



MAGNOLIA

Bulletin of the
Southern Garden
History Society

"The Laurel Tree of Carolina"
from Mark Catesby, 1731
(MAGNOLIA GRANDIFLORA)

Catherine M. Howett, President
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SOUTHERN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY
Old Salem, Inc.
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v.4, no. 4 (Spring, 1988)

Members have now received final announcement of
THE SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF SGHS, "Classic Meets Country,"
IN NASHVILLE, MAY 20-22, 1988.

You may still be able to make plans to join us for this fine program.

The conference will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, May 20, with registration during the late morning and through the noon hour at the conference hotel, the Hampton Inn--West End, 1919 West End Avenue, Nashville, TN 38203; tel.(615)329-1144. (Mention SGHS for our rates: singles \$41; doubles with two double beds \$46).

Events will extend into the evening on both Friday and Saturday; the registration fee of \$160 for the main two-day conference will include both dinners as well as breakfast and lunch on Saturday and drinks at receptions, all transportation and entrance fees. Send this fee to Mrs Ben G. Page, Jr., 3801 Richland Avenue, Nashville, TN 37205.

On Sunday, May 22, we continue our tradition of offering an optional tour of historic sites and landscapes of the larger region of the conference city. A fee of \$25 for this tour includes transportation, lunch, entrance fees, and afternoon drinks.

Many of the gardens included in the Nashville meeting are not otherwise open to the public. They will enable members to survey middle Tennessee history throughout its period of settlement. Members are urged to make every effort to attend this well-planned meeting and enjoy exploring our mutual interest in garden history.

PUBLICATIONS

I. Information requested for book in progress

The Garden Club of America has spent ten years assembling a visual archive documenting the history of American landscape gardening. This archive is now housed at the Office of Horticulture, Smithsonian Institution. GCA will celebrate its 75th anniversary with the publication of a book intended to introduce the collection of the Slide Library of Notable Parks and Gardens to the public and to scholars.

The subject of the book is Gardens of the Gilded Age. It will be published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., noted for high-quality art books. The authors will be Mac K. Griswold, a free-lance garden writer who has recently completed a book on the history of gardening as shown in the collections at the Metropolitan Museum, and Eleanor Weller, chairman of the Slide Library.

The book will contain 100 examples from hand-painted slides made of American gardens between 1919 and 1938. These will be supplemented by historical black and white photographs of significant gardens.

The authors are still searching for additional documentary materials. Persons who have old photographs should contact Mrs. Frank H. Weller, Jr., 16135 Old York Road, Monkton, MD 21111. The greatest care will be taken to preserve the quality of original photographs.

II. Several articles published by members of Southern Garden History Society:

"In Search of Boxwood in Central Virginia," by Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton, published in The Boxwood Bulletin, vol. 27, no. 3 (January, 1988). Mrs. Frackelton, who serves as president of the American Boxwood Society (P.O. Box 85, Boyce, VA 22620), which publishes the quarterly Bulletin (\$12 per year; back issues \$4), provides details about the boxwood varieties grown in the Charlottesville area, with emphasis on the sites which members of SGHS visited during our 5th annual meeting last June.

"An 18th-Century Kitchen Garden," by Julianne Berckman, Staff Horticulturist at Old Salem, appears in Garden 1988, published by Early American Life magazine. (EAL, P.O. Box 8200, Harrisburg, PA 17105)

"Old Salem, North Carolina," by Rick Mashburn, and "Old Salem's Medicinal Garden," by Julianne Berckman, appear in v. 19, no. 2 (April, 1988) of Early American Life. The design for the Miksch garden described and photographed in this issue is also based on a garden plan and plant list from nearby Bethabara. The plan and list are included. The Mashburn article provides information on early life at Salem and efforts to recreate it for present-day visitors.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE NOW

I. In addition to the "Battle-Friedman Update," by George Stritikus, published in our Winter issue, several other pieces of information are available in typescript, including:

- Roses listed in the Langdon Nursery Catalogue, 1873-74;
- Plants listed in the Langdon Catalogue of the same year;
- 1857 Landscape Plan of Henry Watson, Greensboro, Alabama;
- Roses in Alabama Gardens still in cultivation today;
- reprint of "Decorative Plants Around Historic Alabama Homes," by Henry P. Orr, which originally appeared in Alabama Review in January, 1958.

