. See David Jacques and Arend Jan van der Horst, *The Gardens of William and Mary* (London: Christopher Helm, 1988), 153–66; David R. Coffin, *The English Garden: Meditation and Memorial* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 71–86.
13. About 1804–1805, Thomas Jefferson proposed that "the Broom wilderness on the South side [of the mountain] to be improved for winter walking or riding, conducting a variety of roads through it . . ."; see verso of "General ideas for the improvement of Monticello" (Massachusetts Historical Society). In that reference, he later substituted the more appropriate term "wilderness" for "thicket" as originally written.
14. Carl R. Lounsbury, ed., *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). On the current project spon-

sored by the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, see Therese O'Malley, Anne Helmreich, and Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, "Keywords in American Landscape Design," *Plants and People*, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings 1995, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University, 1996), 179–88.

15. The extant graphic documentation is discussed in M. Kent Brinkley and Gordon W. Chappell, *The Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1996), esp. 1–7, 77, 136–41, 148–151.

16. James A. Bear, Jr., *Old Pictures of Monticello: An Essay in Historical Iconography* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1957).

17. Returning to America in late 1789, after living five years in Paris, Thomas Jefferson soon began to redesign the house and grounds of Monticello. A drawing in pencil at the Massachusetts Historical Society (Coolidge Collection, MS 77) apparently begun in the early 1790s, exhibits evidence of numerous erasures and includes notes in Jefferson's hand added as late as "May. 23. 08." (The early 1790s attributed dating of the initial drafting is based primarily on the plan of the house which was reconfigured differently by 1796 when new construction commenced.)

18. See Virginia Randolph Trist to Ellen Randolph Coolidge, 23 March 1827 (University of Virginia Library); Meriwether Lewis Randolph to Septimia Randolph, 31 July 1832 (University of Virginia Library).

19. For an interesting account of the rise of "historical archaeology" in the United States during the mid-twentieth century, see the new afterword to the 1994 edition of Ivor Noël Hume, *Here Lies Virginia: An Archaeologist's View of Colonial Life and History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 309–32. See also Lu Ann De Cunzo and Bernard L. Herman, eds., *Historical Archaeology and the Study of American Culture* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1996); Paul A. Shackel and Barbara J. Little, eds., *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994). For the development of "landscape archaeology" as a specialized field during the last quarter of the twentieth century, see William M. Kelso and Rachel Most, eds., *Earth Patterns: Essays in Landscape Archaeology* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990); Naomi F. Miller and Kathryn L. Gleason, eds., *The Archaeology of Garden and Field* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994); Rebecca Yamin and Karen Bescherer Metheny, eds., *Landscape Archaeology: Reading and Interpreting the American Historical Landscape* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996).

20. See William M. Kelso, "Landscape Archaeology and Garden History Research: Success and Promise at Bacon's Castle, Monticello, and Poplar Forest, Virginia," in *Garden History: Issues, Approaches, Methods*, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture XIII, ed. John Dixon Hunt (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1992), 31–57.

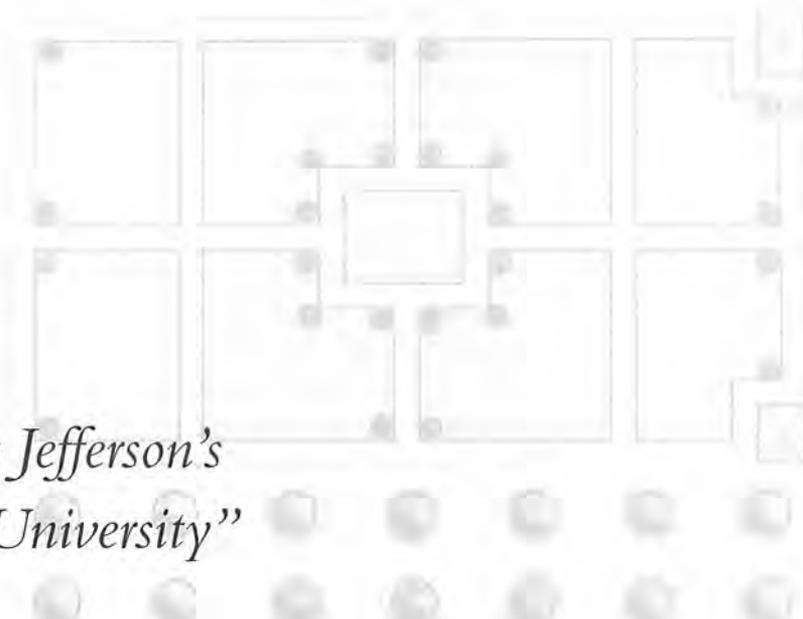
21. Voltaire's observation specifically referred to *ancient* history. See the essay on "Histoire . . .," in his *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764).

