



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

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## *Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Park: A Celebration*

*Judith B. Tankard, Boston, Massachusetts*

Nearly 100 years after they were first conceived, the gardens at Dumbarton Oaks are regarded as an icon among landscape architects, historians, and garden visitors the world over. However, they are not as universally well known nor as fully appreciated as they should be. In 1985, landscape architect and scholar Diane Kostial McGuire recounted in *Beatrix Farrand's American Landscapes* that a disappointed visitor wanted to know "where are the flowers?" and "where is the color?" After all, the visitor complained, she had come all the way from California where gardens were all about display and vibrant color. "There are so many things you could do here to make this a real garden," she concluded.<sup>1</sup> Part of the problem lies in the fact that Dumbarton Oaks is not a typical American garden dependent on horticultural displays, well-worn paths, signage, and teashops. Instead, it is an extraordinary accomplishment conceived and executed in a remarkable partnership between the client and the designer. Together they created a magical sequence of designed spaces or rooms, ranging from formal to informal, that progressed through the garden, while taking into consideration texture and incidents of alternating light and shade.

When Robert Woods Bliss and his wife, Mildred Barnes Bliss, first spied The Oaks in Georgetown, they thought it had the possibilities of becoming their country home in Washington as well as a future institution for their scholarly interests and collections. After returning to the United States from Paris in 1920 during his long career as a diplomat, Robert Woods Bliss invited the renowned landscape gardener and family friend, Beatrix Farrand, to view the property. It consisted of a south-facing house built in 1801 with a classical orangery set on 53 acres of



*Beatrix Farrand in her New York office, 1927.*

land that included a range of dilapidated farm buildings. On the positive side, there were numerous fine old trees, but the steeply sloping ground itself presented a serious challenge. The house, which was set on a hill, commanded

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# *President's Report to Our Members*

*By Perry Mathewes*

To say that 2020 has been an extraordinary year could be an understatement. The Southern Garden History Society has not been immune from the world's turmoil as the shutdowns due to Covid-19 forced the postponement of this year's annual meeting. This fall, we held our second consecutive board meeting on a virtual platform instead of in person. But with these challenges the SGHS has shown resilience. This publication, *Magnolia*, continues to turn out great articles and provides a level of comforting continuity in a time of unanticipated change. Meanwhile, a fantastic team of board members worked this summer to enhance the website and restart a stagnant social media platform. A series of wonderful posts led to spikes of traffic on our website. Efforts are under way to make sure we will have an annual meeting next year. Welcome news in a discouraging time.

But we still face some challenges that require

our attention and effort. Predictably, membership renewals are down this year. Please take time to reach out to our fellow members and encourage them to remain part of the SGHS family. We need to continue to explore ways to keep our membership engaged, connected, and encouraged by our mission. We are planning regional get togethers through our State Ambassadors program, virtual programs, more website posts, and other ideas that will get you excited. If you have your own ideas or suggestions, please share them with a board member.

I see these challenges as the fire that runs through the long leaf pine savannas of the southeast. At first it looks terrible. But gradually, you notice that many of the trees have survived and continue to grow. Then you see that many seeds have started to sprout in the heat of the fire. The forest is renewed and growing stronger than ever. This can be the SGHS in 2021.

## *SGHS Fall Board Meeting*

The Society's board met via Zoom on Saturday, October 3 under the leadership of President Perry Mathewes. The agenda covered the normal range of business including reviewing minutes; a treasurer's report (SGHS remains financially sound); a membership update (down, as noted in Perry's report); and, very importantly, improving service to members via not only *Magnolia* but also through the website and other virtual/social media offerings.

Of special interest was a report from Mount Vernon's Dean Norton on plans for the 2021 annual meeting. In two words, "it's on," with projected dates of April 23-25. As to be expected, pandemic circumstances may have an impact on these plans, but for now the coming function will in most

ways follow the same schedule as was set for spring 2020. All precautions will be followed to the letter related to distancing, face coverings, and other recommendations to keep members safe.

Board members also discussed the work of our State Ambassadors and gatherings that can be coordinated at state and local levels. Such events can be at drive-able distances and cover the span of one or two days. Experience has already shown them to be well received. Previous examples include the Texas State Ambassadors program, "300 Years of Plants on the Move," held in Nacogdoches, and the Georgia State Ambassadors event at Pebble Hill Plantation in Thomasville for Georgia and Florida members.

*Please refer to the SGHS website for upcoming calendar items, descriptions, and links:  
[www.southerngardenhistory.org](http://www.southerngardenhistory.org)*

## *Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Park...* (continued from page 1)

fine views, but the land seriously dropped 100 feet down to the creek below. Despite these challenges, Beatrix Farrand created her undisputed masterpiece. According to Walter Muir Whitehead, “the gardens represent the skill of Mrs. Farrand and Mrs. Bliss in constructing an enchanting landscape out of magnificent trees that are on slopes so varied and in places so steep as to present a great challenge in design.”<sup>2</sup>

In June 1922, Beatrix Farrand prepared a detailed eight-page memo for Mildred Bliss outlining her preliminary design and planting suggestions for the property, and by 1923 the layout was well advanced and construction underway.<sup>3</sup> At the time of the commission, Farrand was well established in her career dedicated to prestigious private commissions as well as important campus consultations. She was also familiar with Washington, having consulted on the National Cathedral in the early days of her career, and later, in 1913, she had designed the East Garden at the White House. Dumbarton Oaks, however, would prove to be her most challenging and significant commission. As Mildred Bliss wrote, “the gardens at Dumbarton Oaks were perhaps one of the most difficult problems presented to her, for she found not only an existing and rather dominating house and an unusually wide variety of grades, but also the very definite personal preferences of the owners with their special interest in design and texture.”<sup>4</sup> In 1960, Lanning Roper, the renowned American landscape architect who worked mostly in England, recounted that “the gardens of Dumbarton Oaks are the product of the harmony of these two dynamic minds. Through their very close co-operation the garden evolved, each conceiving, adapting and re-evaluating her own ideas in the light of experience and the best considered opinion of the other.”<sup>5</sup> From the start, Mildred Bliss had a vision of what she wanted to create, inspired in part by years of living abroad and her extensive travels, while Beatrix Farrand had “taste, the ‘know how’ and the courage of her convictions as well as her unflagging energy—all important characters for such a partnership.” The resulting gardens are “brilliantly adapted to a difficult site and rich in decorative detail and planning.”<sup>6</sup>

To add to the challenge, the Blisses were away from Washington for the first 10 years, the active years of the creation of the gardens. In January 1923, Robert Bliss was appointed minister to Sweden, which necessitated living abroad for five years, and then in 1927, he was appointed Ambassador to Argentina for six years. During these years when the Blisses were mostly absent, Farrand and her team proposed ideas, prepared sketches, and for some of the more important architectural features, such as steps, small structures, and benches, her office

prepared life-size cardboard mock-ups for the clients’ approval. As for planting suggestions, Mildred Bliss herself was a knowledgeable horticulturist, so there was much back and forth about specific selections. Although they sometimes had differing ideas, a mutual respect for one another brought out the best in the two personalities. As Farrand wrote, “What I shall try and do with The Oaks is to simply be your gardening pair of hands, carrying out your ideas.”<sup>7</sup> Mildred envisioned a garden to be lived in, balancing private family areas with grander spaces for the Blisses’ extensive diplomatic entertaining. Mildred was a connoisseur of fountains and other antique ornament that needed to be incorporated into the scheme. As well, her knowledge of classical gardens mandated the importance of architectural features, such as walls, steps, paths, and small structures, all of which jibed with Farrand’s sensibilities to garden design.

