Celebrating Garden Genius: A Handbook to Selected Gardens by Charles F. Gillette

Charles F. Gillette Forum

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Acknowledgements and Credits: The Charles F. Gillette archives at the Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, provided a rich source for the material in this handbook. The University of Richmond and the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens appreciate their grant of permission to digitize the figures in the handbook.

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**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**Thursday, May 14, 1992**

- 8:15 a.m.  Registration and Coffee
- 9:00 a.m.  Welcome: Frank Robinson

  **Lectures:**
  - George Longest, "On the Making of Genius"
  - Jack Robertson, "Charles Gillette Archives at the University of Virginia: A Moldering Treasure Trove"
  - Meade Palmer, "Personal Reminiscences"

- 12:30 p.m.  Lunch, University of Richmond Commons
- 1:45 p.m.  Garden Visits (buses provided):
  - Elderslie
  - The Executive Mansion of the Commonwealth of Virginia
  - Redesdale

**Thursday, May 14, 1992 (Evening)**

- 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  **A Garden Party in honor of John Brookes**  

**Friday, May 15, 1992**

- 8:15 a.m.  Registration and Coffee
- 9:00 a.m.  Welcome: Frank Robinson

  **Lectures:**
  - John Brookes, "The Evolution of Landscape Design in the Twentieth-Century"
  - Robin Karson, "The Country Place Era: Its Stirring and Spread Across America"

- 12:00 noon  Lunch, University of Richmond Commons
- 1:15 p.m.  Garden Visits (buses provided):
  - Agecroft
  - 4300 Sulgrave Road
  - Nordley
  - Virginia House

**Saturday, May 16, 1992**

- 8:30 a.m.  Departure from Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

  & 9:30 a.m.  Garden visits (buses provided, lunch at Christ Church in Gordonsville):
  - Little Yatton
  - Meadowfarm
  - Midway
CELEBRATING GARDEN GENIUS:
A Handbook to Selected Gardens by Charles F. Gillette

The Charles F. Gillette Forum
May 14, 15 and 16, 1992

The Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Clinton Webb and The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation
for the generous grant which has made this Forum possible.

• • •

THE GARDEN OWNERS

Walter Casati

Dr. and Mrs. Adam J. Fiedler

Mr. and Mrs. E. Morgan Massey

The Honorable Helen Marie Taylor

Mr. and Mrs. Wyatt A. Williams, Jr.

and others,

as well as

Scott Burrell, Virginia House

Cathy Walker Green, The Executive Mansion

Richard Moxley, Agecroft

• • •

The Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
The Bloemendaal Society

• • •

The University of Richmond

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George C. Longest  
Chairman, The Gillette Forum Committee

The Gillette Forum Committee

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Mrs. Eugene G. Bowles, Jr.  
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The Charles Gillette archives at the Fiske Kimball Fine Arts Library of the University of Virginia provided a rich source for the material in this handbook. All Gillette drawings not otherwise noted are from the collection. Our thanks to Jack Robertson, Fine Arts Librarian, without whose interest and assistance none of this would have been possible. Unfortunately, Charles Gillette’s workshop suffered a fire that destroyed many drawings; others are unaccountably missing. Therefore, the task of interpreting all of the gardens in a similar way became impossible. Wherever possible we have tried to show features for comparison, such as the pavilions. For Nordley, documentation exists for every facet of the design process. The interesting evolution of the gardens at Nordley has been used to demonstrate what must have transpired at all the other gardens. The Gillette gardens were seldom a one-step process, but a series of meticulously drawn, carefully conceived plans, usually implemented over time. The thirty-seven extant designs for Nordley also graphically depict the relationship between W. L. Bottomley and Charles Gillette, a combination that resulted in some of Richmond’s most exceptional houses and gardens.

Editorial Assistance: Sheila Hayden, W. John Hayden

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THE LECTURERS

John Brookes is internationally known for his excellence in garden design. Widely published, his last work, *The Book of Garden Design*, appeared in September, 1991. Mr. Brookes resides in England, where he has practiced landscape design since 1964. John Brookes has designed and constructed gardens in Great Britain, Europe, the United States, Japan, Australia, and South America. Recently completed projects include: an English garden at the Idaho Botanic Garden; Boberski Park in Lake Forest, Illinois; a three acre English private garden in Tateshina, Japan; and the English Walled Garden at the Chicago Botanic Garden, dedicated by H.R.H. Princess Margaret. A teacher, as well as a practitioner of his art, Mr. Brookes frequently conducts workshops on garden design throughout the world.

Robin Karson, author of *Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect*, is currently at work on a new book about the Country Place Era that presents Steele and his contemporaries in context. Ms. Karson lectures frequently about the landscape architects of the period and other topics relating to early-twentieth-century landscape history. She is executive director of the newly formed Library of American Landscape History, an organization that facilitates the publication of books about American landscape design and history. Ms. Karson also serves on the Advisory Committee of the Garden Conservancy and is the Vice-Chairperson for the American Society of Landscape Architects Open Committee on Historic Preservation. Her monograph about the Cleveland, Ohio, estate, Gwinn (designed by Charles Platt, Warren Manning, and Ellen Shipman), will be published by Sagapress in 1993.

Rachel M. Lilly, an Albemarle County landscape architect, has been a principal in her own landscape design firm since 1983. With a practice directed primarily towards garden restoration, residential, estate, and farm landscape architecture, her projects range in scope from complex residential and farm projects to intimate city gardens. Currently she is working on properties in Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Washington, D.C. Ms. Lilly received her B.A. in Art History from Sweet Briar College and a Master of Landscape Architecture from the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia.

George C. Longest, author of *Genius in the Garden: A Biography of Charles F. Gillette*, is a native of Richmond, Virginia. After receiving his B.A. and M.A. in English from the University of Richmond, he took his Ph.D. in English at the University of Georgia. A student of Southern literature, with a particular interest in the Romantic and Realistic periods of American literature, Dr. Longest has taught at Virginia Commonwealth University since 1962. He is the author of numerous articles and essays. An avid gardener, Dr. Longest is married to Jean Montgomery and is the father of four children.
Meade Palmer was elected Fellow to the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). He has been in private practice as a landscape architect since 1948. Mr. Palmer, who created many award winning designs, won the ASLA's highest award in 1991—the ASLA Medal Award. The scope of his projects continues to be very broad, and includes design and construction of public grounds, roads, and parkways; garden restoration; private residences; subdivisions; and schools and colleges. Dumbarton Oaks and the National Cathedral are among projects on which Mr. Palmer is currently consulting. Meade Palmer also has the distinction of having apprenticed with Charles F. Gillette. His is a unique perspective of bringing Gillette’s classic design concepts into the present-day realm of landscape architecture.

Reuben M. Rainey is Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Virginia. A background rich in philosophy, religion, and horticulture gives Dr. Rainey a fascinating perspective on the spiritual and metaphysical aspects of gardening. Dr. Rainey received his B.A. from Duke University, his Master’s of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary, his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion from Columbia University in New York, an M.A. in Landscape Architecture at the University of Virginia, and studied at the University of Basel in Switzerland. The recipient of numerous awards, Dr. Rainey received from the University of Virginia the Sesquicentennial Fellowship for Research on American Landscape Architecture in 1987. Dr. Rainey and Ms. Lilly coauthored the article, "The Country Place Era: The Residential Site Planning of Charles F. Gillette."

Jack Robertson is the Fine Arts Librarian at the Fiske Kimball Fine Arts Library at the University of Virginia. He has extensive training in art and art history, as well as, library science. Prior to his tenure at the University of Virginia, Mr. Robertson was the Head of the Art Library at Vanderbilt University. He also worked at the National Gallery of Art Library. Mr. Robertson received his Master’s degrees in Art History and Library Science from the University of Michigan. A frequent contributor to the periodical, Art Documentation, he has recently published the book, Twentieth-Century Artists on Art: an Index to Artists’ Writings, Statements, and Interviews.
Arriving in Richmond on November 9, 1911—a dull, damp, dreary day—Charles F. Gillette began his career in the Southeast as "clerk of the record" for landscape architect Warren Manning, who, working with architects Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, was responsible for building the new campus of the University of Richmond in Westhampton. As one of Warren Manning’s apprentices at the Tremont Street studio in Boston, Gillette had received invaluable training in landscape art. Manning, moreover, had served his apprenticeship under Frederick Law Olmsted and had shared in the work at Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina. A tradition from Olmsted to Manning to Gillette had thus been born. By 1914, Gillette, recently wed, made a momentous decision. He would practice landscape architecture in Richmond, Virginia.
Since that rainy day in 1911 Gillette did nothing less than create the image of Virginia gardens as they are known and loved today. Developing a distinctly regional landscape architecture, one geared, as Professor Reuben Rainey has observed, to the Piedmont and the Tidewater, he won the admiration of men and women as remote in time and place as Douglas Southall Freeman, Paul Green, Ellen Glasgow, and Francis Pendleton Gaines. His designs remain today the paradigm of the Virginia garden.

The genius loci of the middle Atlantic, Gillette was drawn to the spiritual in nature. The garden, etymologically an "enclosing," was instinctually real to him as the paradisus was to the medieval basilica. Like Emerson, he knew, after all, that nature was "language whereby God speaks to man." One senses that today in the magic of a Gillette garden.

Gillette’s eclecticism is rich in the traditions of landscape art. The Georgian Revival, the Country Place Movement, the English cottage garden, the designs and motifs of Capability Brown, Inigo Jones, or Gertrude Jekyll form organically, in the vernacular, the "Gillette look" or the "Southern garden." English boxwood, Virginia cedar, azalea, camellia, crépe myrtle, Cunninghamia, daffodil and yew, brick, stone, water, and bronze form the palette of his art. The native and the imported thrive side by side. One leaves the Gillette garden with the echo of a John Hersey line, "True genius rearranges old material in a way never seen . . . before."

George C. Longest
AGECROFT HALL

Gillette Client: Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Williams, Jr.