These can be obtained at no cost from George Stritikus, Montgomery County Agent, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, 4576 Court St., Montgomery, AL 36196.

II. Publication of The Garden Library of the New Orleans Town Gardeners, a catalog, will be celebrated at a reception to be held on May 5, 1988 at the Southeastern Architectural Archive, Tulane University Library. Copies of the catalog are now available for purchase. Members may contact William R. Cullison, III, Curator of the Southeastern Architectural Archive, Tulane University, New Orleans, or Mrs. M. Truman Woodward, Jr., 1234 Sixth St., New Orleans, LA 70115, for information on ordering a copy. A description of the collection, a project of the Town Gardeners, and of their decision to house it in the SE Archive, was published in v.4, no. 1 (Summer, 1987) of Magnolia.

WILLIAM PACA'S WAY OF GARDENING

by Mark Reeder, Director of the Garden
194 Prince George St, Annapolis, MD

The limits of 20th-century landscape design--the atrium landscapes of modern shopping malls sometimes seem to be the best we are able to achieve-- have led to an interest in gardens and landscapes of our past, to an effort to see and understand the values of a previous age, with priorities different from our own.

As our interest in gardens of the past has grown, we have tried to investigate them, to learn what they contained and how it was arranged. The fashion for historical landscapes has prompted much research into design styles and tastes in plants, but little work has been carried out on cultivation techniques and tools required to maintain such properties. This article will discuss this aspect of garden restoration in relation to the restored 18th-century William Paca Garden in Annapolis, Maryland.

Annapolis is famous for its colonial charm and fine old houses. It was one of these that William Paca built for his family in 1765. Over two centuries the garden site became obscured by a hotel and parking lot over 9 feet of earthfill. The rumor that a garden had existed on the

site was confirmed in 1965, when Historic Annapolis, Inc., bought the house and persuaded the State of Maryland to purchase the adjacent 2 acres of land.

Researchers were able to piece the garden plan together by using a painting of Mr. Paca in his garden. This documentary evidence was confirmed by archaeologists, who unearthed foundations for many of the original garden features, including a fish-shaped pond, brick canal, underground drainage system, and five terraces. A landscape architect provided with this information then developed a conjectural design for the garden, which includes a central vista flanked by hedges from which four parterres open like garden rooms.

Garden fashion was changing at the time the Paca garden was installed, and this is shown in the transition from the formality of the symmetrical and formal upper terraces to the informality of the wilderness garden below, with its serpentine paths. A fruit and vegetable garden are set to the side of the pleasure garden. All these are now contained within the reconstructed garden walls, a green oasis amid the hustle and bustle of modern Annapolis.

Although a number of country estate gardens survive for our education and pleasure, the Paca garden is very unusual--an 18th-century town garden. And unlike Monticello, which possesses extensive records of garden activities, the Paca garden has no such documents. This freedom from constraints can be an advantage, but in order to operate a historic garden with accuracy, we have had to do extensive research into gardening manuals contemporary to Mr. Paca.

We know, for example that a neighbor of Paca, Charles Carroll, ordered the latest edition of Miller's Gardener's Dictionary in 1760 from Andersen in London. Gardening techniques were brought over to the colonies from Europe by indentured servants as well, and it was considered prestigious to have an English gardener, as revealed in this message from Carroll to Andersen: "There are often to be met with out of business fellows that understand common gardening as turf, kitchen and flower gardening, mowing and management of an orchard. I am in want of such a one and would go as far as 20 sterling, crimp money passage and all expenses included for one that would indent to me if it can't be got cheaper for 5 or 7 years."