The brilliance of the garden conception lies in its response to the topography, letting the land itself dictate the design, from formal terraces where the land was mainly flat to more naturalistic gardens where the grounds sloped steeply. The result was a blend of Italian terraces, French ornamental features, English flower borders, and a romantic woodland dell. It was unlike anything that had been created in America before. According to landscape historian Georgina Masson, Farrand drew upon these disparate elements to create a garden scene “uniquely her own.”<sup>8</sup> The placement of the individual terraces near the house, including a large rose garden that served as the centerpiece, was dictated by the existing trees, such as copper beech, black oak, and American beech. Farrand had learned her lessons thoroughly from Prof. Charles Sprague Sargent, Gertrude Jekyll, and William Robinson, whose various influences can be strongly felt throughout

(continued on page 4)



*Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss in the Rose Garden, 1936.*

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections.



## Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Park... (continued from page 3)

Dumbarton Oaks. In the end, Farrand's creation was a green garden rather than a traditional themed flower garden such as those she had designed for Thomas Newbold at Bellefield in 1912 and Edward Harkness at Eolia in 1919, and, in 1926, her penultimate flower garden, the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden. Part of the reasoning for her solution at Dumbarton Oaks was the important fact that it was a two-season garden—spring and fall—with a green interlude in winter—and heavily dependent on majestic trees and ornamental shrubs.

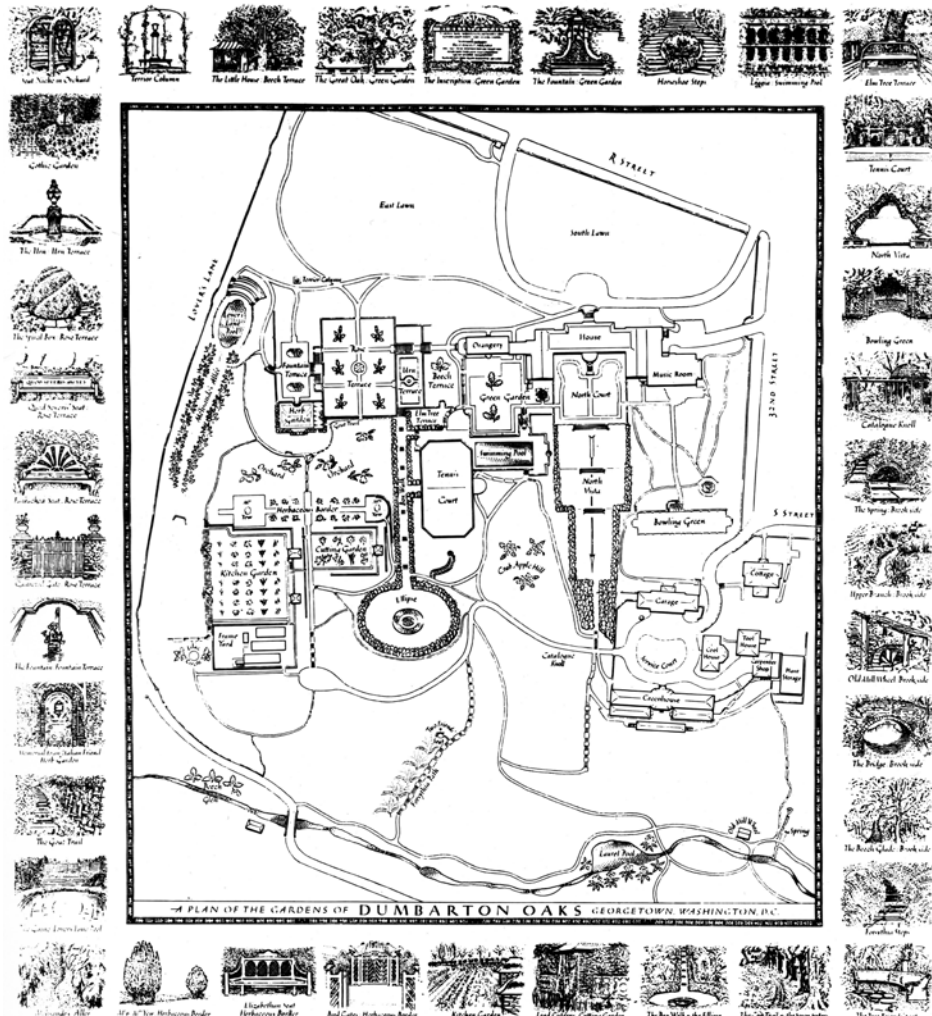
By 1935, when the gardens were fully developed, the Blissés commissioned Rudolph Ruzicka to prepare the first plan showing the finished layout. The plan included depictions of 38 garden spaces, with delightful vignettes showing each area or feature. Although the gardens were a masterpiece, Farrand's years at Dumbarton Oaks were not only challenging but also exhausting. When she began in 1921, she was at the peak of her career, juggling several residential commissions

at once as well as challenging campus consultations, but by the early 1940s, she was looking forward to peaceful retirement years at Reef Point, in Maine. The Blissés, who intended to turn over their entire estate to Harvard University after their deaths, decided to make the transfer earlier due to the impending war. Their gift to Harvard in 1940 included the house and formal gardens (approximately 16 acres) and an additional 10 acres were transferred to the Danish government for their embassy complex. They also donated 27 acres of the adjacent naturalistic woodland gardens to the National Park Service

for use as a public park.

Dumbarton Oaks Park, as it is now called, consists of the woodlands bordering the creek below the formal terrace gardens. They illustrate many of Farrand's ideas that she had absorbed from Robinson. "The so-called natural garden," she wrote, "is the most difficult to fit in with its surroundings" due to no set line to act as a backbone.<sup>9</sup> Those once-enchanting gardens were a "highly designed composition of meadows, woods, and stream, with waterfalls, bridges, and a reflecting pond anchoring the landscape."<sup>10</sup>

They were opened to the public in the mid-1940s, but due to maintenance issues, slid downhill for many decades. Unlike Dumbarton Oaks, the naturalistic garden quickly became overgrown with invasive species, while crumbling stonework and storm water damage were ongoing challenges. Fortunately, Farrand's unique landscape has been rescued in recent years by the Dumbarton Oaks Park



*Plan of the grounds by Rudolph Ruzicka, 1935.*

Conservancy, whose mission is to revitalize and maintain Farrand's only surviving naturalistic garden while meeting the challenges of sustainability in an urban environment.<sup>11</sup>

When Dumbarton Oaks entered this second phase, it quickly became apparent that long-term care of the ornamental gardens needed to be addressed. The gardens, which had never been easy to maintain in the Blissés' era due to the hilly terrain and the rigorous replacement of plants, among other issues, would quickly become a serious challenge if there were no guidelines. With this in mind, and at Harvard's invitation, Farrand prepared



detailed maintenance instructions for the upper gardens, but not those in the adjacent naturalistic park that was not part of Harvard. Farrand prepared the first draft of the comprehensive plant book in 1944, but it lay forgotten until it was rediscovered by Diane McGuire and published in 1980 as *Beatrix Farrand's Plant Book for Dumbarton Oaks*. It stands as a unique document for one of the greatest gardens in America, "the cornerstone on which the plan for the preservation of the gardens at Dumbarton Oaks is based."<sup>12</sup> The book acknowledges Farrand's understanding that without detailed guidance, maintenance standards would be lowered under institutional ownership. In explicit detail, Farrand recommended measures to be taken when plants needed replacement, the various levels of maintenance required, and steps that were not advised. Seventy-five years later, her advice still rings true.

