

Six Dollars



Summer - Fall

1990

GARDENS & PORCHES

THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE

QUARTERLY

of Local Architecture and Preservation

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COVER PHOTO:

Huntsville's pride: formal garden of Henry Chase's 517 Adams Street residence, circa the first half of the twentieth century. What better advertisement for his family's business, Chase Nurseries.

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THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE
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from the Editor

This issue of *the Quarterly* is dedicated to gardeners and porch-sitters everywhere. Huntsville, Alabama is a city of generous lawns, bountiful gardens, and wonderfully livable porches. *The Quarterly* celebrates efforts of our citizens, singularly and in groups, to turn nature's raw materials to such good and and happy use.

Contributors to this issue include Bill Nance, Lakin Boyd, and Harvilee Harbarger; our newest garden group: the Botanical Garden Society; and, our major public gardens: Constitution Hall Park, Burritt Museum, and the "Garden of Weeden." Thanks to the Burritt Museum for providing a copy of their garden plans and to Harvilee Harbarger for the rest. Joberta Wasson, Eleanor Hutchens, and Frances Robb have again contributed their research and insights to offer interesting perspectives on gardens, porches, and the times in which they were created.

Cover to cover, this issue aims to please. Membership keeps apace, under Ginger Fail's dynamic chairmanship. This may even be a lucky issue, as through its pages a reader may order raffle tickets for a famous name quilt that is a rare collector's item. Before winter sets in, drop into Harrison Brothers, meet Paula Ingram and the keen volunteer shopkeepers, and see for yourself all of the intriguing lawn, garden, and porch items Paula has written about. New items arrive daily.

Oh yes, this editor would appreciate your "letters to the editor." Happy gardening from an inveterate porch sitter.

Elise Stephens

HUNTSVILLE'S GARDEN DISTRICT: A SAMPLING

Bill Nance and Harvilee Harbarger

Introduction

A garden is a fragile work of art and can evoke the purest of human pleasures. Its beauty is ethereal and can only be maintained by the constant sweat and tears that have watered every garden since Eden. To make a garden in our climate requires patience, humility, stoicism, and irrepressible optimism in the face of devastating odds. And yet, some gardens triumph over the adversities of nature and offer us that euphoric moment when all of our senses are touched by the beauty that only a garden can evoke. The gardens in this issue do just that. Every garden is different, the variety impressive, ranging from the small and intimate to the very large and grand. There are mature gardens lovingly tended for years and very new, even unfinished ones, whose promise is yet to be fulfilled. But all have in common that ability to create a very special sense of place and beauty.

Because of the limitations of black and white illustrations, we have chosen to emphasize design and structure in these gardens. They demonstrate the importance of layout and planning. In the best gardens nothing is haphazard or arbitrary, and however artfully the design is concealed, nothing is really left solely to nature. These gardens employ artifice to create a more ideal setting than Nature will ever devise.

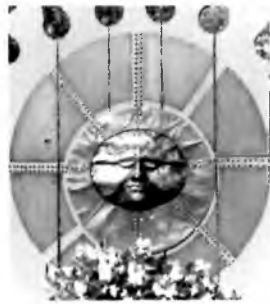
I am most grateful to Lakin Boyd for his beautiful photographs and special acknowledgement to Harvilee Harbarger whose name is synonymous with garden design in this area. But, most of all, to those special people who have allowed us the opportunity to view and admire their gardens and the beauty they have created.

Bill Nance

Bill Nance - Clinton

This garden, influenced by the English Cottage style, has a very definite Southern quality. It is a very small garden divided into rooms, but visually connected from one related space to another.

A gate embellished with a copper sun opens into a small entrance area with an urn as its focus.



The path leads through a latticed arbor to the shade garden. This arbor, planted with Moon vine, has a white marble circle as its floor. Lit from above, it gives the impression of the moon at your feet by night. This area, though formal in its plan, allows masses of multi-hued pastel flowers to spill over and soften everything in the true cottage style.



Broad brick steps connect the shade garden with the white garden. Here herbs are allowed to spill over and be stepped upon to release their fragrance. Some, such as Penny-royal, are even planted in the pea gravel walks.



The white garden contains two curving perennial borders backed by Box hedges. These surround a small circular lawn. White Roses, Nicotiana, and Asters mix with touches of silver and pink. This is primarily a garden to be viewed at night or late afternoon. The borders draw the eye to a gazebo which frames a statue of Pan (the God of the Garden). Dutch honeysuckle is being trained to soften the roof and provide fragrance. Tim Schremser beautifully built the gazebo and all other structures in the garden.



A pergola has been built across the back of the house and is covered by a white Wistaria, silver-lace vine, and more Moon-vine. With the addition of ceiling fans, furniture, and potted plants, this is an ideal place to sit and enjoy the garden. Although the garden is very young, plants have already begun to soften the design in the cottage style. In the years ahead water features will be added and planting refined. A garden takes many years to develop and cannot be rushed.



It is a living thing, ever-changing and never finished, with a life and will of its own. But, that is the challenge and the joy of it.

Brenda and Kendall Black
The Clay House, Eustis

The approach to this small but elegant garden is along a brick wall softened by climbers and crape myrtle. Here, close to the kitchen, herbs grow in profusion as the Blacks are well-known for their culinary skills and gourmet dinners. A Chippendale bench adds a note of



delicacy to this area. Behind it, an espaliered *Pyracantha* will eventually repeat the design of the bench on a larger scale. The gate to the garden proper sets the theme for this intimate and architectural space. Its design is repeated throughout the garden. The circle of ship-lapped lattice allows a glimpse of the entry garden beyond. The gate was beautifully constructed by Byron Papa.

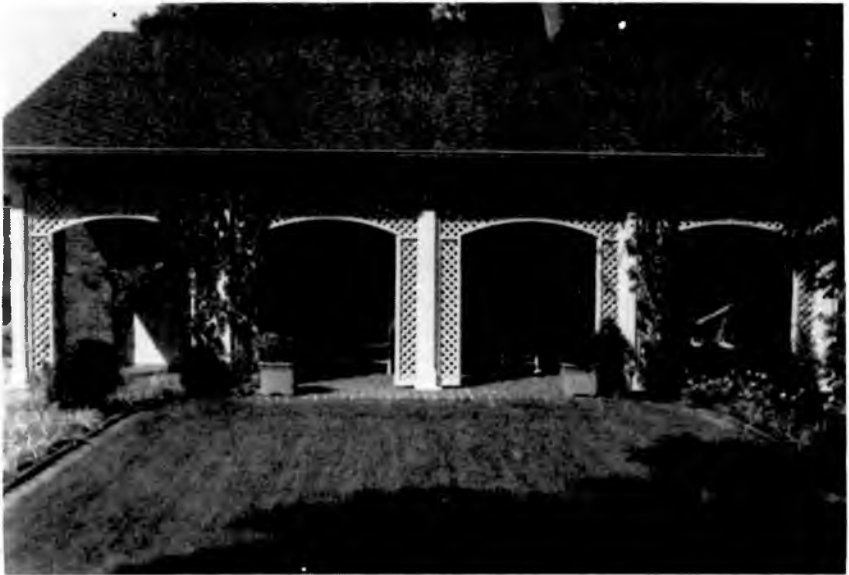
An allee of Crape Myrtle acts as a dramatic foyer and also softens the brick wall of the garage. Standing in this tunnel of green, the view leads to a raised circle of brick interplanted with herbs and a Sweet Bay Magnolia. This will serve as a living umbrella for the main terrace. From the house, the Crape Myrtle allee is interrupted by an urn on a pedestal which acts as a focal point and anchors the view.



The dining area on the west side of the garden contains a dolphin fountain recessed in an alcove within the brick wall. At the east end of the long terrace, surrounded by a curving Box hedge, another fountain repeats the thematic expression of the garden. This garden is a series of spaces, small, detailed and carefully interrelated.



A veranda built on the back of the garage allows a shady spot for viewing the perennial borders. Facing the latticed veranda is a small rectangular lawn graced by a Lutyens wave bench.



The garden becomes magical by night. The owner designed and installed lighting system adds an intimate dimension to the evening. Combined with the sound system, this garden becomes a perfect setting for entertaining for which the Blacks are well known.

What better compliment to this beautifully restored and elegant home than a garden that reflects both the owner's sensitivity and esthetics: a garden of architectural spaces full of charm that draws the visitor into its spell.

Ann Beck
The Steele House, Randolph

Ann is an avid and experienced gardener. Although her garden is only a few years old, it already exhibits those qualities of care and sensitivity that have been lavished upon it. The side garden facing Calhoun Street was designed to be viewed from above. It is a shade garden with Azaleas, Dogwoods, and in the summer Hostas and Impatiens. Because of the small space, color is limited and kept to large masses that repeat the circular theme of the design. An urn on a pedestal surrounded by a circular brick walk provides architectural interest and contrasts with the delicate antique iron fence surrounding the front and side gardens. This lovely space hints at what is to come in the main garden which reflects a period feeling in keeping with the house.



The side garden looking toward Randolph with its delicate iron fence.

At the garden's center is a sunken oval lawn slightly bermed and surrounded by a brick walk. This strong design element helps to tie all of the areas of the garden together and visually expands the space. A charming little gazebo overlooks this lawn and is placed to act as a focal point from several areas in the garden.



To view the garden, a Louisiana-style columned porch has been incorporated on the back of the garage and tied to the



house by a covered breezeway. Here one may sip morning coffee and enjoy the delights and scents of the perennial borders. Directly opposite this view is a Lutyens wave bench which helps to draw and anchor the eye and from which to view the garden in the late afternoon. Although there are large areas of terrace for entertaining, they have been divided and



softened by areas of planting. The crisp lines of clipped Boxwood provide structure and are softened by masses of flowers that spill over walks and tumble out of containers. Informality of planting and the predominate use of pastel hues give a sense of nostalgia and romance to this garden. This is a garden which alludes to the historical past but reflects all of the feminine charms and personality of the owner. This is "the Secret Garden" of our childhood dreams.



*Jo Ann and Scott Osborne
Randolph*

Like the porch, a very tradition of Southern welcome to guests and summer living; this tiny garden, small and precious like a rare jewel, casts its spell. The smaller the space, the better the design must be; there is no room for mistakes. Few small gardens succeed as this one does, and it was designed by the owners. A good garden should have the ability to transport the viewer far from the worries of the world. This garden does that and more. It evokes the feeling of a shady grotto on the grounds of some ancient villa.



tiful antique cage add their sound to the garden. This is just one of the charms of this garden. The sounds of water and birds enhance the feeling of an earthly paradise.

Entering through an arch of Carolina Jessamine the eye focuses on a circular pool. This pool, with its splashing jet of water flashing silver in the dappled shade, provides a cooling music for the entire garden. The visitor is drawn to a charming summer house in the Victorian gingerbread style. Inside this structure song birds in a beau-





This is mainly a green garden, very difficult to do but here done very well. Color is limited. Great care has been given to the texture and forms of the evergreens used. Tight clipped forms are contrasted with more informal ones. Much use is made of standard topiary forms in terra-cotta pots. These elegant potted forms are casually placed about the garden and create a very sophisticated mood to the setting.

The repetition of the circular theme holds the various elements together. Just off the pool is a dining area that also repeats the circular motif. There is great attention to detail in the entire garden. The eye is constantly discovering one delight after another. This is as it should be. A garden should reveal itself slowly and reward the discerning eye.



This is a mature garden. One that has been tended with care and sophistication. A garden that has been refined to the very essence of an earthly paradise.

*Ray Morris
Randolph*

Upon entering this garden the visitor is impressed by the strong fluid lines of its design. It was designed by the owner and Brinkley. This is a garden on two levels. The lower contains a brick terrace flanked by a brick wall which is covered by an espaliered evergreen *Euonymus*. From the terrace a walk curves boldly to steps ascending the upper level. This level contains double borders in fluid curves. These curves contrast with the strong horizontal sweep of the retaining wall. Borders are filled with an informal mix of Roses, Day lilies and bedding plants. This informal planting of masses of color visually softens the strong lines of the design.





Antique iron garden furniture acts as a focal point at the west end of this upper border. Light and delicate it beckons the visitor to sit in dappled shade. This is a tailored and immaculately tended garden.

Evergreen shrubs in large drifts give structure and definition to the garden. This is a garden that holds up even in the bareness of winter. Good lines are important in any design. Walls, paths, steps, and evergreens are the basics of this garden. Here flowering plants and garden ornaments work within this framework.

This is a garden for all seasons and can be enjoyed year around. What could be more enjoyable than a garden on a mild day in late autumn when there are no weeds to pull or grass to mow.



Bill Nance, Lakin Boyd, and Harvilee Harbarger are three very talented artists who put together this sampling of Huntsville Gardens. Bill and Lakin are Associate Professors in the Art Department of A&M University. While their profession is art, Bill's passion is gardening and Lakin's is photography. Harvilee grew up in Huntsville amidst the gardens she, joined now by her daughter, Julie H. Stephens, have added their professional touch to. A rare mother-daughter team, both are registered landscape architects, Harvilee's registration number is 34, Julie's is 304.

The above samplings were provided by Bill Nance, the following samplings were provided by Harvilee Harbarger.



Caudle

The grounds of the Jimmy D. Caudle home at 420 Echols Avenue show careful planning and a classical sense of balance. A circular drive leads to the front entrance of the English Tudor style house, crowning a rise that is framed by splendid old, gracefully branched Hackberry trees. This handsome home was constructed in 1928 using the finest and strongest of structural materials and was purchased in 1986 by Jim and Helen Caudle. The last four years have been spent in redecorating, remodeling, and landscaping the property.

There was already a variety of native trees on the site and the property has been developed to the highest degree of perfection. Using seasonal color both in foliage and bloom, each season brings to this garden fresh loveliness. Mrs. Caudle is a lover of flowers and color so after one views the formality of the very fine old Boxwoods in the front planting, one moves into the rear garden which reflects a lighter mood. Garden flowers are in profusion and the landscape opens up onto flower filled borders and bands of bulbs. Many of the flowers and bulbs were brought by Mrs. Caudle from her home in Atlanta.

Of historical interest to the home is the slate on the roof of the newly constructed breezeway and pool house that originally was used on the old depot in Nashville.

The terrace looks down on a beautifully detailed, trickling fountain through the sweeping lateral branches of an old Dogwood tree down wide brick steps into the large family swimming pool area to the newly constructed, handsome stucco and brick wall.





A stone urn and a bench (original to the site) in a shaded nook invite one to sit and enjoy the perfectly kept grounds of this charming town estate. The *Liriope* beds are in full bloom in August and remain a nice lush green through the other seasons. Climbing *Euonymus* traces up the massive walls surrounding the property. Borders vibrant in spring with *Forsythia* and *Spiraea* bloom then leaf out to give a stately background to *Azaleas* and then on into summer with *Crepe Myrtle* and *Phlox*. The full colors of the natural hardwoods and native trees complete the seasonal spectacle.

A stately iron and brick fence give definition, stability and complete enclosure to the front boundaries.

One problem of the Southern gardener which requires real ingenuity and work is the lawn. It is the basis of all good landscape work - especially adjacent to the house. Fescue sod along with an irrigation system and expert maintenance gives the Caudle home a stable base that is green both summer and winter.

Mere words and descriptions cannot do justice to this garden where beauty and individuality of form are softened by an ever changing, many-hued mantle of trees, shrubs, and flowers.