Agecroft Hall, a private museum, interprets the Tudor and early Stuart era with historically accurate furnishings and appointments. When he died in 1929, Thomas C. Williams, Jr. (1864-1929) left his wife, Elizabeth Booker (1893-1984), the hall and its contents for her lifetime. His will also provided the means for Agecroft Hall to become a public library and art gallery with a trust of one million dollars.¹

Williams was born in 1864 in Danville, Virginia, where his father had transferred his tobacco business during the Civil War. The Confederacy was confiscating factories in the capital for hospitals and arsenals. After the conflict the family relocated to Richmond and engaged in the tobacco business as well as railroad companies. The elder Williams supported many philanthropic causes. In 1870 he endowed the University of Richmond Law School that bears his name.² Four years later, he purchased a 150-acre tract with a farmhouse called Windsor, and eventually, he bequeathed it to his son. In earlier times, his ancestors had lived across the Westham Plank Road at Reveille, an eighteenth-century brick house, still standing. The Windsor Farms tract, part of the crown grant to William Byrd I in 1675, remained in the Byrd family until the 1768 lottery. The farm, with forest trees and prospects of the James River, was a favorite spot for fox hunting in the 1920s.

By then, the Country Place Era was in full swing; good times permitted city dwellers to flee crowded streets and enjoy the pleasures of rural life on large, extensively landscaped estates. In addition, the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art opened in 1924, influencing the Colonial Revival movement that swept the country and recalled an agrarian society. These factors, coinciding with the natural westward march of the city, gave impetus to the development of Windsor Farms.

T. C. Williams, Jr., an avowed Anglophile, selected an English village prototype for the new subdivision. He added the Peebles and Gwathmey tracts to that he had inherited. Williams and his friend Alexander W. Weddell chose lots side by side overlooking the James River. While on a trip in England with Henry Grant Morse (1884-1934), the New York architect, Weddell happened to see an advertisement of the auction of a twelfth-century priory slated for demolition. Morse arranged the purchase of the priory for Weddell and told Williams of the slated demolition of Agecroft Hall in Eccles, Salford, Lancashire, England. Sight unseen, Williams bought the hall in 1925.³

The first recorded history of Agecroft occurred in the reign of Edward III (1327-1377), when Robert de Holland released lands to Robert de Langley, thereby adding the manor to his holdings. In 1376 a village named Agecroft is mentioned in the vicinity. The original name of the manor may have been suggested by the site, ache (wild celery) croft (field). The Langley estate remained largely intact until Sir Robert Langley, three days before his death in 1561, divided his lands between his four daughters. He bequeathed to Anne the quarter of his estate containing the hall.⁴ She later married William Dauntsey of Wilts, gentleman usher to Queen Katherine Howard, fifth wife of Henry VIII. The Dauntseys were the last English family to own Agecroft before the manor suffered fire, modernization, and abandonment. In 1904 a
local writer complained no tenant could be found for the hall, even at a little over one hundred pounds a year rental. "It seems," he wrote, "a pity that some public spirited Manchester man cannot be persuaded to obtain possession of it."3 Twenty-two years later Agecroft, undermined by coal pits and facing demolition and extinction, began a new life on the other side of the Atlantic. Well known in England for the excellence of its mosaic-like exterior woodwork, the half-timbered English manor house's departure precipitated a debate in the House of Commons. Yet one English lady sent a bit of soil and her thanks to the Williamses for saving the structure.

In 1926 seven freighters brought the stone, paneling, window glass, and other exceptional pieces of both dismantled structures to Richmond. Such care was taken that each pane of the windows at Agecroft arrived unbroken. (Some were damaged in recent years by a hailstorm.) The setting on the James River with its high ground, sloping lawn, and mature trees duplicated the original site of Agecroft in the Irwell River Valley. When the fragments of Agecroft arrived, Morse made no attempt to recreate the original. He designed a half-timber house on a smaller scale, incorporating the old materials. Two years after the ground breaking, the house was completed at a cost of $249,434.71.6

Williams died in 1929; his widow continued to live at Agecroft, marrying Dr. David C. Morton some years later. Bessie, as she was fondly known, enjoyed working with Charles Gillette to carry the out wishes of Williams for a series of garden rooms, employing parterres and vistas. The landscape architect continued his association with Agecroft until 1967 when his last commission was to modify and expand the parking lot. The handsome wrought-iron gates, from the original entrance, were reunited with the hall in 1980.

Through the gates, the first or outer courtyard is a picture of neat formality with flagstone paving and topiary box in tubs. An archway leads into the service courtyard where the cobblestones have been replaced with flagstones, but the old box remains. An aged black walnut stretches its limbs unhindered over the workshop of Dr. Morton. Adjacent to the courtyard in the Court Garden, Gillette employed a parterre de broderie of dwarf boxwoods (detail in fig. 1).7 Here a circular center, paved with random pattern flagstones follows the original plan of seasonal plantings housing white, yellow, and blue daffodils and tulips, and other minor bulbs in the spring, and magenta, pink, and dark red, fragrant nicotiana, wallflowers, clematis, peonies, four-o-clocks, and sweet rocket in the summer.

Through to the left is the Henry VIII or sunken garden that seeks to recreate the Pond Garden commissioned by Queen Caroline in the eighteenth century, along the broad walk at Hampton Court. The box on either side of the reflecting pond, never topiary as at Hampton Court, were removed in 1980. The inner terrace beds, ablaze with tulips in the spring, recall the tapestry plantings of the seventeenth century. Box frames the top terrace level and overgrows its bounds if not severely pruned. Ivy still edges the oval pool, but Chrysanthemum pacificum, the satisfactory ground cover with white rimmed leaves, is used now around the turf quarters.

Turf supplanted blooming flowers in the rectangular beds along the crêpe myrtle walk, where some gnarled specimens with marvelous shiny, smooth trunks remain. On the opposite side of the sunken garden, clipped limes (Tilia sp.) form pleasing double lines from the terrace to the timber house that was constructed of scraps of wood from the fifteenth-century manor. The remaining wood was used in the formal entrance to Windsor Farms.
On the south terrace, three climbing roses scramble on the wall: *Rosa eglanteria*, the old fashioned species; *Mme. Alfred Carriere*, a delicate blush-pink; and *Dainty Bess*, known to have been Mrs. Morton's favorite. On the southwest side before the rose walk with its double row of pillar roses are two intimate gardens. An L-shaped one paved with Robinson slate in random patterns flows into the other with herringbone-patterned brick paths forming a semicircle, then a circle, and another semicircle. A pathway off of the circle ends at a garden seat, reminiscent of the turf seats in the monastic gardens of the Middle Ages. The tall box hedges, enclosing the gardens, accentuate the cloistered feeling. A curvilinear rectangle created by the pathway design was removed, or perhaps never implemented.  

Recently, in the lower garden to the east, ivy replaced a boxwood hedge, making an informal path in an otherwise strictly axial plan. The knot garden, a recent addition; the cutting gardens; and the herb garden are useful to the museum in their interpretation of the seventeenth-century plant materials. Although modified with time, Agecroft still bears Gillette's stamp with its patterned flagstones and brick, its allées of crépe myrtle, and its box hedges.

Mary Twain

NOTES:


6. Vick, "Twentieth-Century."


TULIP PLANTING LIST FOR AGECROFT SUNKEN GARDEN - 1929

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tulip Name</th>
<th>French Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afterglow</td>
<td>La Fiancée</td>
<td>Inglescomb Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baron de la Tonnage</td>
<td>La Tulipe Noire</td>
<td>William Copland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bleu Aimable</td>
<td>La Tristesse</td>
<td>Zulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Haarlem</td>
<td>Princess Elizabeth</td>
<td>Jubilee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara Butt</td>
<td>Pride of Haarlem</td>
<td>Inglescombe Pink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesneriana lutea</td>
<td>Miss Willmet</td>
<td>Rev. Ewbank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Detail of Court Garden

Scale: 1/4 in equals 1 ft.
Elderslie was built in 1909 in what was then the country, even though Hillcrest stood nearby and Greymont soon would be. Fashionable Ginter Park to the north of Richmond was losing out to this westward expansion, which was being fueled by plans to move Richmond College and to build the Country Club of Virginia. The new Western Electric Railroad ran through open fields to Westhampton Park, slated to be the Richmond College (now University of Richmond) campus, and afforded transportation to the rapidly developing area.

The twenty-five-acre farm that stretched from Westham Plank Road (Cary Street Road) to the car tracks, later Grove Avenue, was bought by Gordon Wallace (1867-1945) who wanted his four children to have a taste of country life. His daughter remembers how "he loved the country" and "liked the soil." On the east side, Harry Beattie operated a pony farm, and one of their first purchases was a pony cart.

A local architect, Marion J. Dimmock, carried out the instructions to design a comfortable, simple frame house with plenty of room. Mr. Wallace hesitated about putting too much into it as he feared that his wife, Ellen Clarke, a city girl, might not find country living congenial. That proved to be an unnecessary concern, for the family lived there thirty-five years. Mr. Wallace had a Scot in his office do research on the homes of his forebear, Sir William Wallace, in Scotland. From that list of names the family selected Elderslie.

A large vegetable garden, farmhouse, stable, chicken house, icehouse, and other rural necessities filled the land behind the house and on the south all the way to the car line. There were ponies, peacocks, chickens, guineas, and cows, as well as pigs that were butchered on the place.

But for the eastern side Elizabeth Wallace remembers that her mother called in Charles Gillette to design flower beds filled with old fashioned flowers: cockscomb, calendulas, and gaillardias. Her mother had a particular aversion to magnolias because as a child growing up on Fifth Street she had had the chore of picking up the dead leaves. She decided to have a large magnolia cut down but three defiant shoots grew back. Undeterred, she again had it axed only to be faced with six trunks the next season. The six-trunked tree that would not die still remains.

A sketch of the existing grounds survives in the Gillette archives showing that Gillette's involvement with Elderslie began in January 1917. A little timber summerhouse and trellis with vines completed the colorful picture. Sweet peas grew on the trellis that lined the path to the car line. Gillette also planned a shrub bed in front of the house where a yellow gravel driveway ran into the Westham Plank Road at the spot where a large sweet gum tree grows. Yucca plants mingled with shrubs in the front border along the driveway. The turf in the front lawn presented such a beautiful picture that the T. W. Wood seed firm used a photograph of it on the cover of its brochure.
Around 1926 the expansion of developments in the suburbs encouraged Mr. Wallace to subdivide his farm. Maxwell and Clarke roads took their name from Maxwell Clarke, Mrs. Wallace's father, who lived with the family for a time. The Wallace family continued to live there until 1944, when it was sold.

By 1945 Ellis Raymond Patterson (1888-1970) a native of Nobelsville, Indiana, and his wife owned Elderslie. Quite naturally he turned to Gillette for the garden design. Both of them were active members of Saint Giles' Presbyterian Church and undoubtedly had formed some ties. Patterson had made his home in Richmond since World War I, founding the Richmond Tire and Rubber Company. This commission gave Gillette the opportunity to transform a typical Virginia clapboard farmhouse into a semblance of a Federal style New England sea captain's house complete with widow's walk. The old galleries on the front were torn off; the house underwent remodeling inside and out, losing two chimneys, three dormers, and the bays on the east side.

