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ON COVER Plate 53, Jane Loudon’s *The Ladies’ Flower-Garden of Ornamental Perennials*
(V. 2, London: W Smith, 1844), Cherokee Garden Library – Historic Collection.

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Rooted: Gardens and Cultural Landscapes of Black America



BY DR. D L HENDERSON
Historian, Genealogist, Preservationist,
Author, and Cherokee Garden Library
Advisory Board Member and Acquisitions
Committee Co-Chair

LEFT A woman standing on a front porch
with vines, circa 1940s.

TOP Real photo postcard of young women
playing badminton at Fern Rock, Y.W.C.A
Camp on Lake Tiorati, NY, circa 1950s.

Your family may not have called it a porch, you may have referred to it as a veranda, or even a portico, but traditional porches, especially southern porches, were gathering places. A porch brought family, friends, and communities together. It was an outdoor room to entertain guests when it was too hot to sit indoors, a cool resting spot after a day of work, a meeting place for friends on a Saturday night, a relaxing spot for sitting and loosening belts after Sunday dinner, a place to reflect, or observe the neighbors and the world go by—and it was a space for keeping a garden. Even a single pot on a porch railing, as one member of the Cherokee Garden Library’s Acquisitions Committee observed, is a sign that “a gardener lives here.”



ABOVE Elizabeth Ann, sitting with her dog on porch steps, with a plant stand holding containers on porch, June 1953.

Porches as spaces for people and their plants are a recurring trope in the images of the Cherokee Garden Library’s newest digital collection: Gardens and Cultural Landscapes of Black America visual arts materials collection. Many of the images in the collection show outdoor scenes of gardens with ornamental bulbs, shrubs, flowers, and trees along with porches, fences and trellises, planters, and brick or stone-lined planting beds, rural homesteads, farms, and recreational landscapes—representing various parts of the United States. Moving from the porch and landscape to interior spaces, this collection captures an array of house plants and floral designs in formal and informal settings—from both candid and posed family photos in living rooms, to portraits produced in professional photography studios. The Gardens and Cultural Landscapes of Black America visual arts materials collection currently contains 900 black and white and color photographic prints, postcards, stereographs, and glass slides—dating from the 1870s to the 1990s. Of this number, 389 images have been digitized and are available online. The remaining images will be available soon. This still-expanding collection is significant, perhaps unique, in its emphasis on Black gardening traditions and landscapes.

In celebration of Juneteenth 2023, the Atlanta History Center presented *Rooted: Gardens and Cultural Landscapes of Black America*, a program designed to introduce the collection to a new audience. The event was hosted by Dr. La’Neice Littleton, Director of Community Collaborations, in partnership with the Cherokee Garden Library. The aim of the keynote lecture, which I presented, was to contextualize the history and content of the contemporary images in the collection and to describe how Black gardening traditions became rooted in American soil. A portion of the Juneteenth program included a presentation by Abra Lee, Director of Horticulture for the Historic Oakland Foundation. Abra is also a member of the Cherokee Garden Library Advisory Board. She eloquently expressed the need to recognize the historical foundation and accomplishments of Black gardeners, Black horticulturalists, and Black landscape designers. Abra is a speaker, writer, and founder of Conquer The Soil, a community which celebrates the history, folklore, and art of horticulture in the history and culture of Black America. Her presentation emphasized the contributions of Black women gardeners, their social activism and social life—and their garden clubs, which merged their special talents in the garden and in the community.

Colah B Tawkin, the entrepreneurial gardener and producer of the podcast *Black in the Garden*, made a brief presentation during the Juneteenth program to describe her collaboration with the Atlanta History Center. Colah is producing a four-part podcast series, “Botanical Black History,” featuring the Cherokee Garden Library collections and the Goizueta Gardens. The first episode, “Who’s Missing from Black Media and Gardening Media,” aired in March this year. The podcast examined what Colah calls “the seeming invisibility” of Black gardeners in traditional garden media. Colah spoke about her experiences in the gardens, touring the Library’s collection, and browsing the Gardens and Cultural Landscapes of Black America visual arts materials collection. Colah’s second podcast episode was released in August. “Foraging for Freedom: Harriet Tubman’s Botanical Legacy,” explored Tubman’s experiences as a naturalist, cook, herbalist, forager, and ornithology enthusiast. Colah posits that these skills were essential in Tubman’s historically significant role as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. The Cherokee Garden Library is integral to this collaboration in terms of research time, information sharing, and funding.