Laughlin

One gets a sense of going back in time when walking down Cruse Alley to the garden of Dr. and Mrs. Edward Laughlin. You feel as if you are truly visiting the old colonial capitol of Williamsburg, Virginia. This house is a composite of several homes in Williamsburg. The plans were developed by Mrs. Laughlin to meet the needs of their family. While these plans were being drawn, the Laughlins engaged the services of a landscape architect to bring the landscape together.

The circular gravel drive bounded by a concrete curb and the four very large and specimen American Boxwoods in the front planting are an example of simplicity at its best. This goes a long way in proving the old adage, "Sometimes less is best."

However, as we proceed to the rear garden the landscape begins to change into a more active scene and the personality of the owners is at once evident. The back garden is not large by any means, but gives a feeling of enclosure and interest by use of a tall background screen of cherry laurel. Of special delight in spring is the explosion of bloom given by the magnificent Yoshino Cherry.

As you descend the steps from the breezeway you immediately enter a very formal Herb garden. These beds are raised to allow for interest as well as good drainage. Each herb in cultivation there has a use by the owners. Nannette gives much credit to the Huntsville Herb Society for helping her to learn more about using and growing herbs. She does some of the yard work herself, but gives much credit to Ollie Hatchett for his attentiveness to detail in his maintenance work.





Inviting sitting area beside the pool.

Running the width of the back garden is a beautiful pool designed to be used as a reflecting pool as well as for swimming laps. Mrs. Laughlin worked with architect David Crow AIA to achieve the look of this pool. The pool is not covered in winter, and the underwater jets give movement to the water in all seasons. A seating area beside the pool invites hours of enjoyment and is a perfect spot for entertaining.

Located below the spacious screened porch is the delightful “child size” playhouse that has been lovingly restored. This little gem of a house was not only enjoyed by Nannette as she was growing up but was used for many years at the kindergarten on McClung Avenue run by Mary Beirne Darwin. So many Huntsvillians who attended “Miss Mary Beirnes” will have a tug at their heart strings when visiting this garden.



O'Meara

Mr. and Mrs. William O'Meara are the owners of the colonial revival house at 612 Adams Street. The house was built in the late 1880's and was purchased by the present owners in 1983. Mr. O'Meara is an avid gardener, and growing specimen Orchids is one of his many hobbies. He attached his Orchid greenhouse to the barn on the property. This barn is one of the few free-standing barns remaining in Huntsville and was built about 1888.

The front of the house is set off by lovely old Boxwoods with beds of Azaleas, Oakleaf Hydrangeas and Nandina set in the shady areas on the side. The grounds are beautifully developed and under perfect cultivation, the old and the new delightfully blended.

A spacious lawn area leads from the front yard to the rear of the house where one's eye is drawn to a 15 foot annual bed in the shape of a butterfly. The generous use of color gives a definite Victorian taste to this part of the garden.



Partierre gardens lined with edging Boxwood and featuring Korean Boxwood give symmetry to the beds lining the property on each side. Lavish use of Holly and *Photinia* give screening and background.

Working with their landscape architect, the O'Mearas' ideas and thoughts were brought together into this easy, very comfortable plan that can be enjoyed by all the family.

The terrace and gazebo were added when the new owners refurbished the house. The gazebo is positioned to be an anchor to the terrace and gives a feeling of stability to this outside amenity.

Of great interest to all those involved in gardening is the service area surrounding the barn. Rooting beds, cold frames, compost bins, mulch storage, and an equipment shop would be the dream of any full-fledged gardener. Working in many capacities with the owners, Jack Taylor also implemented the planting plan. And, since the O'Meara's are now owners and operators of the Boshancee Nursery, they had an excellent source of specimen plant material.

The special charm of this garden is that it is practical, beautiful, and leaves us with the feeling of having been in a garden of a by-gone era.



Lowe

Each garden has its own individuality which must be enhanced with good design and a sense of style. Clipped shrubs, hedges, beds tumbling with color and fragrance, and surprises are hallmarks of the garden of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Lowe, 413 McClung Avenue.

In 1826, a reservoir for the City of Huntsville was cut in a bed of limestone rock on Pope's Hill, now Echols Hill, at the junction of McClung Avenue and Adams Street. The reservoir was 96 feet above the level of the Big Spring, was 70 feet in diameter, 10 feet deep and held 287,532 gallons of water. It was protected by a red cedar picket fence about 15 feet high and was located on ground just west of this present home of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Lowe.

Through the years the property has had many owners and now the old reservoir has been converted into a sunken garden complete with a large reflecting pool bordered with Italian tile and capped in native limestone. A beautifully detailed cast iron cascading fountain passively trickles into the center of the pool. Also of interest is a rock garden on the old reservoir wall planted as an English wall garden.



Under the guidance of local landscape architects the Lowe's are developing the grounds to bring the garden back to its beauty of times gone by. The graceful borders of *Elaeagnus*, Florida jasmine, Boxwood, Magnolia, and Dogwood add stability to its wide, uncovered porch with its classic columns over the front doorway stoop.

A guest parking area added to the front lawn gives better access to the front entrance and was designed so as not to disturb the beautiful old Sugar Maples growing in that area of the yard. There are graceful old Magnolia trees, magnificent Sugar Maples, and numerous Dogwood trees lining the property. An abundance of Crepe Myrtle peeps out from every nook and cranny.

The conservatory is ruled over by an impressive cast iron fountain statue of a Greek maiden. The tinkling water sounds are intriguing as well as soothing as one sits and enjoys the many ferns and tropical plants in this room. The floor is a striking design of black and white polished granite and adds a sense of elegance to a green and restful setting.

A soon to be developed formal garden to the north side of the house will incorporate cutting beds to accommodate Mrs. Lowe's hobby of English and French flower arranging.



The enclosed courtyard to the east of the house is perfect for entertaining and in the evening the moonlight effect from the low-voltage lighting highlights the plantings of Weeping Yaupon Holly, Japanese Maple, Magnolia and Euonymus. The seasonal color beds are accented by the skillful use of potted ferns, topiary trees and annuals.



This is a garden for all seasons and is truly lived in as the Lowe family enjoys it and unselfishly shares it with others. The whole place is on the scale of life of the more spacious days, and in the play of light and shade on grass, trees, and sweeping lawns, recalls the dignity of that life which passed with the period of the Old South.



Thompson

Two matching Ginko trees stand guarding the circular brick paved drive at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Ira Duke Thompson, 608 Adams Street. The low clipped hedge of Helleri holly lining the driveway gives a definite formal look to this entrance.

The front of this beautiful home is only the beginning of an intriguing trip down the garden path. Upon entering the home you look immediately through the reception rooms, through a gallery, to a vista which opens to a terrace, then through formal gardens, to an open lawn, to a vegetable garden, a small orchard bounded at last by the lattice brick fence and beautiful iron gate - all the way back to Green Street.

The Georgian style home was built in 1972, on the site of the original house built in the 1850s. The bricks used to build the courtyard wall, the garden house, the brick fence at the back gate, the fireplace wall, and the columns in the breakfast room all were salvaged from the original house.

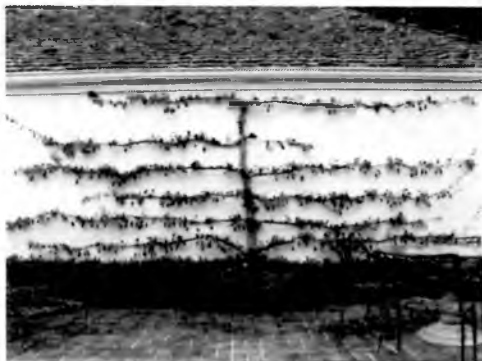
Also of interest in the courtyard is an old millstone that was a gift from Mrs. E. V. Caldwell. Mrs. Caldwell lived for many years in the house next door to the Thompson's, and she was the first president of the Garden Club of Alabama.

The wrought iron gates on the terrace represent blending the old and the new. The medallions in the center of the gates were used in the original house as grills in the foundation.



A landscape plan was done in 1972 by William C. Alford of Nashville. These basic plants were put in and since that time a local landscape architectural consultant has been working with the Thompsons. Some areas have been redesigned as Mary Edith has a keen interest in the garden. For many years Ollie Hatchett was employed as a full-time gardener and his influence, balanced with a personal sense of pride, has made this one of Huntsville's best kept yards. Ollie's employment as gardener is now part-time, but he manages to keep the garden maintenance under control.

The terrace wall is the background for a huge Pear tree that has been espaliered. This tree bears edible fruit and its symmetry is a definite conversation piece. A Golden Rain Tree and Cucumber Magnolia tree at the back of the terrace flanked by large Burningbushes give surprises at all seasons.



Azaleas used in the plantings around the house are Exbury Azaleas. These are deciduous Azaleas and when they bloom cause quite a surprise to passersby as they are in shades of yellow and orange.



The formal garden makes the visitor want to walk along the brick paths and enjoy the clipped Boxwood and English Ivy borders. A bench in the garden house will invite you to sit and "smell the roses" for a while.

A magnificent row of Oakleaf Hydrangeas lining the back drive leads you to a very well-tended vegetable garden and grape trellis. All of this is presided over by an 8 foot scarecrow fashionably dressed in whatever whimsical manner the owner chooses at that time. Sometimes she is a country maiden, sometimes he is a country doctor complete with black string tie and black medical bag. He has even been known to be an astronaut!



Majestic Pecan trees make a delightful shady area for Impatiens and ferns and even a few fruit trees flourish in the sunny area by the rear wall. Climbing Roses on the brick fence bring an end to this fun and surprise filled stroll through this horticultural wonderland.

Wiginton



Standing tall and stately on the corner of Cruse Alley and Franklin Street is the home of Danny and Lyn Wiginton. The three story Italianate structure with its prominent tower blends the old and the new with the ever changing times in Huntsville.

The house was built between 1819 and 1826, and is the birthplace of General John Hunt Morgan of Civil War fame.

The original house used the Federal style of architecture and a

picket fence surrounded the property. After 1850, the tower was added and the Italianate influence took over. The picket fence was removed from the front and the present low brick wall with English Ivy was added.

The entire back area of the property is now enclosed by a ten foot high brick wall. The design of the fence was taken from the design of the exterior wall of the tower room. Landscape architect Harvilee Harbarger and designer John Martz developed the fence design to be an outstanding architectural addition to the historic district.



The present owners travel extensively and are developing the grounds to bring a sense and feel of the formal gardens of Europe, combining relaxation with control to the growth habits of the plantings.

This garden has a play area incorporated into the landscape design since this is the childhood home of the Wiginton's two year old daughter, Lee Lee. Their teenage son, Christopher, and the adults enjoy the swimming pool and very modern spa added to this antebellum structure.

The well-formed Boxwoods give a simplicity of design to the front of the house. Beyond the magnificent iron gates the garden is being developed along with the addition of a garage and a gallery connection to the house.



The flowing annual and perennial beds and Rose garden will be at their height of summer color just as the wide Daylily border begins to wane. Flower arranging is a special hobby of the owner and as a garden of this type is never finished, there are plans to add more color, more texture, more background, and more interest.

Landscape architects have plans to design a knot garden in the courtyard which will incorporate herbs to be used by Mrs. Wiginton in her gourmet cooking. The subtle sounds of the wall fountain lend a relaxing mood to this courtyard and porch area.

Another fountain and pool is in the sunroom courtyard which is shaded by a beautiful multi-trunked River Birch and lattice walls. The Wigintons enjoy the sounds of water in the landscape and have used it freely.



As a garden is truly never “finished,” this garden will continue to be changed, added to, and moved about. The elegant old Magnolia and Holly trees have had many changes under their branches, but they still stand guard to some of Huntsville’s best examples of the art of landscaping.

Conclusion

The gardens represented in this issue of *“The Historic Huntsville Quarterly of Local Architecture and Preservation”* are but a few of the beautiful and interesting gardens abounding in our notable city of Huntsville.

Gardens are the link between men and women and the world we live in. People in every age have felt the need to make their surroundings more suitable and have created gardens to satisfy these desires and goals. Therefore, it is not surprising that there is greater interest in gardens today than ever before. To many they represent a peaceful refuge in this noisy, busy world and an opportunity to be creative in close contact with “Mother Nature.”

Garden design is an art. For its full enjoyment, some understanding of landscape design and horticulture opens up the possibilities of one’s own garden and gives us great satisfaction at seeing “others.” We are aware of the sense of peace some gardens give us, while others are exciting and invite us to explore. So do the gardens represented in this issue.

My thanks go to Lakin Boyd for his excellent photographic skills and patience and to Bill Nance, a person gifted in the language of art and flowers, who has a sense of style to make them harmonious. We have all spent many hours working on this issue of the *“Quarterly”* and hope sometime in the future to devote another publication to other lovely gardens which are the glories of our Huntsville homes.

Harvilee Harbarger, ASLA

PORCH LIFE Before Air-Conditioning

Eleanor N. Hutchens

Although rich in porch scenes, American reminiscence rarely gives full value to the main reason people built porches: to cool off. A walk through the older streets of Huntsville, with glances at the dates on historical markers, reveals the successive efforts of generations to lighten the summer load of heat and humidity in a climate where the latitude is shared with northern Africa. We who lived here in the second quarter of this century, before the immense relief of air-conditioning, can appreciate those efforts. We enjoyed their final fruits.

The Virginians who founded Huntsville built their houses tastefully plain, with no projections visible from the front. Long wings might extend backward, as separate kitchen, shed-porched servants' quarters, and utility rooms; but from the front all was decorous English restraint. Inside the heat of summer accumulated. Brick walls held the winter chill awhile, but toward the end of June they became warm all the way through.

Thermal strategies there might be: front and back doors aligned to lure an air current through the hall, blinds at the windows to be closed on the east side in the morning and the west in the afternoon so that air but not sunrays could come in. Members of the family who slept upstairs the rest of the year might move downstairs for the summer. These slight alleviations still found the house a close, humid box at the end of the day - when lamps had to be lit and radiated even more heat within the rooms. A walk in the garden made a temporary escape, but then one had to go back into the house and swelter through the night.

The fortunate fled to Monte Sano, where they had built frame cottages with porches.

With the Greek Revival of the 1830's, Federal houses began to sprout porticoes, large or small, that gave a more welcoming look to their facades. The Weeden House, among many, acquired a little porch. Miss Howard Weeden, born in the 1840's, may never have seen the house as it is today, restored to Federal purity.



The new Greek Revival houses had, in addition to larger rooms and higher ceiling which made for airier interiors, porticoes ample for family seating, but without the railings that made later porches semi-private.

As stylistic changes progressed, people in houses old and new must have discovered that summer demanded porches where the whole family could cool off. The servants had known this all along, sitting in relative comfort on their long porches in the back wings on hot evenings. It may have been their example, as well as that of the new styles and such influences as the coastal architecture of New Orleans and Charleston, with its multiple galleries and balconies, that brought the porch to the fore.



Likewise, suggestive of New Orleans, were the balconies of commercial buildings on and near the Court-house Square. They served the upstairs apartments of lawyers, cotton brokers, and others who did business below. The middle west side of the Square, now demolished, had not only these balconies but, at the rear, several stories of porches overlooking the Big Spring and its small, shady park. The Huntsville walker today can only remember or imagine the charm of these old and well-planned structures.

With the coming of Victorian styles, big, sittable

With the coming of Victorian styles, big, sittable porches could form part of the original house plan, not so much as entrances, like the Greek Revival porticoes, as outside rooms. (The later bungalow had the same advantage.) Owners of Federal houses could only add them on, and some did. My great-great-grandmother, whose house stands back from the southwest corner of Eustis and White, in the 1890's moved the small Greek Revival portico from the front to the back and wrapped a large, comfortable porch across the front and around a corner. Both are still where she left them.