22. See Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985); Mac Griswold and Eleanor Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens, 1890–1940* (New York: Harry A. Abrams, 1991); Davyd Foard Hood, "The Renais-

sance of Southern Gardening in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of Garden History* 16 (Summer 1996), 129–52.

23. The horticultural emphasis of such studies was evident throughout the first half of the twentieth century in America, from Alice Morse Earle's landmark book, *Old-Time Gardens* (New York: Macmillan, 1901) to Ann Leighton's [Isadore Smith] three-volume history—*Early American Gardens: "For Meate or Medicine"* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), *American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century: "For Use or for Delight"* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), *American Gardens of the Nineteenth Century: "For Comfort and Affluence"* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987).

24. Among the most significant of these studies have been Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950); Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964); and various essays by J. B. Jackson, editor-publisher of *Landscape* from 1952 to 1968, some of which were reprinted in Ervin H. Zube, ed., *Landscapes: Selected Writings of J. B. Jackson* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970). Norman T. Newton's *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), has remained the standard survey.



Mary V. Hughes

## Preserving Jefferson's "Garden University"

*I would have your University the Garden University of America, for these gardens would be one its greatest distinctions, and their whole development would indicate a refinement of taste that would give greater emphasis to the high ideals already established by the University and be in marked contrast to the absolute bareness or the meager display of garish flower beds in most other American institutions.<sup>1</sup>*

—Warren H. Manning, "Report to Accompany a Plan for The University of Virginia" 1908

As Warren Manning observed, the walled Pavilion gardens are one of the most distinctive and appealing aspects of the University of Virginia grounds. Serving as the link between Lawn and Range, the gardens are central to the architectural framework of the institution as well as its academic mission. The association of gardens with academic life traces its roots to the "gymnasium" near Athens where Plato taught in a garden setting; later the Roman poet Horace described his studies amid

the “groves of Academus.” No doubt, Thomas Jefferson recalled these classical antecedents when he included gardens at the heart of his model university.

These gardens have been prized by the generations that succeeded Jefferson, although their use has changed over time. In particular, one can trace three phases of the gardens’ metamorphosis from the private domain of the pavilion residents to their current use as public display gardens. As with other areas of the University’s historic grounds, this evolution represents the continuity of the academic mission pursued at the institution. Preservation plans must, therefore, take into account all the layers of this rich history.

### *The Founder’s Vision*

The integration of landscape and buildings into a unified architectural composition is one of the fundamental principles of Jeffersonian design. Inspired by the villas of classical antiquity, Thomas Jefferson’s designs for his estates at Monticello and Poplar Forest demonstrate mastery of all aspects of landscape architecture, from site planning to planting. In a letter to his granddaughter, Ellen Randolph, he argued that gardening should be considered one of the fine arts. By gardening, he meant “the art of embellishing grounds by fancy,” a practice more closely allied to landscape painting than horticulture.<sup>2</sup> It is not surprising then to find that Jefferson incorporated gardens in his institutional planning as well. He included gardens in the preliminary diagram he drew in 1814 for the proposed Albemarle Academy, precursor to Central College, which ultimately became the University of Virginia. (Figure 1) In fact, there are few better examples of the successful union of architecture and landscape than that represented by Jefferson’s design, with the intimate walled gardens serving as a counterpoint to the grand public space of the Lawn and open prospect to the mountains beyond.

Jefferson’s early scheme for his “academical village” incorporated both a central commons lined with trees as well as gardens arranged in a ring around the building complex. This is the arrangement Jefferson drew in plans for the West Range and gardens in 1818–19. (Figure 2) Joseph Cabell first suggested to Jeffer-