It is hard to know what Farrand thought of the transfer of a complex private garden to institutional ownership. In 1944, after the transfer was complete and during her tenure as an advisor, she wrote: "The house and its surroundings are a single unit at Dumbarton Oaks. From the students' library, the trees, lawns, and terraces are the outdoor expressions of the continuing and living studies to which the farsightedness of the

givers have dedicated the enterprise."<sup>13</sup> By 1951, Farrand found it increasingly difficult to continue in an advisory role for a research institution rather than a private client, so she bowed out as a gardens advisor, although she happily helped Mildred Bliss develop her garden library. During the early years of the institutional phase, Bliss had continued to develop the upper gardens, mostly in collaboration with Ruth Havey, who began working in Farrand's office around 1929. Havey made an enormous contribution to the present appearance of the gardens, working on a redesign and ornamentation of the North Vista and the Arbor Terrace as well as her most famous addition, the Pebble Garden in 1960. In 1956, Alden Hopkins redesigned the Ellipse after the original boxwood hedge died, replacing it with a double row of pleached hornbeams. Harvard employed several landscape consultants, namely Robert Patterson, who had worked at Reef Point and the Arnold Arboretum, and also Donald Smith, who had also worked at Reef Point and later became superintendent of the gardens and grounds at Dumbarton Oaks until his retirement in 1992.

When it opened to the public in the mid-1940s, Dumbarton Oaks became known around the world. Henry Francis duPont, who also had a world-class garden

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Photo credit Richard Cheek. Judith B Tankard Collection.

*Rose Garden from upper terrace, 2008.*

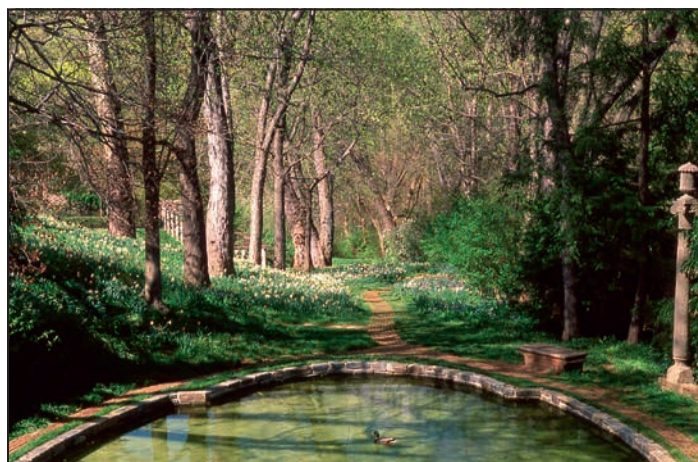


Photo credit Richard Cheek. Judith B Tankard Collection.

*Lovers' Lane Pool, 2008.*

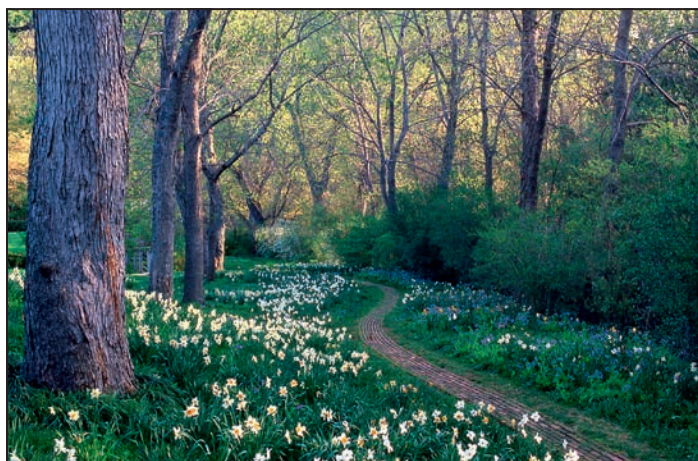


Photo credit Richard Cheek. Judith B Tankard Collection.

*Mélissande's Allée, 2008.*



Photo credit Richard Cheek. Judith B Tankard Collection.

*Fountain Terrace, 2008.*



## Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Park... (continued from page 5)

at Winterthur, wrote to Mildred Bliss in 1949 to say he admired the gardens, its upkeep, and above all its collection of benches. Today Dumbarton Oaks remains one of America's outstanding gardens and a tribute to Beatrix Farrand's immense capabilities as a designer. In 1980, Farrand's contribution to the profession of landscape architecture was celebrated in a Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, while emerging landscape architects, such as Michael Van Valkenburgh, benefitted from Dumbarton Oaks Fellowships which had been established by the Blisses. Numerous landscape architects and garden scholars were quick to recognize Farrand's extraordinary accomplishment at Dumbarton Oaks and her career and gardens continue to be celebrated in books, articles, and documentaries.

Over the years Mildred Bliss and Beatrix Farrand had enjoyed a close personal relationship, writing letters to one another as "MilRob" and "Trix." In 1950, for instance, Farrand sent the Blisses a sprig of white heather from Reef Point in memory of their visits.<sup>14</sup> Mildred Bliss provided the final accolade when she wrote, "Dumbarton Oaks has its own personality sculptured from Beatrix Farrand's knowledge and wisdom and from the daydreams and

vision of the owners."<sup>15</sup> After Beatrix Farrand died in 1959, the Blisses erected a memorial tablet in the Green Terrace:

*May kindly stars guard the dreams born beneath the spreading branches of Dumbarton Oaks. Dedicated to the friendship of Beatrix Farrand and to succeeding generations of seekers after Truth.*

*Many thanks to Gail Griffin, Director of Gardens and Grounds, Dumbarton Oaks (retired); Lindsey Milstein, President, Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy; and Anatole Tchikine, Curator of Rare Books, Garden and Landscape Studies, Dumbarton Oaks.*

*Judith B Tankard is a landscape historian and the author of Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes (New York: Monacelli Press, 2009)*

### Endnotes

- 1 Diane Kostial McGuire, "Plants and Planting Design," *Beatrix Farrand's American Landscapes: Her Gardens & Campuses* (New York: Sagapress, 1985), 63.
- 2 Walter Muir Whitehead, *Dumbarton Oaks: The History of a Georgetown House and Garden, 1800-1966* (Cambridge:

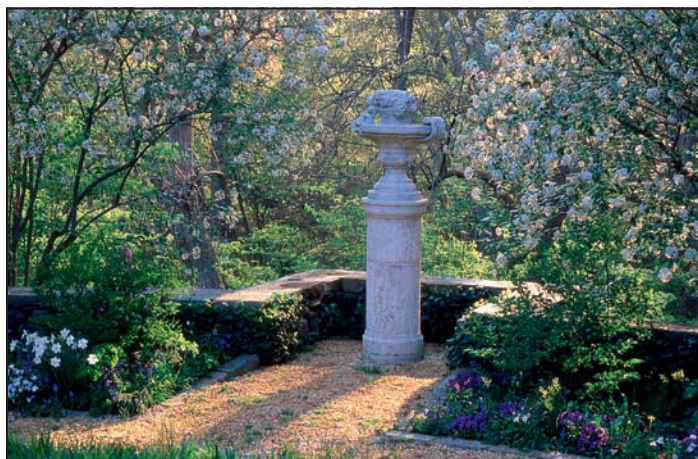


Photo credit Richard Cheek. Judith B Tankard Collection.

Urn Terrace. 2008.



Photo credit Richard Cheek. Judith B Tankard Collection.

Pebble Garden designed by Ruth Havey, 2008.



Photo credit Richard Cheek. Judith B Tankard Collection.

Wisteria on chains in North Vista, 2008.