One of the fascinating aspects of gardening at the time was that the whole operation was self-contained. The horse was a very important part of the social system, and the dung produced was plentiful and free. Manure is of course a supplier of nutrients, organic matter, and heat. Two practices which involved its use were digging and the creation of hot beds. Miller, in the 1731 edition of his Gardener's Dictionary, writes of hot beds, which were used to "have the tables furnished with the several products of the garden during the winter and spring months." At the Paca Garden a hot bed has been made in the most appropriate place, the quarters of the vegetable garden. The construction took place in December 1987 using the guidelines set out by Miller, who says that new dung should be used, containing part of the litter or straw used in the stable. This is allowed to stand for six days as he suggests.

Miller also says that mixing the dung with sea coal ashes will continue the heat of the dung, but this was not feasible for us. The soil in the vegetable garden is dug out to a depth of six inches and manure is laid in this up to the previous level. Miller says that the dung should be laid with a fork trodden so that it does not heat up too violently. About four inches of soil is built up over it and allowed to remain until it is warm.

Miller advises further: "During the first week or ten days after the bed is made you should cover the glass but slightly in the night, in the Daytime carefully raise them to let out the steam." In the 18th century specially made glasses or bell jars were available to act as mini-greenhouses to assist with the heating process. We are hoping to obtain some modern-day copies; in the meantime small panes of glass made into cloches have done the same job. Another practice of the 18th century was laying the matting over beds for additional protection. And more heat could be supplied as needed by the addition of extra manure or lawn mowings laid against the side of the glass.

We are just beginning to experiment with these hot bed practices at the Paca garden. The system does work: despite very cold conditions during January 1988, radish seed germinated and started to grow.

The practice of digging over the soil to incorporate dung is another traditional one that would have been used by old-world gardeners. Miller says, "the property of Dung is to fatten the earth and make it more fruitful." The technique is not used as extensively as previously because of the use of modern fertilizers and machinery and other labor-saving techniques, which can be harmful to the soil.

At the Paca garden, the old techniques are continuing. Because the site was once occupied by a hotel, parking lot, and bus station, the soils of the garden are compacted and thin. A program of single or double digging has been instituted. The former technique involves turning the soil over to one spade's depth and the latter involves breaking it up to two spades depth, thus mixing in the manure at a good depth, and using it and the turning action to break up compaction.

Plants in pots staged on benches were very much a part of the 18th-century garden scene. Auriculas were popular subjects for seasonal display. Miller describes their cultivation: "When flower begin to open [sic], you should remove their pots upon a stage (built with rows of shelves one above another, and cover it on the top to preserve them from Wet, this should be open to the morning sun but shelter'd from the heat of the sun in the middle of the Day) in this position they will appear to much great advantage, than when pots stand upon the ground, for their flowers being low their beauty is hid from us; whereas when they are advanced on shelves, we see them in full view."

Auriculas were probably first brought to England by Flemish weavers fleeing persecution. At first they were grown in the ground, but later in the 18th century it became customary to grow them in pots for display. Auricula flowers are coated with a waxy paste, and their beauty can easily be ruined if they are not protected from the rain.

Many fancy types were available; those with a pale "eye" (a circular band of color and an edge of a different color on the outside of the petals) were especially valued.

At the Paca Garden we have constructed a simple staged bench following a design illustrated in The Book of English Trades and Library of the Useful Arts (London, 1824). Auriculas will be displayed if they can be persuaded to survive the heat and humidity of an East Coast American summer. Eighteenth-century gardeners displayed other plants this way as well (Miller mentions carnations), and we will display other plants, such a potted small bulbs and dwarf pomegranate in this manner.

Another way of interpreting the past is to use the tools that were popular at the time of the garden you are showing. A painting that has been helpful to us is that by Nebot (c. 1738) of Hartwell House, Buckinghamshire, England. A gardener shapes the formal hedges with hand shears while another collects the trimmings. The helper uses a besom broom to sweep and a wicker basket to collect the material. Our gardeners today use baskets and brooms which are virtually identical to those depicted by Nebot. The besom is a very useful broom, and the baskets are of good capacity, and are light and easy to transport. These features lend an air of authenticity to the restored garden.