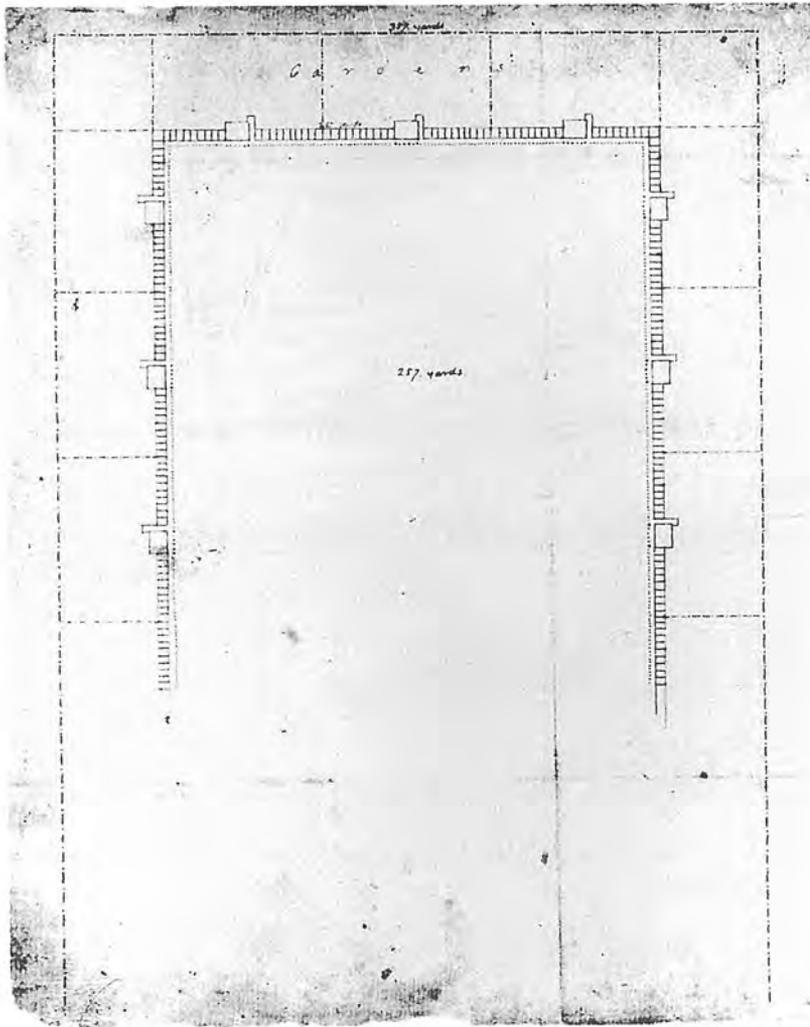


FIGURE 1. Preliminary Ground Plan—August 1814 (Thomas Jefferson)

son that the gardens might be more conveniently placed between the row of buildings along the Lawn and those on the Range. Seconded by General John Hartwell Cocke, who served with Jefferson and Cabell on the University's building committee, the idea appealed to Jefferson as well. He developed a revised plan that folded the gardens into the architectural framework of the University, creating a link between Lawn and Range.<sup>3</sup>

Jefferson drew variations of this arrangement from March to July of 1819. In this sequence of drawings, one can observe the

