



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

# Magnolia

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## The Gardens of Historic Columbia

By Keith Mearns, Columbia, South Carolina

*"Throughout the South, the city of Columbia has gained a high reputation in point of Horticulture. The interest in the products of the garden, manifested by the citizens generally, is well exhibited in the surroundings of their residences, remarkable for trees of unusual grandeur and beauty, so essential to the charm of the landscape."*

*Farmer & Planter*, 1861

Visits to Columbia Gardens, NO. 1

By W.R. Bergholz, Columbia, S.C.

Founded in 1961 to preserve the Ainsley Hall House (now referred to as the Robert Mills House), Historic Columbia is a private, non-profit organization that manages six historic properties in downtown Columbia, South Carolina, and provides tours and other history-related services in the community. Of the six properties spanning the fourteen acres that Historic Columbia manages, four have significant gardens, and two of those each comprise entire, four-acre city blocks. Since their conversion to museums, these landscapes have been managed much like a collective public park, but this approach does not accurately reflect the rich horticultural history of Columbia made evident through multiple primary sources, including the excerpt above from the *Farmer & Planter*. As Historic Columbia is renovating and reinstalling large areas of the gardens, the organization continues to move toward a botanical garden model featuring unique Living Collections Policies for each site and the first publicly available garden database in South Carolina. Over the last fifteen years, Historic Columbia has affected numerous improvements to the gardens on its sites, culminating in the current 2.2-million-dollar project to complete the landscape at the Hampton-Preston Mansion.

Having aesthetically evolved for more than 125 years since its construction in the late-eighteenth century,

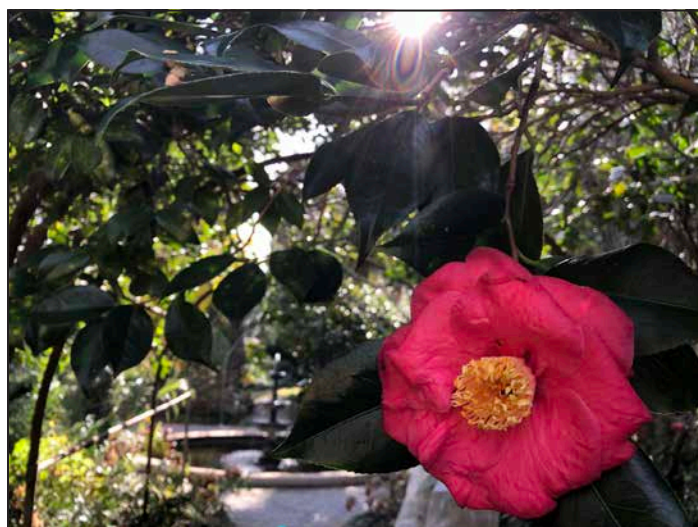


Photo Credit: Historic Columbia collection.

*Camellia japonica 'Akashigata' aka 'Lady Claire' in the gardens of Seibels House.*

the Seibels House today reflects the Colonial Revival architecture popular during the 1920s. One of Columbia's most treasured buildings, the house was donated to Historic Columbia in 1984 and adapted for offices and rental space. The Seibels House is the oldest residence in Columbia, and its gardens contain some of the oldest plants in the city, including over sixty large specimens of

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## CALENDAR

**April 6, 2022. Part of Olmsted 200, Cherokee Garden Library Talk, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA.** Rolf Diamant, landscape architect, professor, and former superintendent of five national parks, will discuss *Olmsted and Yosemite: Civil War, Abolition, and the National Park Idea* (co-authored with Ethan Carr; LALH, March 2022). Visit: [atlantahistorycenter.com/events/](http://atlantahistorycenter.com/events/)

**April 22-24, 2022. The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern Garden History Society meeting at George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate.** Speakers for the meeting include: Urban Ecologist and Harvard University Botanist Peter Del Tredici; North Carolina Garden Designer Chip Callaway; Colonial Williamsburg's Director of Archaeology Jack Gary; Doug Fine, author of *American Hemp Farmer*; and Monticello's Curator of Plants Peggy Cornett. Visit: [southerngardenhistory.org](http://southerngardenhistory.org)

**April 28-May 1, 2022. Colonial Williamsburg's 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Garden Symposium, "Responsible Gardening: Sowing Seeds for a Bright Future."**

Virtual and limited in-person options are available for lectures by Arthur Shurcliff biographer Elizabeth Hope Cushing and distinguished gardening expert P. Allen Smith. Brie Arthur and Matthew Benson will discuss "foodscaping;" and CW horticultural staff past and present will give presentations and workshops. Visit: [colonialwilliamsburg.org](http://colonialwilliamsburg.org) for conference information.

**May 3, 2022. Part of Olmsted 200, Cherokee Garden Library Talk, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA.**

Jennifer J. Richardson and Spencer Tunnell II will discuss *Olmsted's Linear Park* (Arcadia Publishing, March 2022). Visit: [atlantahistorycenter.com/events/](http://atlantahistorycenter.com/events/)

## Recommended Revisions to SGHS Bylaws

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Southern Garden History Society has not been able to meet in person since 2019 at the annual meeting in Birmingham, Alabama. The officers, *Magnolia* editors, and board of directors have continued to do the work of the Society, but through this two-year period we have seen the need for adding new language to the bylaws to allow for virtual meetings and teleconferences for the purpose of conducting business. In reviewing the bylaws, we also saw the need to allow more than two

committee members when the committee chair deems it appropriate. The Scholarship and Awards Committee, under the able leadership of Jeff Lewis, has updated the work of the committee. Additional language specifies that nominations shall be approved by the board.

Please read all the recommended changes to the bylaws found on the [southerngardenhistory.org](http://southerngardenhistory.org) website. President Perry Mathewes will call a vote to approve these at our annual meeting at Mount Vernon April 22, 2022.

## Member News

On January 13, 2022, the Garden Club of America announced honorary memberships for Monticello Curator of Plants Peggy Cornett and landscape historian and author Judith B. Tankard. The Garden Club of America awards this distinguished honor annually to recognize those who achieved outstanding efforts in gardening, botany, conservation, education, and design. The achievements of Peggy and of Judith merit not only this award but also our esteemed respect in celebration of their contributions to historic gardens through their tireless dedication and many publications.

See more on the GCA website: [gcamerica.org/news/get?id=3671](http://gcamerica.org/news/get?id=3671) and at [southerngardenhistory.org](http://southerngardenhistory.org)



Judith B. Tankard



Peggy Cornett

Courtesy TJF.



## The Gardens of Historic Columbia... (continued from page 1)

*Camellia japonica* dating to the early twentieth century, a pair of over one-hundred-year-old *Cedrus deodara*, and several old *Sabal palmetto* that are greater than fifty-feet tall. Revitalized in 2006, the property's landscape merges existing historic elements with a lush and relaxed aesthetic featuring plantings comprised of both heirloom and modern cultivars to represent the evolution of Southern gardening from the nineteenth through early twentieth centuries. Plant collections important for this site include *Sabal* (Cabbage Palms), *Camellia*, and *Musa* (banana & plantain). As well, a close relationship has developed with the Mid-Carolina Camellia Society, as the Seibels Family was integral in its formation and leadership in the mid-twentieth century. As Historic Columbia emerges from the COVID pandemic, the organization plans to pursue International Camellia Garden of Excellence status for the gardens of Seibels House.

Additionally, due to its south-facing brick wall and porch, plants can be tested previously considered to be too tropical to grow this far north. As a result, there has been exciting success with rare bromeliads such as *Dyckia* and *Puya*. The pseudostems of various banana and plantain cultivars no longer freeze in winter and have begun fruiting. Recently added is a memorial to longtime garden volunteer Foster Yarborough consisting of a new millstone fountain accompanied by an assemblage of native plants.

The newly renamed Museum of the Reconstruction Era at the Woodrow Wilson Family Home, the only museum in the United States dedicated to the Reconstruction Period, features a traditional Victorian suburban landscape. Completed in 1871, this Italian villa-style residence was home to a fourteen-year-old boy—the future twentieth-eighth United States President—named “Tommy” Woodrow Wilson. During the height of Reconstruction, Woodrow Wilson's parents built this house, the only one they would ever own. Although the home has changed hands many times since the teenaged

future president lived here, it stands as a reminder of the complicated racial history of one of the most misrepresented and misunderstood periods of American history. While no records of the original garden exist, a plan is now in place inspired by the renowned landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing consisting of a strictly separated pleasure garden and work yard. Plant collections significant for this site include *Chrysanthemum*, *Rosa*, and *Dianthus*. In recent years, Historic Columbia acquired a number of “show” mum cultivars to determine their garden potential and has found that over half are quite tolerant of our climate; these will be added permanently to the cutting garden in the work yard section of the site. Also exciting is the addition of several heat-tolerant varieties of lilac (*Syringa* species) to this garden for trialing.