Gillette designed a handsome and unusual brick wall, not conforming to the shape of the lot, to enclose the grounds. The curving wall, with brick piers and pierced brick panels, graduates down to two solid brick panels at the entrance piers. The wooden gate of panel-and-slat construction has a curved top. The landscape architect solved the problem of a large entryway by making a half gate on each side stationary. The present owner recently employed the same specifications for the gates when two others needed to be replaced; Franko, LaFratta, and Farinholt, Inc., built new service gates on the east and west by the plans.

Only a portion of the Gillette design came to fruition (fig. 2). The absence of the toolhouse, a symmetrical counterpart to the garden house, and the rose arches connecting the structures ordinarily might give the garden an unbalanced feeling; however, the commanding grove of trees to the west compensates. Within a month, on another drawing, Gillette modified the plan for the square toolhouse to an octagonal one. The axis from the base of the terrace terminates at the garden house. The octagonal lattice summerhouse is Gillette at his best; the intricacies of the design as well as its execution make the structure a success. Lacy white lattice gives a delicate air not possible in the brick pavilions. Every detail from the rectangular fluted inserts in the columns to the angle of the pilasters received attention. Built of heart cypress by John E. Dicks, the garden house remains a prominent feature of the garden at Elderslie (figs. 3 and 4).

The small garden in front of the white latticed summerhouse has clumps of box on four sides of the rectangular pool, backed with crêpe myrtles and Viburnum carlisii. Although no plan survives, Dr. Charles Romaine heard from his mother about a white scheme that Gillette devised to take advantage of the "luminous quality of white flowers" after dark. Mr. Patterson liked to admire his garden when he came home late from work. Victoria Sackville-West had popularized one-color gardens by her description of her experiment with the now-famous White Garden at Sissinghurst. She wrote about her gray, white, and silver garden, which had a "cool, almost glaucous, effect" on a summer evening. Gillette evidently kept abreast of international garden trends, for within a few years he planned the white garden at Elderslie. Like Victoria Sackville-West, who used the old word garth, meaning a small piece of enclosed ground, to describe her garden, the landscape architect could have done the same. A barberry hedge, which still remains, sets the space apart. The azaleas, ducks, and sundial are recent additions; the present owners adhere whenever possible to Gillette's design. They hope to construct the toolhouse.
later, using the exacting plans that even show the tools hanging in place.\(^7\)

An undated plan, in the possession of the owner, gives the specifications for the wall, the brick sidewalk at the entrance, and the path to the summerhouse in addition to the wooden gates and arbors. Gillette used a rich pattern at the entrance, leading up to the brick steps, diverting attention from the small space. East of the entrance where the six-trunked *Magnolia grandiflora* almost obscures the area, Gillette designated a children's play yard, not a usual feature in his gardens. The limbs of the tenacious magnolia still hold a board or two of treehouse remnants, a reminder of the children who enjoyed both of the Gillette gardens at Elderslie.

Mary Twain

**NOTES:**

1 Conversation, Miss Elizabeth Wallace, 23 March 1992.

2 Ibid.


4 Conversation, Mrs. Adam Fiedler, 20 March 1992.


7 Conversation, owner, who also supplied figures 3 and 4.
Figure 3

Elevation 1/4 of Each

Section Over Hall in Seat

Garden House
Mr. R. E. Jefferson, Richmond, Va.
Charles F. Gill, Landscape Architect.
Richmond, Virginia

Plan No. 194-6
Scale: 3/8 in. = 1 ft.
July 12, 1945
Forty-Three Hundred Sulgrave Road

Gillette Client: Mrs. Mary Morton Parsons

The house and garden at 4300 Sulgrave Road, built for Mary Parsons, reveals other facets of Charles Gillette’s talent. In that instance he collaborated in the selection of the site, the negotiation for its purchase, and the choice of architect and design, in addition to planning the garden. The team assembled to produce the opulent home even included James Coger, an antiquarian from Williamsburg, who went to England to purchase furnishings.¹

After the death of her husband, James, Mrs. Parsons wanted a change from city dwelling at the Prestwould, and she needed a place for her two dogs to run. She chose a home on Dover Road in Windsor Farms. Unfortunately, it lacked closet space and did not satisfy her storage needs. Mrs. Parsons’s friends, who heard her complaints, declare to this day that the closet deficiency made her decide to build a new house.²

She consulted Clinton Webb, her trust officer, who promptly recommended that the "great Gillette" be called in.³ By 1957 it was rare to find large lots in Windsor Farms; most had been taken. But, Gillette, an intimate friend of Virginia and Alexander Weddell, had designed the gardens of Virginia House, including the victory garden on the extra ground across Sulgrave Road (fig. 20). Naturally, he thought of that space. By a fortuitous chance, the landscape architect happened to be working for a client who was on the board of the Virginia Historical Society, then owner of the tract by the bequest of the Weddells.

The board member, eager to raise money for the society by selling the extra land, pushed the sale through. The gardeners at Virginia House lamented the sale because they had used the plot to grow cut flowers for the house and vegetables for the table. Cold frames had assured that the Virginia House garden had a ready supply of plants for bedding out.⁴

The owner of the adjacent vacant lot also agreed to sell some land to Mrs. Parsons. It was then possible to consider building a large home, and Westover became the model. Clarence Huff, an architect with an office on the second floor of Gillette's building at 105 East Cary, was chosen to draw the plans. Other than the closets, Mrs. Parsons had but two requests: she wanted a sunken tub in the bathroom and an elevator. As a result the house had to be overscaled to accommodate the elevator, creating a structure too large for the lot.

This presented Gillette with another challenge that he overcame by using rich material in the entrance court and other devices. The cobblestone circular driveway, laid in pattern, distracts the eye from the limited space, uncluttered with foundation plantings. Two large clipped boxwood that are planted well away from the house on either side relieve the starkness of stone and brick. Another pair of specimen boxwoods borders the iron fence, near the handsome entrance piers (fig. 5). The original holly hedge, a copy of the one that remains at Virginia House, was removed by the owner.
The rectangular pool and girl with a watering can figure by Jack Witt, was commissioned for this garden after the hedge was replaced. The wooden panel gate, a Gillette original, leads into the pool garden. At the outset, the landscape architect had planned a lily pond for the spot, but one of Mrs. Parsons's friends who loved to swim suggested the swimming pool.

Gillette refined the space on a drawing titled "A Pool Study," 2 October 1959, deleting the gravel path, the flower borders, and the pavilion. The brick path became flagstone paving that framed the pool. On that plan everything conformed to the slight arc of the pool, including the Egyptian-style bathhouse with the two copper-gilded eagles perched on the pyramidal roofs. The eagles were cast by Gillette's friend, Kenneth Lynch, a metalcrafter in Wilton, Connecticut. The conformation of curvilinear structure leaves uneven plots on the right and left. On the east side, sand and beach umbrellas are shown in the plan. Here is grass with an old Japanese Maple (Acer palmatum) filling the corner with its feathery leaves. The trellis entrance to the bathhouse was added by the owner as were the honeysuckle and trumpet vine that soften the angular features of the structure. The privet hedge, a recent addition by the present owner, brings a spot of white and green with its variegated leaves. The serpentine wall supports several espaliered jasmine vines whose yellow blossoms spill over when in spring flower.

The next enclosed garden room, reached through a wrought-iron gate flanked with decorative side panels, has original plantings of crépe myrtle arching over a striking lead figure of Mercury, said to be one of three designed by Gillette and executed by Kenneth Lynch. Above, on the terrace a dragonfly statue is a most unusual feature of a small, rectangular pool set into the flagstones. The smooth-barked yellow-wood trees that replaced the green gardens on Gillette's plan (fig. 6) outline the vista to the walled garden. With the exception of the crépe myrtles, none of the plantings in that garden could be saved. The trellises are Gillette's design and have been adapted for a New Dawn rose in the rose garden beyond the service yard. The rose garden replaces a gravel path, lined with shrubbery, that ran south on an angle from the astrolabe to a secluded corner, which was formed by the holly hedge on the front and the evergreen border on the side. The secret garden with a brick floor and benches made a place apart—a quiet spot.

The demise of the holly hedge resulted in the loss of the cloistered space and made the shrubbery path obsolete. A keen gardener, the owner designed the rose garden in its stead. She squared the axis to the astrolabe on the east and the axis to the side entrance on the south with brick paths. The roses underplanted with various ground covers form a most attractive vista. The crab apple nearby, so old that it resembles a piece of sculpture, flowers in profusion each spring. The tree long antedates the house, and appears in Gillette's plan to have dictated to some extent the placement of the house.

The American elm to the west of the forecourt was also an existing tree. Others shown in the plan have been removed. As in most Gillette gardens, change comes from plant material dying or owner preference, but the elegance of his touch lingers on, particularly in the site planning, the masonry patterns, and the statuary.

Mary Twain

12
NOTES:

1 Conversation, Clinton Webb, 3 April 1992.

2 Conversation, Mrs. Walter Durham, 4 April 1992.

3 Conversation, Clinton Webb, 3 April 1992.

4 Conversation, John Melville Jennings, 4 April 1992.

5 Conversation, Mrs. E. Morgan Massey, 6 April 1992, who also supplied figures 5 and 6.

Fig. 5
The Mansion has remained an integral part of the Capitol Square area throughout the several transformations that have occurred since its beginnings in the 1790s. Thomas Jefferson originally intended the complex surrounding the Capitol to be like a Roman forum, but it has evolved far from that concept during its first two centuries. In 1816, Governor Nicholas commissioned a Frenchman, Maximilian Godefroy, to transform the space from "pasture to park." In the French baroque manner, orderly terraces and promenades were built to view the river's valley. A very formal approach was designed with an allée of trees from what is now Ninth Street to the Mansion.1

This formal approach was altered in 1851 to the fashionable picturesque style by John Notman, of Philadelphia, the architect and designer of Hollywood Cemetery. The Richmond City Council had commissioned him to create a new master plan. The steep hillsides were reduced and planted with native trees such as maple, ash, tulip poplar, dogwood, cedar, and holly. Curving walks connected the buildings. Two greenhouses were built near the Mansion's stable buildings, and for the first time professional gardeners were hired. These changes reflect some of the new prosperity Virginians were beginning to experience. Capital Square became the first large urban park in the country in the picturesque rural style.2

The original Mansion was a frame house and was used by Patrick Henry, Henry Lee, James Monroe and John Tyler. It fell into some disrepair, and had reached the point that caused Governor Tyler's son to describe the landscape as "untamed and unbroken" and the house "intolerable for a private family."3 The current Executive Mansion, built in the Flemish-bond brick pattern, was designed by Alexander Parris, a native of Massachusetts who had been influenced by Benjamin Henry Latrobe and Charles Bullfinch. It is an adaptation of the eighteenth-century Adamesque style that reduced neoclassicism to a smaller scale, combining brick and wood.2 Parris also built homes for John Bell and John Wickham, whose home is now part of the Valentine Museum. Governor James Barbour moved into the present structure in 1813, and it remains the nation's oldest Executive Mansion in continuous use.