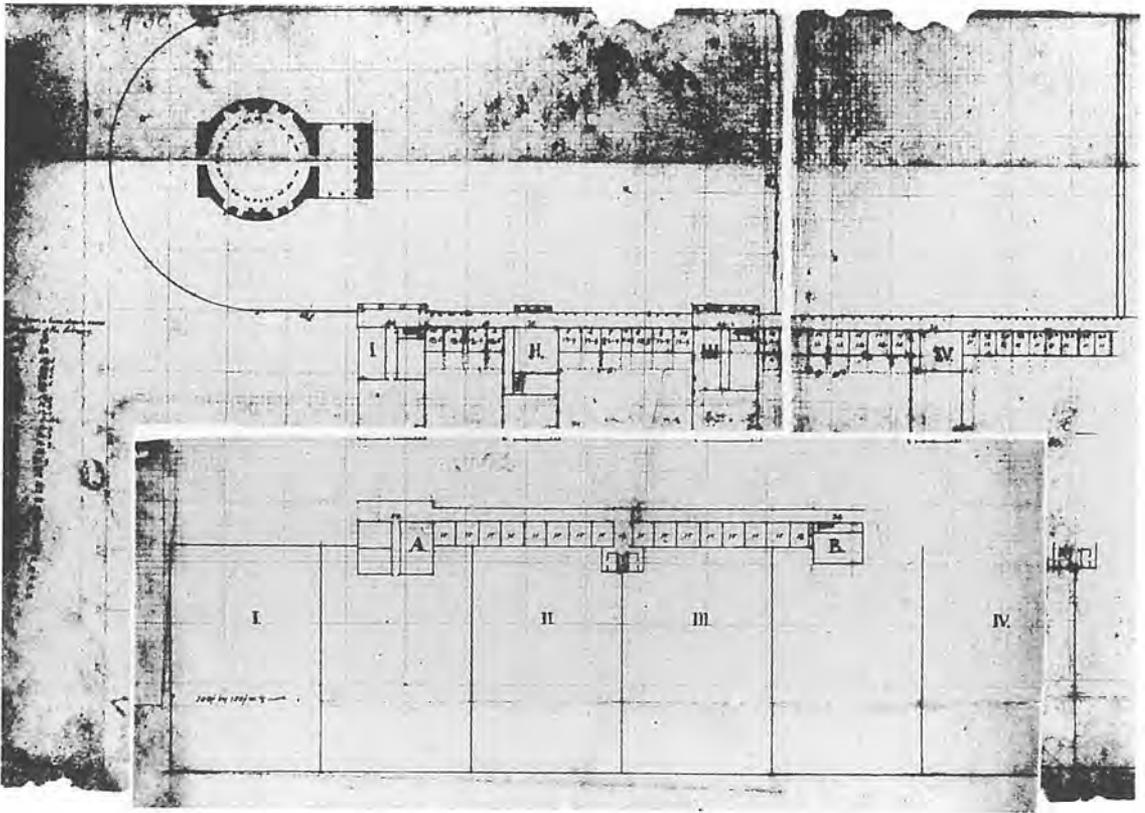


FIGURE 2. Study for the Lawn with Pavilions and Rotunda March 1819  
(Thomas Jefferson)

evolution of Jefferson's ideas about the gardens. In particular, he distinguished between the "back-yards," which were intended to be functional work spaces containing cisterns, wood piles, and the like, and the gardens, which were viewed as the private domain of the Pavilion residents and Hotelkeepers. This was a common practice in town lots of the Chesapeake region, as seen, for example, in restored gardens of Colonial Williamsburg and Old Salem in North Carolina. Architecturally, Jefferson differentiated between them by surrounding the former with straight walls and the latter with serpentine enclosures. Although Jefferson did not invent the serpentine wall, his use of them here was so effective that it became one of the signature design features of the University grounds. (Figure 3)

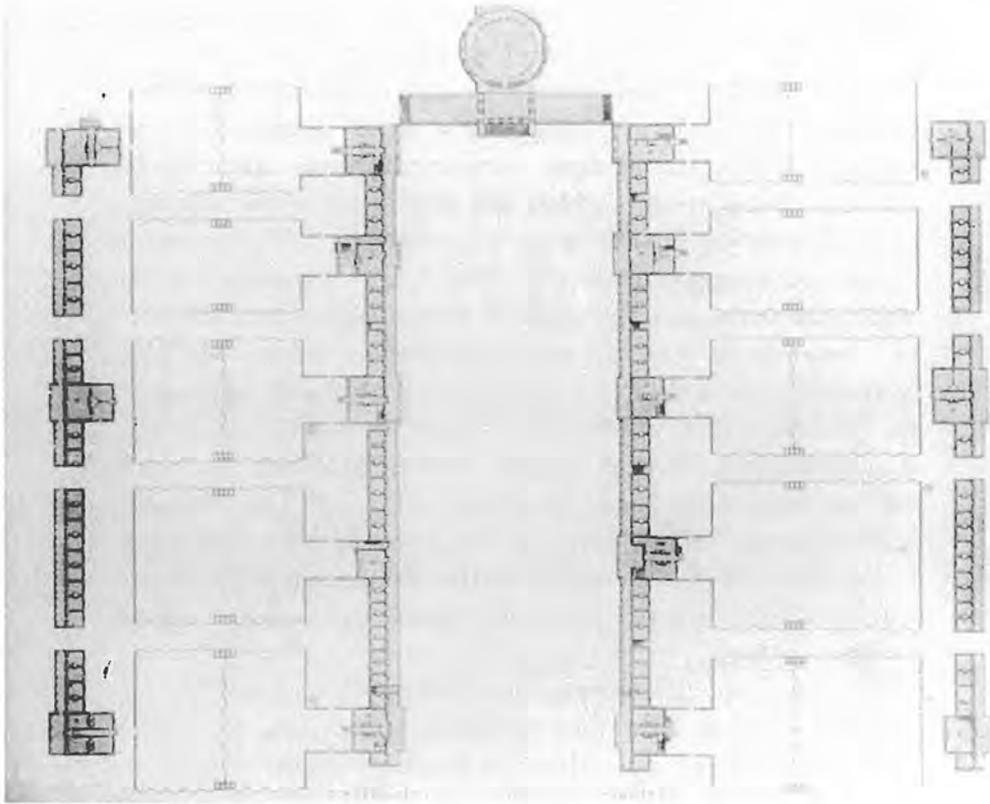


FIGURE 3. University of Virginia Ground Plan 1822-revised 1825 (John Neilson, draughtsman and Peter Maverick, engraver)

Beyond the distinction drawn between yard and garden and the placement of the gardens in the overall plan, we know little of what Jefferson intended for their use or planting. Presumably, he thought it best that they be planned and shaped by the needs of the Pavilion occupants and the Hotelkeepers operating the dining halls that shared six of the ten gardens. Although further research is needed to determine how the gardens were used in the nineteenth century, preliminary investigations indicate that the correspondence and diaries of Pavilion occupants may yield valuable insights.