Public programming for significant community events like Juneteenth and collaborations with partners like *Black in the Garden* help promote the Library’s collections, and strengthen its ties to community, while aiding its mission to be more inclusive and diverse. Much like the traditional southern porch, the Gardens and Cultural Landscapes of Black America visual arts materials collection brings together curators, donors, collaborators, and community. These assembled images signify the goal of the Atlanta History Center and the Cherokee Garden Library to build a broader collection through the acquisition of materials reflecting the contributions of Black Americans, Indigenous peoples of the Americas, Latinx, and other historically underrepresented communities.



ABOVE Josephine Carmichael working in her vegetable garden in Edna, California. Mrs. Carmichael, a former schoolteacher, donated \$15,000 to pay for a hospital wing in Liberia. Her story and image were featured in *The Houston Post*, on April 19, 1966.



1 A couple at their wedding with the bride holding a bouquet of roses and maidenhair fern. The reverse side of the photograph: “To Marie & David from Thami and Moses, January 31, 1942.”

2 Myrle H. Cooper (1907-1984), Chief Horticulturist for Cleveland, Ohio, examining a large banana shrub in a city greenhouse, February 8, 1971.

3 Two children in a garden next to a newly planted tree and in front of a trellis, vines, wooden fence, shrubs, and houses behind, circa 1950s.

4 Group of women and a man on a porch with large container plants, possibly lilies, East Texas, circa 1950s.

5 A girl standing in front of a potting bench with potted plants, circa 1950s.

THE GARDEN AND LIBRARY: THE BOTANICAL LEGACY OF RACHEL LAMBERT MELLON

Sir Peter Crane,
President of the
Oak Spring Garden
Foundation



Join us on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, for an illustrated lecture by Sir Peter Crane, President of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation, in Upperville, Virginia, on “The Garden and Library: The Botanical Legacy of Rachel Lambert Mellon.”

Rachel Lambert Mellon, and her husband, Paul Mellon, were two of the foremost American philanthropists in the second half of the twentieth century. On her death in 2013, Mrs. Mellon hoped that the Oak Spring Garden Foundation could continue to steward her home, her garden, and her astonishing Oak Spring Library, while also developing a range of programs focused on plants, gardens, and landscapes for artists, scholars, and the broader public. The lecture will introduce the life and work of Rachel Lambert Mellon, and the diverse activities of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation (osgf.org) that she created.

RIGHT The Oak Spring garden connects to a formal glass house by way of a white gravel path lined with pleached Mary Potter crabapple trees, whose interlacing branches shade the walkway.

All images are courtesy of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation.



About the Oak Spring Garden Foundation

Rachel Lambert ‘Bunny’ Mellon is well known for the breadth of her creativity and her exquisite taste. In the horticultural sphere, this included designing the Rose Garden at the White House for President Kennedy. However, the sweep of Bunny Mellon’s artistry and her enduring legacy sees its fullest expression in the estate, garden, and home that she shared with her husband Paul in Upperville, Virginia.

The estate of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation includes Little Oak Spring, the former Mellon main residence, along with part of Rokeby Farm where Paul Mellon bred and trained his most successful thoroughbreds. Little Oak Spring is modest in scale, but the details are superb, and its treasures are a delight. Rokeby now includes accommodation for the artists, scientists, and scholars who visit the Oak Spring Garden Foundation. It also includes the Biocultural Conservation Farm that serves the local community through its education and outreach activities as well as through the produce supplied to local food banks.

Little Oak Spring comprises a complex of whitewashed buildings with trees espaliered against the whitewashed walls. As one commentator said, “From the outside, it seems like seemingly a modest country cottage that had been slowly enlarged over the years. It reveals its secrets quietly.” The associated garden, designed by Mrs. Mellon, slopes gently from the main house with the linked structures on either side giving the impression of a small village. Among the decorative features of the garden are a spectacular crab apple arbor and a formal greenhouse with its reflecting pools, a unique trompe l’oeil interior, and an exquisite Schlumberger finial. A recent exhaustive landscape report by the Oak Spring Garden Foundation in partnership with Oehme Van Sweden reveals how the garden came to be, and how it was transformed and embellished through more than six decades under Mrs. Mellon’s stewardship.

On an adjacent hillside, to the northwest of the main house and garden, is the Oak Spring Library, housed in a building of contemporary design. The large interior bookroom has picked oak bookcases fitted with doors to preserve the bindings from exposure to sunlight. Each object in the Library, including the art and the structure itself, was selected by Mrs. Mellon to enhance the unique attributes of the collection and its place in the magnificent landscape of the Northern Virginia Piedmont.

The Library houses a collection assembled by Mrs. Mellon over more than eight decades, which highlights the naturalists, horticulturalists, and nurserymen at the center of creating, cultivating, designing, and documenting the gardens and landscapes of North America and Europe. Mrs. Mellon’s curiosity over many decades brought together works relating to botanical and horticultural studies, garden design, and botanical art, as well as biographies of naturalists and explorers, accounts of their ships, their journeys, and their discoveries. The collection includes books, manuscripts, illustrations, prints, drawings, and ceramics related to plants, gardens, and landscapes. The collection is also the library of a working gardener. In addition to rare and beautiful books, many other volumes trace the history of gardening back to the fifteenth century.