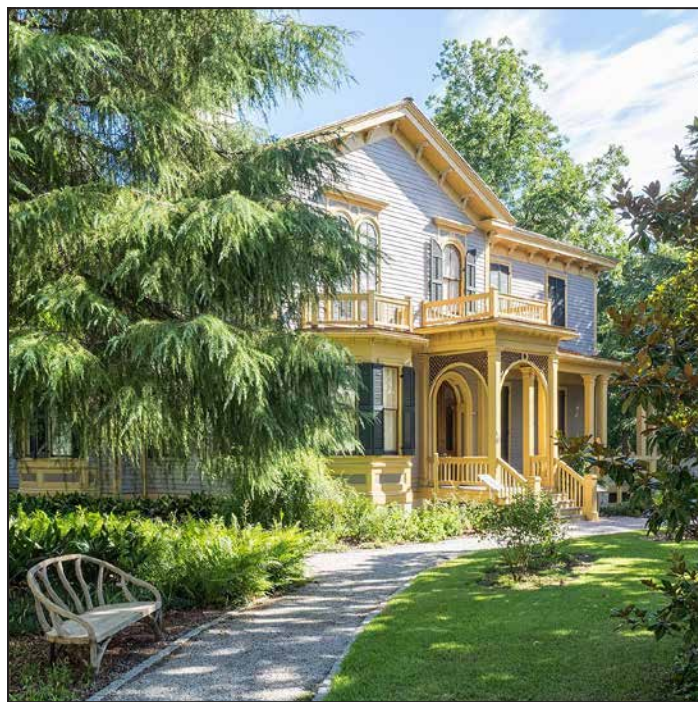
The Robert Mills House is the only private residence designed by the famous American architect Robert Mills (1781-1855) and was commissioned by British merchant Ainsley Hall in 1823. Mr. Hall, however, died before he could move into the home, and the site instead became a campus for three different religious schools. Gardens were never installed. Abandoned and threatened with demolition in 1960, the early-nineteenth-century architectural masterpiece became a lightning rod for historic preservation advocates who banded together to form Historic Columbia. While information about its time as a seminary and as the original site of Winthrop University is included, the current interpretation of the site centers on what it would have looked like if someone

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South elevation of the Seibels House.

Photo Credit: Historic Columbia collection.



Southwest elevation of the Museum of the Reconstruction Era at the Woodrow Wilson Family Home.

Photo Credit: Historic Columbia collection.



## The Gardens of Historic Columbia... *(continued from page 3)*

of Ainsley Hall's wealth and status had, in fact, lived there. After the site became a historic house museum in 1961, the gardens and grounds were laid out in the formal English landscape style but employed a mix of typical twentieth-century Southern mainstay plants. As it became apparent that several sections of the site's gardens required renovation, Historic Columbia chose to employ plants native to the eastern United States while retaining the English design. In 2019, with the acceptance of the gardens at the Robert Mills house as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation, the City of Columbia became the largest Community Wildlife Habitat in the state of South Carolina. In 2020, key partner, the Darnall W. and Susan F. Boyd Foundation, enabled the complete renovation of two of the major gardens at the Robert Mills site, bringing the living collections of the site to over 50 percent native plants.

Beginning in 2012 with the renovation of the Hiram Powers Fountain Garden and the Henry Michael Powell Children's Garden, the gardens of the Hampton-Preston Mansion have perhaps received the most expansion and renovation of all Historic Columbia sites. Because a comparatively prodigious amount of historical

documentation referencing its gardens has been preserved through time, the site has experienced a truly inspiring transformation from trees and grass to a vibrant and exuberant recreation of the original French/Italianate gardens. Made possible by the Darnall W. and Susan F. Boyd Foundation, the second and third phases of the garden renovation at Hampton-Preston have brought



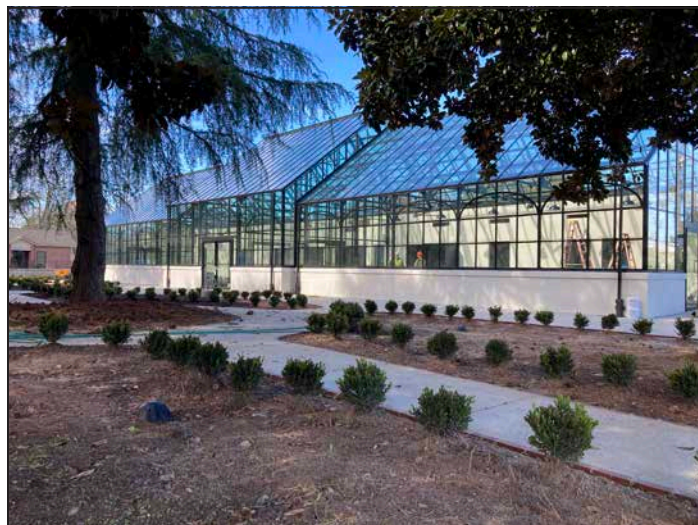
*South elevation of the Robert Mills House.*

Photo Credit: Historic Columbia collection.



*Southwest elevation of the Hampton-Preston Mansion.*

Photo Credit: Historic Columbia collection.



*Southeast elevation of newly constructed historically informed glasshouse on the grounds of the Hampton-Preston Mansion.*

Photo Credit: Keith Meams.



Photo Credit: Keith Meams.

*Cladrastis kentukea 'Perkins Pink,' part of a 2020 renovation of the Founder's Garden at the Robert Mills House.*



to life the riotous mixture of species extolled by visitors from the 1840s to the 1860s and available from the famed Pomaria Nurseries located in nearby Newberry County. The Boyd Foundation also supported the construction of a wholly unique “sunken patio” interpretation of the since-demolished 1840s extension of the main house. Staff have had their hands full installing and caring for antique indica azaleas, monkey puzzle trees, coast redwoods, and hundreds of other rare specimens recorded at the site. Still, it has resulted in overwhelmingly positive feedback from both local and regional gardeners and horticultural professionals. Historic Columbia and the Boyd Foundation are also excited to be nearing completion of the final phase of the rehabilitation of the site, which will include a reconstructed glasshouse, a reconstructed summerhouse, and a large nursery space. The glasshouse building is a one-of-a-kind structure that features a three-quarter-span glass roof with a production space, an entry foyer for public engagement, and an interpretive space to display plants grown in the original glasshouse, to host meetings, and to offer expanded educational programming. This final phase of the Hampton-Preston gardens will greatly enhance the interpretive capacity of the site as well as significantly increase the capabilities of Historic Columbia’s nursery operations, which both safeguard rare specimens and propagate large volumes of important plants for distribution through plant sales and exchange with other professional institutions and private

collections.

Complementary to the Living Collections Policies of our sites, Historic Columbia has been engaged in the rematriation of heirloom crops and fruits back to Columbia and South Carolina. This work began after Historic Columbia succeeded in securing nationally celebrated food historian Dr. David Shields as the keynote speaker for one of our Garden Symposiums. Since that first meeting, Dr. Shields has been an essential partner in the return and establishment of several historically and culturally important crops, or as he would call

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*David Shields (right), Keith Mearns, and the late plantsman A.J. Bullard posing with one of the remaining Hick's Everbearing Mulberries near Calypso, North Carolina.*

Photo Credit: Keith Mearns.



## *The Gardens of Historic Columbia... (continued from page 5)*

them, “seminal ingredients,” to the gardens of Historic Columbia. The inspiration for this special collection lies with the efforts of Nicholas Herbemont. In the early nineteenth century, Herbemont, a French national who married into a wealthy Columbia family, began experimenting with many different fruit crops at his wife’s four-acre downtown property. He regarded the South’s cotton economy as unsustainable and sought to find new viable options for the region’s agriculture. His efforts led to several releases, two of which gained much repute through the Southeast: the Herbemont or Warren Grape and the Hick’s Everbearing Mulberry. Through extensive online research, Historic Columbia was able to secure the Herbemont Grape from the viticulture program at Texas A&M University. It has inspired one of the most popular events in Columbia, the annual Rosé Festival held on the Hampton-Preston grounds. Through Dr. Shields’ tireless research and numerous connections, Historic Columbia was invited to visit and secure material from the last known stand of Hick’s Everbearing Mulberry in the country, located near the town of Calypso in eastern North Carolina. These over two-hundred-year-old trees are the remnants of a vast orchard used to feed hogs and chickens, as was a popular and essential practice before the advent of commercial feed supply. Historic Columbia continues to seek out plants like this and to grow annual crop plants important to the

region, such as Old Timey Dutch Fork pumpkin, the Carolina African runner peanut, the Perfection Pimento pepper, and the Bradford watermelon.

Historic Columbia is proud to share these spaces, and thus all gardens are free and open to the public from Tuesday to Sunday during our regular operating hours. The organization offers numerous event rental opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, at several of its sites. Please explore the website at [historiccolumbia.org](http://historiccolumbia.org) for more information about these remarkable sites and Historic Columbia’s advocacy work. Also browse the garden database ([www.historiccolumbia.org/gardendatabase](http://www.historiccolumbia.org/gardendatabase)), which includes photos and detailed information about all the plants across our properties. The author and the rest of our team at Historic Columbia look forward to seeing you here in Columbia.



Photo Credit: Keith Means.

*Herbemont Grapes growing in the gardens at the Robert Mills House.*



Photo Credit: Keith Means.

*Benne, an African landrace of sesame, growing in the vegetable beds at the Robert Mills House.*



# An Iris Paradise in Savannah: A Tribute to Stan Gray

By Charles Perilloux, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

## The Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens

Many SGHS members attended the 2014 annual meeting in Savannah and visited the historic Bamboo Farm and camellia gardens. Since then, volunteer Stan Gray has created an iris paradise at the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens (CGBG). His gardens showcase numerous Louisiana iris hybrid cultivars in a “Rivers of Iris” display. Stan is also one of the species preservation stewards for the Society of Louisiana Irises (SLI), an organization that maintains collections of the diverse colors and forms of the five original species of Louisiana irises from which today’s hybrid cultivars all descend. Unfortunately, these wild species are threatened by habitat destruction, and therefore, the large collections of *Iris brevicaulis*, *fulva*, *giganticaerulea*, *hexagona*, and *nelsonii*, are foundation stock for re-establishing the species in protected nature preserves and for use in stabilizing coastal wetlands.