Such is the case with the papers of John Patten Emmet, the first professor of natural history who occupied Pavilion I on West Lawn. Discovered in 1997 by landscape historian C. Allan Brown

in the archives of the Huntington Library in California, the papers include a letter Professor Emmet wrote in April, 1827, while he was courting Mary Byrd Tucker, the niece of Pavilion IX resident Professor George Tucker. "My dearest Mary," Professor Emmet writes, "there is one of those confounded things called faculty meetings, this afternoon, which will deprive me of the happiness of being with you as soon as my heart wishes. . . . Expect me on the terrace among your flowers, about 6 or 7 if possible. We will walk upon our prison walls and talk & think of joys to come. . . ."<sup>4</sup> In a letter to his sister the same year, Emmet writes, "My great recreation is working in my garden & am anxiously looking for the fulfillment of Anna's [his sister-in-law in New York] commission. If the plants have not yet been forwarded, I wish you would call and select some handsome flower seeds. . . ."<sup>5</sup> This charming correspondence offers a glimpse of the daily life of the Lawn's early residents as well as an indication that the gardens of Pavilions I and IX, at least, were planted in ornamentals and used primarily as pleasure gardens.

In 1829, soon after moving into Pavilion VI, Professor Gessner Harrison wrote to Mary Stewart Harrison describing the bounty of his garden: cantaloupe, citron muskmelons, watermelons, pears, peaches, and apples. It is unclear, however, whether these fruits were grown in the garden of his pavilion or in the larger garden plots, called the "outer gardens" provided for the professors' use at the periphery of the Lawn.<sup>6</sup> The professors also had fenced "lots" in which they were able to pasture their livestock. Since the University was built on farmland, there was plenty of open land available for cultivation. Therefore, the professors had no need to use the limited space of their walled gardens for utilitarian purposes. Professor Harrison also discussed the purchase of flower seed and offered to send his family in Harrisonburg slips from the plants in his garden, including multiflora rose, geranium, yellow jessamine, and paper mulberry.<sup>7</sup>

### *Refurbishment and Renewal*

By mid-century, the changes wrought by succeeding generations of Pavilion occupants to their gardens had radically altered the Jeffersonian plan and blurred the distinction between yards

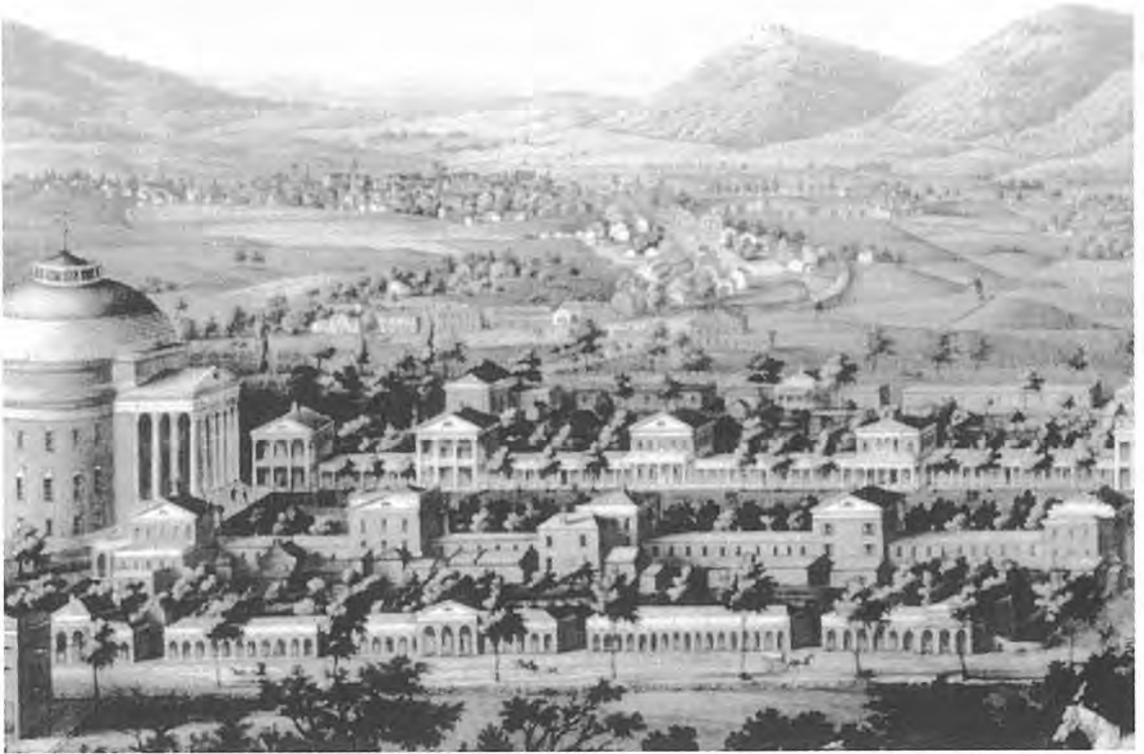


FIGURE 4. Enlarged view of West gardens and outbuildings from “View of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville and Monticello, Taken from Lewis Mountain,” 1856. Lithograph published by Casimir Bohn.