About the Speaker,
Sir Peter Crane

Sir Peter Crane FRS is known internationally for his work on the diversity of plant life – its origin, fossil history, current status, conservation, and use. He was at the Field Museum in Chicago from 1982-1999, and Director of The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew from 1999–2006, before being appointed University Professor at The University of Chicago. In 2009 he was recruited as Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (now Yale School of the Environment). Since 2016 he has served as the inaugural President of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation in Upperville, Virginia.

Peter Crane was elected to the Royal Society—the UK Academy of Sciences—in 1998 and was knighted in the UK for services to horticulture and conservation in 2004. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Foreign Associate of the US National Academy of Sciences, a Foreign Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and a Member of the German Academy Leopoldina. He is the recipient of several honorary degrees including honorary doctorates of science from the University of Connecticut and Sewanee: The University of the South as well as Cambridge University in the UK. He received the International Prize for Biology in December 2014.

2024

SAVE THE DATE

CHEROKEE GARDEN LIBRARY TALK

“A GARDEN, HOVERING ALWAYS IN A STATE OF
BECOMING, SUMS ITS OWN PAST AND ITS FUTURE.”
—BUNNY MELLON

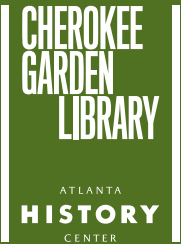
WEDNESDAY

APRIL 3, 2024

SIR PETER CRANE
PRESIDENT OF THE OAK SPRING
GARDEN FOUNDATION

THE GARDEN AND LIBRARY:
THE BOTANICAL LEGACY OF
RACHEL LAMBERT MELLON

DETAILS FORTHCOMING





FLETCHER PEARSON CROWN AND HER GARDEN SCHOOLS

BY TREADWELL RICE CROWN III

When Fletcher Pearson Crown (1888–1960) arrived in Decatur, Georgia, one hundred years ago as a wife, homemaker, and the mother of two boys, she immediately began to lay out her garden on the three adjoining city lots she had purchased and made time to immerse herself in civic activities and entrepreneurial pursuits.

Among the many organizations she joined were the PTA groups for both Decatur High School and Winona Park Elementary School; the League of Women Voters with her newly won right to vote; and the recently constituted Decatur Women's Club, Garden Division, which would provide access to the many garden clubs forming in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Born in 1888, Fletcher was raised in Montgomery, Alabama, in a family that prized education and industriousness, as well as valuing the natural beauty that gardens and flowers provide. She developed a belief that every individual could gain much from gardening, and she spent the rest of her life encouraging, demonstrating, educating, and expounding upon those benefits in any venue she could find or create. Realizing that many people were disinclined to garden because they did not know where to begin or what to do, her solution was to provide education in the form of garden schools, a concept she would explore and refine over many years and in many ways.

LEFT Fletcher Pearson Crown as garden designer onstage at one of her garden schools in this undated photograph from the 1930s. Fletcher dressed for the job at hand on different days, as determined by the lecture subject, ranging from Sunday finery to heavy-duty apron for soil mixing.

In 1928, Fletcher began her first garden school in the basement of her church, Holy Trinity Episcopal in Decatur, Georgia, working with her fellow Auxiliary Guild members. The format was to charge attendees an entry fee of one dollar for six consecutive days of one-hour talks and demonstrations. Fletcher engaged merchants to supply materials, which she used in her landscape demonstrations. Participating merchants advertised their products on the auditorium walls to garner business. This successful event led Fletcher on her path, sharing her garden knowledge professionally for the next thirty years.

A key element that would prove constant throughout Fletcher’s various garden schools was balancing the interests of all involved. In this instance, the church received all the admission receipts for hosting the school, while her compensation was the advertising revenue from the merchants, whom she adroitly plugged during her presentations. Attendees also won raffled items the merchants provided throughout the session, and any leftover materials were donated to the church or neighboring elementary school.

Fletcher quickly realized that speaking to established garden clubs was an effective way to reach an interested audience, and by the late 1920s, short notices of her upcoming presentations, as well as reviews of past talks, were appearing regularly in Atlanta newspapers. She put effort into her education as well, reading books and periodicals to expand her knowledge, and acquiring a certificate from the American Landscape School in Des Moines, Iowa, through a correspondence course.