Around 1900, a wonderful invention, the sleeping porch, erased the dread of going back into the house after enjoying the cool of the evening out in front. Not usually visible from the street, sleeping porches were commonly upstairs at the back of the house, screened on three sides and furnished starkly with cots for all members of the family. It was bliss not only going to sleep there, but waking up at delicious dawn. The worst of the summer heat was beaten.



Sleeping porch

Certain houses built in the first quarter of this century achieved what was probably the ultimate in summer comfort before air-conditioning. They had open front porches, screened side porches and sleeping porches, and removable cloth awnings over windows and sometimes porches. Oscillating electric floor fans moved any air that needed moving, so that the lack of a natural breeze no longer meant suffocation within. These were usually large white frame houses whose graciousness has lasted past the need for their elaborate protections.

Cooling off on the front porch was a gradual sinking into peace. After supper the family, sometimes still fanning themselves, drifted out to the rockers and swings which were designed partly to simulate breezes. Deep twilight brought lightning bugs up from the grass, giving their casual flashes higher and higher as

the yard darkened. Conversation was quiet and sometimes more and more confiding: the recollections of the old, in voices that carried their wonder that what was so vivid to them could have happened so many years ago; the reflections of the middle-aged, often calmly analyzing the characters of absent relatives living and dead; the diffident plans of the



young, who in daylight would state them in confident terms if at all; and occasional chirps from drowsing children. That tranquil intimacy of three or four generations in the cooling dark was an experience like no other. The scripted scenes of courting couples and hearty visitors cannot touch it.

This is not a history of the American porch. For that, see the readable and well-illustrated account in the July-August 1990 Old House Journal. I have merely tried to suggest to the many walkers of Huntsville something special to notice in their preambulations: the human need that created our porches and the soothing relief they provided for broiling summer days.







VIRGINIA CLEMENTINE CLAY

Joberta Wasson

Virginia Clementine Clay began to edit and publish a newspaper in 1885 and she continued to do so for more than twenty-five years. This feat brought her considerable attention - at first because she had dared to enter a man's world - later because she succeeded brilliantly in that world. Her father, Withers Clay, had published and edited the *Weekly Democrat* in Huntsville, Alabama, for many years. But, in 1885, a stroke left him unable to speak or to write, though his mind remained clear. Virginia no doubt already had a hankering to work on the paper because she had learned to set type two years earlier when she was nineteen and just out of school. She had called herself a printer's devil then. Now, she assured her father that the *Democrat* would continue to roll off the presses as usual, and indeed it did. Only two issues failed to appear when she first took over.



The Clay Family

She made no attempt to change the paper's format or the kind of stories and

news it favored. Recognition came to her through her fine editorials and through her good public relations work. She attended, when possible, every regional and national news writers' convention. Gradually, the *Democrat* garnered readers from far beyond the confines of Huntsville.

Virginia's sister, Susanna, volunteered to help with the manual labor, no small chore. In those days, type was set by hand and presses rolled with a crank. And, there were other tasks, as Virginia described:

“My sister and I have made our own office fire, split and carried the kindling up town to do it with; we have cleaned up our own office, brought the water from the corner of the public square hydrant to wash our type, rolled while the pressman worked the press, until our hands have been blistered from the unusual exercise.”

When they purchased new type in 1887, their tasks were lightened, but Virginia grieved at giving up the old tried and true press and wrote an “Ode to Our Old Type.”

Virginia and Susanna came from a distinguished family. Their grandfather, Clement Comer Clay, had been a U.S. Senator and governor of Alabama. Their uncle, Clement Claiborne Clay, had also been a U.S. Senator before the Civil War and, during the conflict, a leader in the Confederate cause. There were two other sisters in the family, Mary and Elodie. All four continued to live at home after they were grown. Townspeople considered them a formidable foursome. They were spoken of collectively as one would speak of a well-known firm. All helped maintain the family fortunes. Elodie, Mary, and their mother at various times, often simultaneously, taught dancing, music, and French, and maintained a day school for boys and girls. Elodie, who sang beautifully, gave voice lessons. Even Virginia taught school some years, as a sideline.

Not all of Virginia's problems as a newswoman came from splitting kindling and wrestling with ancient type. When she first took over the paper she had some trouble with the employees. They assumed they could do as they pleased now that a young girl was at the head of affairs, but she speedily let them know otherwise. An employee called Miss Susanna a printer's devil, thus hurting sensitive little Susie's feelings. Virginia blazed out at the person who had taunted Susie,

“You will have to treat Miss Susie with respect. I want you to understand that I am the devil in this office and you can govern yourselves accordingly.”

She promptly discharged those who were rebellious and reorganized the office sometimes writing the whole paper herself, she afterwards make the rounds, collecting payments.

An admirer, Robert Barr of the *Detroit Free Press* said this about her:

“As collector Miss Virginia was a great success and those who have met this charming young woman will understand the difficulty a man would have in refusing to pay a bill that was due ... Personally, she is a handsome, tall and rather slim girl.”

Elizabeth Chapman describes the sisters: Virginia had greenish-blue eyes and light brown hair. Her sister Susie was a brunette.

One of the first national conventions Virginia attended was the Editorial Association meeting in Detroit in 1887. Afterwards the *New York Times* carried this succinct statement:

“Miss Virginia C. Clay of Huntsville, Alabama, edits the *Democrat* and supports a paralyzed father and five small brothers and sisters.”

Virginia noted in an aside that all but one of the five small brothers and sisters were older than she was.

This notice was copied in papers all over the U.S. and in Canada. It called forth numerous offers of marriage. Indeed, though Virginia never married, she could claim some devoted men friends. One was a Mr. LeRoy Wilson, another Mr. Robert Barr of the *Detroit Free Press*.

Mr. Barr wrote this in the *Detroit Free Press* in 1889,

“The various meetings ... were brightened by the presence of many beautiful and talented women ... one of the brightest, wittiest, and most charming of these editorial ladies was Miss Virginia Clay of Huntsville, Alabama.”

More and more honors came her way. The Nashville Press Association and the New England Press Association each elected her an honorary member and, at the latter's urgent invitation, she accompanied them on an excursion to Chattanooga and Atlanta.

She was elected National Committeeman of the Alabama State Press Association, the only woman committeeman in the National Editorial Association. In 1906, she was invited to speak at the National Convention of Editorial Writers in Guthrie, Oklahoma. With charming informality she talked about her experiences as a newswoman. Her speech was spiced with wit, and she offered this little tidbit to show an extra advantage that women have over men:

"I am sorry for you men who lack a most important article in a country newspaper office. It is this little instrument -- yes, a hair pin, for we have used it as scissors to cut out copy, a knife to open mail, pincers in making up forms ..."

Eventually, Virginia was able to declare, with pardonable pride,

"From Maine to California and Canada to the Gulf, the editors of metropolitan and country newspapers have thrown bouquets at our modest efforts."

Why did the *Democrat* have such a wide appeal? It was much like other small-town turn-of-the-century newspapers. It offered farm tips, recipes, personals, and household hints, as well as news. Every edition featured a work of fiction, a short story. Jokes enlivened its pages but there were no comics -- they had not been invented yet. The illustrations were line drawings. It was invariably just four pages long, but those pages encompassed a lot of writing because the type used was smaller than present-day news type.

Virginia's showmanship had certainly attracted attention to the *Democrat* but, without something special, the attention would have wavered. It was Virginia's writing which elevated the *Democrat* above the commonplace. Her editorials consistently gave it substance. Her personal reminiscences infused it with a sweet charm which was unique.

She composed her editorials in a crisp, straightforward manner, free of verbosity. She made this statement:

“Any editorial that is found in the *Democrat* is from the brain and pen of the editor. If it is worthy of favorable comment we are grateful to our readers for words of encouragement; if it causes adverse criticism we will not repudiate the authorship -- we are not infallible -- but maintain strenuously our individual opinions.” (September 29, 1909)

She held strong opinions. For instance, she deplored our attempts to conquer the Philippines in 1899. She felt we were dilly-dallying, too.

“This is a costly experiment, and doubtless the Dons are laughing in their sleeves at gulling the shrewd yankees.” (June 14, 1899)

In her political beliefs she was a staunch Democrat, thinking it was important to keep harmony within the party, presenting a united front to the enemy -- i.e., the Republicans. Understandably, she was for womens' suffrage. She said on August 14, 1901:

“Women are among the criminals and the insane when it comes to exercising the right of suffrage.”

She was sometimes critical of the state legislature, complaining that campaign promises were often not kept.

“All members should join in a general confession, ‘We have done those things we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things we ought to have done and there is no health in us.’” (March 6, 1901)

She feared irresponsible taxation:

“The power to tax is the power to destroy and frequently irresponsible and corrupt persons will become invested with the power to levy taxes.” (June 26, 1901)

She scorned agricultural colleges and stated that they turned out graduates who were bookish but didn't know how to farm. (July 24, 1901)

She lampooned the careless use of words, but she never could resist a pun. For example, in speaking of Carrie Nation, militant WCTU member, who attacked saloon keepers,

"Mrs. Nation is doubtless regarded as Adam-Nation by Kansas saloon keepers." (January 30, 1901)

She favored labor unions and was bitterly opposed to child labor.

Through the years, Susanna continued to be her faithful helper. The sisters were devoted to each other. Once, when Susie was away on a trip for some time, she wrote Virginia, "Do you miss me?" Virginia replied, "Ask the lightning, Dear Sukey, if it would miss its thunder; Niagara if it would miss its roar; the stars if they would miss their twinkle." (July 1, 1903)

One of her most successful literary ventures was a delightful series of articles which should be classified as essays rather than editorials, though they ran on the editorial page. The idea for them came from a table - of all things. The Clays dined together around a sturdy old mahogany table which had belonged to the girls' Grandmother Lewis. It was their habit to linger at the table after dinner discussing the day's happenings. In October, 1909, Virginia brought that old table to life. She performed this magic with essays on subjects the table found worthy of its attention. It was not concerned with world-shaking events or with politics, but it had a rich fund of stories to tell about the family, their friends, and their town. It particularly enjoyed reminiscing concerning portraits painted by local artists, Wilhelm Frye and John C. Grimes.

Virginia declared that it was certainly a table worth knowing. Though bright and always polished, it was a little rough when rubbed the wrong way. It could even shake with rage. It could become sentimental, too; once it received a valentine and a flower from a Miss Katie Townes. This made its heart glad.

"The old table is not so ancient that it cannot appreciate pretty attentions," said Virginia.

Sometimes it tired of talking.

"The old mahogany table sleepily closed its lids and said, 'I am board now!'"

The old table attracted attention even in the distant states. Readers in Texas, New Jersey, and New York wrote fan letters. One admirer said, "You are helping to tell us a marvelous story of the South. I wish to save it for my children and grandchildren to read as an authentic history of the times and the people who are fast passing into the great beyond."

One of the Clay ladies' chief pleasures was hostessing lively and unusual social gatherings. They celebrated Virginia's and Susanna's twentieth anniversary as newswomen with an invitation to meet the Printer's Devils and Imps at an evening party. Everywhere around the house "devils and imps of various colors and sizes leaped, lurked, climbed, ran, or sat." (It was suspected that little ballroom dancing pupils may have been transformed into imps and devils for the occasion.)

Each guest was asked to bring a quotation about the devil and the prize for the most interesting was a portrait of Mephistopheles.

The years slipped by. Success followed success. Virginia said there had been downs in their career but never a time when they could not laugh the downs away after a little while. This was always true until Virginia's health failed. In about 1909, she contracted an incurable disease and died, tragically young, in 1911. She was forty-nine.

Susanna assumed full responsibility for the *Democrat* and continued to edit and publish it until 1919.

Sources

The Huntsville Democrat, various issues between the years 1884 and 1911.

The Huntsville Evening Tribune, May, 1900; October, 1900; May, 1902; and June, 1906.

The Huntsville Mercury, August, 1885.

Changing Huntsville, by Elizabeth Humes Chapman; Historic Huntsville Foundation, 1989.

The Clay Family Scrapbook, a private collection of newspaper clippings and memorabilia was a primary source. Not all news items are exactly identified as to date and author.

HUNTSVILLE'S FIRST GARDEN CLUB

It should come as no surprise that the first Garden Club in America was Southern. Twelve ladies in Athens, Georgia gathered in the cold, unseasonable month of January 1891, and started the first garden club on record. Huntsville's first garden club was organized May 28, 1926 by Mrs. Winston Fearn Garth, its founder and first president. A newspaper clipping from the Club's scrapbook recalls:

Outstanding activities of the first year's work included: The planting of Canna beds on the court house lawn, Big Spring Park, and Southern Railway, also the planting of bulbs at two places. On Arbor Day a Water oak was planted on the hospital grounds in honor of the Club's honorary member, Mrs. H. E. Garth.

The Club members went to Normal, Alabama, where they donated plants and directed the planting to assist in beautifying the college grounds.

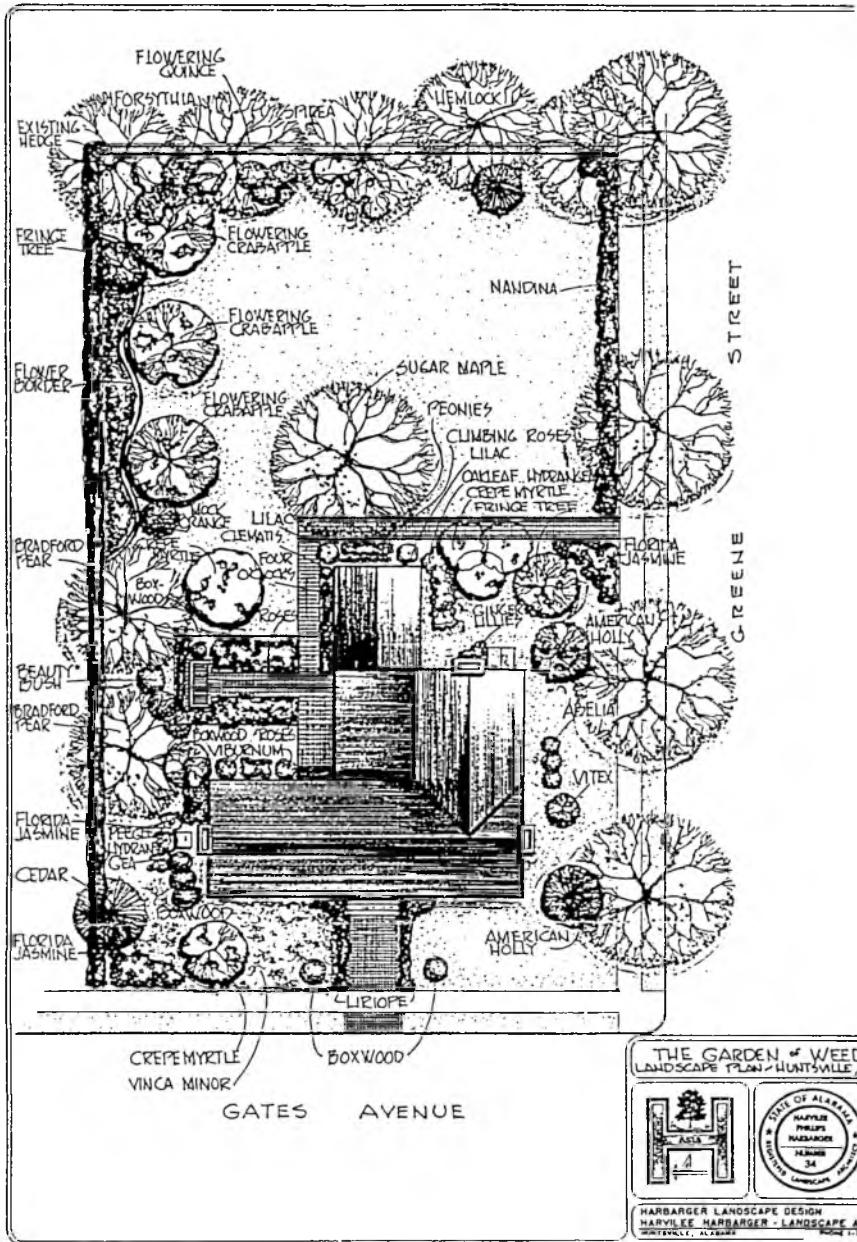
Japanese Cherry trees were planted on the court house lawn and Big Spring Park.