and gardens. They removed and/or relocated walls and reorganized their private space to suit their needs. Over time, more than thirty outbuildings, including kitchens, sheds, and stables, were constructed in these areas. (Figure 4)

In 1904, the University appointed its first president, Edwin A. Alderman, who oversaw an ambitious building program of renewal and repair as well as new construction. On the recommendation of a friend, he hired one of the nation’s leading landscape architects, Warren H. Manning of Boston, to guide the development process. Manning was on retainer with the University from 1906 to 1913, and his work culminated in a new master development plan. To his credit, he began with a thorough study of Jefferson’s design intentions. With William Lambeth, he published

*Thomas Jefferson as an Architect and Designer of Landscapes* in 1913, one of the first studies to recognize Jefferson's design genius.

Manning quickly grasped the significance of the gardens in Jefferson's plan. He noted in a 1908 report: "One of the most attractive features of the original plan and an indication of the refinements of that day which we have yet to attain, was the provision for gardens at each residence hall. Already some portions of these gardens have been destroyed to provide a more convenient service road [presumably he refers to the East Range Road]."<sup>8</sup> In the same report, he describes the ornamental vegetation remaining from earlier periods: forsythia, Indian strawberry, periwinkle, hollyhocks, perennial pea, and Japanese honeysuckle. He went on to propose that they be cleaned up and developed as "old-fashioned gardens of Jefferson's day."



FIGURE 5. The "Italian Garden" on the East Lawn, The University of Virginia. Holsinger Collection.

Several, if not all, of the gardens were refurbished according to plans drawn by Manning. A 1909 article in *College Topics*, the student newspaper, described the newly completed garden behind Pavilion IV, then the Administration Building.<sup>9</sup> A new garden also was being planted at Pavilion X, and plans were in progress for Pavilion VII, where the Colonnade Club was adding a new wing. The University seems to have made it a priority to redesign the gardens of pavilions that had been converted to some public or semi-public purpose. The article goes on to state, "The improvement of the other plots is under the control of the Professors whose houses they adjoin and will be fixed later. There will be much variety in the plans of the gardens."<sup>10</sup> It is presumed that Manning also designed the large garden lying on the slope between the service road and the East Range, known as "the Italian Garden." (Figure 5)

### *Restoration by The Garden Club of Virginia*

By 1948, the gardens were once again the topic of discussion and concern. At that time, the University turned to The Garden Club of Virginia for assistance with restoring the gardens. They responded generously, hiring Alden Hopkins, resident landscape architect for Colonial Williamsburg, to prepare a master plan for all ten gardens. Due to the cost and scale of the undertaking, the implementation of these plans proceeded in phases. The West Lawn Gardens were refurbished first, again under Hopkins' direction.

In November 1949, James M. Knight of Colonial Williamsburg conducted a brief archaeological investigation to determine whether the engravings of the University prepared by Peter Maverick in 1822 and 1825 provided an accurate depiction of the garden walls and structures designed and built under Jefferson's direction. The results of these exploratory examinations provided the justification needed to reconstruct the garden walls and privies as indicated in the Maverick engravings, forming the framework for the garden design within.<sup>11</sup>

Hopkins followed the design approach developed for Colonial Williamsburg gardens by Arthur Shurcliff in the 1930s. In the absence of solid documentation for the exact configuration of their gardens, Shurcliff, and later Hopkins, drew from a lexicon of

The varying styles found within the ten gardens illustrate a transition in the fashion of garden design during Jefferson's lifetime.<sup>15</sup> Traditional gardens featuring geometric parterres were being replaced by "landscape gardens," whose curving paths through sweeping lawns and clumps of trees were composed according to principles borrowed from landscape painting. The University's gardens directly reflect these changing tastes. At Pavilion III, for example, a path meanders through planting beds filled with perennials and shrubs in a manner adapted from the English landscape garden, while in the upper garden of Pavilion V, "old style" geometric parterres are edged in trimmed boxwood. (Figure 7)

After the restoration in the 1950s and 1960s, these gardens were for the first time fully open for the enjoyment of the general public, to be shared by scholars and visitors alike. They may be appreciated on many levels, simply as beautiful settings for weddings and special events or as insightful botanical essays on the evolution of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century gardens. In recent years, some have called for new investigations into the earlier layers of the gardens' history, obscured by the twentieth-century reinterpretations, which might lead to a restoration of the early nineteenth-century gardens. This interest may be fueled by a common