Stan also has an extensive collection of tall bearded, spuria, pseudata irises, and *I. virginica* species. This is probably the largest, the most diverse, and the most impeccably-maintained public display of the genus *Iris* in all North America. In part because of favorable local newspaper and television coverage, the last bloom season hosted more than one thousand visitors to an unforgettable display.

The fifty-plus acres also contain very large collections of historic camellias, orchids, palms hardy to 15°F, and

most of the original collection of nearly seventy species of bamboo. These also have unpaid volunteers in key roles. The private bamboo collection started with imports of Japanese timber bamboo around 1890 and was later acquired by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and later by the University of Georgia for agricultural research. Commercial use of bamboo in paper making did not develop in the U.S., but these ornamental stands have been maintained, now somewhat reduced in extent.

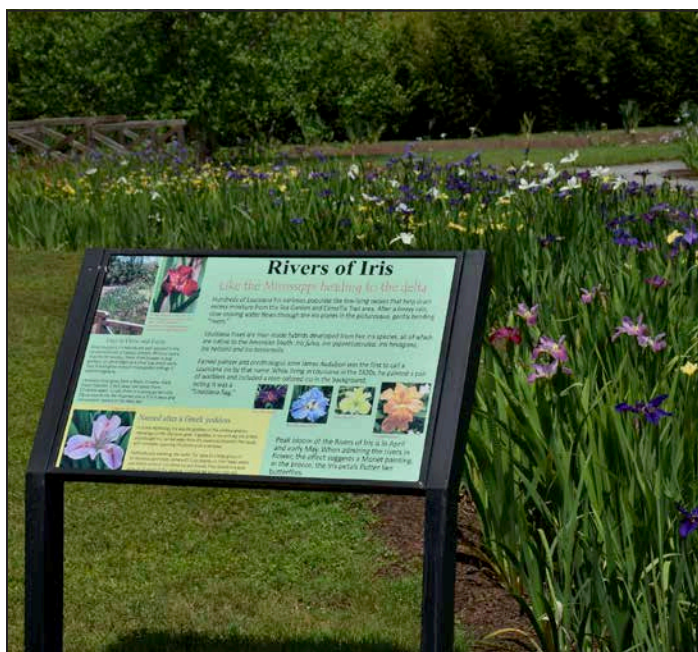
These iris gardens were designed, installed, and are currently maintained by a single volunteer. Stan has had a dream for almost twenty years to create an iris garden that would continue under public stewardship when he could eventually no longer maintain it himself. He is grateful to the University of Georgia for giving him the opportunity to do that in Savannah.

## A Diverse Career

Stan’s interest in Louisiana irises is fairly recent, but his involvement in bearded irises goes back to his childhood in Montvale, New Jersey, with a garden started by his family in the 1920s. Gray’s iris garden became one of the larger sources of bearded irises in the mid-Atlantic states and was twice chosen for American Iris Society convention tour stops.

Stan began a military career upon graduation in 1972 from the United States Military Academy at West Point. He initially served in the Corps of Engineers, then obtained a master’s degree in Chinese language and Asian

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Rivers of Iris.



Stan with birder's binoculars and Charles Perilloux.



## *An Iris Paradise...* (continued from page 7)

area studies at Seton Hall University. He received further advanced foreign officer training in the U.S. and at the British Ministry of Defense Chinese Language School in Hong Kong. Stan then returned to West Point in charge of the Chinese Language program. He served in military and diplomatic intelligence missions overseas and in Washington, DC. He was in China during a time of great change when the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests erupted and were brutally suppressed.

After retirement from his military career, Stan served with the Nature Conservancy and NatureServe in northern Virginia for eleven years. The Savannah connection started when Stan's older son entered the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). Stan's occasional visits introduced him to the Savannah area. He eventually decided in 2005 to exchange Washington, DC's hectic pace and traffic for the pleasant life in Georgia's Low Country. Fifteen years later, he is also active in the coastal Georgia birding community and leader of several bird survey projects with the area Audubon Society.

### **Early Failures with Bearded Irises in Savannah**

After moving to Savannah, Stan continued to manage the family iris nursery from afar. But eventually, he was invited by the Friends of Coastal Gardens to move the entire collection to what was then the Bamboo Farm of the University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. Getting the irises planted was easy but keeping them alive was not. The vast majority died within two years, maybe because of the warm, humid climate of Savannah?

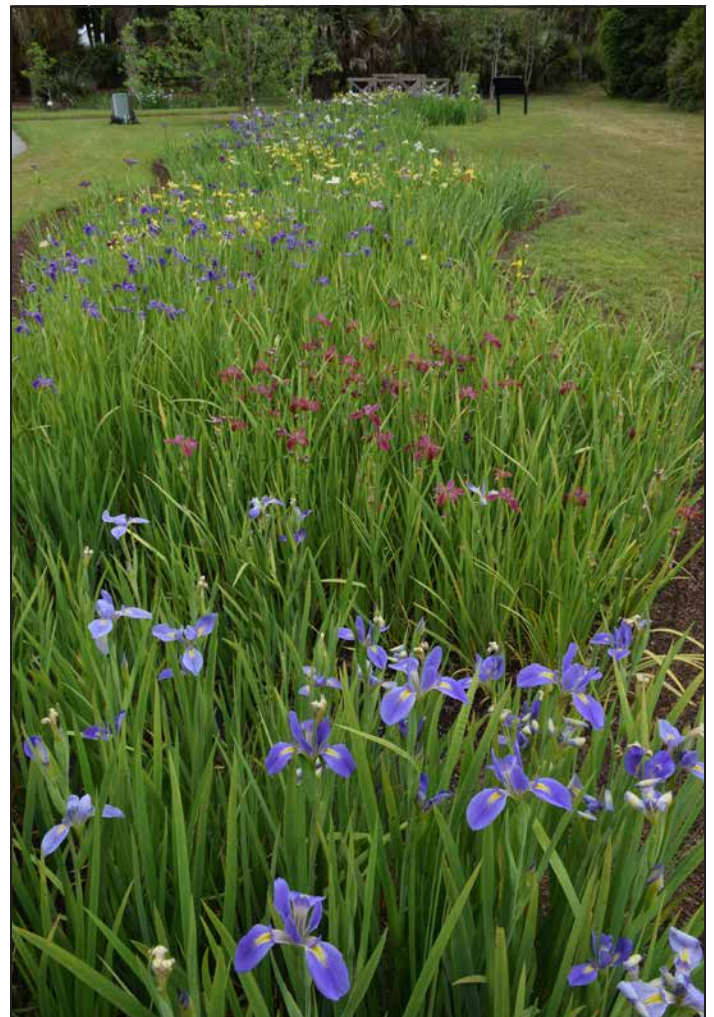
Fortunately, he has learned a lot by experimenting and recently published a very interesting breakthrough scientific article in the Summer 2020 *Bulletin* of the American Iris Society ("Living on the Edge"). Bearded

irises in their native habitats of Eurasia have extended periods of dormant "chill hours" between 32° and 45° F that strengthen them against rot and other pathogens. Getting colder than 32° F does not help, and hotter than 80° F does not hurt. The Willamette Valley of Oregon, site of many successful bearded iris nurseries, has the same minimum annual temperature USDA climate zone as Savannah. But it has the greatest number of "chill hours" of any region in North America. So what bearded irises want seems at first glance to be a self-contradiction: an extreme of cool moderation: not too hot, and not too cold, but just right.

Stan is not easily deterred, so his second attempt with bearded irises has been much more successful by experimenting and choosing those cultivars that can tolerate the limited chill hours in Savannah. Despite being a perfectionist, Stan seems content to have what most of us would consider an exceptional display of bearded irises – but perhaps not quite up to the standards of his family's nursery in New Jersey. Fortunately, the climate of Savannah will allow Stan to achieve the elusive goal of perfection in Louisiana irises. They can tolerate the winters



*The Stan Gray Iris Garden.*



*Recent clumps that have not yet intermixed.*



of southern Illinois and the hot summers of Dallas, so Savannah is just right. Had it not been for challenges with bearded irises, Stan might never have embarked on his venture into Louisiana irises.

### The Louisiana Iris Display Gardens

While struggling to find at least a partial solution for his bearded irises, Stan decided he had better have a backup plan to try Louisiana irises. Stan does not get into things half-heartedly. In the fall of 2014 and 2015, he received generous donations of thousands of rhizomes of hybrid cultivars from members of the Society for Louisiana Irises (SLI). After initial acclimation to filtered sunlight in his greenhouse in Savannah, he started planting. And they grew, and they grew, and once put in the ground, they practically exploded, with some clumps producing 20 or more stalks the following spring from only one or two rhizomes!

One of the most creative aspects of his garden design, and one which gets favorable local publicity and many visitors during bloom season, is his “Rivers of Iris” display, mimicking riverbeds meandering through fields of Louisiana iris cultivars. This design is not only attractive,



*Stan's Monet Garden*



*Louisiana Species Preservation.*

but it places the plants and the flowers below the level of the walkways. Louisiana irises are best viewed from above as well as from near eye level. And since Louisiana irises like moisture, this placement puts them in the flood plain rather than in the upland.