Each year a flower show in the foyer of the Elk's Theater is held.

Two campaigns for "Better Farms and Gardens" have been held, with prizes for the best, given by the Club.

The Club tried to interest all landowners on the highways to plant roses, selling them at a reasonable price. However, the venture was not very successful.

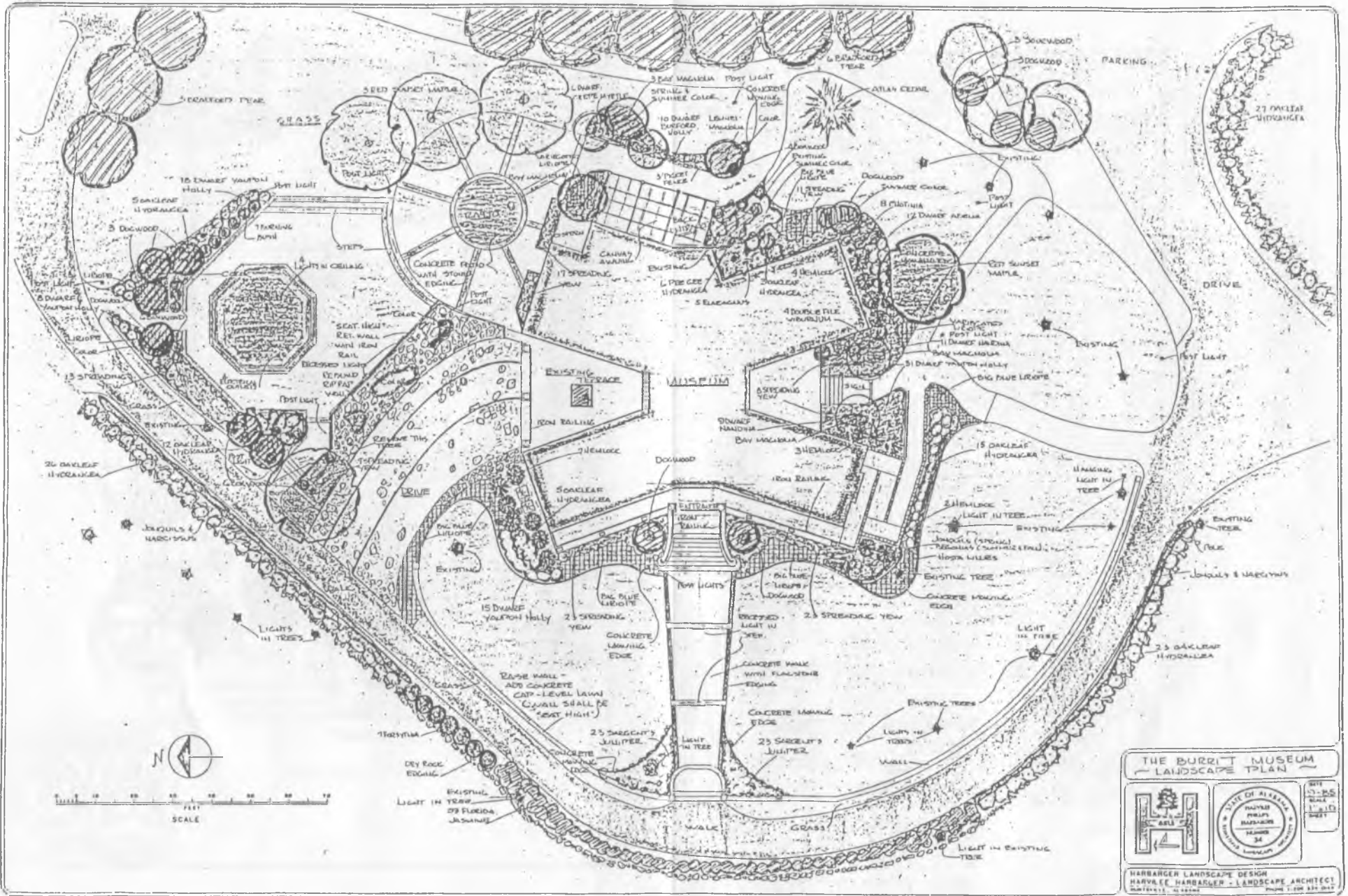
Garden Club scrapbooks may be found in the archives of The Huntsville-Madison County Public Library.



THE GARDEN OF WEEDEN
 LANDSCAPE PLAN - HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

	DATE 8-25-56
	SCALE 1 1/2" = 20' SHEET 1

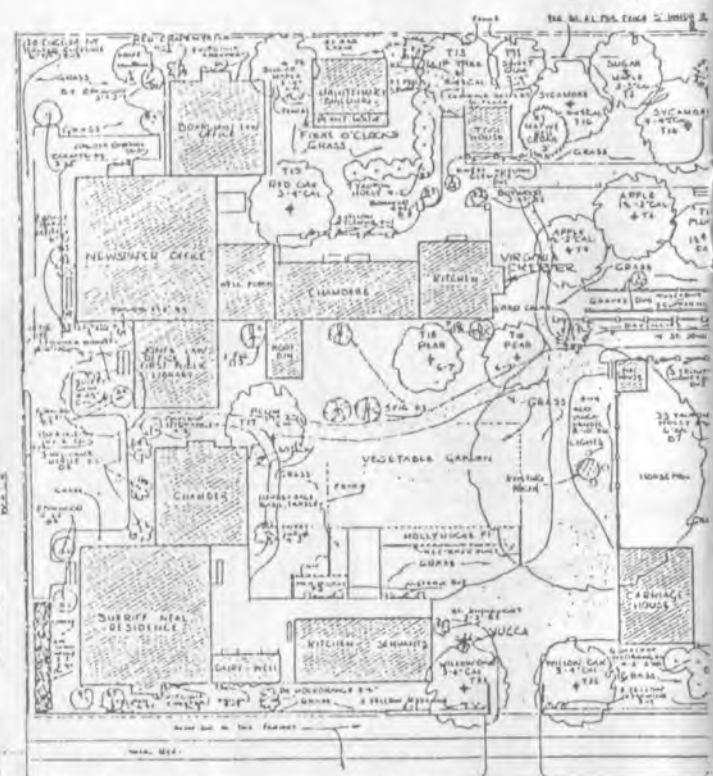
HARBARGER LANDSCAPE DESIGN
 HARVILLE NAMBARGER - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
 HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA



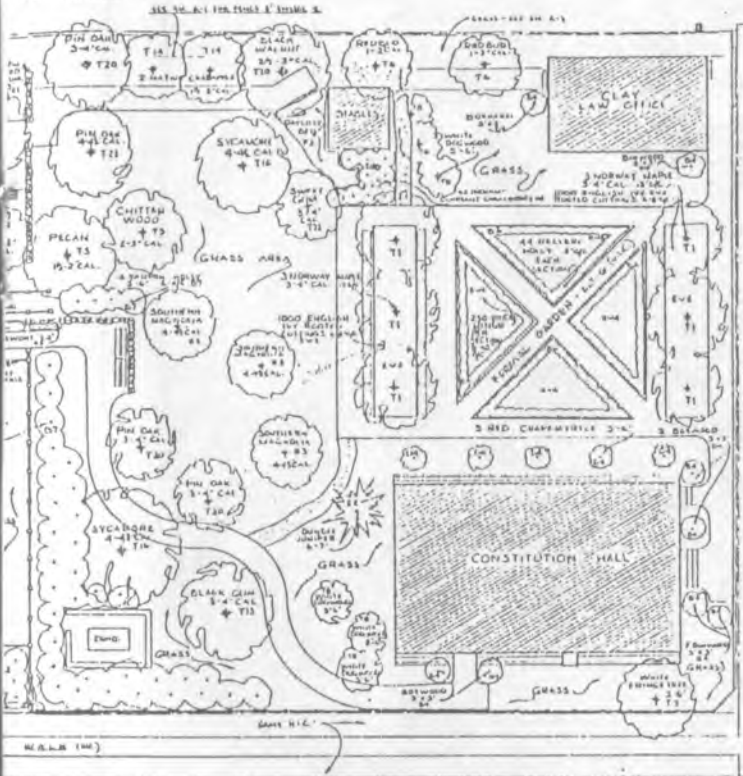
**THE BURITT MUSEUM
LANDSCAPE PLAN**

		<p style="font-size: small;">SHEET NO. 34 DATE 11/10/83 SCALE 1" = 10'</p>
<p style="font-size: small;">HARBARGER LANDSCAPE DESIGN HARVLEE HARBARGER - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT 200 BENTLEY BLVD. SE ANNISTON, AL 35810</p>		

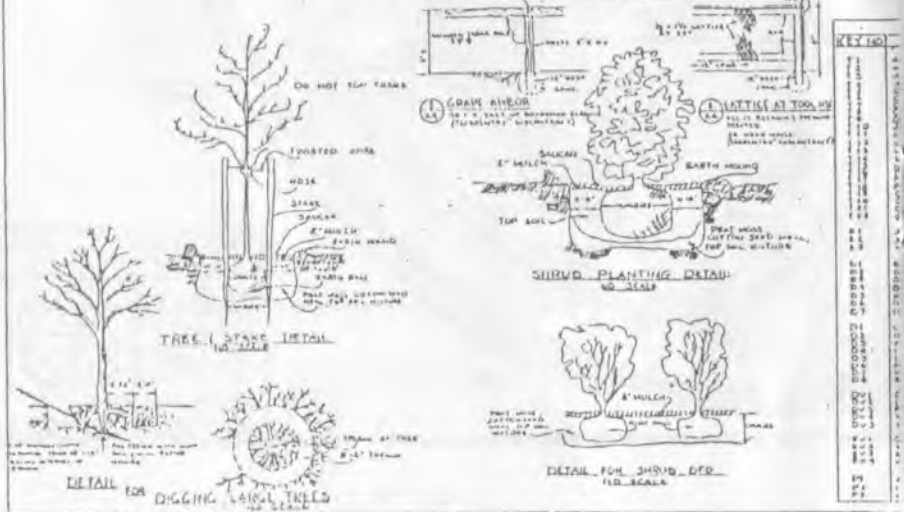
ALLEY 1



HQU BLOCK



GARDEN STREET



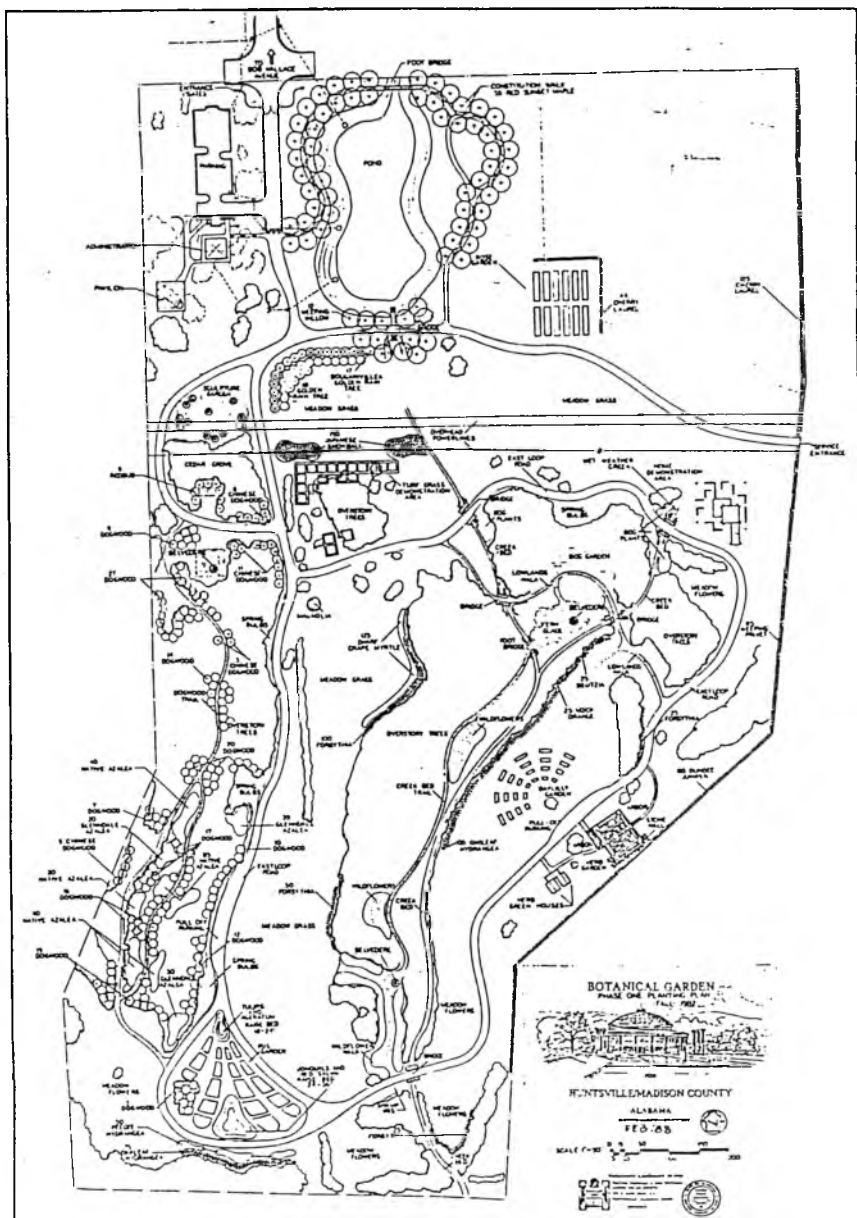
NOTES:
1. LANDSCAPE SQUARE AND HQU BLOCK SHOWN ON '61 & '62 L.S. & L.C. PLANS.
2. QUANTITIES SHOWN ON DRAWINGS ARE APPROXIMATE. SEE PLANT LIST.

