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

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An Elegant Seat: Caring for the Garden at Mount Airy

By Mollie Ridout, Annapolis, Maryland

Mount Airy stands out among the terraced gardens of the Chesapeake tidewater for the elaborate nature of its spaces and the many uses of its garden. Built by John Tayloe in 1758, the Richmond County, Virginia house is still occupied by direct descendents of the builder. It is a remarkable expression of the Palladian ideal. A central pavilion made of locally quarried materials and of rusticated Aquia Creek sandstone is connected to square dependencies by curved hyphens. The front and rear elevations were based on classic examples in eighteenth-century English pattern books. William Buckland was employed to provide the interior woodwork. Unfortunately his work was badly damaged in a nineteenth-century fire and was replaced with much simpler Greek Revival details.

The sophisticated elegance of the building is reflected in the carefully articulated spaces of the garden. The house is approached along a winding drive through the "park." Very likely it is this selfsame park that inspired Frances Carter to declare that she wanted her husband, Robert, to make her a park at their nearby home Nomini Hall and stock it with deer.

At Mount Airy the park may well have been used as a game reserve, but it also serves an aesthetic and cultural function. An initial impression of wild and natural landscape is belied by the orchestrated views of the house that appear and disappear during the visitor's approach. These glimpses of a highly structured, ascendant landscape holding sway over seeming natural and "wild" areas prepares the visitor for entrance into a space that is economically and socially dominant.

The builder's grandson, John Tayloe III, kept a minute book for the year 1805, which still survives in the collections of the Virginia Historical Society. In it he recorded the work accomplished at Mount Airy and



Photo by M. Ridout

Mount Airy drive façade showing finely articulated forecourt and elevated entry.

six other Tayloe properties, week by week. From those notes we know that the park was groomed. In March, Tayloe brought in hands from several of his properties, as well as "jobbers," or hired hands, to trim the trees in the park. That the task required extra hands suggests that this annual chore was extensive and was intended to manage the view of the house.

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CALENDAR

June 1-4, 2016. “Urbs in Horto – City in a Garden,” 38th annual meeting of the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation (AHLP), held in Chicago, IL. Meeting includes visits to Lincoln Park; Graceland Cemetery; Chicago’s west side parks, including Garfield and Columbus, designed by Jens Jensen; Riverside, the garden suburb designed by Olmsted and Vaux; and Pullman, the town that President Obama designated as a National Historic Monument. Visit: ahlp.org

June 5, 2016. The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association presents the 10th Annual Belfield Design Lecture: “A Garden Writer’s Journey” by Paula Deitz, editor of the *Hudson Review*, and frequent contributor to the *New York Times*, *Architectural Review*, and *Garden Illustrated*. Deitz’ lecture coincides with the new paperback edition of her acclaimed book, *Of Gardens*, a collection of her writings on gardens around the world. Visit: beatrixfarrandgardenhydepark.org

June 6-10, 2016. “Changing Perspectives: Planning for the Future,” American Public Gardens Association annual conference in Miami, FL. Visit: publicgardens.org

June 19-24, 2016. 20th annual Historic Landscape Institute, “Preserving Jefferson’s Gardens and Landscapes,” held in Charlottesville, VA. This one-week course uses Monticello and the University of Virginia as outdoor classrooms to study historic landscape preservation. Lectures, workshops, field trips and practical working experiences introduce students to the fields of landscape history, garden restoration, and historical horticulture. Call (434) 984-9816 or visit: monticello.org/hli

June 21, 2016. Georgia Perennial Plant Association Garden Lecture Series featuring Susan Varlamoff, Director of the Office of Environmental Sciences at University of Georgia and author of *Sustainable Gardening for the Southeast*, a vividly illustrated guide that offers simple techniques to help conserve water, reduce pollutants, and mitigate climate change while increasing biodiversity and attracting pollinators and wildlife. Contact georgiaperennial.org

September 9-10, 2016. 10th Annual Heritage Harvest Festival will be held at Monticello, in Charlottesville, VA. Celebrate the legacy of revolutionary gardener Thomas Jefferson during the 10th annual Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello. Patrick O’Connell, chef and proprietor of The Inn at Little Washington, will be the keynote speaker. Visit: heritageharvestfestival.com

November 6-18, 2016. 53rd Annual Fall Outdoor Cascading Chrysanthemums display at Bellingrath Gardens and Home in Theodore, AL. Bellingrath’s Mum Show is the nation’s largest outdoor chrysanthemum display. For more information, including the peak bloom time, visit Mum Watch at bellingrath.org

April 22-29, 2017. Historic Garden Week in Virginia. More than 250 of Virginia’s most beautiful gardens, homes, and historic landmarks take part in the celebration of Historic Garden Week, described as “America’s Largest Open House.” This tour, organized by the Garden Club of Virginia, supports restoration projects statewide. Visit: vagardenweek.org

May 26-28, 2017. Southern Garden History Society Annual Meeting, Lexington, Kentucky. **SAVE THE DATE.** More details to appear in upcoming issues of *Magnolia* and on our website: southerngardenhistory.org



Historic photograph of the Bellingrath Gardens Chrysanthemum Display.

The Elegant Seat..... (continued from page 1)

Arriving at the house, the visitor mounts a shallow flight of steps onto the forecourt terrace. As in the original configurations at nearby Sabine Hall and Nomini Hall, this approach is a stage where arrivals and departures are played out against an elegant formal backdrop. We learn from Tayloe's minute book that the forecourt was mowed, rolled, and cleaned up regularly. The semicircular space is punctuated by a pair of Coade stone urns, thought to be original to the eighteenth century.