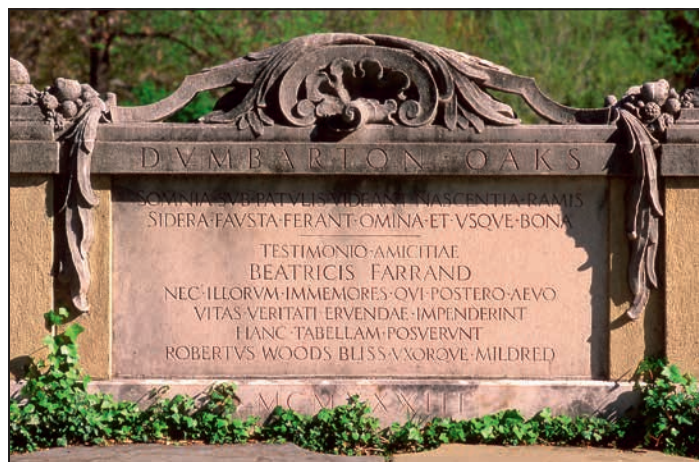


Photo credit Richard Cheek. Judith B Tankard Collection.

Tribute panel in Green Garden, 2008.



Harvard University Press, 1967), 63.

- 3 Beatrix Farrand, "The Oaks. Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss, June 24-25, 1922," Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections.
- 4 Mildred Bliss, "An Attempted Evocation of a Personality," *Beatrix Jones Farrand: 1872-1959. An Appreciation of a Great Landscape Gardener* (Washington, D.C.: privately printed, 1960), 13.
- 5 Lanning Roper, "Dumbarton Oaks: A Great American Garden," *Beatrix Jones Farrand: 1872-1959. An Appreciation*, 21.
- 6 Roper, "Dumbarton Oaks: A Great American Garden," 21, 19.
- 7 Beatrix Farrand, letter to Mildred Bliss, July 5, 1922, cited in Susan Tamulevich, *Dumbarton Oaks: Garden Into Art* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2001), 43-44.
- 8 Georgina Masson, *Dumbarton Oaks: A Guide to the Gardens* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks/Trustees for Harvard

University, 1968), 21.

- 9 Beatrix Jones, "The Garden as a Picture," *Scribner's Magazine*, July 1907, 8.
- 10 For more information on the Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy, visit <https://dopark.org>.
- 11 Lindsey Milstein and Liza Gilbert, "Dumbarton Oaks Park: A Walk on the Wild Side," *Oaks*, Spring-Summer, 2020.
- 12 Diane Kostial McGuire, ed., *Beatrix Farrand's Plant Book for Dumbarton Oaks* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks/Trustees for Harvard University, 1980), xi.
- 13 Beatrix Farrand, "Dumbarton Oaks: An Historical Setting for the Making of History," *Landscape Architecture Quarterly*: 34/12 (July 1944), 135.
- 14 Beatrix Farrand, letter to Mildred Bliss, August 14, 1950. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections.
- 15 Bliss, "An Attempted Evocation," 17.



National Park Service, Museum Resources Center, P.A.P.C.

Lovers' Lane Entrance, Dumbarton Oaks Park, 1945.



National Park Service, Museum Resources Center, Public Affairs Photograph Collection.

Forsythia Steps, Dumbarton Oaks Park, 1945.



National Park Service, Museum Resources Center, Public Affairs Photograph Collection.

Clapper Bridge Falls, Dumbarton Oaks Park, 1946.

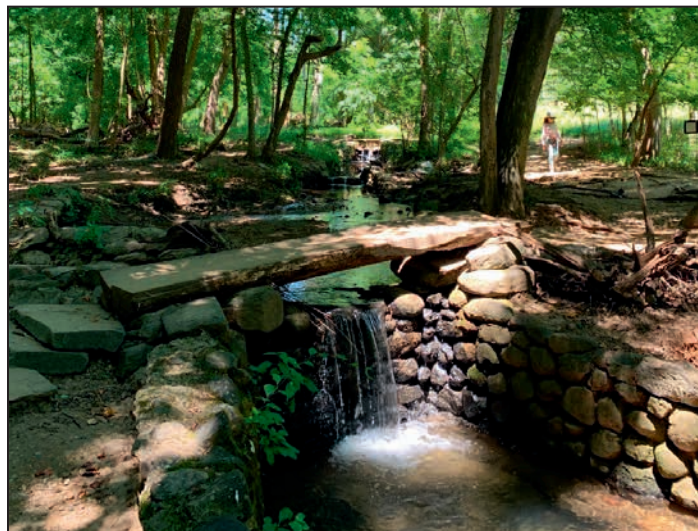


Photo credit Maria Jose Garcia, Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy.

Clapper Bridge Falls, Dumbarton Oaks Park, August 18, 2020.



# Jane Welles Loudon: “First Professional Lady Gardener”<sup>1</sup>

By Kenneth M. McFarland, Brandon, Vermont

Judith Tankard’s lead article reminds us of the vital role women played in landscape design in the twentieth century. Looking back to earlier years, however, one finds the field relegated to men, a monopoly spread across the professions. Yet times were changing as shown, for example, in the growing role of women in various areas of medicine.

And by the very end of the 1800s Beatrix Farrand, by her 1895 founding membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects, showed that domain too was no longer exclusively for men.

Even in the early Victorian period, moreover, women were making an impressive impact on the garden/landscape world. One such individual was Jane Webb Welles Loudon (1807-1858). To a degree, of course, she is known through her marriage to the well-known Scottish landscape designer, John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843). Yet Jane Loudon’s achievements stand proud of her husband’s notable record and reputation.

Her biographer states it was Jane Loudon “who put gardening on the map for the women of her generation. She might well be said to have been the first professional lady gardener and writer on horticultural subjects. Thus she opened the way for such outstanding figures in the development of the English garden as Gertrude Jekyll and Ellen Willmott.”<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this short article is to remind readers of those achievements and to encourage them to learn more on their own about this remarkable woman.

In a fascinating set of letters beginning April 21, 1948, Beatrix Farrand herself signals that Jane Loudon’s work had long continued to be appreciated (as it is today). In particular, the correspondence refers to a complete five-volume quarto set of Jane Loudon’s *The Ladies’ Flower-Garden*, then available from an English bookseller at £80. Farrand was writing to Anne Sweeney at Dumbarton Oaks, who under the direction of Mildred Bliss (see lead article) had assumed a variety of garden-related responsibilities, including development of a library. While Bliss apparently had extended to Farrand the authority to acquire publications for the growing collection, the latter believed the price of the Morocco bound Loudon set needed final word from Bliss. Sweeney replied on May 21 noting Bliss’s approval of the purchase of the Loudon books, which a letter of May 28 Farrand termed “invaluable” even if the cost was the equivalent of \$300.<sup>3</sup> (One source indicates this would equal over \$3,000 in



Jane Loudon

Image in public domain, Wikipedia.com.

2020. Similar sets now sell for many times *that* figure.)

Jane Loudon probably would like knowing her works were, and are, fetching big prices. Though born into a comfortable situation, a decline in family fortunes compelled her from an early age to rely on writing skills to make her way. *Magnolia* readers may know that her first successful foray into publication, *The Mummy!*, might today be counted as science fiction and was thus far afield from the world of plants and gardens with which she became so closely linked.<sup>4</sup>

In a twist of irony, however, it was *The Mummy!* that brought Jane Welles together with J. C. Loudon. The latter had found her literary voyage into the future sufficiently interesting to note it favorably in an 1828 issue of *The Gardener’s*

*Magazine*, a publication he edited.<sup>5</sup> This led to a meeting of the two and ultimately to their marriage in September 1830. Jane Loudon came into the union professing a total lack of knowledge of anything pertaining to plants or gardens. She was a quick study, however, and became an invaluable aide to a husband who suffered from serious physical disabilities. And it was at their amazing London villa, garden, and library at 3 Porchester Terrace, Bayswater where she began her transformation from novice plants person to widely recognized gardening authority.<sup>6</sup>

The 1830s were notable for the birth of daughter Agnes in 1832, travels with John marked by landscape



Plate 13, a bouquet of camellias from Jane Loudon’s *The Ladies’ Flower-Garden of Ornamental Greenhouse Plants* (1848).