As the area and life around the Mansion became more urban, the requirements of its grounds changed. Eventually a wall replaced the iron fence of the 1880s and a guardhouse was built. Governor Kemper put in the pool and fountain at the entrance in the 1870s. In 1954, Governor and Mrs. Thomas B. Stanley chose Charles Gillette to reinterpret this space, now surrounded by towering office buildings and "bland" governmental facilities.4 This association had proven successful when Gillette worked with the Stanleys on their Tudor-style home Stoneleigh in Henry County.

Gillette designed a formal garden area to the south of the Mansion unifying this complex with a system of brick terraces and walks. A two-story promenade leading off the South Portico...
allows the guest to have a view of the whole design as he descends the stone stairs into this wonderfully private space in the midst of downtown Richmond. There is a central axis with a niche for the rectangular pool and sculpture site. The simple, classical curves of the beds edged with Helleri hollies are symmetrical and continued in the brick terrace. The two square parterres had a crisscross design in miniature boxwood with urns in the center.

Two water oaks (*Quercus nigra*) screen the east wall and a lovely live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) planted by Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd in 1931 hangs gracefully over the wall to the south. The wall built by Wesley Morris separates this garden from the garage-carriage house and greenhouse area. The two-story servant’s house and kitchen became guest quarters and family housing for subsequent governors. It is connected to the Mansion by an enclosed walkway that forms the foundation for the promenade mentioned earlier.

Gillette’s palette of shrubs and trees for this garden, some of which remain, was similar to many of his other plans with boxwood, azalea, osmanthus, and photinia. Although he often used these trees in designs, the two shadblow (*Amelanchier canadensis*) that frame the niche were planted during a later project by Stanley Abbott in 1970.

The statuary has been changed over the years and the urns removed. An American twentieth-century bronze Daphne stands behind the pool and fountain. The statue of a young boy *Joy of Life* from the Pollard administration was moved to the herb garden planned by Gillette in the rear of the guesthouse. This area has housed the gubernatorial pets in recent years and is no longer maintained as an herb garden. The open ironwork on the gates is probably a Gillette detail. The handsome ironwork on the guesthouse and the terrace furniture are included in a watercolor drawing showing his implemented design, which hangs in an office at the Mansion.

Detailed bulb plantings were done for this garden and the Camellia Garden, which is on the opposite side of the Mansion. Overplantings of annuals and perennials were mapped out. A statement that ninety-seven garden clubs in the Richmond area offered assistance, suggestions, and plant materials is indicative of what this process must have been like.*

The Camellia Garden, formally called the First Lady’s Garden, consists of a mixture of geometrically shaped bed and walkway. The herringbone brick work of the paths and hexagonal walls with wooden gates are an interesting contrast to the restrained classical architecture of the building. This small, again private, walled area is a good solution to the steep drop of the topography. The oval niche is a focal point for sculpture and is presently occupied with Harriet Hosmer’s *Nymph on a Sea Serpent*. Gillette here had used six-to-eight-inch English boxwood to line the walks and *Sarcococca hookeriana* and *Vinca minor* covering the bulbs.

Mr. Longest sums up the achievement of the landscape architect, “Gillette’s ability to unify an already existing historic complex previously devoid of any landscape unity is in no place more obvious than at the Governor’s Mansion. The romantic Georgian ambience he created in the very heart of a growing metropolis is eminently successful.” Whether it was the impetus of having the Queen Mother visit the Mansion in November 1954, or the members of ninety-seven garden clubs who likely would come when it opened for Historic Garden Week in 1957, the project was completed. In Gillette’s own words in a letter to Governor and Mrs. Stanley, he applauded them for their foresight and strength to carry out their "vision of what a state’s
main home and surroundings should be." Although much of the small plant material from his designs has changed, the character and structure of the garden remains in place today.

Mabel Baldwin

NOTES:


2 Ibid., p. 49.

3 Ibid., p. 14.

4 Ibid., p. 12.


6 Ibid.

PLANT LISTS FOR THE EXECUTIVE MANSION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Herb Garden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
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<td><em>Asperula odorata</em></td>
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<td><em>Aucuba japonica</em></td>
<td>Green Aucuba</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Azalea kurume 'Pearl Pink'</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Chrysanthemum majus</em></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><em>Eleagnus edulis</em> (multiflora)</td>
<td>Cherry Eleagnus</td>
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<td><em>Foeniculum vulgare var. dulce</em></td>
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<td><em>Hyssopus officinalis</em></td>
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<td><em>Lavandula vera</em></td>
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<td><em>Mentha piperita</em></td>
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<td><em>Mentha spicata</em></td>
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<td><em>Monarda didyma</em></td>
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<td><em>Ocimum basilicum</em></td>
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<td><em>Petroselinum crispum</em></td>
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<td><em>Teucrium chamedrys</em></td>
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<td><em>Thymus vulgaris</em></td>
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### Camellia Garden

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<td>'Daikagura'</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Duchess of Sutherland'</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Empress'</td>
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<td>'Julia Drayton'</td>
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<td>'Kumasaka'</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Liberty Bell'</td>
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<td>'Magnoliaeflora'</td>
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<td>'Mathiotiana rubra'</td>
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<td>'Monarch'</td>
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<td>'Pink Perfection'</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Rosea Superba'</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Sarah Frost'</td>
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<tr>
<td>'White Empress'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gardenia florida</td>
<td>Cape Jasmine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lagerstroemia indica</td>
<td>Purple Crépe Myrtle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarcococca hookeriana</td>
<td>Sarcococca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vinca minor</td>
<td>Periwinkle</td>
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<td>Azalea macrantha</td>
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<td>Baptisia australis</td>
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<td>Buxus sempervirens</td>
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<td>Dianthus</td>
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<td>Blue Plantain Lily</td>
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<td>Hosta (Funkia) subcordata</td>
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<td>Gardenia florida</td>
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<td>Hemerocallis 'Fulva Rosea'</td>
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<td>'Hyperion'</td>
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<td>'Russell’s Minuet'</td>
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<td>Iberis sempervirens</td>
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<td>Iris germanica 'China Maid'</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Great Lakes'</td>
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<td>Ilex helleri</td>
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<td>Ilex vomitoria</td>
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<td>Liriope muscari</td>
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<td>Rosa polyantha 'Gruss an Aachen'</td>
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<td>Salvia pitcheri</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sarcococca hookeriana</td>
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<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Vinca minor</td>
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</table>
Double Guy Wire
Cal. 2/V2-Inch Wire
No. 12 and No. 14
Gauge

Hose for covering guys,
At least 3/8 in. inside diameter

Wood Guy Tightener

Anchor Stakes
2 x 4 x 24 long

Detail for Tree Staking

Finished Grade
15-18 Min.

2-3" Well Rotted Sawdust Mulch
Specially Prepared Topsoil
Bare Rooted Shrubs

Balled and Banded Shrubs

Finished Grade
15-18 Min.

Detail for Planting Shrubs
Fig. 15

East Elevation
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"

Plan of Outbuilding
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"
The woodland site, which afforded fine views of the James River and encompassed vestiges of Civil War fortifications for the defense of Richmond, appealed to Benjamin Hodges Smith (1888-1972) and his wife, the former Lettice Lee Woodward (1891-1970), the original owners of Nordley. Both remembered the romantic and poignant stories of the Confederacy, told to them from childhood. His father lost an arm at Fredericksburg as a member of the Richmond Howitzers, yet served to the end of the war as a lieutenant with the President’s Guard, even following President Jefferson Davis on the retreat in 1865.1 His grandfather was Major Erasmus Taylor of Meadowfarm. Her father enlisted at the age of eighteen in Company I, Second Kentucky Cavalry, rode with General John Hunt Morgan on his daring raids, was captured when Morgan’s whole command was surrounded, and later escaped from prison. War’s end found him in Canada planning a rescue operation to free his fellow prisoners at Camp Douglas in Illinois.2

General R. E. Lee had a tenuous connection to the site when in 1861, at the request of the city of Richmond, he appointed one of the engineers in his corps to design the defense of Richmond. In addition, his youngest son and namesake died at his summer home, Nordley, in Fauquier County in 1914.3 Lettice Lee Smith, a descendant of Richard Henry Lee, signer of the Declaration of Independence, called her home Nordley after the manor in England where the Lees lived.4

In May 1923 many other river sites were available but the unusual aspect of the breastworks perpendicular to the river undoubtedly made the Smiths decide to purchase 1.25 acres of the Quarry property from the estate of R. S. J. Peebles and Joseph Beattie, and the adjoining 8.63 acres, part of the Stockton tract, from the estate of Anne Lee Peebles for a total of $15,764. Two months later T. C. Williams sold them 1.47 acres more of the Quarry tract, making 11.45 acres in all.5

Mr. Smith, a native of Richmond and a successful businessman, recently made the vice-president of the Smith-Courtney Company, left the planning of house and garden to his wife, who was well-traveled, witty, intelligent, and gregarious. Both her father and mother had died before she was twenty-one years old, in 1912, leaving her feeling bereft and lonely. Her older sister, who was married to a missionary in Japan, asked her to come for a visit for that reason or another. The family hoped to break off a romance with Charles Whitlock, a wealthy young man with a terminal illness. Undaunted, Whitlock followed her to Japan and persuaded her to marry him. The wedding took place at the summerhouse of Lettice’s sister on the ocean. Beautiful wild lilies were used for decoration. In 1917, Whitlock died at his home, Westhampton (a St. Catherine’s school building, now demolished), at the age of thirty-three.6 After a time the young widow married Smith. By 1923, she was eager to plan a place in the country and make use of a file of clippings she had collected for years.
Lettice Smith, a tall, glamorous woman with flair and verve and her own sense of style, knew she wanted a house that was unique with a quality that would endure. Rejecting her original idea of bringing a home piecemeal from England, because of the prohibitive cost, she began corresponding with William Lawrence Bottomley in May 1923. A sketch exists in the Gillette archives showing an L-shaped house, probably the first rendition; two others were presented before the topography suggested the curving wings on the center block. With her strong individual preferences, Mrs. Smith managed to free Bottomley from the restraints of formalism long enough to develop an exuberant, romantic design. Reminiscent of eighteenth-century Adam, the center block of Nordley, with curvilinear arcades linking its wings, couches into the escarpment of the old fortifications. The site, according to William O’Neal in his book *William Lawrence Bottomley in Richmond*, "demanded that the house be placed to take maximum advantage of the view of the James" (figs. 9 and 10).