Coade stone, an artificial stone described as a vitrified ceramic, was manufactured in London from 1769 to 1833 in a process that involved casting decorative figures in molds. The material is remarkable for its ability to withstand the weathering of time and pollution. The present Tayloe-family members point out that decorations on the urns are not simple flowers, but appear to be the rosettes awarded at horse shows and races, reflecting John Tayloe II's prowess as a horse breeder and owner of prize racehorses.

The overall effect of the property was expressed by Philip Vickers Fithian when he accompanied the Nomini Hall Carter family on a visit to the Tayloes. "Here is an elegant Seat! ...He [John Tayloe II] has a large well formed, beautiful Garden, as fine in every Respect as any I have seen in Virginia. In it stand four large beautiful Marble Statues—From this House there is a good prospect of the River Rappahannock." (Farish-Fithian, 95)

The statues have not survived, but Fithian puts us on notice that this was something more than a run-of-the-mill Chesapeake terraced garden. Deer parks, urns, and statuary were all accoutrements of the most elaborate gardens belonging to wealthy English landowners. Philip Miller, in his *Gardener's Dictionary*, recommended the use of statues, urns, and basins containing fountains as punctuation marks in the layout of an extensive garden. But seldom were these decorations found in eighteenth-

century American gardens, where landowners were less familiar with the decorative features of classic Italian gardens, had less money than their English counterparts, less access to the producers of such objects, and furthermore preferred to turn away from the high styles

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Coade stone urn. Note main house-dependency hyphen in background.

Photo by M. Ridout



Side and rear elevation showing terracing around main house.

Photo by K. McFarland



Ruins of Mount Airy greenhouse retain large openings that allowed maximum light-warmth inflow.

Photo by M. Ridout

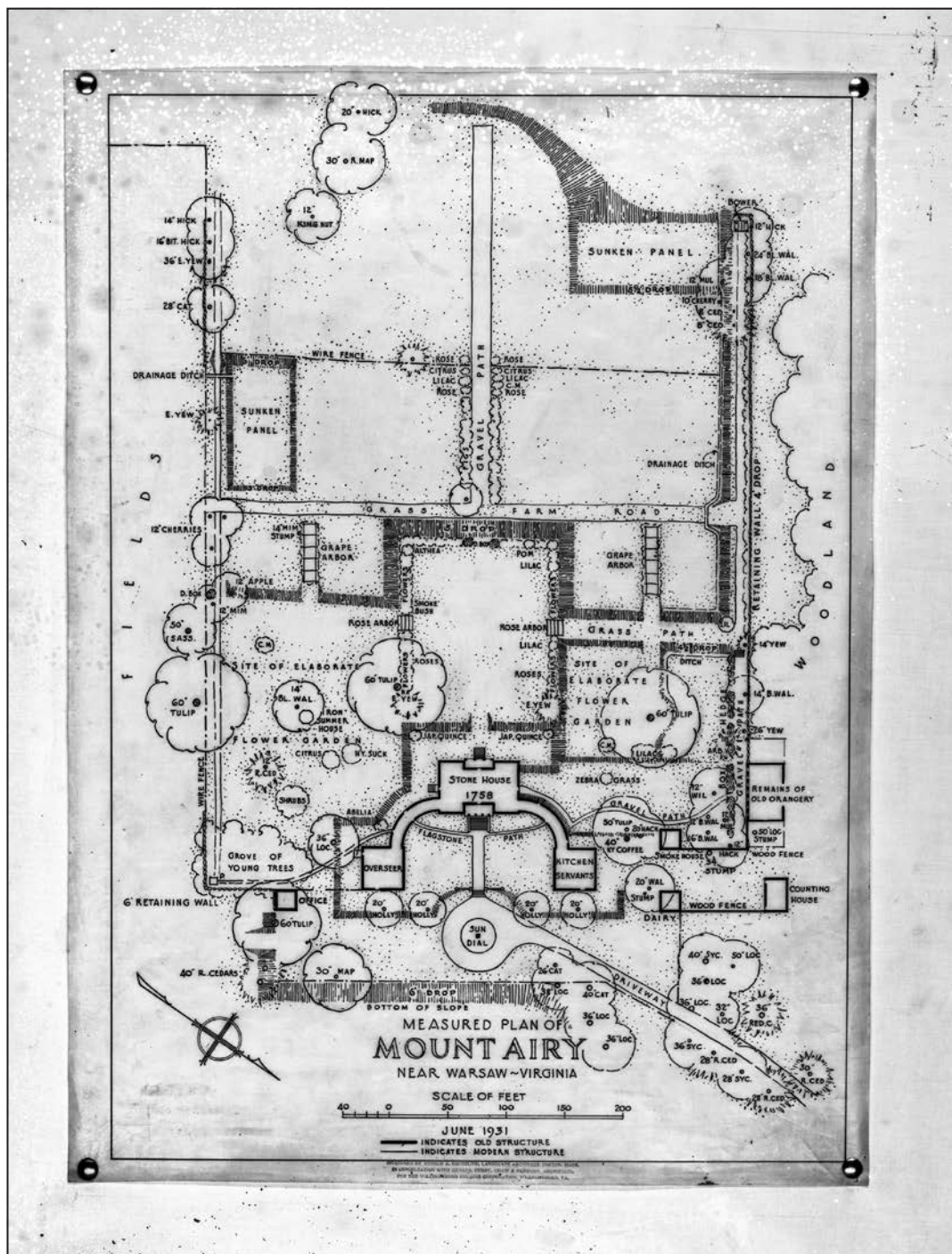
The Elegant Seat.....(continued from page 3)

and excesses of European aristocrats and espouse the plainer styles of the republic. But the Tayloe family took the Palladian ideal to heart and decorated the garden in the same classic style as the house.