Plate 1, A bouquet of irises, from Jane Loudon’s *The Ladies’ Flower-Garden of Ornamental Bulbous Plants* (1841).



and horticultural study, and recurring periods of financial stress, a woe that bedeviled Jane and John many times during their lives. Through her learning process, Jane increasingly saw the need for easy-to-understand publications directed towards those like herself who were inexperienced hands at gardening. In his attempts to provide instruction John reinforced this awareness, finding trouble speaking in anything other than advanced horticulturist language. Meantime, Jane continued to hone her writing skills, not only in her work with John but also in producing several works of fiction, with Agnes playing an important role as a character. She also began to write for *The Gardener's Magazine*, that publication furthering her literary career in 1838 by publishing *The Ladies' Flower-Garden*, which first appeared in monthly segments.<sup>7</sup>

That endeavor was followed in 1841 with *Gardening for Ladies*, described by her biographer as "an immediate success."<sup>8</sup> As Jane Loudon's reputation grew, her pen found little rest. The same year saw publication of the second volume *The Ladies' Flower-Garden*, the subject being Ornamental Bulbous Plants, and *The Ladies' Companion to the Flower-Garden*. The following year *Botany for Ladies* appeared, Jane now comfortable with a topic that she once found highly daunting. A very proud John Claudius Loudon reviewed both *The Ladies' Companion* and *Botany for Ladies* in the December 1842 issue of *The Gardener's Magazine*, noting tremendous pride in his wife's work.<sup>9</sup>

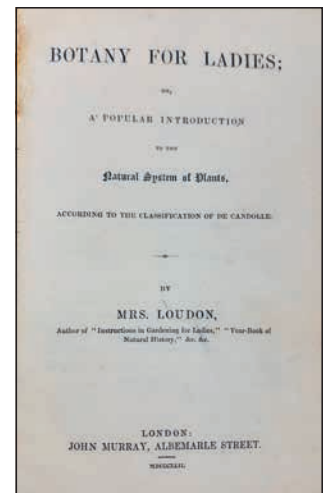
Sadly, after periods of decline and then moderate recovery, John Loudon entered months of increasingly bad health, his death from a lung condition coming in December 1843. By his side until the last, Jane now turned to addressing John's many lingering matters of business and managing Porchester Terrace, while she also devoted herself to being the best of mothers to Agnes. Unfortunately, the sale of her husband's publications began to lag, while household and garden expenses remained high. Agnes, moreover, had come to enjoy a high standard of living. Even aided by a government pension, Jane Loudon knew she would need her writing talents to help keep afloat, just as she had realized before the publication of *The Mummy!*

The coming years were trying at many moments, Jane being compelled to "let" her Bayswater home at times while she and her daughter visited friends or traveled extensively in Europe.<sup>10</sup> As well, Agnes suffered several failed, painful relationships, which added greatly to a mother's burdens. Jane's publication efforts also turned partly sour with her editorship of the unsuccessful *Ladies' Companion*. Yet, her gardening books remained popular, Jane adding new titles to her body of work, as well as penning additional volumes of *The Ladies' Flower-Garden*. When she was able to return home, moreover, she took satisfaction in attending to John's and her garden, which had been so important in her development as a gardening and plant authority. As the 1850s progressed, however,

her health began to decline, and she was often confined to bed. By summer 1858 any hope for recovery was lost, and Jane died on July 13 shortly after destroying her personal papers.

Jane Loudon had not reached her 51<sup>st</sup> birthday when she was buried next to John Claudius in the Kensal Green Cemetery. As discussed, however, she had created an enviable legacy over the short span of her life. Fortunately, several of her publications are easily available via the internet, underscoring why Beatrix Farrand thought them a valuable addition to the Dumbarton Oaks garden library.<sup>11</sup> Even a cursory look makes clear why Jane Welles Loudon does indeed deserve a most special spot in any study of garden history.

*The author wishes to thank Gail Collmann Griffin, retired director of gardens and grounds at Dumbarton Oaks, for bringing the Farrand-Sweeney letters to his attention and Staci Catron, director of the Cherokee Garden Library, for providing illustrations taken from the works of Jane Welles Loudon. KMM*



*Jane Loudon's Botany for Ladies (1848). All Loudon illustrations are from the Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center.*

## Endnotes

- 1 Title derived from statement by Bea Howe, *Lady with Green Fingers: The Life of Jane Loudon*, (London: Country Life Limited, 1961), 9.
- 2 Howe, 9.
- 3 For the Farrand-Sweeney correspondence visit the Dumbarton Oaks Garden Archives at: [https://www.doaks.org/library-archives/garden-archives/archive-search#index\\_term=sweeney-aacomma-anne](https://www.doaks.org/library-archives/garden-archives/archive-search#index_term=sweeney-aacomma-anne).
- 4 The full title was: *The Mummy! A Tale of the Twenty-Second Century*, and it appeared in three volumes.
- 5 The full title was: *The Gardener's Magazine and Register of Rural & Domestic Improvement*. Jane Welles had forecasted in *The Mummy!* such improvements as steam plows and milking machines, concepts which caught John C. Loudon's eye.
- 6 The villa actually consisted of two conjoined houses and two gardens. John Loudon's mother and two sisters lived in the second part.
- 7 Howe, 64.
- 8 Howe, 72.
- 9 Howe, 81.
- 10 It is striking how apparently low the cost of travelling and living in parts of Europe was then in comparison to expenses encountered in London.
- 11 One of various examples is found at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/187044#page/27/mode/1up>.

# Book Review

**André Michaux in North America: Journals & Letters, 1785-1797**, by André Michaux; editors: Charlie Williams, Eliane M. Norman, Walter K. Taylor | University of Alabama Press, hardcover, 608 pages | ISBN-13: 978-0817320300; ISBN-10: 081732030X | March 2020, list price \$54.95

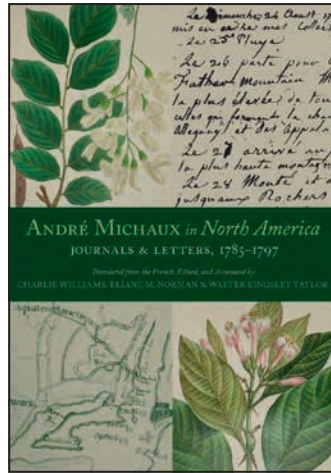
Recently named Royal Botanist by Louis XVI, André Michaux departed from the French port of Lorient on 27 September 1785, in the company of his son, François André, aged fifteen, a fellow botanist Pierre-Paul Saunier (1751-1818), and Jacques Renaud, a servant, and arrived in the city of New York on Sunday evening, 13 November 1785. His charge from the king and court officials was to collect plants and seeds in North America for the royal gardens of France and trees from the forests here to replant those lost in France, largely to shipbuilding. A first step in the mission was to establish a nursery where plants and seeds collected on future botanical expeditions could be cultivated until they were shipped to France. In winter 1786 André Michaux acquired a suitable tract of 29.75 acres on the west bank of the Hudson River, in New Jersey yet convenient to the port of New York, which he cleared and prepared for plantings, where he erected a small house of four rooms and made other necessary improvements.