Bottomley designated the placement and conformation of the forecourt walls and upper terrace. An elaborate plan for intricate parterre, garden bench, and semicircular pool survives. Initially a brick bridge over the tree roots was planned, but placing a long step amid the shallow ones that continue to the lower terrace solved the problem.

The architect wrote his client in December 1923:

Start perhaps by going down the steps from the Library, across the bridge with a few sentinal cedars along a path edged with old box and leading to the garden. A garden enclosed, shut off from the wild woods, but surrounded and protected by them. A garden with one lovely vista, small, narrow, heavily cut off by foliage at either side. A vista preferably on the side, one that you would not see until you got into the garden. I would have this garden mysterious, secluded, romantic, in strong contrast to the formal balanced lines of the house.

Bottomley envisioned the dark rich green of cedars, cypress, and box enclosing a retreat, an outside room to get away from people and things. Gillette’s 1924 plan graphically captures Bottomley’s word picture. Despite differences in stylistic interpretation, they had the same vision for the site. The extent of the collaboration of these two strong-willed, elegant men cannot easily be determined but they clearly had divergent ideas on the design of the forecourt. Bottomley wrote Mrs. Smith: "I would like to say for your private ear that I think the design of the forecourt as he has laid it out is not only dull but out of character. It seems the lines are 'moue'." Gillette had been in on the project from the earliest stages, and had billed the Smiths $250, half of his fee for the project. A plan for arrangement of the grounds dated 25 September 1923 bears Bottomley’s stamp (fig. 11). Edward C. Jones, the Harvard trained landscape architect responsible for most of Gillette’s plans, sent Bottomley a letter 27 September 1923 enclosing two prints of the sketch prepared for Mrs. B. H. Smith and asking for "proposed level for the hall, the sun room, the drawing room, and the library. . . . On receipt of this Mr. Gillette will make the necessary arrangements for staking out the house and setting of levels." At this juncture, Mrs. Smith may have brought out her scrapbook: Gillette’s 3 November 1924 Plan of Forecourt (fig. 12) copies exactly a clipping that she had saved.
A Brick Pattern for the Library Terrace
Mrs. Benjamin Hodgen Smith at Northley
Charles T. Gillette ~ Landscape Architect
Richmond, Virginia
Scale 1/10 = 1'
July 10, 1976

Fig. 14

Existing Wall and Steps

Existing Boxwood Hedge

New 12' Wall

See Elevating Section

4 x 8 Bricks

8 x 8 Bricks
equal
equal

Library

Herring Bone Band
and 8 x 8 in grater on 2" Sand Cushion

Plants

The 2 Borders in Concrete Mortar

Section thru Lobby
Scale 1/10 = 1'

Plan No. 181-71

Fig. 14
PLAN OF FORECOURT
FOR B.H. SMITH, ESQ.

SCALE - 1" = 20'

Cross Section of Forecourt

Detail of Gutter

Brick on End

Brick laid flat

Cement mortar

Paving stones laid in concrete flash with road

Gravel Road

Paving stones laid in concrete flash with road

Fig. 12
The architect also offered advice on the terrace plan. "I suggested in a letter to Mr. Gillette," he wrote to Mrs. Smith, "that the terrace in front of the house on the riverside be made about twenty feet wider and a good deal narrower with a curved terrace about five feet lower extending the entire width." Gillette's 12 December 1924 plan (fig. 13) reflects these changes. Bottomley devised the deliberate break of courses in the bricks of the house that was repeated in the pierced and paneled forecourt wall to simulate settling and great age. He also was responsible for the design of the ornamental iron gates, the concrete urns with flowers, and lead eagles cast from the original carvings of ship figureheads by Samuel McIntire, of Salem, Massachusetts.

Bottomley sent drawings in 1930 for the brick columns with half-inch sinkage front and rear, the eight-inch brick wall, and the four-inch serpentine wall that Mrs. Smith had insisted he copy from the Jeffersonian one at Folly Farm in Staunton, where her sister lived. The serpentine wall had a practical application in colonial gardens protecting fruit trees and vegetables from early frosts, but is solely ornamental at Nordley.

Gillette defined the spaces of the intimate gardens on the upper terrace near the house, the lower terrace, and the forecourt, and selected all of the plant materials. Whenever possible, he preserved native material. He preferred to use a limited variety of plants in mass, especially boxwood. Dwarf box against brick edging rimmed the circular drive in the forecourt; box and other evergreens were also used for the riverfront terrace. Here the present owners prefer color, and underplant the glossy evergreens with white and yellow daffodils in the spring and pink impatiens and geraniums in summertime.

Where the bank of the second terrace overlooking the river drops away, a plantation of holly trees was clipped to the level of the terrace, to make the turf seem to extend farther. The upper terrace, outlined in box, had a magnificent two-hundred-year-old specimen as the centerpiece of the plan. A large Nelly Stevens holly, a chance seedling from Oxford, Maryland and remnant of the original plantings, remains. The cottage-like beds of Irish heather, plumbago, violets, and Florentine iris adjacent to the library were replaced in 1936 by a brick terrace, the elaborate pattern in the small space giving the effect of a carpet (fig. 14). The pool is a recent addition, but the old well at the entrance of the terrace is a delightful individual feature imported from England.

Before its implementation Gillette modified his 1924 plan for the lower terrace, omitting the pool and dividing the space into two parts (fig. 13). Later, in the far corner of each, he added a pavilion. The teahouses, as Mrs. Smith called them, with their pagoda roofs and Chinese Chippendale railings in his original plan, reflects her penchant for the Orient; but the roof line was later simplified to a plain peaked one with rounded eaves, louvres, and screens (fig. 15). It seems likely that she visited the restoration at Williamsburg, then in its early stages, and copied the pavilion in the Blue Bell Garden.

Looking past the teahouses one is beckoned by brick steps along inviting paths. Toward the south the gun emplacement with rifle pits shelters a holly bosk, a cloistered spot with a statue of St. Francis. The original paths of bark, lined with wild flowers, wind through the woodland.
to the Kanawha canal, in marked contrast to the axial design of the lower terrace in their midst and the classical formality of the house.

At the entrance on the 1930 plan Gillette suggested that mimosa and magnolia be planted with lindens in each curve of the serpentine wall. Now the long driveway, with woodland verges, filled with dogwood, redbud, azaleas, and rhododendron, curves inward from Sulgrave Road. Originally, east of the entrance, where a field had been, there was a kitchen garden with figs, black raspberries, strawberries, and asparagus, mixed with spectacular, saucer-flowered tree peonies and cut flowers. York-and-Lancaster roses snuggled against the serpentine wall with violets along the edge. A twenty-eight-by-seventy-two-foot bed held dahlias; Mr. Smith fancied dahlias and exhibited them with success in 1924. This was especially rewarding as he had worked all summer digging the bed himself.

Everyday Mrs. Smith arranged fresh flowers, giving fragrance and color to the lovely rooms at Nordley. An English gardener and three assistants maintained the grounds that also included trial beds and hot beds in the vegetable garden. Brick walls define a cruciform with pecan trees centered in each quarter. Adjacent to the driveway the rose garden, one of the earliest gardens implemented, had a parterre filled with tea roses planted in groups of three and four. Gillette selected Mme. Edouard Herriot, Mme. Jules Bouché, Hadley, Ophelia, and Mrs. Cutbush, to name a few of the twenty varieties. Box in a diamond pattern balanced the other side of the quadrant.

In 1927 the Smiths had acquired the plot created by the curve of Sulgrave Road in Windsor Farms when it varied from the proposed straight road. The rest of Nordley is not in Windsor Farms because it preceded the development. Contiguous to the kitchen garden, the new area proved ideal for a boxwood nursery and rows of flowers. At the time, the area east of Nordley between Stockton Lane and Clovelly Road enjoyed reknown as Copperhead Canyon—a well deserved name, according to Lillie Mae Wallace, who worked for the Smiths. She recalls hearing tales of the 275 copperheads the gardener killed the first year the Smiths lived at Nordley.

A restless gardener, Mrs. Smith relished change, and in 1937 Gillette drew plans for an extensive perennial garden bordered by a "clipt" yew walk on the site of the kitchen garden. The plan containing an admonition to save the strawberries, mentions feverfew, wall flowers, asters, daisies, Sweet William, pinks and other amenable, old-fashioned flowers (fig. 16). Today this garden, retaining the brick edges, recalls the earlier plan with its vegetables, flowers for cutting and four apple trees. Many of the flowering shrubs, mock orange, azaleas and others were early plantings.

Much of what Lettice Smith set out to accomplish when she decided to build a house that in fifty years would not be "out of date but more beautiful with time" does remain, making Nordley as unusual and interesting as its first owner intended.

Mary Twain
NOTES:

1 George Alvin Smith, obituary, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 12 February 1908, p. 10.


3 *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 23, pp. xiix and xxxvii.

4 *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 6, p. 258.


Plat Book No. 12 Henrico Co., p. 28.

Letter from Stuart Christian to Mrs. B. H. Smith, April 1923 (letters in a private collection).

6 Conversation, Mrs. Arthur Ringwalt, 22 March 1992. Mrs. Ringwalt, niece of Lettice W. Smith, was a flower girl in the wedding. She also remembers her father’s having an architect to plan the first hospital of brick in Japan, and, contrary to other accounts, states that Mrs. Smith had nothing to do with the design.