PLANT	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	PLANT TYPE	SIZE	QUANT.	DISTANCE	REMARKS
1	PLUM TREE	PLUM TREE	TREE	3'-4' CAL.	10	10'	PLUM TREE
2	SYCAMORE	SYCAMORE	TREE	4'-6" CAL.	10	10'	SYCAMORE
3	PEAR	PEAR	TREE	3'-4' CAL.	10	10'	PEAR
4	APPLE	APPLE	TREE	3'-4' CAL.	10	10'	APPLE
5	CHERRY	CHERRY	TREE	3'-4' CAL.	10	10'	CHERRY
6	DOGWOOD	DOGWOOD	TREE	3'-4' CAL.	10	10'	DOGWOOD
7	HYDRANGEA	HYDRANGEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	HYDRANGEA
8	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
9	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
10	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
11	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
12	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
13	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
14	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
15	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
16	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
17	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
18	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
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22	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
23	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
24	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
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28	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
29	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
30	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
31	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
32	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
33	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
34	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
35	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
36	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
37	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
38	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
39	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
40	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
41	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
42	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
43	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
44	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
45	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
46	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
47	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
48	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
49	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA
50	SPYRUEA	SPYRUEA	SHRUB	6'-8'	10	10'	SPYRUEA

NOTES:
1. PLANTING SHOULD BE IN LINE WITH EXISTING CURB AND SIDEWALK.
2. QUANTITIES SHOWN ON DRAWINGS ARE APPROXIMATE. SEE PLANT LIST.
3. DO NOT REMOVE EXISTING TREES OR SHRUBS UNLESS SPECIFICALLY NOTED OTHERWISE.



HARDVILLE P. HARDMAN, JR.
LANDSCAPE DESIGNER
STATE OF MISSOURI, LICENSE NO. 1234
KANSAS AND NEBRASKA LICENSE NO. 5678
CONSTITUTION HALL
STATE PARK
PREPARED BY: [Signature]
DATE: [Date]
SCALE: 1"=10'



HISTORY OF THE HUNTSVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN

from the

Garden Guide Handbook for 1989 - 1990

by

Barbara Yost

After eight years of planning, gradual progress, and over a year of determined labor on the land, this Garden formally opened to the public on May 21, 1988. The opening was the occasion of the Garden's first annual Spring Festival. Approximately 5,000 people attended. There was a ceremony with civic leaders and a ribbon cutting, followed by a mass balloon release. Four different bands played at various times through the day. There were walking tours, carriage rides, and hayrides along with much merriment. The celebration was well deserved.

The first meeting in December 1979, of fourteen people interested in creating a Botanical Garden was held without a garden site. In fact, they did not have a clue where it might be located. But they had faith and determination, and they established the Huntsville Madison County Botanical Garden Society. It is a civic group that operates the Botanical Garden, under an agreement with the City, at no profit. When it was organized, the Society's objective was TO ESTABLISH A WORLD CLASS BOTANICAL GARDEN FOR THE PURPOSES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ENJOYMENT.

As you will see on our tour, a beautiful place was found on which to develop the Garden. In April 1981, the United States Army decided a large tract of land adjoining Redstone Arsenal (in accordance with an Act of Congress) to the Alabama Space Science Exhibit Commission. The City of Huntsville leased 250 acres of that land from the Commission. The land transaction was accomplished with the Army's condition that the land be used only for passive recreation and education purposes. This fits the goals for the Botanical Garden perfectly. In 1983 the Botanical Garden Society proposed that this be their Garden site.

Harvilee Harbarger, of Harbarger Landscape Design, created concept plans for developing the Garden; these concept plans were presented in 1984. The initial clearing of the land was done by volunteers from the Society. Five men formed the main core for this Herculean task: Norm Comus, Sam Jones, Rudd Loder, Seth Mize, and Hartselle Northington. This first work on the land was accomplished without much equipment. It was done with much love (and some mean cases of poison ivy). Their labor made the site ready for the Dedication and Ground-Breaking Ceremony on October 4, 1985. It was the first official event at the Garden. The mayor and over 200 people attended, observing the "Blessing of the Garden," and the ceremonial planting of the first tree introduced to the Garden by the Society. It was a Southern Magnolia donated by Mark Harbarger of Harbarger Landscape Design.

In March 1986, the City authorized \$200,000 for the development of the Garden with the provision that the Botanical Garden Society match that amount with private support within 18 months. This enabled the Society to proceed with the development of the Garden. In June 1986, the Society hired the first Executive Director, Robert Montgomery, to provide full time coordination of the development effort. Public support was outstanding; the matching funds were raised within 12 months.

Note: The authorized funds are appropriated by the City as they are required for the Garden. The Society submits requests for funds along with justifications and at least three bids from prospective material, equipment, or labor sources.

A Board of Advisors was formed in July 1987. In August 1987, the Executive Director resigned, and Al Privette was hired as Site Manager. The next organization milestone was accomplished in February 1988, when the Garden Guild was established to support the Garden.

The City authorized \$25,000 more for the development of Phase I of the Garden. The rest of the money for this project came from volunteer work and private contributions. By June 1989, the Society, with the help of the community, had raised close to \$1,000,000 in funds and services. The community is pleased with the results. It is truly amazing that so much has been done in such a short period of time.

POSTSCRIPT

Lucy and Seth Mize

The Huntsville-Madison County Botanical Garden Society was organized in December, 1979. Members present were: Gary Murray, Nell Bragg, Drucilla Esslinger, Harvilee Harbarger, H. W. Joyner, Gail Kelley, Grady Kennedy, Evelyn Lucas, Duane Miller, Ellie Salopek, Donald Saxton, Margaret Saxton, Mary Ann Terry, and Rosa Belle Van Valkenburg.

Mr. Gary Murry of the Auburn Extension Service agreed to serve as the group's first president, serving two terms.

The major problem facing the organization during this period was to find a suitable and available location for a botanical garden. Membership was small but enthusiastic. At several meetings slides were shown of various botanical gardens around the nation. Mr. Donald Saxton, an engineer serving with NASA, was most helpful in this respect. He also maintained a master planning book and provided useful planning guidance.

Mr. Grady Kennedy was elected and served as the second president. He was instrumental in locating a site for the garden and leading the struggle with the Huntsville City Council to obtain access and use of 110 acres that had been declared excess to the needs of the Department of Defense at Redstone Arsenal. The members of the Board of Directors at that time were: Harvilee Harbarger, Duane Miller, Don Saxton, Evelyn Lucas, and Seth Mize.

All members worked diligently toward the goal of obtaining this land for the garden. They contacted Mayor Davis and members of the City Council, urging authority for the use of this land. A major problem in obtaining use was a perceived conflict of interest between the Space and Rocket Center and the Botanical Garden Society.

During this period, Evelyn Lucas was Vice President of the Society, and was most helpful in dealing with both the City Council and the Madison County Commission. Through the combined efforts of all members of the Society, especially those serving as members of the Board of Directors, they succeeded in obtaining authorization to use the land as a garden site. This authority included the provision that the Society would raise \$200,000, and if they did, the City would

then match this amount with money for needed facilities, including a roadway into the property.

The City Council authorization for use of 110 acres of land was granted at their May 26, 1983 meeting. At this juncture, a large sign was erected near the present (1990) entrance to the garden, with an arrow pointing toward the site with the wording below, "Botanical Garden Site." This sign, erected by Seth Mize and Grady Kennedy, was in full view of all traffic along Bob Wallace Avenue, and was extremely helpful in making the public aware of the intent that a Botanical Garden be built at that location. It had a persuasive effect and the idea was accepted generally by the people who saw it.

Before anything could be done toward making a garden, the site had to be cleared of a healthy growth of unwanted vines, brush, and other shrubbery. This task was undertaken by a group of men later to become known as "The Bushwhackers." They and many others assisting cleared the tangled growth which had accumulated over a period of many years while the area was used as a pasture for the Redstone Stable horses. Normal Comus, Hartselle Northington, Bert Mangum, Seth Mize, and Todd Loder were later cited by Mayor Steve Hettinger for their labors as "Bushwhackers."

Evelyn Lucas contacted members of the Madison County Commission, and obtained their permission to move the old historic columns from the Madison County Courthouse to the Garden site. Seth Mize contacted Tillman Hill of the Madison County Commission and arranged for the actual moving of these columns to their location at the site.

The initial step toward the actual development of the garden was taken by Mr. Gary Murray, and assisted by Julie (Harbarger) Stephens. Together they made the first circular roadway layout, thus establishing the design of the central roadway as it exists today. Harvillee Harbarger had previously made a preliminary garden design and thus provided guidance for the road construction.



**Notes from the
Diaries of Susan Bradley White
Huntsville, Alabama 1875 to 1896**

1877

- May 11 My garden is beautiful and I am very much pleased and gratified for the children's sake. The croquet ground Willie has fixed so nice for Jane.
- 23 All hands have been planting sweet potatoes. ... Willie made me a very nice frame for my flowers.
- 31 Will and Franklin are building the long porch.

1878

- Mar. 15 Planted corn & Raspberrys, Peas, Beets & Radishes.
- 25 This morning is a little cool - but so right and beautiful. The trees and flowers in full bloom. Oh how I miss my Mother and dear old Pilgrim. ... I have been fixing my garden.
- 29 This is the first time I ever saw roses bloom in the garden in March ... My flowers are looking beautiful.
- Apr. Cold. Windy and disagreeable. I have been all morning covering my flowers from the wind.
- May 1 The boys are making the garden.
- 10 ... My flowers are very much injured by the long dry spell.

1885

- Mar. 11 Bright beautiful day after the snow storm Sunday. ... Mitchel planting potatoes, ... Joe Patton has trimmed the grape vines and now I am fixing to plant some corn.

- Mar. 15 ... The first Sunday in March was raining and stormy - the second Sunday was a perfect snow storm - the third Sunday was lovely as a May day. I am greatly distressed at the loss of my jonquils. The calf's have eaten them all down.
- Apr. 10 Friday. These have been pleasant days. Mr. White has been fixing the yard, planted a long row of Buttercups on my terrace walk.
- 25 Saturday. Well, the dear old place is in nice order. Mitchel planted my bed of melons today.
- July 5 ... My Japan lilies are in bloom. I have had them many years.
- 18 The highest point touched by the mercury was 95° at 3:30 o'clock p.m. At 6 o'clock p.m. it registered 90° and at midnight it was the unusually high mark of 79°.
- Aug. 14 ... Betty Patton sent me a nice Heliotrope plant. I finished my little quilt this evening.

1886

- Feb. 21 A lovely morning and everybody on this Hill in good health. I brought for Susie the first Crocus.
- Mar. 19 The first Peach Bloom on the Hill.
- 26 The peach trees are in full bloom.
- May 30 ... My trip to the strawberry bed was not pleasant ... There is a power in perfumes which we have all experienced. The scent of a flower will recall in some mysterious way of its own, a scene long vanished from our thoughts - and will call up remembrances, and emotions which bring tears of grief or joy.
- Oct. 23 ... The days are lovely - no frost. Mr. White busy putting up sweet potatoes. The first time in forty years that I have no flowers for my pit.

1887

- Jan. 19 This is a lovely morning. We have seen crowds of carriages going to the mountain with the visitors and delegates to the new R.R.
- Feb. 10 the loveliest days - crocuses and violets in the garden, and the trees budding.
- 20 The spring flowers, and Peach Blooms and green Willows are like spring time.
- Mar. 27 Dr. Demant ... told us Mrs. Clay received the appointment of Post Office.
- May 3 Well, Well, Well. Who would have believed old Mrs. Tom White has been on the mountain, real Monte Sano Mount. ... It was very pleasant, the company and ride, the beautiful view, the sad memories of long, long ago ...
- June 16 ... It was while I was sick Mrs. Ellen Donegan died and was buried on the 2nd of June at 10 o'clock a.m. - it was so arranged that the gay crowd for the Monte Sano Ball would not come in contact. Oh me, how life is made up of Sunshine and Shadow.
- 27 ... I will have to remember the grand Monte Sano Ball. Jane and Susie with the Campbell's had a gay time of it, it was a mixed crowd.
- July 19 ... The hottest weather I ever felt, this morning a breeze - but so hot. Thermometer in the passage 93°.
- 31 Hot. Oh so hot.
- Aug. 3 I actually had to take off my clothes and go to bed, so oppressed with the heat, did not know whether I was ill or the heat.
- Oct. 12 The first frost this morning. I put my remnant of flowers in the pit today.

1888

- Feb. 8 The first crocus.
- 17 I have had all the grapes and figs pruned for the first time in my life.
- 23 I have been busy in my flower garden, and the dear old walk I have been trying to renew has brought back such pleasant memories, when I was young and fresh and all surroundings so happy. That was Uncle Tom Wilson's favorite walk - and it was beautiful then. He would walk there for hours and loved to have Ellen by the hand.
- Mar. 1 Planting Irish potatoes.
- 22 ... Mr. White is having the trees trimmed.
- Apr. 3 A real summer day. My orange tree is blooming beautifully.
- 5 Sent Gen. Moore a branch of orange blossoms and oranges - knowing he had nothing of the sort.
- 9 I am trying hard to get my old garden fixed up a little, but like myself it is worn out, and part renewing - but the trees and the grass are so fresh and green, that I do enjoy it.
- 10 Planted Holly Hock seed Betty Patton gave me - and a bed of Chrysanthemums. It took old Genny to find my specs in the garden. It makes me sad, it grieves me to the bottom of my Heart to know the fact and realize it every day, that I am drifting away from my old landmarks, from my old ways and self. I would like to see Will Scruggs and talk of old times.
- 12 Cool and wet - finished planting Bessie's bed of geraniums and Heliotrope I hope they will succeed. ... Jane sent Tom a box of cake and lovely orange blossoms. My old tree has certainly given much pleasure. ... The hyacinths Mr. White bought for me were beautiful.

- May 1 ... I am trying to fix my garden, ... I hope my mignonette bed will be a success - and my Chrysanthemums and Heliotrope.
- June 3 This is Sunday, and cold enough for fire. Dr. Dement has been ill for some days. He is and has always been one of the best Friends I ever had. Mrs. Parsons, one of our oldest friends, has been in H for some days. I can never forget the evening Maria Read, her Sister, and my sister Sarah were walking in my garden when Uncle Tom Bibb happened to ride up - he had long wanted to meet Maria, and fancied he was in love with her. So, as he came along, cut a rosebud, presented it, and asked Miss Maria to take a ride which she did, but for some reason best known to him, the ride was short and not repeated.
- Sept. 10 ... The maple trees are turning.
- Oct. 3 I have been busy all day, with my pit flowers - one thing I have plenty of them such as they are.
- 25 ... My pit is brim full of plants, but I don't expect all of them to live.
- Nov. 2 This is one of the loveliest days of Indian Summer. Windows are open and it is warm and delightful. It is said that there has been frost, but my dahlias and flowers in the garden are fresh.
- 14 Continues warm and sultry. The tomato vines are blooming in the garden.
- Nov. 21 I am just out of the garden where I found my lilies and dahlias and tomato vines in full bloom - the day is wet.
- Dec. 1 I have literally gathered the "Last Rose of Summer" this morning.
- 9 Bruce has ended his mortal career early in life. He was found dead in the garden this morning. Dr. Bryson is away with a delegation soliciting funds to establish a college in lieu of the one destroyed by the Federal Army.

1889

- Feb. 10 Sunday. Mr. White brought me the first crocus, I was in the pit this morning for the first time in many a day. I sent a branch of my beautiful oranges to Bettie Patton.
- 17 The warmest day I ever felt at this season. The jonquils and daffodils are budding.
- 31 Made wine
 1888 August 9th grape
 1887 September 15th muscadine
 1889 July 15th Blackberry wine
 1889 August 7th 25 gallons of Red Grape wine
 1889 August 14th 25 gallons of grape wine
- June 26 I think it was a real hard stroke of Providence when the great popular tree that has been for so many years threatening should fall just as the Clays had fixed everything so "spic and span" for the Press Association.
- 30 This is a lovely Sabbath morning. The Press Association have returned to their homes. I firmly believe it was intentional - the notice of old man Clay's entrance into the Hall. The Mercury stated the Press arose and his daughters cheered lustily. The next day the Mercury said it was a mistake. Mr. Clay came in with his daughters and the Press cheered lustily. However, they arranged a beautiful concert and Huntsville has done credit.
- July 10 Made fifteen gallons for Blackberry wine with John Morris for help.
- 20 I had my box cut out in front of the pit, and intend to have it all cut down. But it must be done in sections, else it would be too great a shock to my nervous system.
- Aug. 7 I made today with the help of John Morris thirty-five gallons of Red wine.
- 14 I have made a twenty-five cask of the nicest wine I ever made.