The garden is viewed after walking through the hall, the main room of the central pavilion, and descending steps on the south side of the house. While the original plantings are only represented in a token manner now, the Tayloe family has done a remarkable job of preserving the landforms as well as the integrity of the house. At the base of the steps, a long rectangular flat provides a viewing stage for the garden. This level serves as a base for the house, surrounding it and connecting with the front court. In his 1931 drawing of the grounds, the landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff locates a meandering path – the serpentine path referred to by Tayloe – on this level, close to the house, following the curve of the hyphens and connecting the outbuildings.

The visitor descends the rear steps and the first terrace to the bowling green, a smooth rectangle of turf, about 125 feet wide by 150 feet long, that is the central space in the garden. In Tayloe's day the bowling green was surrounded by beds planted with flowers and a variety of shrubs. In his notes, Tayloe speaks of banks, or falls, which create the changes in level that define the many spaces of this garden. Beyond the bowling green, mixed shrubbery delineates a path, a visual axis that takes the viewer's eye to the distance. Now, a gate separates the end of this avenue from pasture and distant woods. From Fithian's description we

know that in the eighteenth century it afforded a view of the Rappahannock River. On either side of the bowling green, arbors provide an entrance to more garden rooms, occupying approximately symmetrical rectangles. Each contains a grape arbor, again leading the eye toward the distant view. In his drawing Arthur Shurcliff speculates that these flanking rectangles were the site of "Elaborate Flower Gardens." That is borne out by the minute book, as Tayloe does mention "plats," beds, borders, and the tending of flowers. The area to the right, or west, of the



Landscape plan of Mount Airy, Warsaw, Virginia, by Arthur A. Shurcliff, June 1931, Southern Colonial Places Architectural Drawings Collections, image # S-1223.

bowling green is divided by a raised grass path, so that the south end is sunken.

The west perimeter of the entire garden is defined by a retaining wall that handles a drop of about four feet to a wooded area. Tucked along this change in grade, perpendicular to the axis of the main house is a hidden gem, the remains of the eighteenth-century greenhouse. Today, only one wall stands, but the dimensions and style of the building are clear. A narrow, tall structure, the greenhouse's brick walls were punctuated by four windows to admit as much light as possible. Its use is well documented in Tayloe's minute book. He distinguishes between the greenhouse and the hothouses, which Shurcliff's drawing suggests were attached at either end of the greenhouse. The hot houses would have been equipped with soil pits, which were filled with fresh dung in the fall and then covered with soil. The process of decomposition provided warm soil to start young plants or shelter tender plants during the cold months. The buildings were cleaned periodically. Watering the plants in these structures was an almost daily chore, although potted trees—probably orange and lemon trees—were moved outside in May, presumably to an ornamental location close to the house, and moved back inside at the end of September.

Tayloe's minute book makes it clear that the gardens at Mount Airy were extensive and taken seriously. He never lists the number of gardeners, but at least two men, Godfrey and Dick, worked in the garden six days a week; there were probably more, and extra hands from the fields, as well as "jobbers" or hired hands, were brought in occasionally to help with big projects. The upkeep of gravel paths, mowing and rolling the lawns, particularly the bowling green, weeding and cleaning up were weekly tasks in each area of the garden. Always there was watering, facilitated by the installation of a garden cistern in September 1805. According to the season, beds were prepared, vegetables and flowers started, beds weeded and dressed. Early and late in the year, manure was wheeled to the beds or the hot houses. Small trees were collected from the woods or from other properties and heeled into the nursery area, later to be planted along the serpentine paths or in the park. Fruit trees were nurtured and then planted in the orchard. From time to time a larger project was undertaken, such as planting shrubs in the borders of the bowling green, or trimming up the trees in the park. Gardeners also helped with non-garden projects occasionally, working in the fields at harvest time, preparing and erecting scaffolding for some masonry work on the house, loading wagons, clearing snow, cutting wood, cleaning flues, cutting ice. It was an endless round. There was one "holy day," or holiday from work, noted.

On such a foundation of hard, continuous, physical labor, an outstanding eighteenth-century garden was created and maintained. And this was certainly a garden

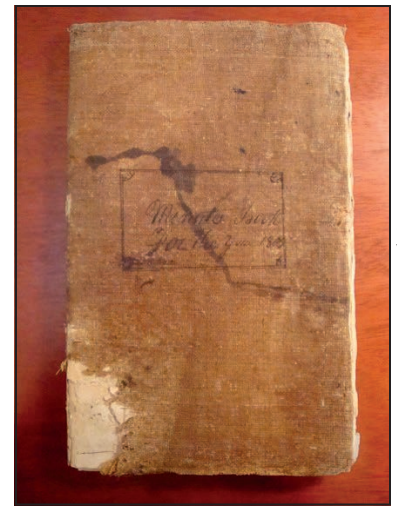
that was a cut above normal; as Fithian said, as fine as any in Virginia. The statues identify this as more formal and more highly decorated than most gardens. The formal urns, imported from England, were another distinguished touch. The greenhouse and hot houses, their design, construction, and operation likewise set Mount Airy apart as a garden of unusual sophistication and resources. And the overall plan of the garden, with its pattern of spaces and levels intricately linked to the classical components of the house, reveals a sophisticated design sensibility and a classical education.