Meanwhile, after the exercise of diplomatic and professional courtesies, as would be his practice for the remainder of his life, André Michaux wrote engaging, detailed letters to court officials and colleagues in France. Read today, over two hundred years later, his description of travels, plants he had seen and collected, and his observations of place and character have an extraordinary immediacy. On 19 January 1786, after two months in and around New York City, Michaux wrote one of his many letters to André Thouin (1746-1824), a close friend and fellow botanist, who had succeeded his father as head gardener at the Jardin du Roi at the age of seventeen. Assessing his prospects in the United States, he concluded “but it is not here that much of the work will take place but rather in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida. That is where I would like to have the company of M. Dantic (Louis-Augustin-Guillaume Bosc d’Antic, 1759-1828)

to travel through the forests, cross rivers and swamps, ...” André Michaux’s personal and professional friendship with Louis Bosc dated to ca. 1779, when they were both students of André Thouin at the Jardin du Roi.

Carrying letters of introduction André Michaux made two trips from New York to Philadelphia in the summer of 1786. On the first he met Benjamin Franklin, visited William (1739-1823) and John (1743-1812) Bartram at the garden established by their father, continued south to visit George Washington at Mount Vernon, and reached today’s Winchester, Virginia, and the Shenandoah River whence he returned to New York. A shorter, second trip to Philadelphia in early September included another visit with the Bartrams and much conversation, particularly with William, who had preceded him in the South, and his first visit with William Hamilton (1745-1813) and the much celebrated garden at his Woodlands estate.

Within days of his return to New York, André Michaux, his son, and their servant departed for Charleston, leaving Pierre-Paul Saunier in charge of the New Jersey garden (where he would remain until his death in 1818 and be succeeded as gardener by his son). Michaux and his party arrived in Charleston on 20 September 1786. He again practiced the expected diplomatic and social courtesies, sought grounds for a Southern nursery, and soon acquired a tract of 111 acres in the plantation community centered



Portrait of André Thouin.

Smithsonian Library image gallery.



Portrait of Count d'Angiviller ca. 1763.

Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Portrait of François André Michaux.

North American Sylva..., 1805.



on Goose Creek, some ten miles above Charleston. Here, with the labor of hired carpenter-builders, he repaired an existing building, erected a new four-room house, built cold frames, and erected fences and undertook other improvements, including “a new road across the marshes and a bridge over a continual stream.” A greenhouse was added by 1789. This was his base of operations for a decade, the point from which he departed on plant-collecting expeditions, to which he returned, where he cultivated the plants and seeds he gathered on his travels, and where he boxed up saplings, plants, and seeds for shipment to France.

André Michaux would remain in the United States, in service to Louis XVI, into the upheaval of the French Revolution and the death of the king in 1793, and increasingly suffering the uncertainty of government support that undermined all too much of his work. In the summer of 1796 André Michaux gathered up his collection of plants in the Charleston nursery for transport to France and sailed with the boxes and trunks on 16 August. A violent storm drove his ship ashore on the Dutch coast, near Egmond, on 10 October 1796. Although he lost many of his personal possessions, including the first notebook in a series of ten comprising the journals of his life and travels in the preceding decade, he was able to save, through salvage and close attention,

nearly all of his plant collections. After weeks attending to these remedial efforts, he renewed his return to France, traveling through Holland, and arrived in Paris on 23 December 1796. He welcomed the company of colleagues and friends who had been his correspondents since 1785 and a first visit with his son François André, now twenty-six, who he had not seen since his departure from Charleston in 1790.

André Michaux remained in Paris for the next three years, into the autumn of 1801 when he departed aboard the *Naturaliste* on what would be the final botanical expedition of his life, a voyage to the South Seas. During this period, he renewed friendships, professional affiliations, and re-established himself in a city greatly changed from the royal capitol whence he departed in 1785 for North America. The possibility of a return to the United States ultimately failed and Michaux accommodated himself to the work of a scholar botanist, organizing his research, attending to his herbarium, and setting about the manuscripts of two books reflecting his tireless years in North America. His *Histoire des chênes de l'Amérique* (*Oaks of North America*) was published in Paris in 1801. *Flora Boreali-Americana* appeared in March 1803, months after André Michaux's death from a tropical fever in Madagascar on 11 October 1802, but before news

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### Plants Michaux encountered on his travels in North America.



*Pinckneya bracteata* *Fever-tree*



*Magnolia macrophylla* *Bigleaf Magnolia*



*Viola hastata* *Halberd-leaf violet*



*Kalmia latifolia* *Mountain Laurel*



*Rhododendron periclymenoides* *Pinxter Azalea*



*Shortia galacifolia* *Oconee Bells*

Photos credited to Charlie Williams.

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of his death reached Paris with the return of the *Naturaliste* later in 1803.

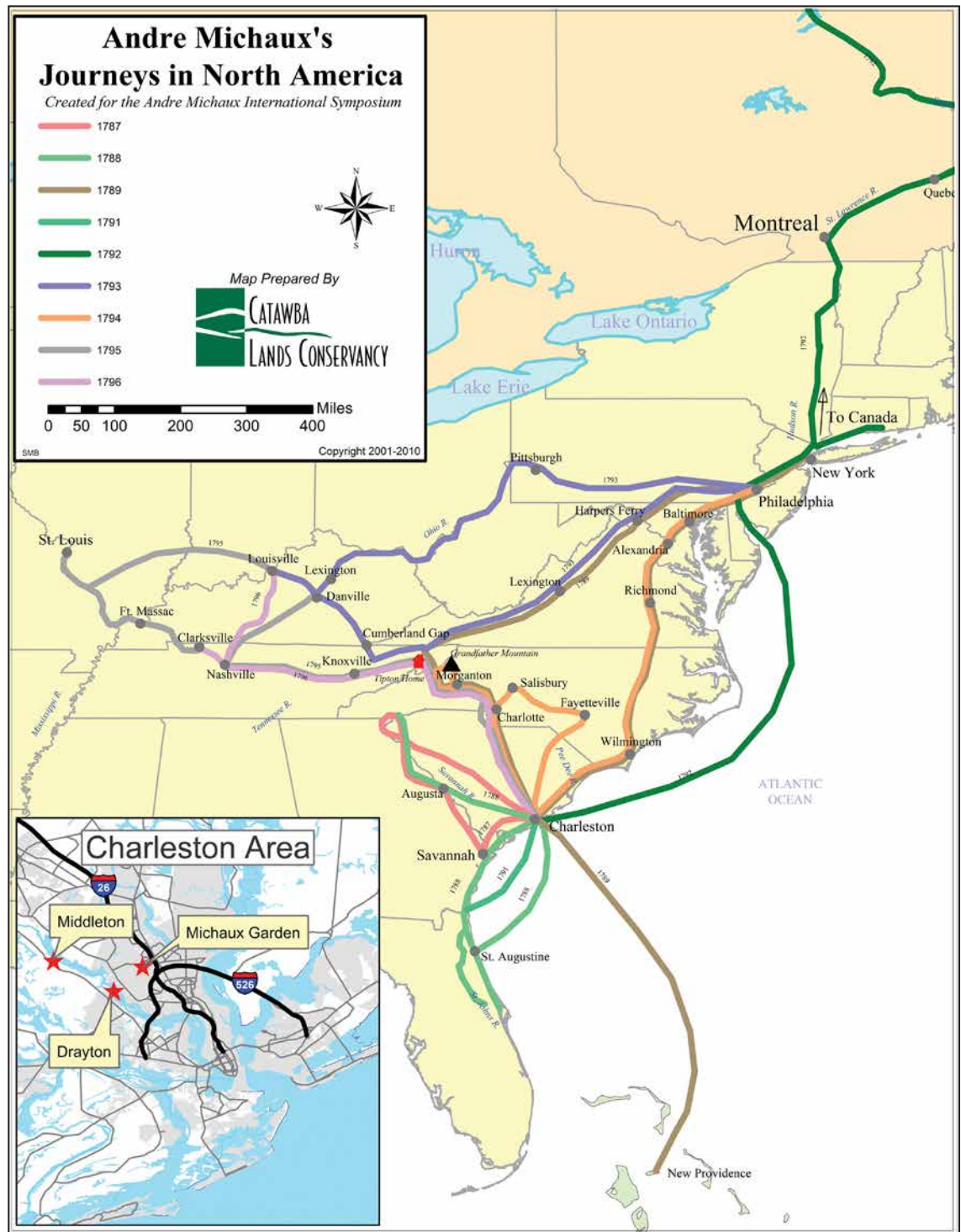


François André Michaux (1770-1855), having assisted his father with the manuscripts of these books, and having written the introduction to *Flora Boreali-Americana*, which had been brought to completion by Louis Claude Marie Richard (1754-1821), would carry forth his father's legacy.