- Sept. 8 ... Add wanted to take the girls on the Dummy to the dance on Monte Sano, but Bessie went with O'Shaughnessy in a buggy so Jane preferred the carriage. It has turned very cool.
- 11 ... Ada has just brought me some slips to plant from Susie's yard, she had collected a quantity for her new place.
- Oct. 4 One of the loveliest days. Bessie will have me mention the Magnolia Blooms that are so beautiful now. She has been sick for a long time. ...
- 22 The Fair is over and I am glad of it. Sallie got two Premiums with my Wine.
- Nov. 3 Sunday morning, beautiful lovely day. The Heliotrope and Dahlias are blooming in the garden ...
- Dec. 15 Sunday evening. There sits on the front porch with Mr. White, Sandy and Jimmie Frank White and Add, Frank Fickling and Campbell and is warm as a May day.
- 29 The last Sunday in 1889, and very remarkable, in many places strawberries, lettuce, peach and apple blossoms and many summer flowers. Today is cooler and cloudy.

1890

... All this time my Beloved Husband was passing from earth to a better world, but oh me how can I live without him.

Sunday morning "the Solemn hour, that Sacred time" that never left him for a moment till Friday night May 30th he passed away. Good bye. Good bye.

1891

- Jan. 1 I begin a new Diary, yes a new life. I write in my dear Beloved's old book.
- 6 I am so glad to have paid so many of my debts. Planted the last of my Hyacinths and Tulips.

- Jan. 7 ... I am having old Champ to fix my Narcissus bed. I cannot bear to lose them, so I will collect them all in one place.
- 9 Add sent me a load of cotton seed.
- Feb. 7 The first Crocus blossom He always brought me with such loving tenderness. Saturday planted my Gladiolus.
- 18 I planted some Roses and Holly Hocks.
- 21 Still raining and no gardening yet.
- 26 Sent for my Dahlias.
- Mar. 10 Planted my Dahlias today ...
- 19 This is the first time in many - many years that old Ginny has not helped me to have the Irish potatoes cut but she poor old thing is now helpless. I hope my garden will be a success. Oh how many ways there are to touch the heart - how many ways to wound.
- 23 The Peachtrees in full bloom. I always am reminded of my Dear old Grandmother Bibb's pet name of Blossom. Some of my Hyacinths are beautiful but I am disappointed in my tulips.
- 25 Planted Tuberoses, and squash ...
- April 2 Ed Mitchel is planting my garden Cabbage plants from Trumps this evening.
- 4 I am thinking Trump and all sorts of "garden Sass" were killed by last nights frost.
- 7 ... I was surprised when Mitchel finished the brick border so nice and now I find I have enough brick to put up the walk. It is my Dear old darling's trench.

- April 11 ... Ed Mitchell is fixing the front walk with the logs from the garden. ... Planted mignonetta and flowersced.
- 15 ... finished the brick border, and it is very nice. I think a great improvement.
- 28 I think the walks are fixed very nicely though it hurts me to take down the old landmarks - for the Box Hedges that has been forty years growing was cut down in less then forty minutes - and has now all passed away forever, and with it goes all my young life associations. I am today replanting corn and pumpkins.
- May 2 ... I am mighty pleased with the condition of my old flower garden.
- 5 A clear windy day - we need rain so much - my White Peonies are beautiful, and what pleases me most of all like myself very old-timey.
- 10 ... The garden is parched and dry. George planted my last tomato plants very fine ones from Haines.
- June 17 ... Campbell painted my front porch.
- July 4 ... I have been engaged trying to get rid of the nutgrass. Planted some late corn.
- 10 Planted the fall Irish Potatoes.
- 11 Still quite cool. Put up Twelve jars of jam and four of Blackberry Cordial.
- 20 Really this has been the most delightful summer as far as the weather is concerned.
- 21 No grapes on my Dear old darlings grape vines.
- 24 I have had a mighty fight with the nutgrass! But it still comes.

- July 27 ... Yesterday was a singular day - at times the wind was hot and oppressive - but towards night it turned cool, quite cool. We could not stay on the porch.
- Aug. 4 Have had the old gate posts removed. They came from my front porch. It is cool enough for a fire. I have been trying to have the front walk fixed. It is a job my old Darling considered his own and well did he accomplish his tasks. Frank White is painting the gate posts. I have had my turnip bed renewed and beans planted today.
- 11 They "boys" with Joe replanted my fall potatoes to day.
- 23 ... Sunday ... the greatest change since yesterday which was the hottest day I ever felt, it is now at 4 o'clock p.m. 64 degrees.
- Sept. 23 ... Everything is parched and dried up for want of rain.
- Oct. 2 Still no rain - everything is parched up.
- 18 A little rain this morning ...
- 24 Not a drop of rain.
- 29 The most beautiful weather, not yet a drop of rain.
- Nov. 7 Indian Summer - I see the people coming from Monte Sano where they were called to put out the fires that threatened the summer residences.
- 9 The first little sprinkle of rain for a long, long time.
- 11 I have had today brought from the corner store six large rock steps - Ed Mitchell has fixed them in the walk.
- 1892**
- Feb. 1 "How circumstances alter cases" is very true at this time with me - for I declared never again would I try to make a garden - but my right hand man, Mitchell, is hard at work, ploughing and cleaning up for planting.

- Feb. 21 ... The Jonquils and Daffodils are beginning to bloom. I love and associated them with my early married life. I dreamed of Mr. White last night.
- Mar. 7 ... My Irish Potatoes all planted.
- 12 I now have a prospect of summer vegetables.
- Apr. 7 I planted many of my geraniums this morning. Am afraid it is most to soon, but I will risk it. Received a beautiful collection of roses, purchased by Mrs. Greenleaf - and Jane a White Oleander - my orange tree is lovely in bloom.
- 11 Much to the surprise of everybody it was pouring down rain when we got up this morning. It is now snowing. Wonder what will come next.
- 22 ... Planting geraniums today, am afraid of Blackberry Winter so I leave some for later planting.
- May 1 This is Sunday. In the old time the flowers of every description were in full bloom - and everybody with summer wear - today is cool enough for a fire - and thick clothes.
- 9 ... I cut some of the most beautiful roses I ever saw - and the first bloom from the beautiful white snow flake.
- 12 ... It was real cold last night, my flowers are blooming beautifully - and my vegetable garden is a feast for the eye but not yet for the stomach.
- June 16 ... I was annoyed at the mention of the table cloth in the Democrat.
- July 1 ... A long rainy spell and very cool - last night was cold.
- 9 Rain still rain.
- 31 This is the last day of the hottest very hottest month I ever spent.

- Aug. 1 Sure enough, the "cool wave" is with us - that is the nights are cool and pleasant - the day very hot.
- 23 I have had Wat Taylor to fix my pit. I hope it will do better.
- Oct. 5 My pit is fixed very nicely indeed better than it has been in many years ...
- 8 The first rain in a long time. Sallie and Susie had yesterday a delightful trip to the mountain ...
- Nov. 1 Well as I expected, my right hand man Ed Mitchell left me, said he could not stand the "cuss words," so I very willingly let him go. Hired a kind of Scape Goat for a day or two.

1893

- Mar. 16 All my potatoes are planted. Hot bed of tomatoes and cabbage. My pit flowers are all killed and I am afraid my orange tree is blighted. I am not well ...
- Apr. 6 Made my Sweet Potato Bed. Sandy gave me the potatoes.
- 12 I have been very sick. Brought from Church twenty-one Roses, and planted them. I think surely in planting I put too much manure on the roots. I am going to pursue a different plan with these.
- Aug. 11 Planted turnip seed, rolled in ashes, hoping for rain but none.
- Sept. 13 It continues wet and rainy. I am going to make another desperate effort for a Turnip Bed. The snakes seem to have taken possession of my Back Yard.
- Oct. 22 ... I sent Sister a basket of beautiful flowers for I thought more than probable she and I would never have it in our power to remember each other another year.
- Nov. 6 The days are beautiful. The trees are grand.

1894

- Jan. 18 The warmest spell I remember for many years. Smith the Gardener is busy as a Bee. My yard and premises look like an Old Barn yard.
- Mar. 12 A beautiful day. Had a water pipe and faucet put in the upstairs porch.
- Apr. 3 ... I have Pruitt planting my vegetable garden corn, peaes, beans, and squash and c.
- 9 I have cut down every Rose Bush.
- May 11 ... I am trying to work my garden successful - planted watermelon 11th and 12th ...
- Aug. 5 ... What with one thing and another, I have felt under the weather for the past few days. Although it is Sunday, I must record the success of my turnip planting for they are already up, to my delight.
- 10 Everybody is going to Monte Sano, to the Mary Clay Fancy Ball. Hot-Hot-Hot. Very Hot. Another blow. Another Blow. Oh, this kind of a life is killing me, and then everybody is so sweet and good to me.
- 13 Mr. James Mastin died this morning. Only a few remaining lines Cousin Eliya Jane Mastin, Aunt Eliza Hopkins, Sister and myself are the last of all that time. Well I do remember the Old pear tree, and the young Mastins would gather the pears for us.
- Oct. 1 Yesterday was one of the very hottest days of the summer, but this morning is cool enough for a fire, with a heavy fog. Mr. Brockus is moving my front porch to the back door.
- 2 Reached the back door about 3 o'clock.
- 9 Mr. Brockus has taken out the old front door. I had my flowers put in the front. This is a real frosty evening.

- Oct. 16 I try to realize the fact that "time is short with me," and am earnestly trying to make a just and Christian settlement of all my worldly concerns, so as not to be distracted with the cares of this world, when all my thoughts should be upon another, help me thus to settle all my earthly affairs. I accept Milt Humes' contributions to my porch given so kind and graceful. My porch is beautiful. Mr. Reognor is fixing my pit equal to Dryier.
- 18 One of the loveliest days for which I am so pleased. My porch is beautiful.
- 20 ... Mr. Brockus is doing my work very nice. My grate presented by Mr. Murphy suits me exactly. Lillie Greet sent me a beautiful cactus.
- 24 One of the most beautiful mornings the sun bright and the trees grand in their colours and I am so glad to have another day to work on my dear old house, that was so near gone. The kitchen chimney revealed our past dangers from fire and it seems Providential to have had it taken down. It scares me sometimes all this expense, but thank the Lord I am prepared to pay for it. It is too funny to see the little Dutch-man wriggling around with a pipe in his mouth as big as he is, but he is a faithful worker ...
- 25 Another beautiful day. Mr. Brockus making the front steps and old man finishing my new old front door and the Dutch man cleaning up the kitchen chimney. Thomas White has made a nice ornamental fence by the pit ...
- 28 Saturday ... Mr. Brockus is finishing the front steps. Who would believe that old Mrs. Tom White "Phenix like" has actually arisen from the ashes and as in days gone bye has a number of workmen employed fixing up the old place. Not less than ten workmen in sight. Well, well, who would believe it.
- 28 Another beautiful day. My little Grandchildren have enjoyed playing in the fallen maple leaves. My dear old House has lost many old landmarks but like myself has become old and "dilapidated."

- Nov. 1 I put down my carpet and things are getting strait once more. Even old Bob did not know the dear old premises, so changed front and rear.
- 10 ... My front door and sash have come. I don't know whether I am glad or sorry for everything around me will be so changed. Oh me, I do so long to see that Dear One.
- 24 ... I think Mr. Hoover, the carpenter, has put in his last nail, and now there is but little more to do and my old House and Shed is ever so nice.
- 25 ... Sunday morning like a bright summer day. This Dutch man has certainly fixed my yard substantial and nice.
- 27 The last touch on my dear Old House. ...
- Dec. 21 Put a quantity of gravel on the walk.
- 23 Another old landmark gone, had my dangerous old back steps taken down.

1895

- Mar. 18 Planted terrace.
- 26 Irish potatoes, corn.
- 27 Planted mustard bed, also Dahlias, Gladiolas.
- 29 In the Garden Mustard.
- Apr. 1 Corn, early corn in the garden, mignonette and nasturtium, Roses from Memphis.
- 4 Okra, Peas, Squash, and a quantity of Mustard & Adam's waste seed.
- 5 Jane planted her tomatoes and Old Champ planted fifty cabbage plants.

- Apr. 9 The Fruit Trees are in full bloom.
- 12 Good Friday, and a beautiful day I am glad to hear my corn is up.
- 18 Sandy planted my onions.
- 24 Planted butterbeans. Planted 150 cabbage plants, 12 tomato plants.
- 29 Planted Beans on the terrace.
- May 1 Planted watermelon & cantaloupe seed given by Dr. Robinson - and Add sent me Cabbage plants this morning - am ploughing my potatoes and replanting.
- 6 It brings such sad reflections when the season rolls around to lay aside the winter or the summer things. Not many valuables have I now to lay away.
- 11 I had a visit from Susan White ... came to invite Jane to Rose Bud party.
- 14 Planted nutmeg, melon seed that Rose brought me.
- 15 Planted watermelon seed from Belmina.
- 17 It seems to me the time has come.
- 18 Planted late corn above the grape vines. Planted six Yeatman Tomatoes.
- 28 I found my Wedding dress, all stained and torn, so I have ripped it up - fit emblem of myself.
- June 18 I have thought for a long time I could try and recall to my mind my Classmates ...
- July 9 Jane has gone to "lovely Monte Sano" with a large Coaching party.

- July 11 It feels like a day in the late fall ... Maria was at her first Party as a young Lady last night at Mr. Goldsmiths. ... My Grand Old Magnolia tree has just fallen, so one by one the beautiful things My Dear Old Darling surrounded me with.
- 18 Hot-Hot-Hot... My Garden is a great help at this time.

1896

- Mar. 9 Planted Snaps and Pease. Sallie fixing the drawing room.
- 10 I have employed Mr. McKay to plant my potatoes. ... I don't feel well today and have not for some time. We finished planting the Irish Potatoes.
- 26 ... Nice Mr. McKay planted my terrace in corn and a few potatoes.
- 27 McKay finished planting corn today.
- 29 Mr. Withers Clay died this morning.
- Apr. 9 Planted red pepper and Dr. Robinson's corn. Planted Cabbage and tomato plants.
- May 3 It is very warm. I have had the garden planted full and do hope it will be a success.
- 14 We had first mess of pease and snaps today. They were very nice.
- Aug. 15 This is Mr. White's birthday - 79 years old. His old wife can truly say, this is the saddest day of my life.

[Several blank pages later, in two different hands.]

Dear Ma died at twenty minutes to 2 o'clock, Sept. 14th 1896.

Dear Ma died at 1:50 "o'clock a.m., 1896.

The Diaries of Susan Bradley White offer readers of the Quarterly a unique opportunity to see through the eyes of a woman who lived in Huntsville all of her life, from July 22, 1823 to her death in 1896. The granddaughter of Pamela and Thomas Bibb, the daughter of James and Adeline Bibb Bradley, Susan married Thomas Wilson White, son of James White. Thanks to Eleanor Newman Hutchens, who edited the diaries; to Margaret Hutchens Henson, who helped with typing; and to Jane Faber Scott, who keeps Susan's flowers growing and still enjoys Susan's porch addition. The pit Susan writes about was one of the earliest glass covered pits for winter storage in this section. (Diary entries were selected by Elise Stephens.)