To learn about events at Mount Airy today, visit: <http://www.virginia.org/listings/historicsites/MountAiryPlantation/>

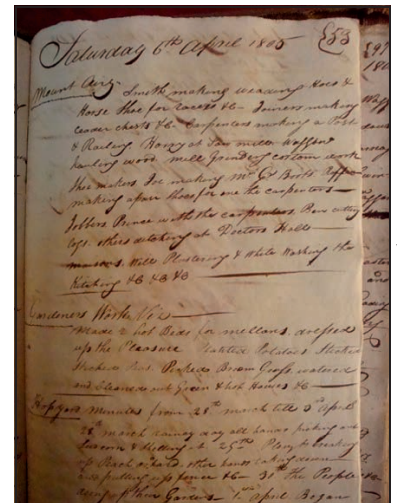
Mollie Ridout is Director of Horticulture at Historic Annapolis, Inc., and secretary of the Southern Garden History Society. This paper is the second in a three-part series on falling gardens of the Chesapeake. See: Magnolia vol. XXIV, no. 4, fall 2011, "A Chesapeake Falling Garden: Landon Carter's Sabine Hall." The author wishes to thank Ken McFarland, former director of education at Stratford Hall, who provided invaluable assistance throughout the development of these papers.

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John Tayloe III garden book.



John Tayloe III garden notes.

Courtesy Virginia Historical Society.

Courtesy Virginia Historical Society.

THE ELIZABETHAN GARDENS: Inspired by Mystery and History

By Sandra D. Snapp, Manteo, North Carolina*

In 1587, when 117 English colonists first stepped onto what is now Roanoke Island, North Carolina, scuppernong vines are said to have abounded. This was a place so wild and so different from their homeland. Yet soon, they made tea from yaupon holly leaves as a substitute for their homeland drink. Wax myrtle plants grew profusely, and candles could be made from their small grey berries. Fish and wildlife were plentiful. Persimmons were also a source for making breads and puddings.

Many of the colonists' daily needs, however, were still not met. Thus, John White and several other colonists returned home to resupply. Unfortunately, England was at war. Two years passed before they could return, and then only to find no one living in the settlement and simply the word "Croatoan" carved into a tree.

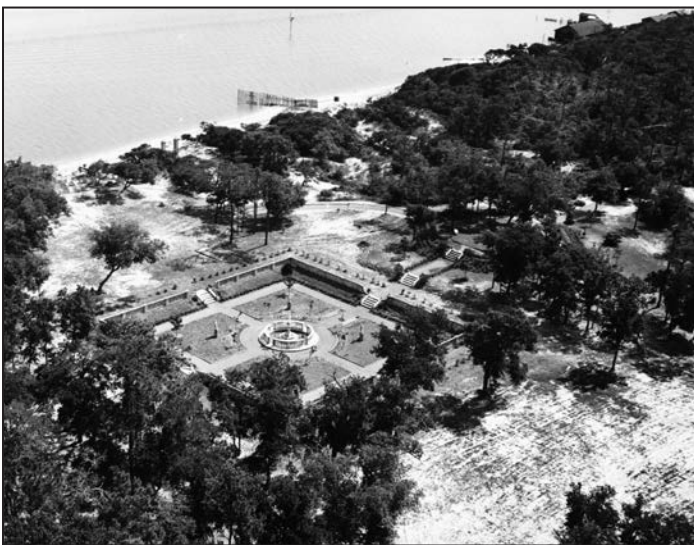
The mystery of the Lost Colony persists. Some believe the colonists lived among the native peoples in Hatteras. Others think they moved to what is present-day Bertie County on Salmon Creek at the confluence of Albemarle Sound and the Chowan River. Still others say their descendants live today among the North Carolina populations in areas such as Engelhard, Chocowinity, and Lumberton. The questions linger on, and perhaps we will never know exactly what happened to those brave souls who came to this new land.

Playwright Paul Green wrote about the early settlers and their hardships in *The Lost Colony*, which opened as a Roanoke Island outdoor drama in 1937 hosting guest of honor President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Since, the

symphonic drama has been enjoyed by thousands, young and old, every summer from June to August. (Only for a period during World War II was it not shown.)

Interestingly, the idea for a garden memorializing the lost colonists came about during a production of *The Lost Colony*. Jointly inspired were Ruth Cannon, affiliated with The Garden Club of North Carolina; Inglis Fletcher, historical novelist; and Sir Evelyn Wrench, founder of the English Speaking Union. Ultimately, the concept was presented to The Garden Club of North Carolina, and in 1951 they formally adopted The Elizabethan Gardens (TEG) proposal and formed a project oversight committee. Construction of TEG began on June 2, 1953, coronation day for Queen Elizabeth II.