With the first-hand advantages of his stay in the United States from 1785 to 1790, two subsequent return trips, and the experience of assisting in the production of his father's books, he again turned his hand to writing, producing a third book that also became a landmark in botanical publishing. First published in French in 1810-1813, the volume that appeared in English in 1817-1819 as *North American Sylva* was aimed to a general readership and enjoyed favor through the nineteenth century, with publication in Philadelphia up to 1871. Its reception was enhanced by the 156 color illustrations produced by brothers, Pierre-Joseph (1759-1840) and Henri-Joseph (1766-1852) Redouté and Pancra[c]e Bessa (1772-1846).

In 1824 François André Michaux donated his father's nine surviving journals of his travels in North America to the American Philosophical Library

in Philadelphia where they remain to the present. Three writers of natural history turned to them in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Charles Sprague Sargent (1841-1927), the founding director of the Arnold Arboretum, was first, writing an article published in the *American Journal of Science* in 1886. In 1889 he saw to publication "Portions of the Journal of André Michaux, Botanist, Written During His Travels in the United States and Canada, 1785-1796. With an Introduction and



André Michaux's North American journeys, color coded by year. (Created by Catawba Lands Conservancy)



Explanatory Notes by C. S. Sargent” in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*. Sargent’s writings were in English: the partial publication of Michaux’s handwritten texts was a transcription in French. Partial translations in English followed. In 1892 Shepherd Monroe Dugger (1854-1938) included translated portions of Michaux’s notebook entries of his 1794 expedition to the North Carolina Mountains in *The Balsam Groves of the Grandfather Mountain*. In his entry for 30 August Michaux had recorded his climb to the summit of Grandfather Mountain where “with my companion and guide, (we) sang the hymn ‘La Marseillaise’ . . .” Next, in 1904, Reuben Gold Thwaites (1853-1913) included an English translation of Michaux’s notes of his 1793-1796 travels in Kentucky in the third volume of his *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*.



*André Michaux in North America: Journals & Letters, 1785-1797* represents the first, full English translation of all nine surviving notebooks (of the original ten) in which André Michaux recorded the details of his botanical work and the exploratory, plant collecting expeditions he undertook in the United States and Canada. Its long-anticipated publication reflects many, critical years of research by its co-editors, Charlie Williams, Eliane M. Norman, and Walter Kingsley Taylor. Their commitment now enables readers, whether scholars or laymen, the opportunity to appreciate Michaux’s descriptions of the plants and places, and people, he recorded in the service of his king and nation. The pleasure he found in his discoveries remains palpable today, and his voice distinct, in this English translation of his original writings in French.

André Michaux’s story is complemented, in turn, by the editors’ contributions. Following a foreword by James E. McClellan III, which places Michaux’s royal commission in its larger, European context, they have



*Quercus falcata* from André Michaux’s *Histoire des chênes de l’Amérique* (1801).

crafted a preface that briefly notes their paths to this subject. Next is their biographical sketch of André Michaux, which immediately precedes the fifteen chapters representing the chronological progress of his travels and their record in his journals. Each chapter begins with a concise summary that quickly provides a foretaste of what is to be learned in the translations of Michaux’s journal entries and the related, contemporary letters, mostly written by Michaux; they broaden and enliven our appreciation of the respective accounts. Those Michaux wrote to Charles-Claude Flahaut de la Billaderie (1730-1809), Count d’Angiviller, director of the Bâtiments du Roi, and André Thouin at the Jardin du Roi are rich with detail and particularly fascinating. The translations are largely the work of Eliane M. Norman who, with her colleagues, availed themselves of other existing, unpublished translations.

In the epilogue, the co-editors next treat the final years of André Michaux’s life in Paris, where he attended to his collections and herbarium, enjoyed the company of colleagues and friends, worked on the manuscripts of his two books, and set about preparations for the expedition to the South Seas. They also address the regrettable fates of

the New Jersey and Charleston gardens. The nursery garden in New Jersey, said to have been enlarged during the long stewardship of the Saunier family, was subdivided in the mid-nineteenth century, and in about 1871 a part of the acreage became the grounds of the Hoboken Cemetery in today’s North Bergen. The Charleston garden came to its own sad end and virtual obliteration. It retained a semblance of its identity into the



*Quercus falcata* from François André Michaux’s *North American Sylva* (1819).

early-twentieth century when, in June 1910, William Chambers Coker (1872-1953) visited the grounds, found mature examples of *Magnolia grandiflora* at the site, and photographed an aged specimen and others in a grove. He described the property and its surviving historic plants in an illustrated article published in 1911 in the *Journal of*

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the *Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society*. Modern-day efforts to gain recognition of the lost garden and its history came to a certain degree of success with the dedication of a South Carolina Historical Marker for the “French Botanical Garden” in 2008.

Readers will find the text of André Michaux’s journals and letters augmented and illuminated by valuable endnotes that comprise over 100 pages. The co-editors’ decision to support Michaux’s writings in this fashion is exemplary and reveals the depth--and wealth--of their scholarship. The University of Alabama Press is to be commended for their agreement in this regard.

In addition to a valuable bibliography, *André Michaux in North America* includes two valuable contributions as appendices. Ninety-nine of the plants Michaux is known to have encountered on his travels here are featured in a gallery of color photographs shot by the authors and others: if floriferous, they appear in bloom. The “Table of Described Plants” is a comprehensive listing of plants André Michaux described in his journals and letters written from North America. They appear alphabetically by the name of the species used by Michaux with their modern binomials and common names in separate, parallel columns, with the page numbers on which they appear in this book in a fourth column. This table is followed by a “Table of Described Animals,” beginning with alligator and concluding with three different woodpeckers he observed. American black bears, whitetail deer, wood ducks, and wild turkeys were the most frequently seen and noted on his travels. They are treated in the same manner as the plants.

Comprising over 600 pages, printed on fine paper, and having a hefty weight, *André Michaux in North America* is not a book (most) readers will read from the first page to the last, in a single sustained effort. Instead, its arrangement and the sequential, chronological record of Michaux’s travels in his journals, generally coincident with the numbered chapters of this book, with exceptions when appropriate, enable the reader to select certain expeditions or time periods, and enjoy them in manageable readings. Southern Garden History Society members might well consult the map of the North American journeys for

expeditions into areas of their interest or place of residence and turn to the corresponding chapter.