MY MOTHER'S GARDEN

She had a soul so like a flower,
That when she passed away
A garden was her monument,
And every year the blooms returned
With all the old-time scents,
Which she had known and loved.

But ever through the musk and spice
Of roses and of pinks,
Her spirit breathed a finer sense
Than either musk or spice;
And day by day, the fragrant air
Spoke less of Bloom than Soul.
'Til odors were but memories--
In that garden of the past

- Howard Weeden

**PLEASING TO THE EYE AND REFRESHING TO THE SOUL:
The Late Nineteenth-Century Landscape of Monte
Sano**

Frances Robb

Yesterday, in the rosy flush of dawn, while the sunbeams pierced the early mists of morning, we visited Monte Sano ... behind a gaily caparisoned steed fresh from the livery stable of Mr. Ozro K. Stegall, over the finest graded turnpike road in the state. The dewdrops glittering on the leaves of the trees sparkled in the early sunshine like diamonds in a setting of turquoise ... pleasing to the eye and refreshing to the soul.

At the head of the turnpike, [we] turn to the right, sharply canter over the broad drive, and in a few minutes Hotel Monte Sano is reached...

From the piazza the eye rests on a scene of wild woodland beauty. The crested hillside is studded thick with tall ancestral trees, and this weird scene - panoramic in its magnificence, stands out in striking contrast to the beautifully cultured and well-kept lawns on either side of the hotel.

Weekly Mercury
May 25, 1887, p. 8

... Upon arrival on the scene, we were fascinated by the grandeur and beauty of the surroundings; and when we recall the appearance of the same spot, only a few months ago, covered as it was then with its native growth of vines, shrubs, thistles, and cactus scattered in wild confusion over the ground where now stands this grand work of modern architecture, containing every improved convenience necessary for the comfort of man, and surrounded by the beauties of nature and art, we bow in admiration of the wonderful work of the hand of improvement, guided by the arm of progress and prompted by the spirit of genius and intellect.

Weekly Mercury
July 13, 1887, p. 2

These appreciations in a Huntsville newspaper were published during the first summer's operation of the Hotel Monte Sano. One hundred years later, they provide considerable insight into the late nineteenth-century Huntsvillians's conception of a beautiful and interesting landscape, and they furnish convincing evidence of the ability of the hotel's developers and staff to fulfill visitors' expectations.

The development of Monte Sano in the 1880s and 1890s by the North Alabama Improvement Company, a group of "enterprising gentlemen ... moneyed men" (Weekly Mercury, Oct. 4, 1885, p. 3), is an absorbing subject for North Alabamians, many of whom are still fascinated by the short-lived glamour of Hotel Monte Sano and Yankee entrepreneur James F. O'Shaughnessy's "summer cottage": handsome buildings in landscaped grounds, twin jewels of a wooded plateau dotted with picturesque natural wonders.

From a national perspective, Monte Sano's development is part of a complex of phenomena that just over a century ago began to transform the appearance of the American landscape. These phenomena are of two kinds, each grounded in a distinctive attitude towards the land and its relationship to human activity.

The older attitude, brought to America by the continent's earliest settlers, holds that humankind holds dominion over inanimate nature. In this view, land - especially undeveloped land - is a resource to be exploited and transformed for immediate economic benefit. By the 1880s, this attitude lay behind:

1. Investment in the development of large elegant resort hotels
2. Construction of railroads and spur lines to make new holiday destinations widely accessible
3. Marketing strategies by railroads and hoteliers (day-tripping, through ticketing, special-events coordination) aimed at long-distance travelers and local visitors of every income level.

Responding to urban congestion, ugliness, and disease, the newer attitude reflects the influence of Romanticism on American lifeways. This attitude is premised on the belief that untouched land and its natural inhabitants manifest the wholeness of divine creation - the remnants of original creation - unsullied by civilization's excesses. According to this view, experiencing nature is recreational in the original meaning of the word: recreation of mind, body, and spirit, best accomplished by direct experience of nature. The result of this point of view was the development of many "green-space" movements, including

1. Establishment of large urban parks (Central Park, New York is the earliest example);
2. Changes in national land-use priorities, resulting in the establishment by Congress of the first U.S. national parks (Yellowstone, 1872; Yosemite, 1890) “for the benefit and enjoyment of the people;”
3. “Greening” of urban neighborhoods: grass lawns, trees, shrubs, and flowers (previously landmarks of the affluent) become the norm for middle-class “front yards.”
4. The enthusiasm of individuals, families, and organizations for restorative vacations and open-air excursions.

Economic benefit from land development and romantic recreation of the human spirit through encounters with nature may seem incompatible, contradictory, yet in one late-nineteenth century environment - the scenic resort - both goals might be accomplished. The Hotel Monte Sano resort complex was not intended to facilitate experience of “pure” wilderness, nor was the hotel envisioned as a solitaire in a landscaped setting. Rather, it was to be the largest, most polished, and most alluring gem in a careful speculative design that included sprawling “summer estates,” inexpensive bungalows on street-front house lots, and a wooded parkland replete with scenic viewspots, spectacular natural wonders, and historic landmarks. All these elements were to be linked by a network of carriage roads and walking and bridle paths. Success would reward investors and accelerate the region’s economic development, and the resulting amenity would serve the recreational needs of day-trippers, vacationers, and year-round inhabitants.



Coach used by day-trippers on trips to Monte Sano.

The landscape we experience is a complex of sensations - close-up, middle ground, and distant view - encountered in time. Our experience varies with the seasons, time of day, and weather, and with our moods, preoccupations, and expectations. Surviving first-hand accounts indicate that Monte Sano's planners, including landscape architect Major Schrimshaw of New York City, provided a variety of satisfying experiences of landscape for late nineteenth-century visitors.

In this experience of the Monte Sano landscape, a conflation of Nature and Civilization was seen. The result was comfortable and unthreatening. The more intimidating aspects of raw wilderness were kept at a picturesque distance. The wildest view from the mountain was to the southeast, a "scene which baffles description ... An extended range of wild mountains and cove, unbroken by a vestige of civilization ..." (Hotel Monte Sano Breeze, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 26, 1890, p. 3. All subsequent citations of this newspaper refer to this rare surviving issue, in the collections of the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library.) Another visitor "was overwhelmed with the wonderful view; mountain after mountain standing there in splendor and glory" (Breeze, p. 2). Monte Sano's visitors climbed the plateau's summit to experience this view, the most awesome and "uncivilized," from a safe distance, protected by rustic fences.

The views to north, southeast, and west were more civilized. The hotel was located one hundred yards from the western edge of the mountain, with a view of the city of Huntsville. On a clear day, ascent to the sheltered safety of the hotel's viewing tower could yield a panorama of town and farm country stretching westward twenty-five or thirty miles. The northern view was especially fine from the grounds of Grand View, the J. L. Rison home, as Breeze (p. 1) noted: "With a field glass one can see the trains winding along for twenty miles."

Visiting clergyman L. D. Bass of Greenville, Michigan, wrote a description of the mountain's views for his hometown newspaper. His comments were reprinted in Breeze (p. 2). When Bass gazed southward, he noted that "The Tennessee River twelve miles away looks like a silver thread as it seeks to find the Mississippi, meandering through the lovely land." Looking east and north, he adds:

"The roads look like chalked lines and the little fields resemble the squares in a beautiful wrought quilt. It is lovely to gaze on these scenes by day, but the night views are often finer still."

Bass also praised Monte Sano's clarity of atmosphere, describing it as so transparent "that the most distant objects stood out with the most perfect clarity of both color and outline."

Though Monte Sano has its share of fierce weather, its nineteenth-century publicists boast only sunny skies. A note in Breeze implies that visitors to the mountaintop are safely above the storm line. They can watch the storms, uninvolved, as a distant spectacle mounted for their benefit:

"From our elevated position ... we can enjoy ... clouds streaked with lightning and sometimes a very distant rumble of thunder ... we will have the pleasure of watching the great black clouds roll along the mountainside." (Breeze, p. 1)

Underbrush, poison ivy, snakes, and insects (and the cactus and vines described in the July 13, 1887 Weekly Mercury) discouraged visitors from straying from the paths and drives to encounter unmodulated wilderness. Monte Sano's twenty miles of paths and drives exposed visitors to a scenic outlook at each projecting point or bluff, and to an exceptionally large variety of natural stands of trees and wildflowers. In Changing Huntsville (Huntsville, 1972, p. 47) Elizabeth Humes Chapman notes that Howard Weedon painted 208 different species of Monte Sano's wildflowers one spring - testimony of the mountains's botanical richness. The number of species of trees was also impressive: white oak, walnut, red oak, poplar, cherry, sassafras, persimmon, magnolia, pecan, plum, maple, mulberry, paw-paw, waterbeechn, hickory, dogwood, sycamore, willow, ash, elm, spicewood, black gum, black haw, and red cedar (Breeze, p. 8). The writer found these "splendid stands" "magnificent." He was also aware of their potential as industrial materials, for he comments on "the fine red cedar, extensively used in making lead pencils."

Walking and bridle paths provided the easiest routes to Monte Sano's geological wonders - unusual formations tamed by civilizing ease of access. Fat Man's Squeeze, for example, could hardly threaten the most timid spirit. Inching through the Squeeze must have yielded the comfortable impression that a jocular nature had intended it as an amusement for holidaymakers. Other geological formations were also anthropomorphized: Lover's Leap, Ella's Rock, Inspiration Point, Brigand's Cavern, and Abbey Rocks.

Awareness of the mountain's history also humanized its terrain and natural wonders, as can be seen in Carol Pleasants' amateur verse:

Thick with romance glamour golden
And with legend sweet and olden,
Every mossy dell and fountain, every rocky boulder gray;
With their Indian tradition,
Backward turns the dreamy vision,
Where the camp fires here were lighted and
the red man held his sway.

The mountain's most awesome natural phenomena, a deep natural well, was explored by well-equipped groups like the one led by Major Schrimshaw in 1889 (Birdie Campbell, A History of Monte Sano, unpublished typescript, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, p. 5). The well, conveniently situated near the hotel, is a deep horseshoe-shaped limestone pot hole. Roughly twenty-five by forty feet across, it drops vertically 150 feet into the mountain's heart, then spirals to a depth of 348 feet, terminating in a chain of subterranean caverns.

Other mountaintop wonders included a cold spring, fifteen chalybeate (carbonate of iron) springs, an alum spring, and many interesting rock formations, including the "romantic mysteries" of Earthquake Glen and the "ordeal" of the Needle's Eye (Breeze, pp. 4-5, 8). Strolling the paths to these wonders was made easier by the occasional placement of stone steps and low walls. These simple structures, obviously manmade, would have humanized the wilderness terrain.

The springs scattered over the mountaintop also bore the signs of human care and shaping. Some boasted stone retaining walls that created picturesque waterpools and protected visitors from missteps. Several springs boasted unpainted rustic wellhouses constructed of tree trunks and slender saplings. The saplings resembled those used for the hotel's balconies, fences, and trellised gateways. The rustic design and materials suggest that the visual environment of woodland areas was carefully coordinated with that of the hotel and its immediate environs.

Monte Sano's natural wonders were thus complemented on every hand by evidence of humanity's civilizing force: paths, stone steps and walls, sapling fences and wellhouses, anthropomorphic nicknames, and landscaped lawns. The May 25, 1887 Mercury contrasts the "weird ... magnificence" of the natural panorama with the "beautifully cultured and well-kept lawns" of the hotel. A July

13, 1887 article in the same paper (p. 2) lauds the human transformation of the raw landscape, resulting in “convenience ... and beauty.” A public relations puff in Breeze describes an environment in which a gentled nature interpenetrates elegant architecture in a seam less flow:

... the graver spirits sit about the verandahs in the cool but soft evening air and watch the bright scene which is scarcely separated from them since the parlor also opens on every side by great doors to the loveliness (sic) about it.

Breeze, p.4

Breeze points out (p. 5) that the hotel’s dining room was also open to panoramic views, allowing hungry visitors the best of both worlds:

We do not need to leave all this beauty reluctantly behind us when hunger calls us to breakfast, for the dining room opening of every side, gives us gracious views of hill and vale while we linger over delicious melons and the more substantial delicacies prepared by our skillful chef.

The hotel’s design emphasized comfort, luxury, healthy air, and restoring views. Wide verandahs encircled the building, ensuring that all bedrooms had “ample openings for the admission of lights, free circulation of the bracing mountain air, and ... superb views (Breeze, p. 7). A “conspicuous and commanding observatory” (a viewing tower) crowned the structure (Breeze, p. 7). Architect John Rea incorporated these features into the hotel’s “modern architecture,” a simplified rustic version of the then-fashionable Queen Anne style. This loose adaptation of a period style is noted for picturesque asymmetry, complex gabled roofs and turrets, and slender decorative elements. The applied details and relaxed informality that made it exceptionally popular with house builders made it equally appropriate for country hotels, especially ones that catered to a family trade. The silhouette of Hotel Monte Sano was lively and picturesque, and its complex roof line was a prominent local landmark.

Hotel Monte Sano’s sprawling bulk was undoubtedly impressive, but its all-wood fabric and stick-style ornament yield an impression of spare simplicity, especially in comparison with other contemporary resort hotels in Alabama like the Bellevue Hotel near Noccalula Falls or the Montezuma Hotel on the outskirts of Bessemer.

Contemporary newspaper accounts and surviving photographs in the collections of the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library yield evidence of the landscaping of the hotel grounds. One early photograph, a bare-leaved winter view, shows several landscaped areas defined by carriage drives and edged with low crisscross fencing behind which are evenly spaced, sparse-limbed trees about five feet tall. Each landscaped area is entered by a rustic gateway of slender sapling posts, similar in their spare open design to balcony railings and other ornaments on the hotel. Some of the sapling gateways are substantial enough to serve as trellises for vines, though no vines can be seen. A Weekly Mercury article of July 13, 1887 indicated (p. 2) that the landscaping was accomplished in only a few months, suggesting that the photography may have been taken the winter before the hotel opened, after the young trees had been planted and the gas lamps described in the July 8, 1887 Weekly Mercury(p. 3) had been installed. This photograph may have been made early enough to form the basis for handworked publicity illustrations - woodcuts, wood engravings, or tintogrames.



The leafless, sparsely branched new trees, similar in silhouette to fruit trees, are hard to identify. Nevertheless, some deductions can be supported by secondary evidence. During the late nineteenth century, nurseries became one of Huntsville's major industries. In the Dec. 9, 1885 Weekly Mercury (p. 5), Huntsville Nurseries advertises "Oriental pear, Laconte and Keifer - drawn from cuttings, peaches, apples, cherries, plumbs, and roses." Fruit trees would have been likely candidates for the landscaping, for they flourished on the mountain, according to the May 25 Weekly Mercury(p. 5). This claim is extended by Breeze, in a short article (p. 1) which describes Grand View, a "lovely home" owned by J. L. Rison and situated on the brow of the mountain looking north.

owned by J. L. Rison and situated on the brow of the mountain looking north. The brief mention of the Risons' "haven of rest and comfort" reports that the Risons' "fine orchard of ten acres bears some of the nicest fruit raised in this section as well as nuts of all varieties."