The renowned New York landscape architectural firm of Innocenti and Webel received the design commission, their work being sited on ten-and-one-half acres leased for ninety-nine years from The Roanoke Island Historical Association. Good fortune came in 1952 when Mrs. E. W. Reinecke informed The Garden Club of North Carolina about valuable garden statuary located at the Thomasville, Georgia home of publisher and Ambassador to the United Kingdom, John Hay Whitney. Umberto Innocenti, in turn, arranged for this to be gifted to TEG. The construction contract went to the Fayetteville firm of E. W. Reinecke. Work proceeded, and on August 18, 1955 TEG was dedicated and opened to the public. The moment was auspicious, as August 18 (1587) is also the birthday of Virginia Dare, the first English child born in the new world. Five years later, TEG held an August 18 ceremony and formally reopened TEG on Virginia Dare's 373rd birthday.



Ca. 1954 view of sunken garden, a key element of the Innocenti and Webel design.



Entrance wall and massive iron gates formerly used at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C.

The impressive entrance wall, constructed of old handmade brick, holds the great iron gates that once hung at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. The gates were a gift to TEG from the Honorable C. Douglas Dillon, Undersecretary of State and later United States Treasurer, and Mrs. Dillon. The gatehouse, in the style of an orangery, was built in later years, and visitors gain admission to TEG through that structure, which also includes a gift shop. In 1974 the first greenhouse was constructed to over-winter tender plants. Today, two greenhouses are located on site, and a plant sale area is a popular spot.

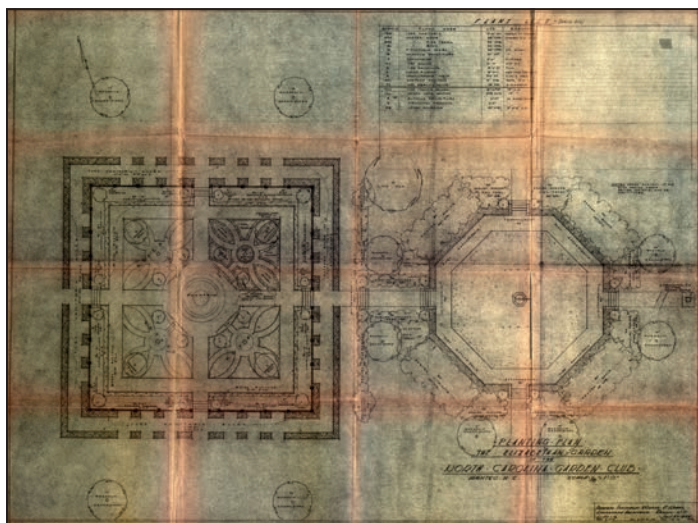
The Queen's Rose Garden honors HM Queen Elizabeth II and was designed by Lewis Clarke and dedicated in 1976. When TEG celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, a grandiflora rose from the gardens at Windsor Castle was presented by Sir Peter Ramsbotham, British Ambassador to the U.S., on behalf of HM Queen Elizabeth II. Over-hanging trees provided excessive shade in recent years, however, and in 2015 some of the trees were removed and some pruned to allow the sunlight a rose garden requires. It has since flourished, the plants enjoying the sun and producing more bloom.

The small butterfly garden near the entrance to the administration building, Odom Hall, was enlarged in 2015, and TEG continues to include new plantings attractive to butterflies. This has become a favorite spot for young visitors as they strive to identify each butterfly species found.

TEG has also expanded the overlook terrace vista to include a view of Roanoke Sound. Visitors can now see the Wright Brothers Monument while looking across the water. As well, the overlook terrace vista has proven to be a favorite place for brides and grooms who marry here. In recent years, moreover, a celebration of Virginia Dare's birthday occurred on the overlook terrace, with the East Carolina University Symphony and the Lost Colony Choir entertaining guests on a lovely August morning.

In 1981, TEG added an authentic sixteenth-century style gazebo, constructed with period tools and using early construction techniques. The octagonal structure is handsomely sited to overlook Roanoke and Currituck Sounds. This is, moreover, very possibly the spot where Sir Richard Grenville, Sir Walter Raleigh's cousin, set foot in 1585 upon arriving with a fleet of seven ships and

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1955 Innocenti and Webel planting plan, with 1956 and 1959 revisions.



Late 1950s photograph featuring some of the state and local garden club members who spearheaded TEG project.



Overlook terrace.



Queen Elizabeth Rose, a gift from the British ambassador originating at the Windsor Castle gardens.

The Elizabethan Gardens.....(continued from page 7)

108 men. Their mission was to prepare for the colonists who came two years later. Without modern nails skilled workers locked massive hand-hewn oak posts and beams. Wattle and daub were applied on the exteriors of five bays, leaving three bays open. There, visitors can look across to the wide expanse of waters to have a distant view of the Wright Brothers Memorial in Kitty Hawk and of Jockey's Ridge, one of the highest sand dunes east of the Mississippi River.

Among the beautiful statuary adorning TEG is one of Virginia Dare as she might have looked as a young maiden. Sometime before 1850, Salem Massachusetts sculptor Maria Louise Lander (1826-1923) created her perception of a personal heroine, Virginia Dare. The Lander statue has a long and vivid history of surviving shipwreck, fire, and abandonment. Almost one hundred years after it was crafted, however, it found a permanent home in TEG. Today, the "maiden of mystery" stands in her own niche at the base of an ancient oak, one of the same species of sea-battered oaks that existed in the area where Dare was born. She holds a fishnet draped around her waist. About her neck and arms is the necklace of an Indian princess, and she is accompanied by a heron. A Native American legend persists that Virginia grew up among them, her spirit roaming Roanoke Island in the form of a white doe.