Some of the photos show particularly the feel of many of the paintings by artist Claude Monet of his own garden in Giverny, France: bright colors stretching along pathways as far as the eye can see. In Stan's garden one gets the same feeling of total immersion in color that Monet must have intended.

### Protecting the Native Species

We have to preserve the genetic diversity in our native irises, but we also have to protect the habitat in which they evolved. Fortunately, there are other areas that are suitable habitats, some of which are already protected in state and local parks. Georgia is doing an excellent job of preservation in its Low Country. Louisiana's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is also working with private landowners and major conservation groups to protect the unique stretch of swamp lands near Abbeville, LA, where *Iris nelsonii* originated. We have a shining example to inspire us: one of the Society for Louisiana Irises founders was Caroline Dormon, the first professional woman forester in America, and the driving force for the establishment of the extensive Kisatchie National Forest in central Louisiana. Her home, Briarwood, is in the center of that protected forest, with fields of iris cultivars and species thrown almost randomly about as if nature intended it that way. (To learn more, readers are directed to *Magnolia*, Summer 2004, “Caroline Dorman and the Gardens of Louisiana,” by Karen Cole.)

As his hybrid cultivars were getting planted, Stan and the Species Preservation Project of the Society for Louisiana Irises found each other. Little did we know how enthusiastic a steward we were getting. Instead of a

*(continued on page 10)*



*Louisiana hybrids, species in the middle, bamboo and observation tower*



## *An Iris Paradise...* (continued from page 9)

steward constrained by limited space, or other demands on his time, it was the other stewards who would be pushed to get his collection complete.

Eventually, the best vantage point on the site will be the three-story observation tower on the edge of the iris gardens. Those sparse clumps will expand to give a lush look of green and vibrant color in the spring, yet still not intermingling with other species variants.

Meanwhile, Stan and steward Brian Shamblin in Cleveland, Tennessee, and Athens, Georgia, have added over fifty new specimens of *Iris hexagona*, originally collected from near Tallahassee, Florida, to their collections. The climate of eastern Tennessee is colder than that of any other steward's, giving us experience in a colder climate zone of 7a and 7b, compared to Dallas at 8a, Savannah at 8b, and New Orleans at 9a and 9b. These recent additions have more than tripled our collection of the native irises of the southeast Atlantic coast.

Stan's wife Sandy is the now-retired horticulturist who helped him move his parent's collection from New Jersey to Savannah. Stan and Sandy were second-grade students together and rode the same school bus. They re-connected four decades later as fate would have it and will soon be celebrating their third wedding anniversary. They share a passion for gardening and bird watching and making an impact on their adopted new home in Savannah.

### **Growing Louisiana irises in Savannah**

The general climate in coastal Georgia is similar to that in other Southern states of the same latitude and distance from saltwater. The Atlantic Ocean is colder than the Gulf of Mexico, so coastal Georgia's ocean breezes are somewhat less humid than the Gulf South. But the soil in Savannah is sandy, very different from the heavy clay soils of much of the Louisiana iris's native habitats and more like Florida soils. Stan has copiously amended the native soil to a depth of 6 to 12 inches with ground-up pine bark and some well-aged compost, and with top dressings of pine straw, plus some 10-10-10 fertilizer with trace elements in September and February. The results are iris roots that are forced to go deeper into the friable soil so they can better withstand occasional dry spells. Stan is proving that you do not need heavy soils or excess water to grow Louisiana irises.

### **Spuria Irises**

The species *Iris spuria* is native to central and southern Europe, western Asia, and northern Africa. Spurias need heat, full sun, and good drainage, especially in summer. And Louisiana iris like plenty of water and

prefer partial shade. Stan has planted his spurias on what we in Louisiana would call the top of the levee, and his Louisianas are in the flood plain below. The spurias get all the sun and the drainage they need, and the Louisianas all the water they want.

### **Savannah a Must-See Spot**

Savannah has always been on the must-visit list for SGHS members. The Low Country of Georgia has some of the most well-preserved natural coastal environments in the U.S., with numerous "sea islands" protected from intensive development but broadly available to the public, in some cases only by ferry. Most of these sea islands were originally agricultural plantations for rice, indigo, silk, and other crops. After good rail connections were established down South, they became private winter vacation preserves for the wealthiest of Northern U.S. businessmen. Today they are a successful example of cooperation between private conservationists and state government.

One of the original settlers, Noble Jones, a skilled



'Big Tex' (Matagorda County, TX), R. Bartonen.



'Dixie Country' Lafitte's Retreat x *I. hexagona*, FL (K. Strawn, 1993).



carpenter from England, established a modest farm in 1735 on the Isle of Hope. A marker for the William Bartram Trail of 1765-66 commemorates the early naturalist's exploration of Florida and Georgia. In 1845, a descendent of Jones built a new house and planted the 1.4-mile avenue of live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*), perhaps the longest avenue of live oaks in America. It is interesting that almost exactly the same ethereal vista through live oaks stretching to the horizon was also a part of plantations on the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Natchez. In those days before railroads, communication between port cities was easier than communication between the coast and the interior. These plantations were contemporary and showed that ideas of what constitutes good landscape design were discussed and shared in the American South, even between the French Creole culture of south Louisiana and the Anglo culture of Georgia.

### The Future of Louisiana Irises in Georgia

Despite having a compatible climate, Louisiana irises are not much known to home or public gardeners on the East Coast from Florida to Virginia. One or more of the four main species that are the foundation of all the hybrid cultivars is native from at least the middle Gulf Coast of Texas to Alabama and up the Mississippi River to Illinois, Ohio, and southern Ontario, Canada. *Iris hexagona* and *Iris hexagona v. savannarum* are native to Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina and will cross with the four other Louisiana iris species (but very rarely with the other Southern native *Iris virginica* and not at all with other iris species). *Iris hexagona*, as the photos show, is quite similar in appearance to *Iris giganticaerulea*, although its genetic interchange became isolated, perhaps after the last ice age. The cultivar, 'Dixie Country' (K. Strawn, 1993) is a cross between the Louisiana iris cultivar 'Lafitte's Retreat' (Granger, 1977), (itself a many-generation cross including *giganticaerulea* and *nelsonii*), and an *I. hexagona* collected near Cross City, Florida.



F25 - Illinois Dwarf

### American Volunteerism is Alive and Well in Savannah

The French political philosopher Alexis de Toqueville visited America in 1833 and published the highly influential book *Democracy in America* (1835). He marveled at the spirit of volunteerism in America, from volunteer fire departments to churches supported only by their members and free of financial support from governments. It is almost uniquely American that unpaid volunteers contribute so much to our gardens, parks, libraries, art museums, charities, historic preservation, conservation, and civic life. Stan Gray and the other CGBG volunteers, and their fellow volunteers elsewhere within the SLI and the SGHS, continue in that great American tradition.

*[Editor's Note: portions of this article have appeared in the journals of the Historic Iris Preservation Society and the American Iris Society. All photos not credited were taken by the author.]*



N17 - Iris nelsonii (Manuel).



G01 - Elizabeth the Queen, (Ira Nelson, 2001).



# Book Review

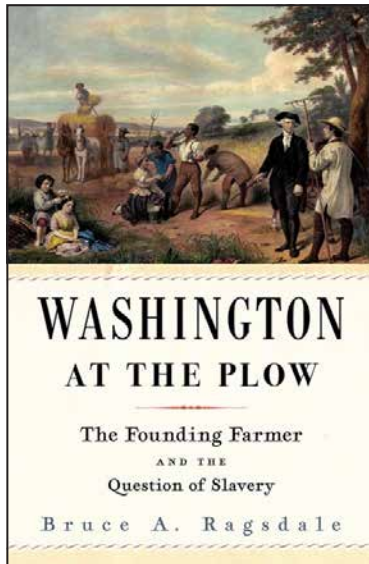
***Washington at the Plow: The Founding Farmer and the Question of Slavery***, by Bruce A. Ragsdale, Belknap Press, 368 pages | ISBN: 9780674246386 | Hardcover | List price \$29.95

Following on the review of “*The Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret*” – George Washington, *Slavery, and the Enslaved Community at Mount Vernon* in the Winter 2021 issue of *Magnolia*, with its import for our experience of the Society’s 2022 annual meeting, another book requiring our attention has been published.

*Washington at the Plow: The Founding Farmer*

*and the Question of Slavery* is a fascinating examination of George Washington’s management of agricultural, labor, and estate operations at his ancestral estate from 1754 until his death on 14 December 1799. Through these years our “Founding Farmer” steadily moved cultivation on his acreage from the cash-crop production of tobacco to a sequence of marketable diversified crops planted in rotation and in parallel with British practices of an enlightened animal and crop husbandry. During these transitions George Washington simultaneously came to see his reliance on the existing system of coerced slave labor as incompatible with his ambitions for his estate and, in turn, for his community, his state, and the nation. Thus, by his will, the nation’s first president freed the 123 enslaved people at Mount Vernon he personally owned in 1799 with certain provisions for their future lives. This was an extraordinary action by a man of singular status in the nation’s history, an example that could have been followed by his fellow countrymen in Virginia and beyond, and by his successors in office.