The coverage André Michaux afforded his travels in Canada in 1792 is exceptional. His experience on that trip, in particular, coupled with that of his earlier travels, became the basis of discussions in late 1792 into 1793 with the American Philosophical Society regarding the scope and funding of a major expedition into the lands west of the Mississippi River, to the Pacific. The proposal failed, however, Thomas Jefferson, a leading figure in the society’s negotiations with Michaux, would later see its prospects to fruition in the expedition undertaken in 1803-1806 by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

Davyd Foard Hood  
Isinglass  
Vale, North Carolina

### Editor’s Note

Having attended the André Michaux International Symposium held in 2002 at Belmont Abbey College and the Oconee Bell Celebration held in March 2007 at Clemson University and Devil’s Fork State Park, Lake Jocassee, South Carolina, I found a personal connection with André Michaux in these pages. On the evening of 17 November 1789 George Heinrich Weidner/Henry Whitener (1717-1792), my great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, was host to Michaux and provided accommodations to the botanist on his expedition into the Blue Ridge Mountains. Mr. Whitener was a maternal ancestor of my grandfather who built Isinglass. The Weidner/Whitener house, on the waters of the Henry Fork of the South Fork of the Catawba River, stood about nine miles, as the crow flies, northeast of Isinglass. The house and its home acreage were next the residence of Mollianna Whitener (ca. 1762-1796), my great-great-great-great-grandmother’s younger sister, and her husband, Jesse Robinson (1760-1840). They were hosts to André Michaux on three further occasions, on 25 July 1794, 10 September 1794, and 1 April 1796. Their hospitality included overnight accommodations on two of those visits and possibly on the third as well.

## Website Offerings

As referenced in Perry’s letter *and* discussed at length by the board, Society members are working diligently to expand and invigorate website material sure to be of interest to members. Readers are encouraged to have a look at such interesting items as two complementary pieces, “Spider Lily (*Lycoris radiata*)” by Perry Mathewes

and “Ladies and Lubbers” (examining *Lycoris squamigera*) by Gail Griffin and Wayne Amos. Other selections include a look at the stunning botanical art of Margaret Stones, by Randy Harrelson; Ced Dolder’s sad recounting of the destruction of the Clermont Lee garden in Savannah; another contribution by Gail Griffin, this



being “Of Common Mind” exploring the remarkably “close relationship” between SGHS and Dumbarton Oaks. In addition, Andrea Sprott has penned a piece on an immensely important Southern garden writer in “Elizabeth Lawrence: Literary and Horticultural Icon,” while we are reminded of another iconic garden figure

through a discussion of Thomas Peter Bennett’s new book *Florida Explored: The Philadelphia Connection in Bartram’s Tracks*.” Finally, readers who enjoyed Will Rieley’s article in the summer issue of *Magnolia*, will appreciate the additional images available in Ken McFarland’s “Garden Restoration at Stratford Hall.”

## In Print

***On Ballylee: The Enduring Legacy of Our Fathers’ Fields*** by Robin Spencer Lattimore with forward and closing essay by Dr. James Everett Kibler, Jr. | Copies may be ordered from: Rutherford County Historical Society, P.O. Box 1044, Rutherfordton, NC 28139 | \$15 each (includes tax and shipping)

James Everett Kibler Jr. is well-known to members of the Southern Garden History Society as a society member, speaker, and author. His long interest in the Summer family and their antebellum nursery was the subject of “On Reclaiming a Southern Antebellum Garden Heritage: An Introduction to Pomaria Nurseries,” an essay published in *Magnolia* in 1993. His presentation at the 2009 SGHS annual meeting in Camden was followed in June 2014 with gallery talk at the opening of “Taking Root: The Summer Brothers and the History of Pomaria Nursery,” an exhibition at the McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina. Next, 2017 was marked by the publication of *Taking Root: The Nature Writing of William and Adam Summer of Pomaria*, which was reviewed in *Magnolia* that year.

Meanwhile, in 1998, renown came to Jim Kibler, in a second primary area of his scholarship, with the publication of *Our Fathers’ Fields: A Southern Story*. This award-winning book reflected his years-long study of the Hardy family and their plantation in Newberry County, South Carolina. Jim Kibler purchased the Hardy plantation seat in 1989 and soon set about its restoration and furnishing. The transitional Federal-Greek Revival style house and its renewed grounds remain his residence.

As a professor at the University of Georgia, Dr. Kibler has been a mentor to many of his students. As a scholar and published author, he has likewise influenced the efforts of others who have admired his writings. One such figure is Robin Spencer Lattimore, a co-author of *Southern Splendor: Saving Architectural Treasures of the Old South*. *On Ballylee* is his homage to James Everett Kibler, a friend, and his life’s many works.

Davyd Foard Hood

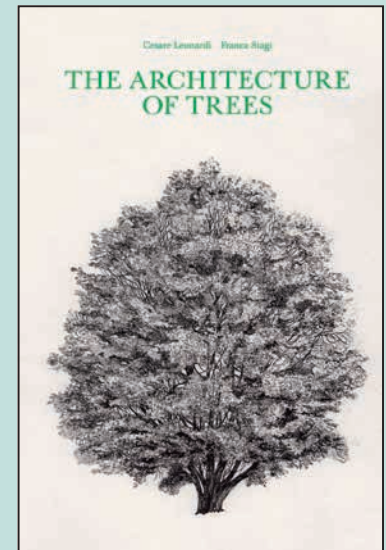
***The Architecture of Trees***, by Cesare Leonardi and Franca Stagi | Princeton Architectural Press | 424 pages; hardcover | ISBN-13: 9781616898069 | March 2019 | List price \$125

*The Architecture of Trees*, originally published in 1982, is the work of Cesare Leonardi and Franca Stagi, two Italian designers, who created the 550 quill-pen ink drawings of 212 species of the most significant trees in Europe to learn and to teach the elements of the architecture of parks and other green

spaces. Over twenty years, Leonardi photographed tree specimens and with transparent film and India ink drew over the photographs, working at a scale of 1:100. In addition to the intricate tree silhouettes, sorted taxonomically under Gymnosperms or Angiosperms, then by family, genus, and species, are other types of information on the species: shade and color changes through the seasons, places of origin and dates of introduction into Europe, and the history and etymology of the generic and specific names. For each species, the authors add detail drawings that show branching patterns, needles or leaves, cones, flowers, or fruit.

Originally used to support a series of landscape projects in Italy and widely used in Italian architectural offices today, this new edition is the first translation into English and should serve as a resource for designers, botanists, and horticulturists, as well as a source of deep pleasure for all lovers of trees.

Gail Griffin





Southern Garden History Society

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## Awards and Scholarships

The *Flora Ann Bynum Medal* is awarded to recipients who have rendered outstanding service to the Society. Nominations may be made at any time by any member.

The *William Lanier Hunt Award* recognizes members, non-members, and/or organizations that have made an exceptional contribution to the fields closely aligned with the goals of the Society. Nominations may be made by any member.

The title *Honorary Director* (Board of Directors) may be bestowed on individuals who have rendered exceptional service and made significant contributions to the Society.

The *Certificate of Merit* is presented to a member or non-member whose work has advanced the mission and goals of the Society.

Society *Scholarships* assist students in attending the Society's annual meeting and are awarded to bona fide students enrolled in college and university majors relevant to the mission and goals of the Society and to new professionals in the field.

*Details, requirements, and directions for submitting applications are posted on the SGHS website: [www.southerngardenhistory.org](http://www.southerngardenhistory.org). For those without internet access, a copy of this document can be mailed. Contact Rebecca Hodson, SGHS Administrator.*

## Annual Membership Dues

The Society's membership year is from *August 1—July 31*.  
Membership categories:

<i>Benefactor</i>	<i>\$500 and above*</i>
<i>Patron</i>	<i>\$250</i>
<i>Sustainer</i>	<i>\$125</i>
<i>Institution or Business</i>	<i>\$100</i>
<i>Joint</i>	<i>\$60</i>
<i>(two individuals living in the same household)</i>	
<i>Individual</i>	<i>\$40</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>\$15</i>

**\*Contact the membership administrator if you would like to pay more than \$500 via credit card. For more membership information, contact:**

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*Memberships can now be made electronically on our website!*  
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*Deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of Magnolia is November 30, 2020.*

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