9 William Lawrence Bottomley to Mrs. Benjamin H. Smith, undated, but probably December 1923.

10 Bottomley to Smith, 12 September 1923.

11 Edward C. Jones to Bottomley, 27 September 1923.

12 Bottomley to Smith, 12 September 1923.


15 Conversation, Mrs. Walter Robertson, 15 March 1992.


17 Bottomley to Smith, 21 June 1923.

Figure 15 was supplied by the owner.
PLANT LIST, NORDLEY, 1927

Trees

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Perennials in Rows

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<td>Shasta Daisy</td>
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<td>Korean Chrysanthemum</td>
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<td>Hesperis matronalis 'Alba'</td>
<td>White Sweet Rocket</td>
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<td>Liatris</td>
<td>Blazing Star, Gay Feather</td>
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<td>Kniphofia uvaria (Tritoma)</td>
<td>Poker Plant, Torch Flower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baptisia</td>
<td>False Indigo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cynoglossum</td>
<td>Hound's Tongue</td>
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<td>Helianthus 'Riverton Gem'</td>
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<td>Aster</td>
<td>Fall Aster</td>
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<td>Artemisia</td>
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<td>Dianthus barbatus</td>
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<td>Dianthus caryophyllus</td>
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Perennials in Borders

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<td>Iris</td>
<td>German Iris</td>
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<td>Paeonia</td>
<td>Peonies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hemerocallis minor</td>
<td>Dwarf Daylily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hemerocallis flava</td>
<td>Lemon Daylily</td>
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Hemerocallis thunbergii
Hosta (Funkia) subcordata
Anemone
Begonia grandis
Digitalis purpurea
Eupatorium
Dicentra exima
Anemone
Aquilegia caerulea
hlox divaricata
Mertensia virginica
Doronicum cordatum
Anchusa
Paonia suffruticosa

Daylily
White August Lily
Whirlwind anemone
Hardy Begonia
Foxgloves
Bleeding Heart
Queen Charlotte Anemone
White and Blue Columbine
Blue Phlox
Virginia Bluebells
Leopard’s Bane
Bugloss
Tree Peonies

Perennials for Edging

Viola
Iberis
Phlox subulata
Chrysanthemum morifolium

Violets
Candytuft
Phlox
White Chrysanthemum

Vegetables and Fruit

Fragaria
Asparagus officinalis

Strawberries
Asparagus

Bulbs

Crocus
Narcissus
Tulipa
Gladiolus

Crocus
Daffodils
Tulips
Glads

Ground Covers

Rosa damascena 'Versicolor'
Convalaria majalis
Euonymus fortunei (E. colorata)
Ajuga reptans
Hypericum calycinum
Vinca minor
Ophiopogon

York-and-Lancaster Rose
Lily of the Valley
Euonymus
Carpet Bugleweed
Creeping St. John’s Wort
Periwinkle
Lily Turf

Annuals

Tagetes 'Diadem'
Callistephus chinensis

French Marigold
China Aster

27
| **Polyanthes tuberosus** | Tuberose |
| **Delphinium** | Larkspur |
| **Centaurea cyanus** | Cornflower |
| **Tagestes 'Yellow Supreme'** | African Marigold |
| **Cosmos 'Early Orange Flare'** | Cosmos |
| **Cosmos 'Late White'** | Cosmos |
| **Delphinium** | Larkspur |
| **Papaver rhoeas 'Wild Rose'** | Shirley Poppy |

**Zinnia cvs:** 'Dream', 'Enchantress', 'Exquisite', 'Canary Bird', 'White Gem', 'Rosebud', 'Mexican hybrids'

The roses were planted in groups of four and three of a kind in parterre.

- Red Radiance, Hybrid Tea, light crimson
- Mme. Edouard Herriot, Hybrid Tea, orange-yellow with pink and scarlet
- Mme. Jules Bouché, Hybrid Tea, white with creamy blush center
- Hadley, Hybrid Tea, crimson
- William Kordes
- Pink Radiance, Hybrid Tea, pink
- White Killarney
- Sunburst
- Ville de Paris
- Echo
- Ophelia, Hybrid Tea, light pink (nearly white), yellow center
- Mrs. Cutbush
- Duchess
- Wellington
- Kaiserin Auguste Victoria, Hybrid Tea, white with greenish center
- Dame Edith
- Helen
- Padre
- Frank Reader
- Betty Uprichard, Hybrid Tea, soft salmon-rose
Details Showing
Arrangement, Planting and Construction of Gardens, Terraces, Greens and Approach from

The Benjamin Hedges Smith — Richmond, Virginia

Charles P. Gillette — Landscape Architect

Scale of General Plan: 1 inch = 20 feet — December 17, 1924

Plan No. 181-21

Fig. 13
A Study for Main Gate to Walled Garden
by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Road
"Redwood"
In the expansive twenties, Leslie Hartwell Reed (1878-1950) defied the trend for subdivisions when he brought out his brothers in the Reed Land and Development Company and claimed Joseph A. Grant's farm, Grantlands, for his own. The brothers had incorporated in March of 1923 and had contracted with J. Woodward Manning of Cincinnati, Ohio, to "personally study the development of a road system that shall serve to bring into practical access the available housesites." Another consideration was "to obtain the maximum value of the landscape views." Tree groups, orchards, and important individual trees figured in the plan for development of Joseph A. Grant's farm.

Initially, a 24.96-acre section of high ground containing the large brick and frame house, barn, and slave quarters was surveyed for Reed on 15 March 1925, and within a month he received the deed for six lots and a strip of land ninety feet in width extending to the River Road. Several years later he added twenty-eight acres of high land and 175 acres of low land near the Kanawha Canal and the creek. Finally, in 1937 he obtained 49 acres on the west, all of the remaining Grantland tract of 360 acres. Bounded on the south by the James River and the north by River Road, the site seemed ideal for a country house.

From early manhood Reed had been involved in the tobacco business, first with his brother in Oxford, North Carolina, then with the Imperial Tobacco Company. His business required frequent trips to England, where he was often a guest at country houses. In 1922, when he became a director of the Imperial Tobacco Company and its American agent, he and his wife Helen Lathrop, wanted a home to entertain their foreign visitors. They favored the English country house style.

In February 1925 William Lawrence Bottomley, the architect, heard of the Reed's plan from Mr. and Mrs. B. H. Smith at Nordley and prevailed upon them to telephone and tell the Reeds that he was not "so bad." Before the month was out, Bottomley was in town touring colonial houses with Mrs. Reed, and by 10 March 1925, the Reeds had received two sketches of Georgian design for their consideration.

Charles Gillette was involved from the beginning. Mr. Reed wrote Gillette 14 April 1925:

I note for a fee of $800 you would make the plan for my entire property at Grantland, including a preliminary general plan for arrangement; final general plan, grading plan, grading plan showing proposed levels and grades for roads, walks, lawns, etc; plan of garden and swimming pool with details of construction; general planting plan showing the details for planting garden, etc; all plans to have the necessary lists and estimates of quantities, and I would be allowed such discounts as you are able to secure for your clients on nursery stock and other materials.
Mr. Reed planned to develop only the ground around the house, but accepted Gillette’s entire plan because he expected to carry out the rest later. He especially wanted Gillette’s pool plan by 1 May 1925 so that he could have the excavations made at the same time as that for the house.

By June the landscape architect had submitted a sketch of the grounds showing the rock garden, pool, and picnic grounds. The orchard and the few pear trees that remained were saved; some of these persist today. The arborist, H. M. Van Wormer, was called in to cable and trim forty-eight hardwood trees and five fruit trees. One special apple tree required an "operation" at a cost of $50. A new road was cut, curving through mature trees past two gates to the circular forecourt. Here the box stands tall to envelope the space. On down the driveway, drifts of the owner’s test daffodils dot the slopes on either side; beyond, the road continues down the hill to the vegetable garden, pool, tennis court, greenhouse, and other buildings.

In September of 1926, Gillette presented another layout of the landscaping around the house, garden, and drives that apparently was overly elaborate with balustrades and terraces. Balustrades and terraces were a general practice with Humphry Repton, the Englishman who coined the name landscape architect; but neither client nor architect liked the plan. Mr. Reed expected a "plain brick wall"; however, Gillette’s serpentine brick wall from the line of garages was accepted. It provides shelter for a magnificent specimen of *Chimonanthus* whose aromatic, strange maroon and yellow flowers cover long sprigs in the winter.

As at Nordley, Bottomley dictated the form for four small terrace gardens or outdoor rooms that he considered an important transition between the classical lines of the house and the free space beyond. On the east, the small formal garden with lead-figured fountain and circular pool merges with the next green garden where overgrown box has recently been removed. Next, westward, against a brick retaining wall, is a catholic mixture of plants differing in form and texture: irises, pansies, delphiniums, bleeding hearts, and primulas. Iceland poppies, with their glorious bright orange, pink, or yellow hues mix into the medley of colors. Best of all are the lupines, which are nearly impossible to make thrive in central Virginia, but here grow to three feet.

Steps ascend to the next rectangular garden that depends on box and winter jasmine for its form, and pansies in the rectangular center bed for its color. Slate, bordered with brick, continues into the last terrace, a vantage point over gently rolling turf and fields beyond. The row of elms on the south mark the line of the old road to Grantland Farm. To the west, immense hackberries with their warty bark complete the park-like setting.

By February 1926 planting the garden began in earnest when Williams and Harvey Nursery hauled in truck loads of boxwood from North Carolina. Gillette ordered 200 Hedera holly from Hugh B. Barclay, in Narberth, Pennsylvania, in March. Henry A. Dreer, on Spring Garden Street in Philadelphia, supplied flower and vegetable seeds. Diggs and Beadles delivered three tons of lime and 41 pounds of grass seed mixture. The old barn burned soon after the Reeds moved in June 1926; the site near the ruins became a vegetable garden and still is today.

The frenetic activity died down over the summer only to resume with greater intensity in the fall, when on 25 November more box was hauled in and planted. Mr. Robert Carter, of Chase
City, Virginia, wrote in 15 December 1926 that he had "just finished digging and loading the truck of boxwoods."6 Williams and Harvey set out six cedar trees and judging by the price of $250, they must have been specimens of some size.

The pace of vast plantings appears to have slowed by 1927. Only two orders survive; Charles Totty Co., in Madison, New Jersey, sent chrysanthemums and Weaver Gardens, of Wichita, Kansas, perennials. Mr. Reed continued horticultural experimentation on a grand scale. A true "brother of the spade," he corresponded with plantsmen over the years, especially about camellias, his great interest. Never far out of touch with the gardens, he rode horseback over the estate every day. By this time, Grantlands had been renamed Redesdale, after Lord Redesdale in England.