As was Mary V. Thompson’s experience in the research for “*The Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret*,”



Bruce Allan Ragsdale (b. 1952) enjoyed associations with and support from Mount Vernon and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. Both their books also reflect respective, career-long research interests and related writings. Having received his undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees from the University of Virginia in 1974, 1980, and 1985, respectively, Bruce Ragsdale went on to successive positions as an historian and judicial administrator, last as director of the Federal Judicial History Office at the Federal Judicial Center, Washington, DC, for twenty years before retirement. Early in this period, Ragsdale returned to research on the interrelated social, political, and economic themes he had advanced in his dissertation and crafted a revised, expanded work for publication. In spring 1996, Rowman & Littlefield, the academic, institutional, and governmental publishers, released his *A Planters’ Republic: The Search for Economic Independence in Revolutionary Virginia*.

In addition to having been a fellow at the Washington Library, Mount Vernon, and the International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello, Bruce Ragsdale was also Mount Vernon’s inaugural fellow with the Georgian Papers Project. This position enabled his research into the agricultural improvements of George III and the larger field of British husbandry, including agricultural publications and innovations in equipment, which Washington embraced in his time at Mount Vernon. George Washington’s ultimate goal, as Ragsdale lays out, was the adoption of the best practices of cultivation and animal husbandry throughout the nation as the basis of a strong family, community, and civic life, a great economic,



“Washington as a Farmer at Mount Vernon,” by Junius Brutus Stearns, 1851.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



social, and cultural prescription for a new nation that proved beyond reach with enslaved labor long-established at its core.

George Washington was born on 22 February 1732 in Westmoreland County, Virginia, the first of four surviving sons of Augustine Washington's second marriage in 1731 to Mary Ball (170\_-1789). When George was three, Augustine Washington (1694-1743) moved his family to property on Little Hunting Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River, which later would become Mount Vernon. Another three years later, ca. 1738, Augustine Washington relocated his family to acreage in Stafford County on the north side of the Rappahannock River opposite Fredericksburg, since known as Ferry Farm. There he died in April 1743 leaving his widow, their five surviving children, and two surviving sons of his first marriage, Lawrence Washington (1718-1752) and Augustine Washington (1720-1762). As the eldest surviving son Lawrence Washington inherited the Little Hunting Creek property. With his marriage to Anne Fairfax (1728-1761), the daughter of Colonel William Fairfax of Belvoir, in July 1743 the couple established themselves at the plantation since known as Mount Vernon.

As a childhood heir young George learned the rudiments of farming and plantation management at Ferry Farm under the tutelage of his mother. In the later 1740s George Washington also learned the art and trade of surveying, and in 1749 he was appointed surveyor of newly-formed Culpeper County, work that engaged him into October

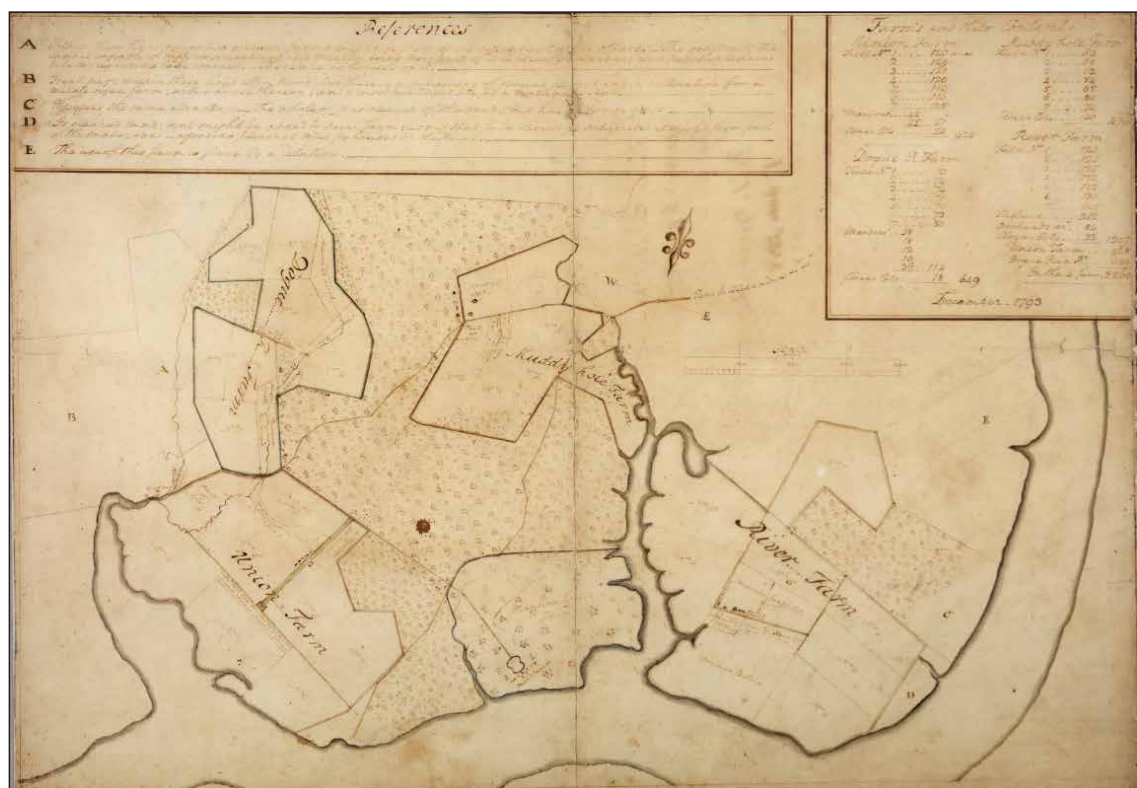
1750. He continued in the profession in Virginia's Northern Neck, enjoying the patronage of the Fairfax family, until November 1752. Betty Washington (1733-1797), the elder of Mary Ball Washington's two daughters, would marry Fielding Lewis (1725-1781) in 1750 and together they later built Kenmore, a Georgian brick mansion in Fredericksburg. Mary Ball Washington remained at Ferry Farm until 1772 when she moved to a house in Fredericksburg

purchased for her by her eldest son. George Washington came as heir presumptive to Mount Vernon in 1754, following on the death of Lawrence Washington on 26 July 1752 and that of Sarah Washington (1750-1754), his late brother's last surviving child, on 7 November 1754. Place making and agricultural improvements at Mount Vernon were on hold for some four years while George Washington was away in service in the French and Indian War from 1755 into November 1758.

In 1758 George Washington pressed his courtship of Martha Dandridge Custis (1731-1802), the fabulously wealthy widow of Daniel Parke Custis (1711-1757) after their seven-year marriage. George Washington and Martha Custis were married on 6 January 1759 at White House, her plantation on the Pamunkey River in New Kent County, where they remained for about two months before removing to Mount Vernon with her two young (surviving) children, John Parke "Jacky" Custis (1754-1781) and Martha Parke "Patsy" Custis (1756-1773). A detailed appraisal of the Daniel Parke Custis estate in 1759 included nearly 18,000 acres in six counties and 283 enslaved people as of August. Full ownership of Mount Vernon became Washington's following the death of Anne Fairfax Washington Lee, then the wife of George Lee (1714-1761), on 14 March 1761.

George Washington's creation of Mount Vernon, an estate on the Potomac River and its tributaries that would eventually comprise five named, well-defined,

*(continued on page 14)*



*"Survey and plot of Mount Vernon and neighboring farms, 1793, Dec." Washington's detailed survey illustrated the four farms of the estate with descriptions of fields under cultivation.*



## Book Review... (continued from page 13)

and productive farms encompassing about 7,600 acres, be the home of the Washingtons and their slaves, and become a place of pilgrimage for many visitors in the later decades of his life, effectively dates to the spring of 1759 and his return, with Martha Dandridge Washington and her two children. Having completed his service in the French and Indian War and resigned from the Virginia Regiment in December 1758, and favored with the financial advantages his wife and the Custis estate brought to their marriage, Washington was then in a position to initiate a sustained course of agricultural development, his “New Husbandry.” He would altogether remake and refine existing agricultural operations, enlarge the expanse of the estate, then at nearly 2,800 acres, through the purchase of adjoining farms and tracts, notably the 1,800-acre Clifton property on Little Hunting Creek, and expand his force of slaves and overseers. By the summer of 1764, the estate’s acreage had increased to nearly 5,500 acres and it comprised over 6,500 acres by 1772. Fields would be reconfigured “as well for appearance as profit” with necessary ditching and the planting of extensive hedgerows, roads were built to link the fields and farms of Mount Vernon to a necessary unity, and many needed outbuildings, domestic and agricultural, were constructed, rebuilt or replaced when required, giving his estate the aesthetic appearance of prosperity and providence. Critical among these were mills for grinding corn and wheat, barns for threshing grains and the shelter of animals and crops, quarters for enslaved people, housing for overseers and other employees, granaries and seedhouses, and last, a distillery.

The scale of operations at Mount Vernon, those on Washington’s other holdings in Virginia and beyond, and across the vast Custis estate lands that were in his stewardship for the Custis step-children and grandchildren drew on his intellect, stamina, and the experience of military service. Ever finding advantage in necessary travel, Washington, when in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 for the Federal Convention, attended a meeting of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture and

joined Samuel Powel, a friend and the society president, for a tour of his farm and a visit to William Bartram at his nursery. George Washington was a keen observer of place and conditions, and he faced and made decisions through time, critical to the progress of Mount Vernon and the nation. None were more important to agricultural success and the pleasure farming brought him than the decision to end tobacco cultivation and to embrace an enlightened British husbandry. The last crop of tobacco was planted and harvested at Mount



Arthur Young, by John Russell, 1794.  
National Portrait Gallery, London.