In the 18th century scythes were used to cut grass. Three skilled mowers could scythe an acre of lawn in a day although this pace is not possible in today's shorter workdays, with a lack of skilled labor. However, we do use this method at the Paca garden for areas which are difficult to mow, such as the falls to the terraces.

It is also still possible to use some of the hand tools that were available in Miller's and Paca's day. Miller describes several hoes:

--"the smallest which is called an onion Hoe is not more than three inches broad and is used for Hoeing of onions, not only to cut up the young reeds, but also to thin the onion..."

--"the next size is near 4" broad and is called a carrot hoe"

--"Beside, these sort of Hoes, which are contrived to draw toward the person who uses them there is another sort of different form, which is called a Dutch Hoe, that is made for the person who uses it to push from him, so that he does not tread over the ground which is hoed."

Both the onion hoe and the Dutch hoe are used in the Paca garden for a variety of clean-up operations; both are available for purchase today, although the Dutch hoe is not widely used in this country.

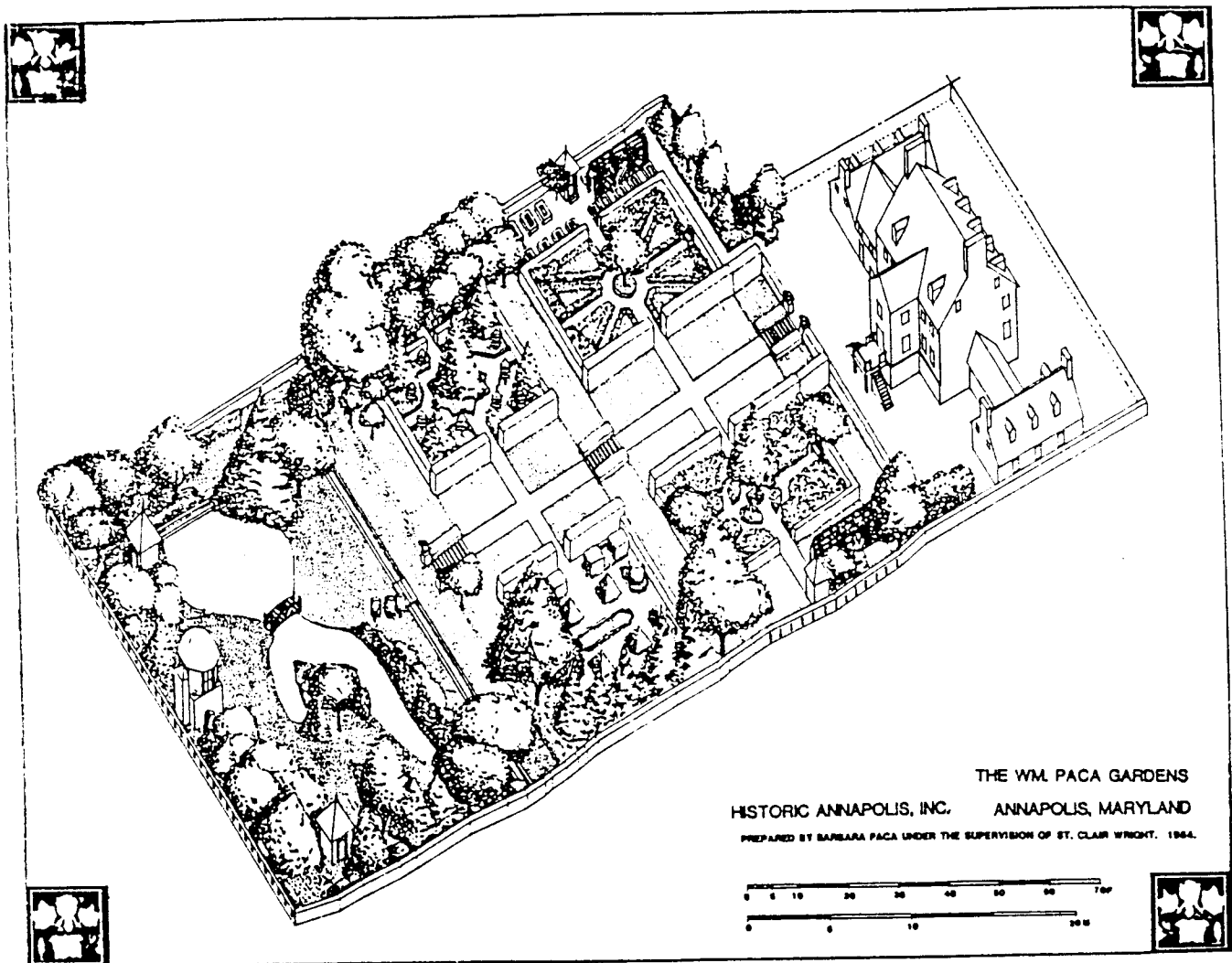
Another useful practice, that of covering plants for winter protection, is described by Miller as a technique for growing figs: "The best way of making the covering is to fasten the reeds with rope yarn, in such a manner, as that it may be rolled up like a mat, so that the whole may with great Facility be put up or taken down; and if these reeds are carefully rolled up after the season for using them is over, and put up in a dry shed, they will last several years."