Interest in her expertise was further fueled by the increasing beautification efforts called for by many entities in the state, especially municipalities and businesses. Word of her enjoyable educational talks spread beyond Decatur and Atlanta, which led to a major next step of conducting similar garden school sessions around the state. Fletcher accomplished this by working with her growing network of garden clubs, likely under the auspices of the newly created Garden Club of Georgia, founded in June 1928.

In 1929 she spoke to the Vineville Garden Club in Macon, then took her longer-format school to Rome and Cartersville. She shared admission receipts with the garden clubs, which allowed her talk to be a fundraiser for them, an impetus to fill the auditoriums, and an avenue to create publicity for local merchants. This garnered accolades from the local newspapers looking for good news. Her ability to entertain audiences with useful information, humorous anecdotes, and demonstrations of recommended practices allowed Fletcher to reach, inspire, and connect with the attendees through the unspoken yet clearly conveyed concept of “If I can do it, so can you!”

These schools, with the accompanying publicity, made quite an impression, and the Peachtree Garden Club awarded Fletcher Pearson Crown the Medal of Achievement in 1930 for the formation of her garden schools. The Club acclaimed her efforts as “the outstanding achievement of the year in gardening” during the Garden Club of Georgia’s second annual meeting in Thomasville. This honor increased demand for her lectures to garden clubs and also garnered the attention of *The Atlanta Constitution* and *The Atlanta Journal*, which continued to post longer notices of her presentations more frequently.

Fletcher began teaming up with larger Atlanta garden clubs that would rent a facility, promote and publicize the program, charge a minimal admission, and pay her a set amount. In addition to developing her home garden and her busy lecture schedule to garden clubs around the state, she took a summer course of study at the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women in Ambler, Pennsylvania, in 1932.

Then in March of 1933, she further developed her professional work by teaming up with Sears, Roebuck and Co. to generate more foot traffic in their garden department, conducting a five-day garden school open to “Every Garden Club Member, Every Garden Lover...,” which must have been a success, as she returned to conduct another five-day “Free Garden School” for Sears later that year in October. This free school was an important evolution, as by not charging admission they removed a major hurdle for any Great Depression era event; and it meant that Fletcher was seen as a valuable expert, being contracted by Sears. She also configured space at the Sears store, located on Ponce de Leon Avenue, for garden club meetings, offering herself as an expert presenter. In between these two Sears garden schools, Fletcher spent the summer of 1933 touring gardens of Northern Europe, absorbing their culture, history, and interesting plant material.



LEFT One side of a tri-fold sales flyer produced by *The Atlanta Constitution* to distribute to potential advertisers for the garden school, showing a 1936 packed and eager audience of white, middle to upper-class women, who were her primary market. The other side touts Fletcher Pearson Crown’s credentials and provides specific instructions for advertisers.

RIGHT The front page of *The Atlanta Constitution* from October 27, 1936, shows competing headlines of Fletcher Pearson Crown’s Garden School versus Spanish Fascists. The article is also prominently placed on the page, nestled next to Wallis Simpson’s divorce announcement and pending royal marriage.

All images are courtesy of Treadwell Rice Crown III.

By 1934 Fletcher was giving talks to garden clubs in Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and elsewhere, as well as receiving certification from her first Flower Show Judging Course taught by the New York Federation of Garden Clubs. She also had begun adding a fashion show element to the garden schools she was leading in the greater Atlanta area, with Sears supplying the clothing, and garden club members modeling the attire.

The pinnacle of Fletcher’s garden schools began in October of 1935, when after more than two weeks of publicity, *The Atlanta Constitution’s* front page announced the opening of the “Constitution Garden School,” the “First Newspaper-Sponsored Classes in the South To Be Directed by Mrs. Fletcher Pearson Crown.” Following her established format, the school was held from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. for four consecutive days, starting with a Sears fashion show and continuing with gardening information, including design, plant material, tips on fertilizer, and much more. Fletcher was likely compensated by *The Atlanta Constitution*. The newspaper’s sponsorship of the garden schools continued through 1940. Fletcher successfully brought the newspaper-sponsored garden school model to other southern states, holding free schools in Tampa, Florida; Birmingham, Alabama; and several other cities.



Treadwell Rice Crown III

Treadwell Rice Crown III (Rick) grew up in his Grandmother Fletcher’s home and gardens, ultimately putting down roots in Madison, Georgia. The garden he and his husband, Richard Simpson, have created over the last 38 years has both served as a base for their gardening business, Crown-Simpson, as well as an inspiration for thirteen years of Rick’s newspaper columns, garden talks, magazine articles, and an HGTV episode.