Nearly a decade after Bottomley lavished praise on "the miracle in gardening which you and Mrs. Reed have been able to accomplish,"7 work began on the walled garden with a new avenue of trees, the most striking feature at Redesdale (fig. 17). Placed some distance from the house, the garden is a treasure with its exuberant planting and sensitive design. A wrought-iron gate gives entry to the path that splits the garden lengthwise (fig. 18). A drawing that survives for the sawn brick circles in the rose garden to the north shows the exquisite planning that Gillette gardens enjoyed. On a recent visit the mason who laid the brick pointed out a flaw that was allowed to remain because it was aesthetically pleasing. The outline of the circles is about half-an-inch higher than the bricks in the path. Here York-and-Lancaster, the old-fashioned white-and-red-striped rose, grew with the coral-red 'Mme. Edouard Herriot' and 'Souvenir de la Malmaison'.

In the circle garden to the south (fig. 19), three descending steps accommodate the different levels. The triangles hold a brilliant display of blue and yellow pansies in the spring. Brick paths form the connecting link between two geometrical gardens, one centered with a bronze astrolabe, the other with a lead figure of a boy with a bird. All of the statuary was imported from England. Around the edges of the garden the much loved Viburnum carlesi, with its fragrant, pink-tinged flowers, flourishes. Charles Lathrop Reed recalls his mother saying, "Gillette wanted every inch planted."8

Double ninety-foot herbaceous borders intersect the main path, bisecting the garden (fig. 17). A dark green background of box runs the length of the rectangular beds. Exuberant plantings of intense blue delphinium spikes rise through the ferny leaves of pale pink and red oriental poppies. Here also grow foxglove, iris, and columbine in muted colors.

Looking from the borders, a 300-foot allée lies beyond. Walled in with box hedges, and with a ceiling of intertwining cedars, the mossy path stretches to the summerhouse. At intervals, Japanese cherries spread their fluffy pink blossoms as they arch over the box hedge. A statue of a gentleman dressed in small clothes is in the center of the gardenhouse. In this quiet place an aura of timelessness and tranquility prevail.

Over the years the Reeds have carefully preserved and enhanced Gillette's design. The present Reed at Redesdale, a grand-nephew of the builder, is carrying on the tradition of elegance and beauty.

Mary Twain
NOTES:

1 J. Woodward Manning to Pleasant Lane Reed, 26 November, 1923 (all letters are in a private collection).


4 Charles Gillette to Leslie Hartwell Reed, 14 April, 1925.


8 Conversation, Mr. Charles Lathrop Reed, 26 March, 1992.

PLANT LISTS FOR REDESDALE

J. B. Watkins & Bros., 6 November 1926

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<th>Quantity</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Spiraea thunbergii</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Philadelphus coronarius</td>
<td>Mock Orange</td>
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<td>110</td>
<td>Forsythia viridissima</td>
<td>Yellow Bells</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Calycanthus floridus</td>
<td>Carolina Allspice</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Spiraea prunifolia</td>
<td>Spirea</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Hydrangea paniculata 'Grandiflora'</td>
<td>Pee Gee</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Crataegus  lelandii</td>
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Weaver Gardens, 18 March 1928

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<td>25</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Sedum sexangulare</td>
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C. M. Griffing & Co., 6 November 1926

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W. T. Hood & Co., 24 November 1926

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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pinus nigra (P. austriaca)</td>
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Henry A. Droer, 10 November 1926

<table>
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<td>6</td>
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Thomas B. Meehan Co., 27 November 1926

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Callicarpa dichotoma</td>
<td>Beauty Berry</td>
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Walled Kitchen Garden

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Aster</td>
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<td>Iris flavescens</td>
<td>Iris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iris 'Caprice'</td>
<td>Iris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paeonia 'Kelway'</td>
<td>Peony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linum perenne</td>
<td>Flax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemerocallis thunbergii</td>
<td>Yellow Daylily</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**Helenium 'Riverton Gem'**  
Sneezeweed

**Delphinium hybrids**  
Delphinium

**Campanula persicifolia**  
Peach Bells

**Penstemon**  
Beard-Tongue

**Aster 'Queen Mary'**  
Aster

**Alcea (Althaea) rosea 'Imperator'**  
Hollyhocks

**Salvia**  
Sage

**Heuchera**  
Coral Bells

**Squares Between Perennial and Rose Gardens**

**Euonymus colorata**  
Spindle Tree

**Vinca minor**  
Periwinkle

**Edges of Walled Garden**

**Alcea (Althaea) rosea**  
Hollyhocks

**Syringa hybrid**  
Lilac

**Viburnum carlesii**  
Snowball

**Exochorda grandiflora**  
Pearl Bush

**Wheel or Circle Garden (Present Rock Garden)**

**Phlox**  
Phlox

**Delphinium**  
Delphinium

**Perovskia atriplicifolia**  
Russian Sage

**Berberis triacanthophora**  
Barberry

**Rose Garden**

**Rosa damascena 'Versicolor'**  
York-and-Lancaster Rose

Mme. Jules Bouché  

Souvenir de la Malmaison

**Circle Garden**

**Aster 'Victor'**  
Aster

**Aster 'Marjorie'**  
Aster

**Aster 'Countess Dudley**  
Aster

**Veronica prostrata (rupestris)**  
Speedwell

**Dianthus barbatus 'Sutton's Fairy'**  
Sweet William

**Dianthus barbatus 'Essex Witch'**  
Sweet William

**Hosta (Funkia) caerulea**  
Plantain Lily

**Paeonia 'Festiva Maxima'**  
Peony

**Phlox 'Columbia'**  
Phlox

**Campanula medium**  
Bell Flower

**Chrysanthemum**  
Chrysanthemum

**Linum narbonense**  
Flax
Cheiranthus allionii  Wallflower
Iris 'Gold Imperial'  Iris
Iberis sempervirens  Candytuft
Heuchera 'Rosamundi'  Coral Bells
Delphinium X belladonna  Delphinium
Iris pumila 'excelsa'  Dwarf Iris
Hemerocallis flava  Lemon Lily
Phlox 'Miss Lingard'  White Phlox
Verbena  Vervain
Buxus suffruticosa  Boxwood

Annuals for Circle Garden

Zinnia 'Dream', 'Canary' (Lilliput), 'Delight', 'Exquisite', 'Daffodil', 'Salmon-Head' (Lilliput), 'Enchantress', 'Lemon Beauty', 'Valee'
Cosmos 'Hever White'  Cosmos
Lantana  Lantan Palm
Ageratum  Floss Flower
Cynoglossum (pink and blue)  Hounds Tongue

Annuals for Herbaceous Border

Ageratum  Floss Flower
Phacelia  Blue Bell
Sanvitalia
Tagetes 'Yellow Supreme'  Marigold
Tagetes 'French Marigold'  Marigold
Anchusa 'BlueBird'  Bugloss

Flowering Cherry Allée

P. serrulata 'Sachalinensis'  P. serrulata 'Kwanzan'
P. serrulata 'James H. Veitch'  P. sieboldii
P. serrulata 'Hisakura'  P. subhirtella 'Ascendens'
P. 'Horaison'  P. triloba 'Plena'
P. subhirtella 'Autumnalis'  P. yedoensis
P. tomentosa  P. yedoensis 'Taizanfukam'
P. myako  P. 'Hata-Zakuta'
Jno. B. Watkins  
B. C. Watkins  
J. B. Watkins, Jr.  
T. D. Watkins  

Midlothian, Va., Dec. 1, 1925  

My dear Mr. Reed  

Imperialis Tobacco Co.  

Bought of  

J. B. WATKINS & BRO.  

Elmwood Nurseries  

TERMS: CASH  

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<tr>
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<td>Philadelphus Coronarius 3-4’</td>
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<td>Cape Jasmine</td>
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<td>Laurceraus Eispriemii</td>
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<td>Azalea Suga Jawa 2’</td>
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<td>“ indicia alta 2’</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Juniper Communi 1 e 2’</td>
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<td>Ligustrum Japonica 2’</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Elmwood Juniparum c. 5’</td>
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Total: $297.40  

Received Payment  

Dec. 1926  

36
Fig. 17
It was Alexander and Virginia Weddell's dream to create the atmosphere and environment of "that serene and stately life, - fruit of gentle tradition and high thinking" an aura that had existed in this English manor for four centuries. Their love of collecting and creating and their prudent choice of architect Henry Grant Morse and landscape architect Charles F. Gillette made it the jewel that it is today.

The Priory of St. Sepulchre, for which these stones were originally used, was dedicated in 1125 and remained a monastery until 1538 when it was seized by Henry VIII along with much of the Church property in England. It was sold and rebuilt as a manor house around 1566, remodeled in 1620; a Georgian addition was added in 1745. The structure was empty from 1910 until the Weddells purchased it from a demolition crew in 1925. It was dismantled and shipped by steamship and barge in numbered crates to the Richmond suburb of Windsor Farms.

Virginia House, named in honor of Mrs. Weddell, was redesigned by Henry Grant Morse and incorporated major elements of the Priory. It also adapted features of the gate tower of Wormleighton (ancestral home of the Spencers) and the south facade of Sulgrave Manor (ancestral home of the Washingtons) for the western front.

The land on which this mansion stands was part of a grant from the English Crown in 1675 to the father of William Byrd II, founder of Richmond. After another generation in the Byrd family, the land was placed in a real estate lottery in which one of the speculators was George Washington. The land and house were conveyed to the Virginia Historical Society by the Weddells shortly after its completion in 1928, with the right of occupancy held by them for their lifetime. It was their residence until their tragic death on New Years Day 1948 in a train accident. Today it is operated as an estate museum by the Virginia Historical Society (fig. 20).

Ambassador and Mrs. Weddell were collectors of fine objects of art from many different ages and cultures. His diplomatic assignments including Spain and Argentina and their extensive travels afforded opportunities for collecting the various statues and urns in the garden. Charles Gillette masterfully wove them into a tapestry of textures held together with his strong design.

The entrance planting is simple but dignified using American and English boxwood with symmetrical placement of the two American elms. Four entrance columns across the front of the property hold heraldic lions. Two are seventeenth-century works and the two to the west were made in Richmond by Gillette’s friend Joseph Grappone. They are identical.

In George Longest’s book, Genius in the Garden, he writes of Gillette’s mystical affinity for interpreting man and his relationship to space. Here at Virginia House Gillette planned a series of small Tudor-style gardens on a central axis, nestled along the contour of the land. The dramatic changes in elevation of the terrain allow a romantic vista of the James River, the Kanawha Canal, the rolling lawn and more naturalistic gardens below. He framed the view with
the rich greens of the native American Holly, Cedar of Lebanon, and *Magnolia grandiflora*. In each of the individual terrace gardens the importance of this view is eminent in the design.