Miller also mentions the use of straw or litter for additional protection in cold climates. In Annapolis salt hay from New Jersey is

used. The reed matting and hay have been used to cover the lead urns in the garden by fashioning them into cone-shaped "hats." These provide interest to the landscape during the winter months.

Today we base our gardening practices on 20th-century materials such as plastics and aluminum. In an historic restoration these are not desirable or appropriate. Jute twine is more attractive than green twist-em ties; stakes cut from the woodland are preferred over green bamboo; slate labels are more appropriate than plastic ones. Use of materials from the past lends a more nearly authentic air to an historic setting.

The old materials and techniques used at the William Paca Garden are meant to represent a time of total self-sufficiency, when very little was thrown away. Garden wastes were recycled and composted, and manure, available free from the stables, was used in great quantities. Because the message of such practices from the past is not always clear to garden visitors, it is important to use simple signs or well-informed tour guides to convey it clearly. It is a message worth the hearing.



MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS

Southern Garden History Society

1988 in Nashville: see page 1--call if you decide to attend;
1989 in Savannah: May 11-13, 1989. Plan ahead and be there too.

William Paca Garden Annual Festival of Roses and Mayflowers

To be held May 26, 1988. Mac Griswold, well known for her lively lectures on the relationship of people and gardens through history, will speak. She recently published a book entitled Pleasures of the Garden. For information: William Paca Garden, 1 Martin St., Annapolis, MD 21401; (301) 267-6656 or (301) 269-0601.

Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes

The next in this excellent biennial series is now scheduled for October 5-7, 1989. Members who have not yet attended should strive to be present next time. Because Old Salem, Inc., allows SGHS to use its Post Office Box, members can write to the same address for information about the landscape conference: Drawer F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27108.

Mordecai Garden Symposium--Act Soon!

"A Garden of One's Own," May 19-21, 1988, will feature Rosemary Verey, author of many recent books on notable gardens, as keynote speaker, and tours of private gardens in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For information call (919)834-4844.

Victorian Landscape in America--The Garden As Artifact

A one-day symposium to be conducted by the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, on Thursday June 16, 1988. Speakers include SGHS member Rudy Favretti, whose topic is "Landscapes Past and Present," and Patricia M. Tice, author of Gardening in America, 1830-1910, on "Industry in the Garden." For information: Symposium Registrar, Centennial Symposium, Morris Arboretum, 9414 Meadowbrook Ave., Philadelphia PA 19118; tel.(215)247-5777. The arboretum was founded in 1887 as the private estate of John and Lydia Morris.