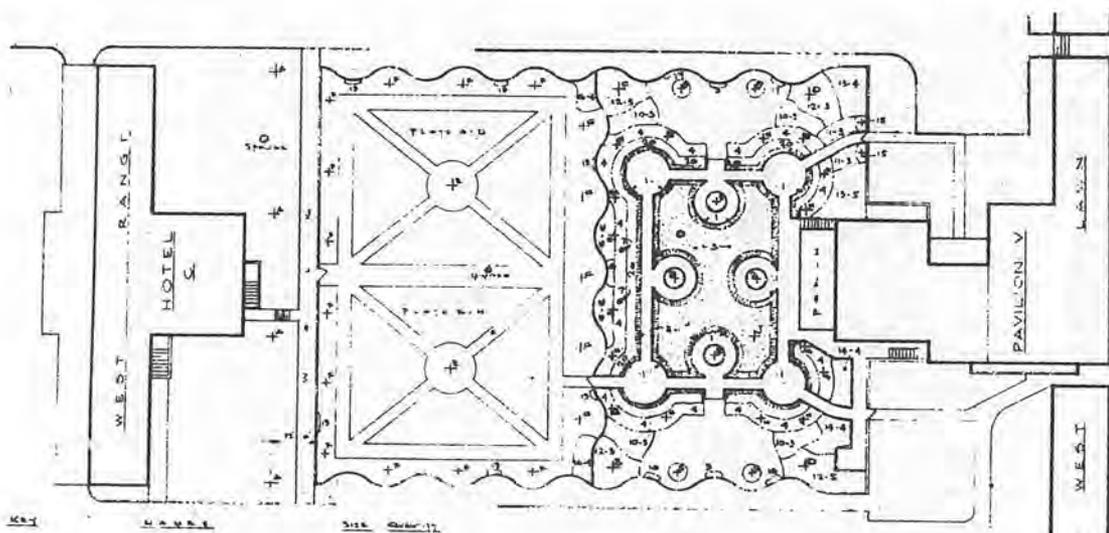


FIGURE 7. Planting Plan and Plant List, Pavilion V Garden July 1951 (Alden Hopkins, landscape architect)

and persistent misconception that there were once gardens of Jeffersonian design behind the Pavilions. To date, the records indicate that the Pavilion residents themselves determined the nature of the garden plantings, although the architectural framework was certainly Jefferson's.

In fact, it is the many layers of these gardens' history that contribute to the rich significance they have acquired over time. Stripping away the later layers to restore a conjectural representation of earlier gardens would only diminish their historical interest. Within the Jeffersonian serpentine walls are found some of the most splendid surviving examples of colonial revival gardens in the state. While recognizing that they are not accurate "restorations" of an earlier period, the gardens stand on their own merit as artistic creations. It might be argued that the colonial revival is one of America's great contributions to the international canon of twentieth-century garden design. Moreover, these gardens also contain small remnants of their nineteenth-century predecessors, such as the boxwood garden of Professor Schele de Vere in Pavilion IV. Photographic evidence suggests that some plants may survive from the Warren Manning designs as well.

The University, therefore, pursues a strategy of preservation and, where needed, rehabilitation, for its colonial revival gardens. While additional historical research on the landscape history of the University is ongoing, archeological investigations within the garden walls are deemed too destructive of the existing fabric to be warranted at this time. This policy is consistent with the rehabilitation approach applied to the Lawn in general, a World Heritage Site that remains in active use as classrooms and residences for students and faculty. Jefferson's University remains a living laboratory, challenged with preserving the legacy of its built environment while accommodating the daily demands of its ongoing academic mission.