Sir John Sinclair, after portrait by Sir Henry Raeburn, ca. 1810.

Vernon in 1765 and the estate fields were sown with other crops, including hemp and notably grains, the most important being wheat, and planted in rotation, with a fallow year in which to renew. By 1774 wheat was grown on over one-thousand acres at Mount Vernon. George Washington’s appreciation of English, Scottish, and Irish farming practices involved both correspondence with leading progressives in the field, particularly Arthur Young (1741-1820), James Anderson (1739-1808), and Sir John Sinclair (1754-1835), and his determined, insatiable acquisition of the best

agricultural publications and journals of his day, effectively the second half of the eighteenth century. These included Jethro Tull’s standard, often reprinted *The Horse-Hoeing Husbandry* (Dublin, 1733); Edward Lisle’s *Observations in Husbandry* (London, 1757); Thomas Hale’s *A Compleat Body of Husbandry* (London, 1758); *The Gentleman Farmer* (Edinburgh, 1779) by Henry Home, Lord Kames; and Henri-Louis Duhamel du Monceau’s *A Practical Treatise of Husbandry* (London, 1759, 1762). Batty Langley’s *New Principles of Gardening* (London, 1727) was one of the standard works on ornamental gardening he ordered.

Bruce Ragsdale recounts these experiences spanning the decades,

from 1759 to 1799, in an engaging narrative, reflecting his long study of Virginia’s agricultural and economic history and his reliance on the diaries, financial ledgers, reports, accounts, and related documents Washington and his estate managers and overseers compiled.

George Washington’s agricultural development—and redevelopment—of his estate at Mount Vernon, while a focused, sustained object of his adult life, occurred



in phases whereby interim absences provided time for reflection which, in turn, energized and redirected the initiatives that followed. The period from spring 1759 into June 1775, when he accepted command of the Continental Army, was the longest uninterrupted sequence of agricultural seasons whose crops, their planting, harvesting, and marketing, reflected an ever-increasing knowledge gained through experience, the steady application of continually-improving farming practices, and his studied appreciation of British husbandry. The management programs he developed during these years served him and the estate well in the longest, almost complete of these absences, when in service in the Revolutionary War. Through these eight and one-half years, to December 1783, he returned but once to Mount Vernon. But all the while, he was receiving reports from

his trusted estate manager and kinsman Lund Washington (1737-1796), a son of Townshend Washington, who had worked with him at Mount Vernon since 1764.

George Washington returned to Mount Vernon late in 1783, renewed in spirit by victory and the prospects of a new nation, and went about the most extensive reorganization of the estate, implementing his best ideas to realize a comprehensive, integrated system of farming modeled on the most progressive estates in England. This work, arguably the most rewarding of his twoscore years at Mount Vernon, continued into the late winter and spring of 1789, when he was elected the first president of the United States and traveled to New York City where he was inaugurated on 30 April 1789. About midway in this period, after receipt of a jack from the King of Spain in 1785, thereafter known as "Royal Gift," Washington

began breeding mules at Mount Vernon for plowing its fields and as draft animals. He also made the services of Royal Gift available to his fellow countrymen, including the ill-fated trip to South Carolina where Royal Gift's health failed, and he died in 1796.

With the decision in 1790 to fix the seat of government in Philadelphia for a period of ten years, George and Martha Washington established residence in the city. The relative proximity of Philadelphia to Mount Vernon and the different role he

(continued on page 16)

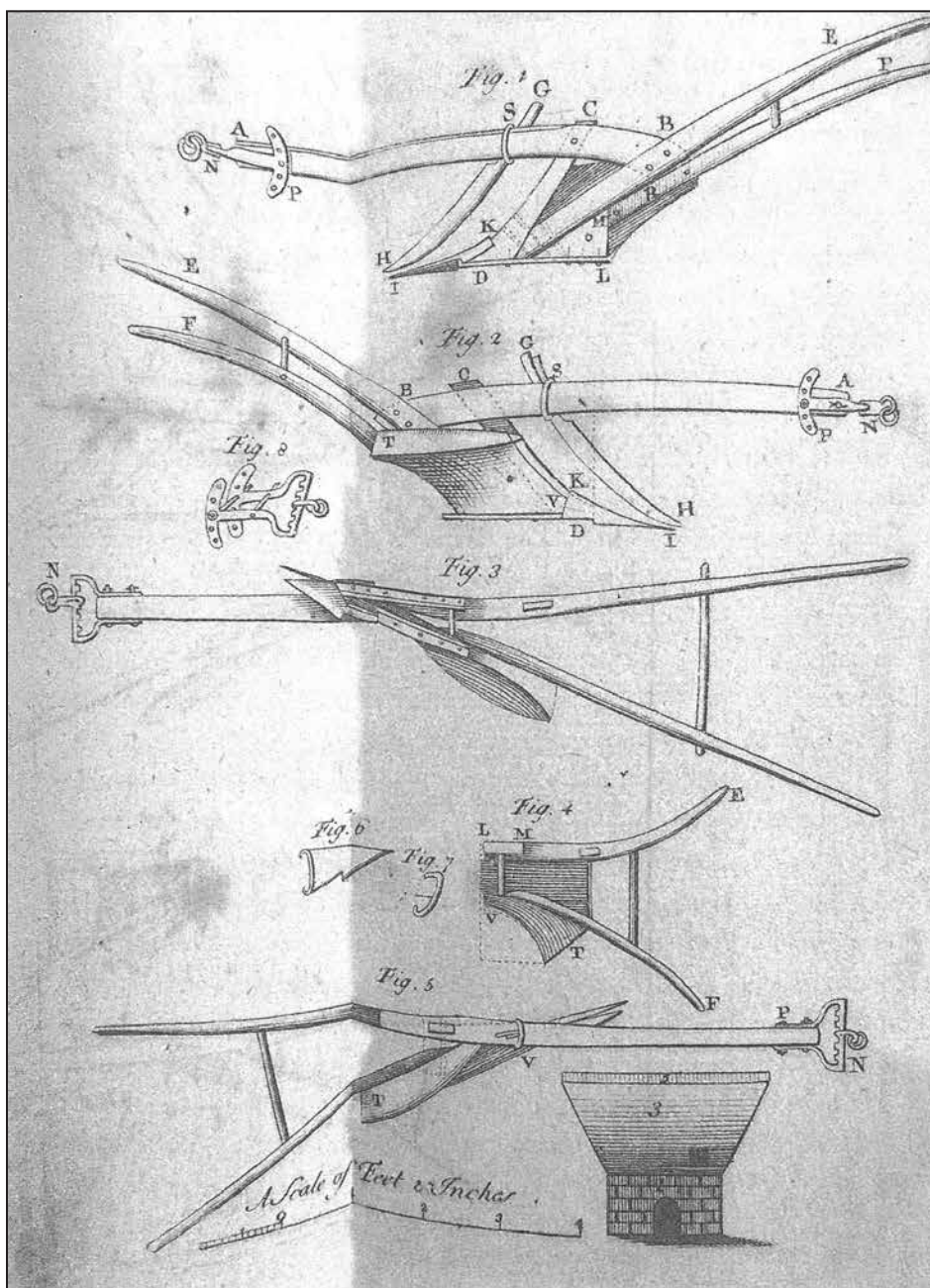
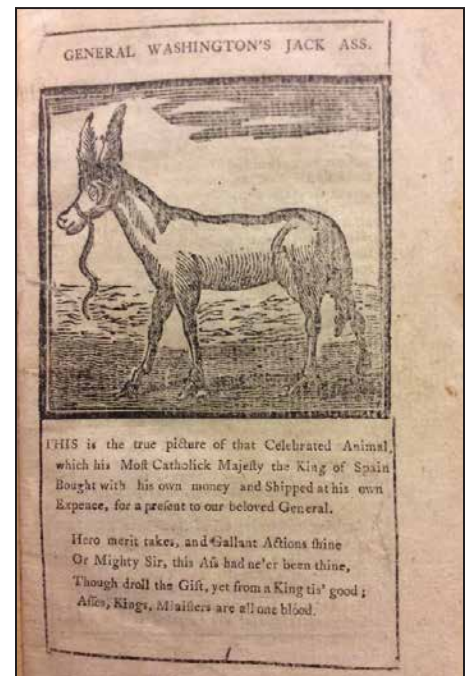


Illustration of the Rotherham plough, from Robert Maxwell, *The Practical Husbandman*, 1757.



George Washington's Spanish jack, a "Royal Gift" from Spain's King Charles III.



## Book Review... (continued from page 15)

enjoyed as executive of the nation allowed his partial, yet distant participation in affairs at Mount Vernon. He also gained a larger understanding of regional farming conditions while on a series of national tours in his first term. In his final annual report to Congress in December 1796, President Washington stated his view that the prosperity of the nation “renders the cultivation of the soil more and more an object of public patronage,” and urged legislators to create a national board of agriculture, having in mind the British Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement as a model. It was established in 1793 with Sir John Sinclair (1754-1835) as founding president. Alas, his advocacy was not persuasive.