Horticultural Perspectives: Past and Present

To be held May 20-22 at Green Spring Farm, Annandale, Virginia. Registration fee is \$125. Speakers include J. Dean Norton, our SGHS Virginia State Editor. For information or to register: Fairfax County Park Authority, 3701 Pender Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030; telephone (703)759-5241.

Continued from the Winter issue:

SIXTH BIENNIAL "RESTORING SOUTHERN GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES" CONFERENCE
CONTINUES TRADITION OF QUALITY

--report provided by Ken McFarland,
North Carolina State Editor

Landscape architect Chip Callaway of Greensboro, North Carolina, provided slide-illustrated details of his restoration of the grounds and gardens of Ayr Mount, the fine federal-era home of financier Richard Jenrette. Severe ground disturbance deprived Mr. Callaway of substantial on-site evidence of early landscape and garden features. He therefore used his extensive knowledge of other 19th-century Piedmont gardens in North Carolina, along with his awareness of the needs of the present-day owners, to create an appropriate design. Observers of the pictures could readily see why the house and its grounds have received wide acclaim.

Another captivating project hundreds of miles from Ayr Mount was shown by its owners, Jack and Pat Holden. They guided conferees through the creole gardens of Maison Chenal, near Baton Rouge in southern Louisiana. The pictures of formal French parterres planted in accomodation with the Louisiana landscape and climate, accompanied by Mrs. Holden's revelation of extensive and careful research, inspired everyone and caused us all to want to visit Louisiana.

While most presentation focused on one specific spot, such as Ayr Mount or Maison Chenal, garden historian Harriet Jansma's talk on 19th-century cemeteries spanned the South in its coverage. Indicating the broadening scope of landscape restoration interests, Harriet's presentation revealed the ways in which these cemeteries, such as Hollywood in Richmond and Oakland in Atlanta, show changing attitudes towards death. From the somber "graveyards" of the past, these burial spots became places of "sleep" or "rest" where the dead, and their living visitors, were surrounded by an abundance of statuary and plantings, including many evergreens symbolic of the continuation of life.

Everyone involved in garden and cemetery restoration benefited from the talk given by John P. Fitzpatrick, Director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello. John reviewed primary source materials that are particularly helpful to the garden restorer, and provided us with printed bibliographies (a courtesy always appreciated). We especially enjoyed his discussion of "fads" in plant material and gardens styles from the 18th through the 20th century.

The sharing session, "What's New in Old Landscapes" was again a pleasant and informative event, with discussions of garden projects in Georgia, Delaware, and points between. And the "how-to" sessions which ended the conference, led by Rudy Favretti, Dan Freas, Carol Hall, and Julianne Berckman (the Salem horticulturist who conducted a tour of the gardens) were a fine and practical finale. Like all the Salem meetings that have preceded it, this one was a great pleasure for all those who came. Again we learned much and resolved to return in 1989.

PLEASE PASS THE PEAS!

--report on a horticultural contest by Diane Dunaway,
Horticulturist & Grounds Manager, Farmington Country Club,
Charlottesville, Virginia

This spring the Grounds staff at Farmington Country Club challenged the Gardening staff at Monticello to a pea-growing contest. In a lively effort to recreate a bit of history, pea seeds were planted in late February, with first harvest anticipated for early May.

Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book, 1766-1824 documents the pea-growing rivalry between Mr. Jefferson and his friends. One close friend, George Divers, owned and lived at Farmington, then a plantation home. Mr. Jefferson (1743-1826) and Mr. Divers (17??-1830) were both avid gardeners, who shared seeds and advice.