The American Beech: *Fagus grandifolia*

BY LOUISE WRINKLE

When people ask me “What is your favorite plant?” I usually reply, “Whatever I am working with at the moment.” But any plant nut like me is going to have favorites, like *Danae racemosa*, or Alexandrine laurel, *Chionanthus virginicus* or Grancy greybeard, or *Polygonatum odoratum* ‘Variegatum,’ or Variegated Solomon’s Seal. The next favorite one to come along will be added to the list.

LEFT Original magnificent American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) was planted soon after the Wrinkles moved in. It suffered from the blizzard of 1993, as well as from the neighbor’s tree falling onto it, so it had to be replaced.

Speaking of favorites, I have always been a sucker for *Fagus grandifolia*, or American Beech. Native to Eastern North America, it is a magnificent, deciduous tree growing to 100 feet if given the chance. In the fall, the leaf color changes from light green to different shades of gold. Although technically deciduous, young trees hold most of their cinnamon-colored leaves in winter and mature trees hold their leaves on the lower half of the tree until spring.

When left to its own devices, an American Beech displays limbs sweeping to the ground and grows in a rounded, pyramid shape. The surface roots and full shade preclude any success with ground cover, but that lack is hardly important considering its overall majestic picture. When those limbs touch the ground, they will sometimes root by layering and form a new tree. Colonies can thus be formed; the old mother tree dies, and a new grove appears. The fruits, made up of two or three nuts encased in a spiny coat, are a favorite food for many forms of wildlife. Some histories tell of heavy crops saving even some human groups from starvation in the Middle Ages when crops failed. The wood is dense and hard, light in color, and used for utensils, framing, and flooring. It is not impervious to natural elements, however, so its use for outside fencing will not provide long-term protection.

Mike Dirr says, “There is no finer specimen tree.” Donald Wyman shares that the beech is “a splendid native tree ...” Hugh Johnson declares, “The beech family is ... the royal family of the broadleaves.” The experts seem to agree that it is a wonderful tree offering all-season beauty and the capacity to last for centuries. Those ancient trees are usually seen in England, where respect for the horticultural specimen in open lands is greater than in the United States with our devotion to the development of our land with houses and shopping centers. Its main restriction is its need for a large space. Remember, fully grown, it can top 100 feet.

When I moved back to what had been my parents’ property, I planted a handsome, young beech tree about head high in a favored spot on my open front lawn. It sat on a throne of extensive mondo grass lawn and was backed by a loose hedge of evergreen hollies to block us from the busy street. It was developing beautifully for about ten years until my neighbor’s giant oak fell and demolished it.

Finding a well-shaped replacement turned out to be difficult because usually lower limbs have been removed for the convenience of the nurserymen who deal with them. They don’t want the added trouble of handling something that takes up much space and demanding care to protect those important lower limbs. Some think the trees grow these lower branches naturally to protect the light grey tender bark from sunscald. The surface roots prevent growth beneath but also result in ease of transplanting beech trees.

In many parts of the country deer are a menace. Luckily, here in Alabama, I have not had a problem. But I know of one clever example of a beech hedge in a territory where deer are always on the lookout for a good meal. My friends enclosed their 8-foot beech hedge with a permanent hog wire fence made to the owners’ specifications. The trees’ branches reaching through and outside the confines of the metal enclosure fence are trimmed (eaten) by deer to keep both owner and animals happy.

Another interesting note on beeches is something I learned from a trip to Newport, Rhode Island, years ago. Among the stately mansions called “Cottages” are many mature, stately beech trees. All I saw were plainly of European origin: not an American beech to be seen. There are many varieties of European Beech (Dirr counts 42), but as far as I know, there is only one *Fagus grandifolia*, or American Beech.

The Newport builders and designers were probably educated to the fact that anything English or European was superior, so they selected European over American beech trees. When the “Cottages” were built in the late nineteenth century, photographs show that the owners planted small trees, presumably to make their houses look larger, but perhaps they were smart enough to know that young trees accommodate planting better than mature ones. Now, 150 years later, the trees have grown into massive outlines to match those stately homes.

My search for a replacement for my destroyed tree took some time but I finally found a whole, rounded-to-the-ground specimen to replace my squashed beech tree. I found it in my contractor’s yard and bought it from him. It was about ten feet tall at planting and is developing beautifully in sun and part shade where its departed twin had sat. I rejoice to see it in all its glory during every season of the year each time I go in or out of my driveway.

When we have time and space, I will tell you of the beech tree which minded its own business at the bottom of my driveway since before we moved to this property thirty years ago. The nearby giant poplar had exerted dominance until it was struck by lightning and had to be removed. Now in the twenty years since the poplar’s removal, the previously neglected beech has developed into a major factor in my landscape.

BELOW Mature American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) in Louise Wrinkle’s garden.