The Sunken Garden features thirty-two identical parterres outlined in clipped dwarf yaupon. Ever-changing displays of ornamental plants complement crepe myrtle standards that bloom for 101 days with their small tufts of watermelon-pink flowers. The central focus is the ancient Italian fountain and pool with carved balustrade from the Whitney collection. Other Whitney statuary depicts Apollo, Diana, Venus, and Jupiter, these being centered on each of the four quadrants of parterres. (At present, the statues have been removed for cleaning and repairs.) An eleven-foot-high pleached allée surrounds the Sunken Garden wall and consists of meticulously groomed North Carolina native yaupon holly with an arched opening.

To the south of the formal Sunken Garden is the sweep of greensward called the Great Lawn. On the edge and encircling this area are some of the finest specimens to be found in the South of *Camellia sasanqua* and *C. japonica*, many being gifts from the North Carolina Camellia Society. (In 2003 TEG dedicated the Camellia collection to Louis Midgette, Jr., who superintended here with total commitment for twenty-eight years.) Also present is a very majestic live oak estimated to have been alive when the colonists landed in 1587.

There is beauty for all in this lovely garden in its tranquil setting on the shores of Roanoke Sound. But more than a vision of beauty is the thrilling experience

created by the women of The Garden Club of North Carolina, so aptly described by the historical novelist Inglis Fletcher on the plaque at the entrance to the Gardens:

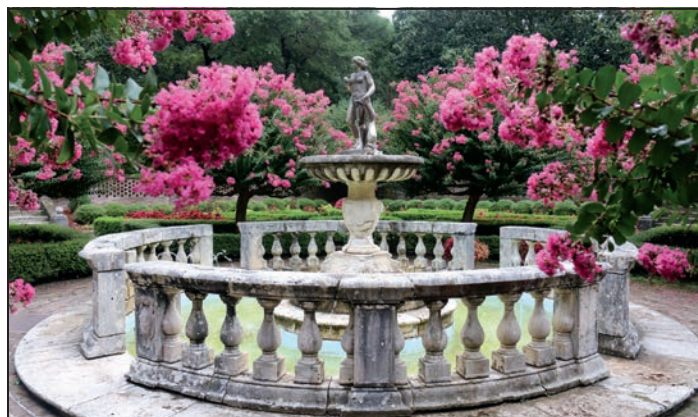
"Down the centuries English women have built gardens to the glory of God, the beauty of the countryside and the comfort of their souls"

"The women of the Garden Club of North Carolina have planted this garden in memory of the valiant men and women who founded the first English Colony in America;

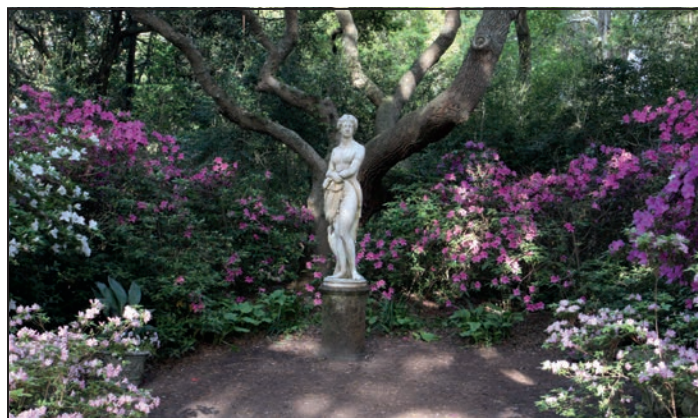
"From this hallowed ground they walked away through the dark forest and into history."

This year The Elizabethan Gardens will celebrate its sixty-fifth anniversary, the blue sapphire anniversary, and a grand celebration is planned for August 2016. The location is 1411 National Park Drive, Manteo, North Carolina. You may visit our website at www.ElizabethanGardens.org for more information. The Elizabethan Gardens very much welcomes your visit, either virtually or in person.

**The author serves on the Board of Governors of The Elizabethan Gardens, Manteo, North Carolina.*



Whitney collection fountain and balustrade at center of Sunken Garden.



Virginia Dare statue crafted prior to 1850 by Maria Louise Lander.

Dinosaurs in the Garden

By Beate Ankjaer-Jensen, Fredericksburg, Virginia

A chance visit by a research geologist changed forever how we see the stonework array at Belmont, the Gari Melchers Home and Studio in Falmouth, Virginia. The materials used in the studio, summer house, and stone garage, as well as paths and garden walls, were recently identified as rich with dinosaur footprints. Dr. Robert Weems, now retired from the United States Geological Survey, found the deposits on a visit with his wife and guests. The author was thrilled to learn about this discovery as it adds another layer of prehistoric significance to Belmont's already history-rich site.

How the dinosaur prints came to Belmont is an interesting story in its own right. Estate owner Gari Melchers (1860-1932) purchased a variety of stone from several sources to build his studio and garden structures. Most of the sandstone came from the now-lost mansion Mannsfield located on the Rappahannock River about two miles south of Fredericksburg. A Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) report documents archaeological and historic research undertaken of the site in 1936. Mannsfield was built in 1776 by Mann Page as a gift to his wife Mary Tayloe of Mount Airy in Richmond County, Virginia. (See lead article.) According to tradition, he promised her this as an inducement to accept his marriage proposal. It would be, he said, a home even better than the one where she grew up.