The Garden Book, annotated by Edwin Morris Betts and published in 1944, gave us the documentation that prompted the challenge:

"There was a custom in Jefferson's neighborhood among the older gentlemen, that whoever first had peas in the spring should announce it by an invitation to the others to dine with him. This custom stimulated a pleasant rivalry among them, each one planting his pea seed in early spring with the hope that his peas would be the first to come to the table. Thomas Jefferson Randolph, writing to Mr. Randall, said:

"A wealthy neighbor [Mr. George Divers], without children, and fond of horticulture, generally triumphed. Mr. Jefferson, on one occasion had them first, and when his family reminded him that it was his right to invite the company, he replied, 'No, say nothing about it, it will be more agreeable to our friend to think that he never fails.' (Randall, Jefferson 3:674)

(George Divers to Jefferson)

Farmington 30th. April 1815

"We returned home yesterday from a visit of several days and I did not examine into the state of our peas till late in the evening, when I found them quite ready, they have suffered so much from the drought that they will last but a few days. We should be glad you will come up and partake of our first dish today & that Mr. Maddison would come with you....(Jefferson Papers, M. H. S.)

Jefferson wrote to Mrs. Elizabeth Trist on June 1 1815:

"Your friends mr & mrs Divers are in as good health as usual. I dined with them on peas the 29th of April. here our first peas were the 29th of May, which shews the inattention here to the cheapest, pleasantest, & most wholesome part of comfortable living. (Jefferson Papers, M. H. S.)"

[The quotations appear in Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book 1766-1824, pages 538, 544, 539.)

The present gardeners at Monticello and Farmington have agreed that the first to harvest a half cup of peas wins the 1988 competition and invites the others to dinner.

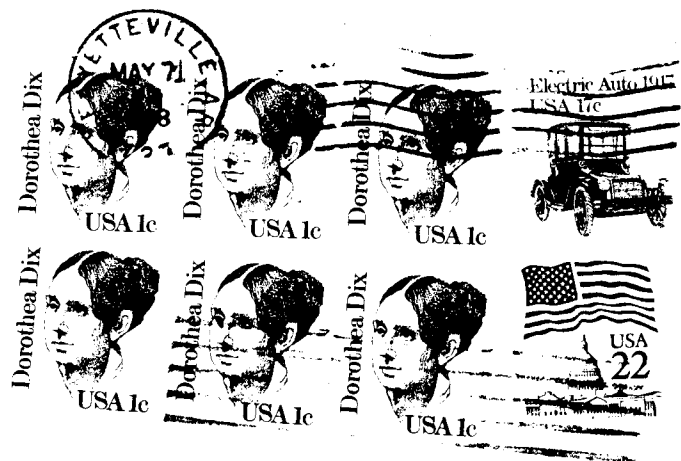
Farmington's Main Dining Room has celebrated the rivalry with a special prix fixe dinner this April, using authentic recipes from Martha J. Randolph (1772-1836), Jefferson's daughter, and Mary Randolph (c.1780-1828, sister-in-law of Martha Jefferson Randolph), and James Hemings (1765-1801), Jefferson's slave chef. The menu included fresh pea soup, salad of fresh "garden stuffs," roasted wild duck with onion sauce, fresh peas, polenta (fried cornmeal mush), lemon pudding, snow eggs, Mr. Jefferson's ice cream, and Virginia-grown Chermont cabernet sauvignon wine. (Thomas Jefferson's Cook Book, Marie Kimball, 1976)

George Divers owned Farmington from 1785 until his death in 1830. During that time, Mr. Jefferson, who had nearly completed construction of Monticello, designed a significant addition to Farmington for his friend. Mr. Divers began construction of this large octagonal room, now called the Jefferson Room. There is speculation that Jefferson also designed other sections of Farmington, such as the first gallery of service rooms. Farmington opened its doors as a country club in 1929 (see "Farmington: A History," by Bernard P. Chamberlain, in The Magazine of Albemarle County History, vol. 29, 1971).

THANKS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR SPRING ISSUE

The summer issue, which will contain extensive reports and information on our sixth annual meeting, as well as news of your activities and research throughout the region, will be produced in early August. Please send us your contributions by August 1, 1988. Mail them to Peggy C. Newcomb, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, Inc., Box 316, Charlottesville, VA 22901.

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