LOUISE WRINKLE

Louise Wrinkle was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1931 in the midst of The Great Depression. Like many young girls, she was born with a strong interest in horses but did not acquire a horse until she was over 35 years old. Equestrian play and competitions were an important part of her and her daughters’ activities during their growing-up years.

Later a sharp turnaround changed her outlook from horses to horticulture. By force of pure nepotism, she was invited to join her mother’s garden club, The Little Garden Club of Birmingham, the local affiliate of The Garden Club of America.

Soon enough, she found herself engaged with regional and later national responsibilities to the GCA. Through the years her interest was reflected by her Chairmanship of the Horticulture Committee, followed by service on the Executive Committee. In 2001 she received the GCA National Achievement Medal. In 2019 she received the Placemaker Award from the Foundation for Landscape Studies.

In 2017, at the age of eighty-seven, she published a book, *Listen to the Land*, reflecting her thirty years of experience in developing her 2 1/2 acre inherited woodland property into a notable natural garden. Here she shares her successes and failures and emphasizes her admonition of letting the land speak for itself rather than having some style of landscape design imposed upon it.

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ABOVE American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) with graceful lower branches in Louise Wrinkle’s garden.

All images are courtesy of Louise Wrinkle, *Listen to the Land: Creating a Southern Woodland Garden*. Birmingham, AL: PMT Publishing, 2017.

THE CLYDE LANIER AND CLARA BELLE KING GARDEN: ONE OF THE LOST HISTORIC GARDENS OF PONCE DE LEON AVENUE IN DRUID HILLS



ABOVE Jack King, the son of Clara Belle King and Clyde Lanier King, and his pony who participated in the carnival “soon to be staged by the Agnes Scott College Alumni club in the park across the street from Jack’s home at 1010 Ponce de Leon avenue,” *The Atlanta Journal*, May 6, 1923.

BY JENNIFER J. RICHARDSON

Clyde Lanier King (1874-1941) was born in Lawrenceville, Georgia, the son of a pastor who later served at Rock Spring Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. He was named in honor of his uncle, Sidney Lanier. At the age of fifteen, Clyde went to work for his brother, George King, who owned King Hardware Company. In 1894, King married Clara Belle Rushton (1877-1939). In 1902, King and two partners purchased the Atlanta Agricultural Works, a manufacturer of repair parts for plows (the company was later re-named Atlanta Plow Company, and then King Plow Company). Commissioned in 1906 and completed in 1910, the Kings’ house was a thirteen-room red brick Georgian with six Corinthian columns at 1010 Ponce de Leon Avenue at the corner of Ponce de Leon Avenue and Oakdale Road. The Kings were the second family to move into the Druid Hills neighborhood. The home sat amongst sweeping green lawns and expansive gardens.

The Kings entertained lavishly in their grand house and gardens. The eleven expansive garden areas featured three pools connected by streams, rock gardens, cutting gardens, hedges, and moss-covered rock walls. Designed by the Wachendorff Brothers nurserymen, the gardens were the scene of open houses for the public, private parties, dances, picnics, and fundraisers. All four of the King children had either weddings, receptions, debuts, or engagement parties in the house and gardens. It was not unusual for the Kings to hold seated dinners for up to forty-five guests.

The gardens and lawns were frequently opened to the public to hold events to sponsor organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, various sororities, garden clubs, and the Agnes Scott College alums. Heralded as the “first Society Circus,” an event was held on May 31, 1913, on the King’s property. *The Atlanta Journal* announced in its May 1913 issue that the event would include “a baby show [with prizes], a parade, a tableau from Mother Goose, dances and music. The pageant will be held on the lawn of Dr. [sic] Clyde King with pony rides and a fierce untamed zebra.” On March 3, 1918, *The Atlanta Constitution* noted a “musical benefit of war relief work” at the King home, while on July 7, 1919, The Atlanta Constitution featured this description: “Cinderella, a little play, will be presented on the lawn of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde King, 1010 Ponce de Leon avenue, Friday night, for the benefit of the Crippled Children’s Home.”

In May of 1923, the Kings helped organize a “Carnival Deluxe” as a fundraiser for alums of Agnes Scott College. According to *The Atlanta Journal*, the event was to be held “in the park across from the Clyde King home and will feature a midway, dozens of side shows, May Day Dancers, pony rides and popcorn, peanuts and red lemonade.” The park mentioned in the article was most likely Olmsted’s Oak Grove Park.

Charles J. Wachendorff (1872-1932) and Edward A. Wachendorff (1878-1943) operated the Wachendorff Brothers firm, founded by their father, Edward Alexander Wachendorff (1838-1896) in 1878. The brothers were trained as florists and nurserymen and had headquarters downtown on Simpson Street. They owned a nursery and fifteen greenhouses in Vine City, on which the current Rodney Cook Sr. Park is located. The Wachendorff Brothers published a nursery catalog with hundreds of entries and sold garden tools and equipment as well. Catalogs from 1909, 1928, 1931, 1933, and 1935-36—part of the Cherokee Garden Library’s Seed and Nursery Catalog collection (MSS 988)—are available for researchers to explore. In 1928, the firm celebrated 50 years in business.