An army correspondent of the "New York Times" describes the house and its fate in an article written, May 9, 1863:

"The owner of this estate, H. I. Bernard [Arthur H. Bernard], is a wealthy Secessionist, middle-aged, bachelor. Not long after General Franklin's force had crossed, he was detected endeavoring to steal into our lines, and believing that he had been conveying information to the enemy, General Franklin ordered him into durance vile, where he has remained ever since. His lordly Mansion, built after the English style of architecture, was furnished with everything that wealth could furnish. Damask curtains, Brussels carpets, marble center tables, elegant mirrors and chandeliers adorned the various apartments. There were rare paintings from the Italian masters suspended

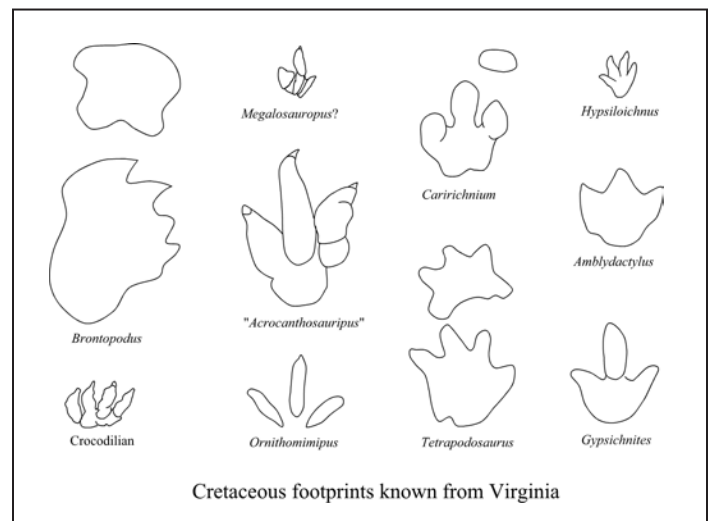
on the walls; and numerous libraries were found in various parts of the buildings. This home and all these adornments are now gone; and their owner is a prisoner in our hands."

The house burned during the Civil War, and various persons purchased the stone ruins in the early twentieth century. National Park Service historian John Hennessy prepared an excellent blog post about the subject in 2010, to be seen at: <https://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2010/12/03/digging-mannsfield/>

Research from 1936 concluded that some of the stone decorative elements at Belmont came from this site. The report, images, and drawings are all available at the Library of Congress website: <https://www.loc.gov/search/?in=&q=mannsfield+rappahannock&new=true&st=>

The HABS article mentions that it was "reported by local amateur historians that this stone was quarried from a now deserted quarry close by on the Rappahannock," but at the time this notion was dismissed. In 2010, however, Dr. Weems and amateur paleontologist John

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Dinosaur footprints are classified by their own names, since no one can know for sure how individual prints looked as they were left.



Mannsfield, built in 1776. Historic American Building Survey, 1940, Library of Congress.

Courtesy Gari Melchers Home and Studio.

Dinosaurs in the Garden.....(continued from page 9)

Bachman discovered an outcropping of sandstone rich in dinosaur footprints just downstream from the Mannsfield site. This area showed evidence of quarrying, lending credence to what the amateur historians mentioned in the 1936 report. The author visited the Mannsfield site recently and discovered quarried sandstone identical to that found in our buildings, verifying that not only the decorative elements, as documented in 1936, but also the remaining bulk of the sandstone at Belmont came from the mansion.

As noted, stones thus quarried on the Rappahannock were transported to build Mannsfield. They were then removed to Belmont in the 1920s and further worked. The dinosaur prints that originally covered the muddy flats of the river were broken up in this process, leaving us mostly partial prints today. Despite this jumble, there is enough

information to identify the prints still visible in the stone.

So far nine Cretaceous period dinosaur footprints and one crocodile print have been found in Virginia, but most are in difficult-to-reach areas. All are present in the gardens at Belmont, however, the only public and easily accessible site where visitors can hunt for the signs of the fauna of our distant past.

The author is cultural resource manager at The Gari Melchers Home and Studio at Belmont.



Courtesy Gari Melchers Home and Studio.

Early view of pathways using Mannsfield stones. Putto statue also stands on stone elements from Mannsfield.



Courtesy Gari Melchers Home and Studio.

Tip of center toe of *Acroanthosauripus*.

Members in Memoriam

Caroline Harrington, 1939-2015

Caroline Harrington, who co-chaired the 2014 Southern Garden History Society's annual meeting in Savannah, Georgia, died November 23, 2015. She served on the board of LeConte-Woodsmanston Plantation and Botanical Gardens in Riceboro, Georgia, and contributed numerous hours researching and restoring the gardens, which were visited during the meeting's Sunday tours. An avid gardener, recognized landscape artist, botany enthusiast, daylily breeder, and benefactor of the arts, she expressed her love of horticulture in her watercolors and her garden in Darien, Georgia.

Ruby Louise Orders Osborne, 1925-2016

Southern Garden History Society lifetime member Ruby Louise Orders Osborne, 90, passed away Tuesday,

January 5, 2016 in Roanoke, Virginia. She was born in Morganton, North Carolina, but lived most of her life in Richmond, Virginia. She attended Mars Hill College, received her BA from Wake Forest College and later earned a Masters from Virginia Commonwealth University and a PhD from the College of William and Mary. Ruby was an avid supporter of numerous arts and cultural organizations in Richmond, her home state of North Carolina, and beyond. She became a lifetime member of the SGHS and attended many annual meetings. Her interest in both gardening and history were a perfect fit for the Society. Although small in stature, she was big in charm. Her friendliness was surpassed only by her intellectual appreciation for the finer aspects of art, music, and history. She will be missed by many members of the Society.