His ownership of slaves, their role as agricultural laborers at Mount Vernon, and the pernicious presence of slavery in the social and economic life of the nation came to occupy much of George Washington’s thought in the middle and late years of his presidency. He had, in effect, enslaved people his entire adult life, having received eleven named males and females by 1750 through a bequest from his father. As Mary V. Thompson records in Table 1 of her book, “George Washington’s acquisition of slaves,” their number increased by purchase, inheritance, or rental up to his purchase of an man called Jack on 21 April 1775, weeks before assuming command of the Continental Army and departing Mount Vernon.

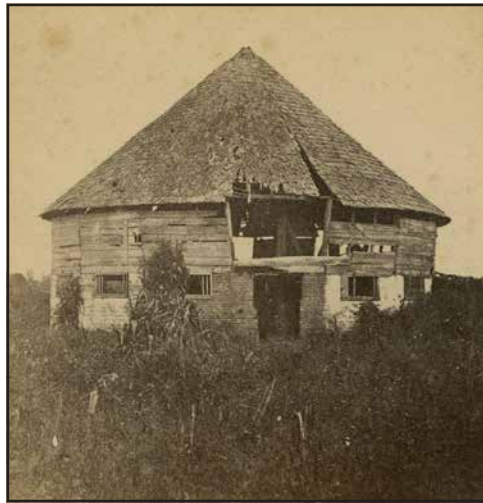
Washington’s experiences during the Revolutionary War and the subsequent efforts to form the new nation, his friendship with the Marquis de Lafayette, an impassioned foe of slavery, and the circumstances he faced in the first years after his return to Mount Vernon in 1783, led him to an evolved, enlightened view. As Bruce Ragsdale writes, “Washington as early as 1786 had privately expressed his support for the principle of gradual abolition (of slavery) by state legislature. . . .” In his letter of 12 April 1786 to Robert Morris (1734-1806), a wealthy Philadelphia merchant, signer of the Declaration of

Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the United States Constitution, and lauded as the “financier of the Revolution,” George Washington wrote “there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it – but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, & that is by Legislative authority: . . .” Yet his voice on the matter remained silent in public.

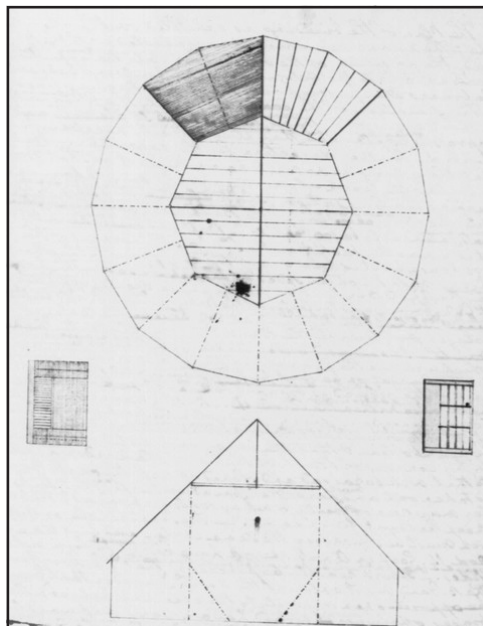
But in his own manner, George Washington hoped to foster change in degree at Mount Vernon by separating slavery from the cultivation of its fields. Beginning in 1786 with the arrival of James Bloxham, with whom he executed Articles of Agreement on 31 May 1786, his English and Scottish farm managers and overseers had difficulty reconciling themselves to managing enslaved black laborers and administering discipline when necessary. In 1793 George Washington decided to lease the four named farms then in cultivation at Mount Vernon to tenants, preferably British farmers, on long term leases. To that end he prepared and circulated a “Survey and plot of Mount Vernon and neighboring farms, 1793, Dec.” This idea proved unsuccessful in large part because the caliber of capitalized farmers he hoped to attract from abroad or within the United States would want to purchase and own their own farms. His solution would be to manumit the enslaved people he owned.

In the event the pleasure George Washington found in his return to the favored work of farming at Mount Vernon in March 1797, at the end of his second term as president, was short-lived, but not without significant accomplishment, including the construction of a distillery, which

he had approved in January 1797 on the advice of his newly-hired farm manager James Anderson. In 1799 his hours were occupied further with important revisions to the system of farming on the estate, incorporating the proposed leasing of parts thereof and certain operations, reductions in force of the enslaved laborers



*Sixteen-sided barn constructed on Dogue Run farm, 1792-1794, photo ca. 1870.*



*Washington’s plan for a sixteen-sided barn for threading (threshing) wheat, 28 October 1792.*



on the respective farms, and his own return to direct management. On 22 February 1799, George Washington's sixty-seventh birthday, Eleanor "Nelly" Parke Custis (1779-1852), the youngest of Martha Washington's three granddaughters, married Lawrence Lewis (1767-1837), the president's nephew. Later in the year they agreed to lease and operate Dogue Run Farm, the distillery, and the mill.

As Bruce Ragsdale relates, the end came quickly. "On December 12, 1799, Washington rode his customary circuit of the farms that he intended to assume the sole management of in another year, and in the worsening winter weather he personally delivered the farming plan (for the coming year) to the overseer at River Farm. The following morning, he awoke with symptoms of the respiratory infection of which he would die a day later. The last letter Washington ever sent was that transmitting the plan to Anderson." It was dated 13 December 1799 and addressed to James Anderson (1745-1807), the skilled Scottish-born agriculturist, who emigrated to Virginia in 1791 with his family and was hired as farm manager at Mount Vernon in October 1796. He remained at Mount Vernon through Martha Washington's widowhood and death and then went to White House plantation, New Kent County, as farm manager for George Washington Parke Custis (1781-1857), Martha Washington's only grandson. He died there and is buried in the plantation cemetery.

Readers of *Washington at the Plow* will be disappointed with the dull, flat, gray, and indistinct appearance of too many of its illustrations. They might also expect a bibliography. Mary V. Thompson included a comprehensive, twenty-three-page bibliography in "*The Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret*." Among the listed titles, Paul Leland Haworth's *George Washington, Country Gentleman: Being an Account of His Home Life and Agricultural Activities*, published in 1915 and a work of the Colonial Revival, was one of many of interest. This reader obtained a copy and read it in the company of Mr. Ragsdale's book. Mr. Haworth (1876-1936), an educator and the author of other works, was both prescient and mistaken in his observations in the opening paragraph of Chapter VII, "Agricultural Operations and Experiments Before the Revolution."

A DETAILED account of all of Washington's agricultural experiments would require several hundred pages and would be tedious reading. All that I shall attempt to do is to give some examples and point the way for any enthusiast to the mass of his agricultural papers in the Library of Congress and elsewhere.

Whether now, a century later, Bruce Ragsdale, respected as a scholar and historian, would accept characterization as an "enthusiast" I do not know. But no paragraph or page of his excellent, well-written, and highly readable book of 358 pages is ever "tedious reading."



The splendid stewardship and husbandry George Washington practiced at Mount Vernon, expertly chronicled by Bruce Ragsdale in the pages of *Washington at the Plow*, did not long survive him. Over four decades, since their arrival at Mount Vernon in the spring of 1759, George and Martha Washington had lavished their energies and means on an extraordinary estate. But its separation into parts to take effect after Martha's death, through bequests, without the means of guaranteed maintenance, doomed their best hopes just as Washington's example in freeing his slaves was of little influence among his countrymen. Bushrod Washington (1762-1829), the son of John Augustine Washington (1736-1787) and the president's nephew, was devised the core lands of the estate, Mansion House, Union, and Muddy Hole farms. Serving as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, on appointment and nomination by John Adams, from 1798 until his death on 26 November 1829, and childless in his marriage, he was of financial substance but did not share his benefactor's expressed commitment to agriculture. The president bequeathed River Farm and an additional farm of 360 acres to the two young sons of another of his favored nephews, George Augustine Washington (ca. 1759-1793), who had married Frances



*Washington as Cincinnatus, by Jean-Antoine Houdon, placed in the Virginia State Capitol Rotunda, Richmond, 14 May 1796. [Photo by David M. Doody, Colonial Williamsburg Fnd.]*

Bassett, a niece of Martha Washington, at Mount Vernon in 1785. George Washington devised most of Dogue Run Farm and adjoining lands, together with the estate gristmill and distillery, to Lawrence Lewis, the son of Fielding and Betty Washington Lewis, who had married

*(continued on page 18)*

## Book Review... (continued from page 17)

Martha Washington's granddaughter, Eleanor "Nelly" Custis at Mount Vernon on Washington's final birthday, just months before he set about drafting his will.

With the deaths of Bushrod Washington and his wife, within days of each other in November 1829, Mount Vernon, the then-declining mansion and estate lands, became the property of his nephew, John Augustine Washington II (17\_\_-1832). His ownership was short. Three years later, John Augustine Washington III (1821-1861), the elder of his two surviving sons, became heir designee of Mount Vernon while his mother, Jane Charlotte Blackburn Washington, would retain dower rights until her death in 1855. After graduation from the University of Virginia in 1840 he returned to Mount Vernon and farmed its fields, raising wheat and potatoes as principal crops. But his best efforts failed to meet the greater maintenance needs of the mansion house: its deterioration and that of the domestic and agricultural outbuildings continued. This was the scene observed by Louisa Bird Cunningham (1794-1873) in 1853, about which she wrote to her daughter in earnest.