In newspaper ads for the company, the Wachendorff Brothers began as “florists” and later added “plantsmen.” They expanded into landscape design with Anton J. Bulk, in charge of the nursery and landscaping, and landscape artist Gladys Schofield. The firm specialized in creating ponds, waterfalls, bridges, and rock gardens. The landscaping division of Wachendorff Brothers designed the Clyde King garden.

In 1932—during the Great Depression—Clyde King and King Plow were challenged by the Internal Revenue Service. King pled guilty in federal district court for evading his income tax and was sentenced to one year and one day at the Federal Prison in Atlanta. Though later granted early parole, this was certainly a grim time for the prominent King family.

Clara Belle King loved her garden and home so much that she asked to be interred there after her death. Since a backyard burial was not allowed by the city, Clyde King erected a replica of the front façade of their home in Oakland Cemetery where Clara Belle King is buried. The monument is so realistic that it even has the address of 1010 over the door.

After the death of Clyde King, the Ponce de Leon house and garden were sold to the Alpha Delta Pi Sorority in 1954 as a national headquarters. Alpha Delta Pi kept the garden manicured and used it for events. Part of the historic King garden was renamed the Hubbard Memorial Garden, after Minnie Allen Hubbard, a former Alpha Delta Pi president. In the early 1990s, Alpha Delta Pi needed more office space. They added a substantial wing to the rear of the home for this purpose. Much of the historic King/Hubbard Garden was either demolished or compromised by this building, though an original rock wall on the east still lines Oakdale Road.

Along Ponce de Leon Avenue in the Druid Hills neighborhood of Atlanta, grand homes such as the King’s had high-style gardens incorporated as part of the entire landscape plan for the home site. Much like today, a garden was a place to sit and relax, cool off on sweltering summer days, host friends and family, enjoy beauty, and study flora and fauna. The King Garden was one such place. It saw its share of wedding parties, picnics, garden club meetings, dances, and other entertainment. But for the most part, it is a lost garden of Druid Hills. However, if one stands beside the rock wall along Oakdale Road and looks carefully, the garden remnants can be seen, if not in reality, then in the mind.



ABOVE Wachendorff Brothers, Florists and Nurserymen, Atlanta, Georgia, Catalogue 1931, MSS 988, Seed and Nursery Catalog collection, Cherokee Garden Library, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center.



ABOVE Photo of Clara Belle King in her garden at 1010 Ponce de Leon Avenue, circa 1920s, MSS 1021, Druid Hills Garden Club records, Scrapbook, 1929-1953, Cherokee Garden Library, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center.



The Salamanders of Goizueta Gardens: Denizens of a Subterranean World

BY TRAVIS FISHER

Senior Horticulturist and Plant Records Manager

AND MADISON LOVE

Horticulturist for Formal Gardens

Although in the heart of a busy urban neighborhood, Goizueta Gardens is still host to many species of native wildlife. Species of all kinds are drawn to pockets of green in heavily developed environments, and the 33-acre Atlanta History Center grounds are no exception.

LEFT A marbled salamander found in the iconic cascade fountain at Swan House. Please note handling is not recommended; they have secretion glands on their tails that can irritate if it were to get in the handler's eyes or other mucous membrane.



ABOVE This two-lined salamander was found in Buckhead Branch Creek, which bisects Goizueta Gardens.

Some of the most surprising and easily overlooked wildlife residents in Goizueta Gardens are salamanders. Salamanders are amphibians, like frogs and toads, although they look more like small lizards. Many of the species live underground or under rotting logs and leaf litter, and often only emerge at night. Like most amphibians, salamanders breathe through their skin, so they must keep their skin moist. Hiding in cool, damp places makes them easy to miss and keeps them safe.

The southeastern United States, and the southern Appalachian Mountains in particular, is the center for salamander diversity globally. More salamander species are found in the southern Appalachian Mountains than anywhere else in the world. The wet, cool mountains provide an abundance of suitable habitat, and the tall peaks and deep valleys isolate salamander populations, driving the formation of new species.

Goizueta Gardens is home to six species of salamanders: southern two-lined (*Eurycea cirrigera*), southern red-backed (*Plethodon serratus*), slimy (*Plethodon glutinosus*), spotted dusky (*Desmognanthus conanti*), spotted (*Ambystoma maculatum*), and marbled (*Ambystoma opacum*). The Atlanta History Center property is an especially good urban habitat for salamanders. In particular, the preservation of Swan Woods in a natural state, with rotting logs and leaf litter, provides habitat and supports the insects and invertebrates that salamanders eat. Salamanders are voracious insect predators, preying on the larvae and adult forms of many insects such as mosquitos.