A later photograph of Hotel Monte Sano shows a summer view, with grassy lawns somewhat sparser than the "velvet carpeting of green" described in the June 8, 1887 Weekly Mercury, (p. 3). Clumps of shrubs and beds of flowers, each planted with a single species, dot the lawns. The photograph is not clear enough to identify the plants. Newspaper accounts are, though admiring, extremely vague in describing the hotel's plantings; the most specific comment is that of the June 29, 1887 Weekly Mercury, (p. 6): "Around the hotel a sweet odorous breath of flowers [perfumes] the already fragrant air."

The other jewel in Monte Sano's crown was the summer home of James F. O'Shaughnessy, situated on the eastern slope of the mountain about two miles from the hotel. Breeze, (p. 1), describes O'Shaughnessy's residence as a "modern cottage with all improvements"; photographs show it a far larger domicile than is today associated with the term. The cottage burned to the ground in the spring of 1890 and was not rebuilt. Photographs indicate that it was a large wooden structure constructed, like the hotel, in Queen Anne style. Its rambling asymmetry was lavished with verandahs, an open balcony extending over the carriage entrance, and four corner turrets with conical roofs. The verticality of the ornaments is emphasized by prominent lighting rods.

The O'Shaughnessy cottage was landscaped, like the hotel, by Major Schrimshaw. Surviving photographs show winter and summer views. In the



winter photographs, the carriage drive is visible, as are tall scattered native trees. Though the grounds are clear of underbrush, no plantings are visible. A later photograph, taken in summer, shows clumps of shrubs and flower beds beneath the trees and edging the carriage drive near the house. Young fruit trees have been planted near the house, and large-leaved coleus fill washpot-sized containers near the drive. Young vines climb the verandah supports, a decorative rather than a shading element at the time the photograph was taken.

In 1890, the summer following the fire that demolished the house, the landscaped grounds were described in Breeze (p. 1) as

... simply beautiful, all varieties of flowers one can name are to be found in this vast yard arranged in lovely beds, vaces (sic), mounds, etc. The walks and drives are all of gravel, and when you enter the lodge which is a beauty, you are charmed with one scene after another during your visit at these grounds. This place includes about five hundred acres. Among the other attractions is Lily lake, surrounded by beautiful flowers, rustic seats, and divans where one can lounge away an idle hour and forget the cares and troubles of this busy world.

The “vace” and the Lily lake may be seen in photographs. The former is a four-tiered vertical framework covered with ivy, and reaching an impressive height of twelve feet or so. The Lily lake was a small pond approached by gravel paths and tree tunnels, and crossed by a low, gently curving bridge edged with sapling fences. Clumps of plants may be seen near the paths, but only a single lily leaf is visible, at the lake’s edge in the foreground.



Photographs show that the entrance to O’Shaughnessy’s extensive acreage was marked by a sturdy round gatehouse, built of large stones, with a conical roof. Set in the side of the gatehouse was a

watering trough made of a single massive stone under a cut-stone arch. To each side of the drive stretched low mortared fieldstone walls topped by horizontal iron bars and sporting young plantings of ivy. The gate, constructed of a few slender iron bars, was light and airy, providing visual contrast to the gatehouse and walls.

The hotel and James O'Shaughnessy's summer cottage, along with their lawns and plantings, proclaimed humanity's civilizing force. Nevertheless, nature's unpredictability occasionally must have added a delicious frisson to some visitors' experiences. A broken railing at a view spot, a snake slithering into the undergrowth, the train engine's struggle to hairpin up the mountain: all might have reminded the visitor of nature's destructive potential.

Shortly after Monte Sano train service was inaugurated in 1888, a derailment occurred on the descent, fortunately without injury to train or passengers. James F. Sulzby, Jr., writing in Historic Alabama Hotels and Resorts (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1960, p. 183-184) points out that the steep winding railroad was a deterrent to visitors; he details the efforts of the railroad company to convince the public of the line's safety. In any case, the derailment stands as a signal instance of the imperfect control by human engineers of Nature's forces.



Perusal of Breeze's advertisements indicates the symbiotic relationship of the resort hotel/land development industry and the railroads. Of the thirty ads in Breeze, nine are for major railroad lines linking Huntsville to the eastern half of the United States. Significantly, the Monte Sano railroad is prominently featured in four of Breeze's five illustrations. (The fifth is a view of a chalybeate spring.)

A trip up the mountain on the new railroad line must have been an exhilarating experience for locals and for visitors making the connection in Huntsville from the Memphis & Charleston or the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis railways. The Monte Sano Railroad's standard gauge track was eight and a half miles long and offered dramatic views. Breeze's illustrations offer foretaste and souvenir of the mountain's scenic wonders and the adventure of traveling there by train through vertical limestone cuts, along s-curves and hairpins, and across the long wooden trestle.

Visitors to Monte Sano compared the mountain and its views to other scenic places, yielding fascinating insights into their expectations and the mountain's success in meeting them. Novelty was a desirable attribute within America's rapidly developing tourism industry; thus, Breeze (p. 8) boasts that Monte Sano possesses both beauty and novelty, since the resort is a "new place, not yet discovered by the great tourist world."

Monte Sano's lands were privately owned, and the mountaintop was developed with an eye to profits. Nevertheless, both sites are the result of Americans' increasing awareness of recreational nature - and their willingness to pay (directly or through taxation) for access to it.

Investment in hotels was a risky business in the late nineteenth century. Nearly a score of large, elegant hotels were built in Alabama in the late nineteenth century, one in 1875, the others in the boom years 1880-1890. Most have not survived. Curiously, the only one still operated as a hotel is the earliest to be constructed: Point Clear's Grand Hotel.

Only five of this group were downtown hotels. The others were, like Hotel Monte Sano, resort hotels - centerpieces in speculative land development schemes, located on major railroad lines or on specially constructed spur tracks. Few survived the Panic of 1893-1894; many had not been profitable even in the boom years preceding the panic. Despite their undoubted glamour, these hotels were over-large, over-optimistic over-developments, constructed in hope of luring wealthy visitors to become investors and settlers in the new land develop-

ment area and in nearby towns. They were too distant from urban centers to provide services to business travelers. Though they offered exceptional amenities (orchestras, fine cuisine, elaborate public rooms, luxurious private rooms), their expenses were high and their rates too low to return a profit.

Of Alabama's fifteen resort hotels of this period, only a few compared in size and amenities to Hotel Monte Sano. These included the Bellevue Hotel, Gadsden (1889), located near Nocalula Falls; the short-lived East Lake Hotel (1889), Birmingham; the Lakeview Hotel (1887-88), Birmingham; the Montezuma Hotel (1886), Bessemer; and the Grand Hotel, Point Clear. Analysis of the data Sulzby recorded, hotel by hotel, in Historic Alabama Hotels and Resorts, shows that all of these grand hotels suffered financial reverses during the business panic of 1893. Most were long-term victims of over optimistic estimates of visitor counts and revenues. Great numbers of visitors from far away never materialized, and revenues from day-trippers were not sufficient to pay for maintenance and staff costs of these large, elaborate operations.

Too, these hotels were competing with more prominent tourist destinations, like Atlantic City, Florida, and the new national parks - competition with which the Hotel Monte Sano and the Monte Sano Railroad were aware. Sulzby points out (p. 184) that in 1893 the Monte Sano Railroad announced that it would not operate that summer "since the World's Fair in Chicago was likely to attract all the customers."

What is impressive, in terms of Monte Sano's landscape history, is that extensive acreage atop Monte Sano remained available for further development during the 1920s. At that time a consortium of local businessmen led by D. C. Monroe, once an employee of Hotel Monte Sano, acquired the property and once *again* turned their hands to its development. This group's vision - like that of Monte Sano's original planners - was similarly doomed by financial panic, in this case the Great Depression. nevertheless, much of the land of the 1880s development survived relatively intact, along with the scenic outlooks, natural wonders, pathways, and thickety woods. In the 1930s, an agreement between the development consortium and the State of Alabama, facilitated by new national legislation that brought a state park system to all the states, created Monte Sano State Park. This most recent chapter in the story of the mountain's landscaping is another story, but there is no question that the present state park owes its existence to the vision of both groups of Monte Sano's developers.

Today, at the top of the plateau, parkland and developed residential neighborhoods coexist in a landscape that is still hauntingly reminiscent, here and there, of the original 1880s design. Grand residences still dot the mountain, their styles recalling - as did the old hotel and the O'Shaughnessy "cottage" - the great architectural styles of the past.

This year's "Decorators' Show House," a benefit event of the Women's Guild of the Huntsville Museum of Art, is sited at a house on the mountain's flanks. Its name, Tollgate, recalls the gate where in the 1880s, a 25-cent fee was collected for the trip up the mountain and back again. The modern Tollgate's pediment resembles the soaring Queen Anne pediments of the Monte Sano Hotel, the O'Shaughnessy house, and the original gatekeeper's Tollhouse. The decoration of the interior recalls the luxury and comfort that distinguished the old hotel. And, like the mountain's most distinguished buildings, Monte Sano's newest grand house faces a spectacular view.

Tollgate's landscaping is modern, but in its combination of natural trees, shrubs carefully selected to flourish in the mountain's cooler temperatures, and space for individualized flower plantings, it continues the honorable history of landscaping on Monte Sano, Huntsville's mountain.



HARRISON BROTHERS

Harrison Brothers has an abundance of items for garden and porch, nostalgic and functional. For instance, there is a shiny red pushmower which is of very good quality and is ideal for mowing small spots or for those who are looking for ways to recall the pleasant times preserved in memory. Remember when Saturday mornings were times when, instead of the noise of power mowers, you could actually hear the birds singing? Incidentally, you can also find unusual bird houses, bird feeders, beautiful bird baths and sundials at the old store.

Hand tools for the garden include New England made pieces with wood handles and cast aluminum molded pieces, great for bulb planting, digging, and weeding. (There is a really great dandelion weeder which actually works!) Rakes in several sizes, along with weeders, floral garden shovels, and other handy garden items rest in an old keg saved from long ago when nails and other hardware were shipped in wooden kegs and boxes, just waiting for your selection.

Strawberry pots, flower pots, and cute animal-shaped terra cotta planters are available for just the right spot in the garden. Charming garden and porch figurines and plaques in concrete or plaster include gargoyles, rabbits, birds, St. Francis, cherubs, and children. There are even beautiful planters and bowls in cabbage and asparagus designs for centerpieces or flower arranging. Some are designed to fit around umbrellas on patio tables for flower arrangements or for refreshments.

“Bloomsavers” are newly arrived in the store - special cutting containers in which to plunge flowers as they are cut, as well as a nutrient for longer lasting cut flowers. Gardening and work gloves are available in all sizes. There is even a matched mother and daughter “Mom and Me” set. Straw hats in a simple natural color and hand-painted ones with flowers will provide protection from the sun. There are gardening books with color designed plans and all sorts of hints. Herb seed packets will allow you to have herb gardens now or windowsill plantings all winter.

Porch rockers in several styles: slat-back, spindle-back, ladder-back, and woven-back are available finished or ready for you to paint to match your decor. Old fashioned fans can be found - to cool you while you rock. All sorts of books to provide relaxation or stimulation - reproductions, nostalgia, history, humor, flower, and gardening books - while you enjoy the rockers on your porch. Games such as dominoes, and diversions such as kaleidoscopes also offer entertainment possibilities. There are even Victorian seed jars to indulge you in the Victorian pastime of examining seeds and other miniature findings.

Handmade pottery items could be put to good use on the porch. There are hand-painted pottery tea pitchers and crocks for lemonade or whatever. One special crock is painted with "Harrison Brothers, Est. 1879. Huntsville, Alabama." Galvanized tubs and buckets are also great for "icing down" cold drinks.

Charcoal lighters are guaranteed to start your cookout fire without the use of chemical firestarters. Grills for cooking hamburgers, hot dogs, or fish; long-handled tongs and brushes; barbecue mops in miniature pottery churns for barbecue sauce are just a few of the cookout accouterments available in the store.

Wooden or metal trays for serving and brightly colored cotton kitchen towels and napkins make serving refreshments a delight. Baskets are there in abundance for decorating, for flower arranging, or for just holding things.

Harrison Brothers was established in 1879 and has been located on the courthouse square since 1897. It is owned and operated by the Historic Huntsville Foundation. Paula Ingram is the manager and contributed this article.



"A Stitch In Time"

AN AMERICAN SIGNATURE QUILT

Through the years HHF has come up with a number of creative fundraisers. No one who attended will ever forget the memorable "Rooftop Affair," an elegant party held under a full moon on the upper level of a downtown parking garage, with music, dancing, fireworks, and a magnificent view of city lights. The "Movable Feast" was unique, as was the Harrison Bros. benefit on the downtown square, with dinner at the courthouse and an auction and street dance.

Now, in an effort to pay off the remaining mortgage on Harrison Bros., Lynn Jones and Dale Rhoades have come up with an unusual project that will not only preserve history, but create history as well. Lynn and Dale have been busy for almost a year writing letters and collecting autographs from famous personalities for an American Signature Quilt. Lynn was inspired by an antique (1880-81) signature quilt owned by Dale, which contains signatures of many well known personalities of that day and was used as a fundraiser for the GAR. She approached Dale with the idea of making a modern day signature quilt as a fundraiser for the store, and Dale said, "Let's do it!"

They have been totally consumed by their determination to secure signatures from a broad spectrum of Americans who have made an impact on the 20th

century, and overwhelmed by the response to their requests. The result is a full size Ohio Star quilt (pieced by Dale, and hand quilted by Ellen Anson), containing the signatures of 163 notable personalities. Bob Hope, Katherine Hepburn, President Bush and three past Presidents, James Michener, Edward Teller, Milton Friedman, Walter Cronkite, Charles Schultz, Neil Armstrong, Mickey Mantle, Jonas Salk, Captain Kangaroo, Rosa Parks, Jessica Tandy, and Helen Hayes are just a few of those who responded. A full list of the signers is included in the latest HHF newsletter. They constitute a veritable Who's Who of the late 20th century. Frances Robb has developed an educational packet, which will be used in local social studies classes this fall, based on the names included in the quilt. This quilt is a real treasure.

A kick-off party to introduce the quilt to Foundation members is scheduled for September 7th, from 7 to 9 p.m., at Gorin's. The quilt will also be on display at the Court House on Trade Day, September 8. Raffle tickets will be available at that time. A drawing for the quilt will be held November 3rd at a gala celebration, to which all the signers, Foundation members, and their friends will be invited. You will be hearing more about this in the future. The Foundation preserves Harrison Bros. as a "place in time." To support this preservation effort we present our American Signature Quilt, "A Stitch in Time."

ORDER FORM

To order raffle tickets, send check payable to Historic Huntsville Foundation, to:

Historic Huntsville Foundation
Box 786
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

Tickets are \$5 each,
or 3 for \$10.

Number of Tickets: _____
Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

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For further information call Dale Rhoades, 534-3002, or Lynn Jones, 534-6671. Please do not call Harrison Bros. for ticket information, but tickets may be purchased there.

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Yes I am interested in volunteering for a Historic
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The HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION was established in 1974 to encourage the preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures throughout Huntsville and Madison County and to increase public awareness of their value to the community. The FOUNDATION is the only organization in Huntsville concerned exclusively with architectural preservation and history. Other similar organizations within Huntsville are concerned either with general history or only with those buildings located within preservation districts.

Summarized, HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION has two main objectives: preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures throughout Huntsville and Madison County; and, educating the public on and increasing their awareness of this historical heritage.

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