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*local and national levels and past chair of the ASLA's Open Committee on Historic Preservation.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. Warren H. Manning, letter to the editor of *College Topics* (Vol. XX, No. 41) March 6, 1909.
2. Thomas Jefferson to Ellen Randolph. (July 10, 1805).
3. For a full account of these design changes, see the essay by Patricia Sherwood and Joseph LaSala, "Education and Architecture: The Evolution of the University of Virginia's Academical Village" in Richard Guy Wilson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village* (Charlottesville, VA: Bayly Art Museum, 1994), 26-33.
4. John Patten Emmet to Mary Byrd Tucker, n.d. This undated love note was hand-delivered by Professor Emmet to his fiancée, presumably in the spring of 1827 when they became engaged.
5. John Patten Emmet to Jane Emmet McEvers (April 2, 1827).
6. Gessner Harrison to Mary Jane Harrison (August 19, 1829).
7. Gessner Harrison to Peachey Harrison (September 11, 1831).
8. Warren H. Manning, "Report to Accompany a Plan for the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. (October 8, 1908), 6.
9. "New Improvements To Be Instituted" in *College Topics* (Vol. XX, No. 39, February 27, 1909), 1.
10. *Ibid.*, 1.
11. Letter from Alden Hopkins to Mrs. C. James Andrews (December 1, 1949).
12. Personal interview by the author with Donald Parker, Williamsburg, Virginia (June 9, 1998).
13. See Charles Hosmer's chapter, "The Colonial Revival in the Public Eye: Williamsburg and Early Garden Restoration," in *The Colonial Revival in America*, Alan Axelrod, ed. (New York, 1985) for a discussion of the historical accuracy of colonial revival landscape design.
14. See the unpublished "Report on the Archaeological Excavation Undertaken in the East Lawn Garden Area at The University of Virginia" submitted by Donald Parker and James M. Knight to The Garden Club of Virginia (1960) and the February 4, 1961 memorandum from Anne Freudenberg to Francis L Berkeley, Jr. for further information on this research.
15. The best descriptions of the designers' intent for the gardens is found in the presentation booklets prepared by the Garden Club of Virginia for the dedication of the West Lawn Gardens in 1952, written by Alden Hopkins, and the East Lawn Gardens, written by Donald Parker.

## Chapter Opening Illustrations

*The Conference Logo*, p. iii, represents four periods in Southern gardening. The white design of squares centered by a rectangle with elliptical ends is the garden pattern at Pembroke Plantation from Claude Joseph Sauthier's 1769 map of Edenton, North Carolina. The doorway is Georgian from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The flowers are from a book of Victorian designs, and the garden pattern resembles early twentieth-century lattice work fences used in many Southern gardens.

*Page 1*—Williamsville, a home in Hanover County, Virginia, built between 1794–1800. Watercolor on paper, drawing, 1875–1900. (MESDA)

*Page 17*—The Hermitage, Burgwin's Seat, near Wilmington, North Carolina, built late eighteenth century by John Burgwin. From *Magazine of America*, 1886. (Archives and History)

*Page 28*—Town view of Bethania, North Carolina. Pencil drawing by Maximilian Eugene Grunert, 1855. (Old Salem)

*Page 48*—"The Sarratown Mountains from Col. Moore's," Stokes County, North Carolina. Watercolor on ivory, attributed to Elias A. Vogler, c. 1845–1850. (Old Salem)

*Page 62*—Col. Palmer's House and grounds, detail from Claude Joseph Sauthier's Plan of Bath, 1769. (Archives and History)

*Page 83*—"A View of Savanah [Savannah, Georgia] as it stood the 29th of March 1734." Drawing by Peter Gordon, engraved by Pierre Fourdinier. (MESDA)

*Page 100*—"Salem in North America from the South West," c. 1819–20. Lithograph by W. F. Neuhauser. (Old Salem)

*Page 106*—Monticello, home of Thomas Jefferson. Modern drawing with view of roundabout flower border. (Courtesy of Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, Inc.)

*Page 130*—*Hortus Medicus*, the Medical Garden at Bethabara, North Carolina, as drawn by Christian Gottlieb Reuter, dated June 23, 1761. (Courtesy the Moravian Archives, Southern Province, Winston-Salem)

*Page 143*—Garden at Hayes Plantation, Edenton, North Carolina, seat of Samuel Johnston, governor, 1787–89. From the Sauthier map of Edenton, 1769. (Archives and History)

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# BREAKING GROUND

## *Examining the Vision and Practice of Historic Landscape Restoration*

The biennial conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes has become an important forum for leading scholars to present recent work and thought on garden history and landscape preservation. When the first conference was held in 1979, landscape restoration was just beginning its current rise to prominence in the field of historic preservation. By the eleventh conference in 1997, new theories, new practices, and varying opinions had emerged in this ever-widening field.

Therefore the conference committee felt it was time to examine current theories and practices, and brought together experts in this field. Their essays are presented in these proceedings of the 1997 conference; both layman and professional will find here stimulating thinking and helpful information.

The book is illustrated with forty-nine photographs and landscape plans; chapter title pages are highlighted with historic landscape drawings.



The conference logo, to the left, represents four periods in Southern gardening. The white design of squares centered by a rectangle with elliptical ends is the garden pattern at Pembroke Plantation from Claude Joseph Sauthier's 1769 map of Edenton, North Carolina. The doorway is Georgian from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The flowers are from a book of Victorian designs, and the garden pattern resembles early twentieth-century lattice-work fences used in many Southern gardens.

Published by the conference committee

## **Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes**

Old Salem, Inc., Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27108



ISBN 1-879704-06-4