The small creek—Buckhead Branch—that runs through Goizueta Gardens is also particularly important for a healthy salamander population. The creek provides a habitat for the spotted dusky salamanders at the Atlanta History Center, which prefers wet, rocky areas near fast-moving water, and provides a place for the southern two-lined salamanders to breed and lay their eggs.

The ecologically sensitive landscape management practices employed by Goizueta Gardens staff also help to foster a robust salamander population. The use of any herbicide and pesticide, both very toxic to salamanders, is minimized as much as possible through the use of integrated pest management practices, hand-pulling weeds, and sustainable soil health endeavors such as creating and utilizing compost and compost tea. When necessary for the healthz of permanent collections, landscape management decisions about chemical inputs are always made with a researched understanding of any effects on wildlife, and with the gentlest, typically organic, application.

As mentioned above, six species of salamanders can be found in Goizueta Gardens, four naturally occurring on the property and two additional species introduced through a partnership with the Amphibian Foundation, an Atlanta-based non-profit, based in the Blue Heron Nature Preserve on Roswell Road, focused on implementing lasting solutions to fight the global amphibian extinction crisis.

In 2017, in preparation for our reintroduction efforts with the Amphibian Foundation, Goizueta Gardens staff dug and prepared a small, lined pond in a protected location in Swan Woods as a place for spotted salamanders to breed. Like many other salamander species, spotted salamanders live on land most of the year, but return to seasonally wet, or vernal, pools in forests to breed and lay their eggs. The eggs mature and hatch in these pools, and young salamanders live in them until they are ready to move out into the surrounding forest. After the pool was constructed, the Amphibian Foundation brought spotted salamander egg masses from other locations around the city and placed them in the pond. For several years it was unclear if the introduction was successful due to the secretive life of this species, but in the spring of 2021, a mature spotted salamander was discovered by Goizueta Gardens staff in Swan Woods. Several weeks later, egg masses were discovered in the breeding pond, and larval salamanders were discovered shortly thereafter.

Encouraged by this success and seeing egg masses increase year after year, it was decided to introduce another native species, the marbled salamander, into this location. Marbled salamanders exhibit stable populations throughout their range (eastern United States), but their populations in Metro

Atlanta have all but disappeared due to habitat loss. To assist this species in re-inhabiting the Atlanta area, the Amphibian Foundation has performed exhaustive surveys to identify where marbled salamander populations continue to exist, identifying two existing populations within the Atlanta area. To conserve these populations, the Amphibian Foundation staff collects a small selection of eggs from these ephemeral wetlands and hatch them out in their husbandry labs to ensure the success of the next generation. They are then relocated into new homes, such as right here at the Atlanta History Center.

In March of 2022, the Amphibian Foundation joined Goizueta Gardens staff to release a total of fifty-eight marbled salamanders into the Swan Woods breeding pool. These marbled salamanders were between 4-5 months old, in their larval form which is the stage between embryo and adult. Marbled salamanders are a fossorial species, meaning they spend most of their life underground, so it came as a wonderful surprise when

members of the Gardens team found a marbled salamander while completing routine fountain maintenance at the Swan House (the fountains run on well water). This nearly mature salamander was the first one ever noted on site, and it is highly likely it belonged to the population of larvae released into the pool the previous March. This salamander trekked around 360 feet to the fountain which is a long trip for an animal who is only 3.5” in length.

Goizueta Gardens serves as a haven in the city for flora and fauna to flourish. Partners such as the Amphibian Foundation aid in increasing the population of native, vulnerable species. This effort was also made possible by our long-term supporters, the Peachtree Garden Club, who established Swan Woods in 1967, have continually volunteered to maintain the woodlands, and have provided funding for the building and maintenance of the amphibian habitat among many other projects.

When next visiting Atlanta History Center, make sure to take some time to walk around Goizueta Gardens and reflect on the fact that all around there could be salamanders going about their lives, denizens of a subterranean world, one of the myriad expressions of life that can be observed in this one small island of preserved green in the great, teeming urban sprawl of the Anthropocene.



ABOVE Lexly Evans, Horticulturist for the Entrance Gardens, holding a mature marbled salamander that was lounging in the Swan House Gardens near the cascade fountain. All images are courtesy of the Goizueta Gardens team.

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THIS PAGE *Callicarpa americana* in the Smith Farm Gardens, Goizueta Gardens at the Atlanta History Center. Photograph by Alexander Lamar.

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