The Bluebonnet and the Fair Ladies of Texas

Jeff Abt, Nacogdoches, Texas

When politicians come into conflict with the members of a women's lineage society, you know that they will lose. It happened in March 1901. According to the Texas Handbook, the 27th Texas Legislature was considering what would be named as the Texas State Flower. You and I, today, have become quite comfortable with the bluebonnet (*Lupinus* sp.) as being the Texas state flower. We all consider it a good choice. But when politicians get involved, the good choice is not always a foregone conclusion.

Some people thought the cotton boll would be a perfect symbol of Texas agriculture. One politician would put forth another plant and another would suggest yet another. The final decision, though, came down to the opinion of a State Representative who would one day be the Vice President of the United States and the influence of the Texas Chapter of the Colonial Dames of America. The politician in question was Uvalde Representative John Nance Garner.

Garner, a representative from South Texas, thought the flower of the prickly pear cactus would be an ideal representative of the state. When one considers his prickly personality, Garner seems natural to be putting forth the cactus. He had a reputation for hard-ball politics, drinking, and serious games of poker. Later on in life, when he served as Vice President to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, he 'worked' the halls of Congress to get much of the New Deal through. He was known in D.C. as a hard, mean politician. In the end, Garner and Roosevelt themselves would have a falling out. In those days, it took a pretty tough hombre to stand against FDR, but Garner

didn't seem to mind a bit, and it is no wonder he came to be known as "Cactus Jack Garner." The Texas Chapter of the Colonial Dames of America was not to be trifled with either. When the Texas Legislature met in Austin, March 1901, the ladies had come to insist the bluebonnet become the state's flower. Timing was on their side. The

countryside around Austin was beginning to mirror the blue skies of Texas. On the day of the proceedings the Dames placed jars of the Texas wildflower on each legislator's table, and carried a painting by a local artist onto the floor of the legislature. When the vote came, the Colonial Dames prevailed. The conflict didn't destroy Garner's future political career, but the bluebonnet *Lupinus subcarnosus*, did win out! Even then, trouble lay in the future for the *Lupinus subcarnosus* or Sandyland Bluebonnet. The little bluebonnet that was named the state flower had a bluebonnet rival that most today actually associate as the state's flower (*Lupinus texensis*). The Texas Bluebonnet is much more showy and robust than the delicate,



Photo by J. Abt

The shy and delicate Sandyland Bluebonnet, *Lupinus subcarnosus*, is the first official State Flower of Texas.

Sandyland Bluebonnet. And there were other bluebonnets, as well: *L. havardii*, *L. concinnus*, *L. perennis*, and *L. plattensis*. Should the shy little Sandyland Bluebonnet be replaced? Texas Bluebonnet had its supporters and each of the other bluebonnets might have supporters lurking in the wings! So, in March 1971, as the bluebonnets began to bloom once again in the hill country, the Texas Legislature did what most politicians do. Compromise! They named all of the *Lupinus* species the Texas State Flower. Any lupines that grew in Texas became the official state's flower. Though all lupines are the state's flower today, it was the ladies love for the little *L. subcarnosus* that paved the way for Texas bluebonnets everywhere.

Members in the News

SGHS members **Evelyn** and **Michael Jefcoat** have fully funded the endowment for the **Eudora Welty Garden** in Jackson, Mississippi. Their generosity enabled its restoration, the telling of its story through SGHS president **Susan Haltom's** book, *One Writer's Garden: Eudora Welty's Home Place*, and now its future.

An article by Bart Zeigler, "Petals with a

Provenance," published in the February 20, 2016 issue of the *Wall Street Journal* quotes our Michigan member **Scott Kunst**, founder and owner of Old House Gardens in Ann Arbor, and Monticello's Curator of Plants **Peggy Cornett**. Zeigler's article focused on a "lesser-known category of historic plants [that] has its own devoted following: heirloom flowers."



Southern Garden History Society

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The **Flora Ann Bynum Award** is the highest award bestowed by the Southern Garden History Society. It is not awarded annually, but only occasionally to recipients who have rendered outstanding service to the society. Nominations may be made at any time by any member. The award will usually be presented at the annual meeting.

The title **Honorary Director** (Board of Directors) may be bestowed on individuals who have rendered exceptional service and made significant contributions to the society. Nominations for Honorary Director are made to the President by current Board members and are approved by the Board of Directors.

The **Certificate of Merit** is presented to a member or non-member, whose work has advanced the mission and goals of the society. Awarding of certificates will be approved by the Board of Directors and will usually be announced at the annual meeting.

Society **Scholarships** assist students in attending the society's annual meeting and are awarded to bona fide students enrolled in college and university majors relevant to the mission and goals of the society. The scholarship provides a waiver of registration fees plus \$500 to assist with travel and lodging.

Details, requirements, and directions for submitting applications are posted on the SGHS website: www.southerngardenhistory.org. For those without internet access, a copy of this document can be mailed or faxed. Contact Peggy Cornett, Magnolia editor.

Annual Membership Dues

The society's membership year is from **August 1—July 31**. The membership secretary will mail renewal notices in the summer for the 2015-2016 year. Membership categories:

Benefactor	\$500
Patron	\$250
Sustainer	\$125
Institution or Business	\$100
Joint	\$60
Individual	\$40
Student	\$15

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 Spring issue of Magnolia is May 31, 2016.

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