The role of Ann Pamela Cunningham (1816-1875) and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union in securing ownership of Mount Vernon and the immediate grounds of 200 acres in the late 1850s is largely known and beyond these pages. The terms of the purchase agreement signed in Richmond on 6 April 1858 in the amount of \$200,000 were satisfied in a sequence of payments and effectively met by the end of 1859. John Augustine Washington III, his wife, Eleanor Love Selden Washington (1824-1860), and their seven children departed Mount Vernon in 1860 to take up residence at Waveland, a plantation in Fauquier County, Virginia. Fate demanded much of John Augustine Washington III, who became a widower in October 1860. On 13 September 1861, as an aide-de-camp to General Lee, he became an early casualty of the Civil War when he was killed by a bushwhacker while on reconnaissance.

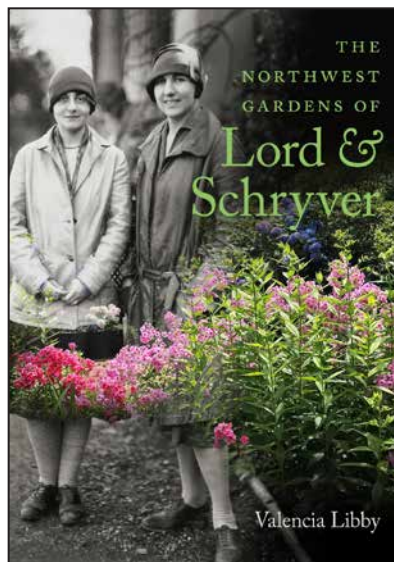
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Vale, North Carolina

## In Print

***The Northwest Gardens of Lord & Schryver***, by Valencia Libby | Oregon State University Press, 2021 | Published in cooperation with the Lord & Schryver Conservancy | Paperback, 220 pages | ISBN-13: 978-0870711527 | List price \$29.95

Some SGHS members may have had the good fortune of visiting Gaiety Hollow, the home, garden, and studio of Elizabeth Lord and Edith Schryver in Salem, Oregon. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, this significant historic site is open to the public and is owned by the Lord & Schryver Conservancy, which restored the gardens based on the original plans.

Scholar, author, and SGHS member Valencia Libby makes visible to a wide audience the contributions of these two pioneering women in landscape architecture in the



United States. Lord & Schryver were the first women in the Pacific Northwest to establish, own, and operate their landscape architecture firm.

Born into a prominent family in Salem, Oregon, in 1887, Elizabeth Lord enrolled at the Lowthrope School of Landscape Architecture in Groton, Massachusetts, in 1926. A year later, at the age of 39, she joined the school's summer tour to Europe, where she met Edith Schryver. Born in Kingston, New York, in 1901, Schryver enrolled at Lowthrope in 1920 and later worked in the New York office of Ellen Shipman. Their 1927 meeting on the European study tour set in motion an enduring friendship and domestic partnership as well as the establishment of their firm.

Between 1929 and 1969, Lord & Schryver designed over two hundred gardens and landscapes in Oregon and Washington. Their firm did not limit their work to residential gardens but also designed civic and institutional landscapes. Moreover, Elizabeth Lord and Edith Schryver were educators, writers, and civic leaders, who ran a highly successful business in a male-dominated field and world, navigating contractors, nursery owners, and others to make their visions come to life.

Val Libby's in-depth research and extensive knowledge of the history of American landscape architecture result in a complete and thoughtful story of Lord & Schryver. These remarkable women designed meaningful spaces



for their clients and the public, with their own unique, invaluable character that endures today. *The Northwest Gardens of Lord & Schryver* will inspire you to visit Oregon and pay homage to these women.

Staci L. Catron, Atlanta, Georgia

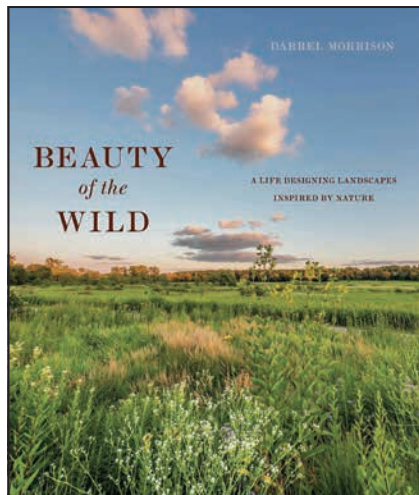
The Garden Conservancy recently featured a webinar with the author for TGC members:

[gardenconservancy.org/education/education-events/northwest-gardens-lord-schryver-webinar](https://gardenconservancy.org/education/education-events/northwest-gardens-lord-schryver-webinar)



***Beauty of the Wild: A Life Designing Landscapes Inspired by Nature***, by Darrel Morrison, FASLA | Library of American Landscape History, 2021 | Hardcover, 184 pages; color illustrations; maps | ISBN-10: 1952620287; ISBN13: 978-1952620287 | List Price \$27.50

The creative and inspired career of Darrel Morrison—landscape architect, educator, naturalist, writer, and artist—could have been written by many of his acolytes, but to have his story in his own words is a treasure. *Beauty of the Wild*, published



by the Library of Landscape History, is a chance to see our changing twentieth-century relationship with nature and landscape design through the keen and generous spirit of someone who continues to practice and inspire us all with his knowledge and work.

I first met Darrel in 1983 at the Founders Memorial Garden in Athens, Georgia. He greeted students and alumni as the University of Georgia's new dean of the then School of Environmental Design. As he so beautifully tells in his book, he came to the Deep South steeped from childhood in a love of the midwestern prairies, and as a professional, someone who was challenged by the landscape architects who could not read the natural landscape or use the diversity of our native plant communities to protect and shape a more beautiful and sustainable environment.

Before he left Georgia, his summer field course with botany professor, Sam Jones, had become legendary and changed the studies and lives of many students, including mine.

From saltmarsh to granite outcrop, longleaf to water prairie, Darrel learned and shared the awesome power of native plant communities of the South with all who would listen.

The story doesn't end in Georgia, and the circle of experiences that brought him "home" to Wisconsin and the designation of the Morrison Prairie and Forest Preserve in Iowa can only be told in Darrel's voice. To read this book is to experience our native landscapes through all the senses. Darrel's inspired life challenges us all to go out and embrace the nuance, fragility, and resiliency of the natural environment and to ensure its future for generations to come.

Lucy Lawliss, FASLA

## In Remembrance



gardener, storyteller, and best-selling author of

Robert Hicks, member of the board of directors of the Southern Garden History Society, died at home near Franklin, Tennessee, on Friday, February 25, 2022.

Preservationist,

*Widow of the South*, Robert was beloved by all who knew him. Hicks was moved by the stories of the 1864 Battle of Franklin, Carnton Plantation, and a cemetery of more than fourteen-hundred graves dug onsite in the battle's aftermath. He spearheaded the restoration of the house and went on to found Franklin's Charge, the organization that helped reclaim nearly two-hundred acres of the battlefield. SGHS members visited Carnton Plantation during the 2015 SGHS annual meeting in Nashville. Remembrances and links to obituaries and news articles in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* can be found at [southerngardenhistory.org](https://southerngardenhistory.org)





Southern Garden History Society  
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## Awards and Scholarships

The *Flora Ann Bynum Medal* honors members who render outstanding service to SGHS. The medal stands uppermost among SGHS awards. Any current, former, or honorary board member may submit nominations.

The *William Lanier Hunt Award* recognizes members, non-members, and/or organizations that have made an exceptional contribution to fields closely aligned with the mission and goals of SGHS. Any SGHS member may submit nominations.

SGHS bestows the title *Honorary Director* (Board of Directors) on individuals who have rendered exceptional service and have made significant contributions to SGHS. Any current, former, or honorary board member may submit nominations.

SGHS presents the *Certificate of Merit* to a member or non-member whose work (a singular project or collective effort) advances the mission and goals of SGHS. Any SGHS member may submit nominations.

SGHS provides *Undergraduate Scholarships*, *Graduate Fellowships*, and *Young Professional Grants* for the express purpose of attending the annual meeting. Bona fide junior and senior students enrolled in college and university majors relevant to the mission and goals of SGHS are eligible to apply for scholarships. Graduate students studying in germane fields may apply for fellowships. Young professionals within five years of having graduated and working in related disciplines may apply for grants, as well as older individuals who have made career changes within the last five years. SGHS members are urged to promote awareness of these opportunities.

SGHS posts details, eligibility, and directions for submitting applications on the organization's website: [www.southerngardenhistory.org](http://www.southerngardenhistory.org). Those without internet access can receive a copy of this information by mail; 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>	\$250
<i>Sustainer</i>	\$125
<i>Institution or Business</i>	\$100
<i>Joint</i>	\$60
<i>(two individuals living in the same household)</i>	
<i>Individual</i>	\$40
<i>Student</i>	\$15

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

For more membership information, contact:  
Rebecca Hodson, SGHS Administrator  
Post Office Box 15752  
Winston-Salem, NC 27113  
Phone: (336) 298-6938  
Mobile: (336) 655-2286

Email: [membership@southerngardenhistory.org](mailto:membership@southerngardenhistory.org)

Memberships can now be made electronically on our website!  
[www.southerngardenhistory.org](http://www.southerngardenhistory.org)

*Deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of Magnolia is May 15, 2022.*

### Officers

*President:* Perry Mathewes, Winchester, VA  
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*Secretary:* Susan McLeod Epstein,  
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