In "Madame’s Garden" to the west of the house, there is a rectangular pool that reflects a terracotta statue of Pan, a copy of a famous one in Florence. Beds with bulbs and bright annuals flank the pool. An old climbing rose finds its way through the dogwood trees and Carolina Jasmine covers the Gothic columns which were purchased in Caan in 1930. The view through the arches of the Loggia is of the Bowling Green, luring the visitor to the gardens beyond.

Below the flagstone terraces lies one of the most beautiful water gardens in Virginia. A narrow channel of water planted with Japanese water iris (*Iris ensata*), lotus, and *Sagittaria* connects the circular pool on the western end to the rectangular one to the east (fig. 21). According to Scott Burrell, the present estate manager of Virginia House, the same plantings have flourished there since the 1930s. The ancient willow which was grown from a cutting of a tree at the tomb of Napoleon on Saint Helena, once stood at the western entrance of this garden, and before it died in the late 1960s, a cutting was taken which now stands on the slope below.

Other plantings have been varied as the size and the amount of available shade has changed. Originally dwarf perennials interplanted between boxwood parterres grew under the statues along the brick and stone wall. Fig vine (*Ficus repens*) and another traditionally Zone 9 plant, Confederate jasmine cover the brick columns on the west end of this terrace. Some of the original English boxwoods of the parterre design have been moved because of condition or size. Three of the four original saucer magnolias (*M. soulangiana*) remain on the southern edge.

The statues of the *Four Seasons* and that of the *Boy and Dolphin* are attributed to Kenneth Lynch, a craftsman from New York, who worked closely with Gillette. The charm of the small owl on the edge of the pool and the interest of the various urns and stone work enhance this interesting area, which is the center of the whole estate.

Two handsome cedars of Lebanon frame the view to the wisteria covered pergola, and a half dozen or more stately magnolias (*M. grandiflora*) form a curve which again leads the eye to the magnificent view below.

In 1939, when the additional acres were purchased, the estate was open for Garden Week. According to Mr. Longest, Virginia Weddell gave up her season in Palm Beach to work with Gillette, who was by then spending full time on the project. In keeping with their interest in planning gardens appropriate to the diverse sites of the property, a wildflower garden was developed in the old quarry area below. Its design is naturalistic, flowing, and full of surprises. Water tumbles over rock, falls into holding pools, and then on to more falls. The wanderer winds along paths and stepping stones finding intimate resting spots for contemplation. On one of the towering granite walls is an inscription to the Weddell’s friend and neighbor T. C. Williams, the original owner and developer of Windsor Farms. It declares the area a sanctuary for birds and wildflowers. Ferns and wildflowers are tucked along the paths and in the spring a sweep of daffodils bloom above.
The Great Lawn
The Meadow
The Pergola

The Orchard and Vineyard
Cobbled Motor Court
The Kitchen Garden
The Azalea Terrace and the Rose Garden were built on the hillside to the west, perpendicular to the Water Garden and the mansion. These gardens form a visual boundary between the estate and Agecroft Hall where the Weddells’s friends, the Williamses, lived, and again direct the viewers eye to the pastoral scene below.

These gardens are connected to the water garden by various landings planted in wallflowers propagated from the seeds placed in the hands of Alexander by Pope Pius XII in 1946 "for Mrs. Weddell’s garden." This "gentle tradition" of propagating the wall flowers annually is continued at Virginia House today in the spring plant sale, along with rooted cutting from the famous willow. According to Scott Burrell the museum staff is intent on educating the public on the diversity of native plants available today and continuing the Weddells’s traditions of collecting unusual specimen suited to Virginia gardens.

Through the harmonious relationship between Charles Gillette and his friends and clients, Alexander and Virginia Weddell, and their years of combined creative efforts, this romantic estate came to fruition. No doubt they would each be pleased today with their garden after forty or more years as their traditions are continued.

Mabel Baldwin

Sources:


The Virginia Historical Society supplied figure 20.
Fig. 23
Midway is situated on a 275-foot-high ridge in the Piedmont country of Albemarle County, affording scenic views of Jones Mountain and Brown’s Gap in the Blue Ridge. The eastern boundary of the approximately eighty acres extends northwest along the ravine to Moormans River. The pastoral setting presents an ideal impression of an early-nineteenth-century farm.

According to family tradition John Rodes from New Kent County occupied the site as early as 1749, but the first record of his ownership was a patent issued in 1762 for seventy-nine acres. A second grant including Buck’s Elbow added fifty acres and eventually the tract was increased to 717 acres. Holkham and Harris’s Mill were originally included in that tract. The Rodes family prospered growing hemp, flax, and tobacco. In addition to a mill, the plantation contained a ropewalk, a rare facility for spinning hemp into yarn. The exact date of the building of the original house cannot be determined, but it is evident that there were three stages of construction: the east wing, built with finely executed Flemish bond construction, probably by John Rodes III in the early nineteenth century; the west wing, finished by 1820 and the kitchen wing, added in the 1930s. An early brick ell, now destroyed, might have been the original eighteenth-century portion of the house. The old kitchen and ice house still survive, as does the cemetery where the Rodeses are buried.

In a county noted for beautiful brick work, Midway provides an excellent example with its delicately tooled joints showing their original white penciling. The farm remained in the Rodes family until 1905 when they decided to sell and move nearer Charlottesville. After that, it passed through many owners, and was called Huntsmoor, Riverdale, and then reverted to its original name, Midway, derived from the location between Brown’s Cove and Charlottesville. In 1935, after looking for a country place all over Virginia, Mr. Winship Nunnally and his wife Isabel Palmer, of Atlanta, Georgia, purchased Midway, then consisting of 600 acres. Within a short time, they added an additional 200 acres and established a farm with Hereford cattle and saddle horses. A year after buying Midway they called in Charles Gillette to design a formal garden near the old house and plan the show ring and stables.

A picket gate opens the way to a series of four gardens. The green court garden retains its four original Magnolia soulangiana in each corner, and a turf center. Brick paths with old box spilling over on either side unite the terraces. In the rose room, gravel paths are edged with brick laid on side to outline the radials of the axial design. In this garden of box-edged geometric beds, Gillette used his favorite coral-red Mme. Edouard Herriot rose, one of the most intensely brilliant of all roses, with Lady Hillingdon, a reliably hardy apricot-yellow, and Joanna Hill, a pale yellow that deepens in the center. Against this colorful display, two hardy, good whites, Kaiserin Auguste Victoria, and Mme. Jules Bouché as well as other hybrid teas were planted in clumps of four or five. In the center dark purple heliotrope surrounds the sundial (fig. 23). The owner has attempted to duplicate the rose varieties by color, if not by variety.
On the third tier, formerly a wisteria walk, a central grass panel is lined with twin herbaceous borders. The alternating white and purple wisteria standards have been removed, but clove-scented, pink dianthus mingle with pointed spikes of iris and furry, gray-leaved lamb's ears (*Stachys lanata*) in the beds that remain. A brick pavilion in the plan on the south, across the lawn, was never built. Mrs. Palmer's granddaughter has fond memories of the abundant drooping pale lavender wisteria panicles blending with puffy, double, pink Japanese cherry trees (*Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan'), and each garden had its own bulb plan. *Muscari botryoides* 'Album,' the white form of the rampant grape hyacinth flourished under the soaring thick stalks of *Lilium tigrinum*, and the nodding bell-shaped yellow and orange *lilium canadense*. Various old-fashioned daffodils included *Narcissus poeticus* 'Alba Plena Odorata', the double poet, with heavy gardenia-like petals were planted in masses. The bright pink *Nerine sarniensis* and the cadmium yellow *Sternbergia lutea* are at their best in autumn, unlike most other bulbs.

The evergreen lower section has a center area of brick laid in a shape corresponding to a cross section of a Gothic church pier. A statue was in the middle, marking the center of the path. This slowed down movement around the rim of the garden. As is often the case, small gardens such as this profit by having a central figure to hold the eye. The statuary now has been moved to one side, freeing up the space.

A dark green picket fence atop a low brick wall forms the garden's boundary, yet allows from all sides a beautiful, unhampered view of the surrounding rolling meadows, and haze-covered mountains beyond. The tall trees called for in the plan in the corners and by the pavilion site never were planted. Crab apple and lilac trees delineate the borders of the garden with lavender and pink trusses; while peonies, baptisia, dianthus, and other perennials fill the beds. Solar lights provide illumination after dark for more enjoyment of the lovely spot.

A marvelous six-foot-eleven-by-thirty-nine-inch plan that survives captures the spacious, open feeling of Midway not only with its size, but with the liberal use of green color, unfortunately not reproduced (fig. 22). What is evident is Gillette's versatility. He negotiated the one-hundred-twenty-by-two-hundred-forty-foot show ring, paddock, and barn placement as easily as the precise geometric formal garden design with which he is most usually associated.

NOTES:


"Farm Stood Midway Between Old Towns," ibid., 1 December 1977.
"Isabel Palmer: Miss Magnolia and Spirit of '76," ibid., 2 July 1972.

Conversation, Mr. George Palmer, Jr., 26 March 1992.

4 Conversation, Mr. Walter Casati, 25 March 1992, who also supplied figure 23.

5 Conversation, Mrs. Elizabeth Palmer Mossman. Mrs. Mossman has Gillette’s bulb plan for the garden.

6 Conversation, Mr. George Palmer, Jr., 26 March 1992.

**PLANT LIST, MIDWAY FARM**

Bulb Plan, 16 July 1936

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<td><em>Gladiolus 'Mrs. Frances King'</em></td>
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<td>Tulipa 'Inglescombe Pink'</td>
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<td>Tulipa 'Princess Mary'</td>
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<td>Tulipa 'Inglescombe Yellow'</td>
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<td>Tulipa 'Morilla'</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>Tulipa 'Rosa Bella'</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Tulipa 'Dido'</td>
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**ROSES**

'Luis Brinas'
'Mrs. Pierre Dupont' (golden yellow)
'Edel'
'Ophelia' (blush pink)
'William Kordes'
'Lady Hillington' (apricot-yellow)
'Mme. Jules Bouché' (white hybrid tea)
'Kaiserin Auguste Victoria' (white hybrid tea)
'Joanna Hill' (pale yellow)
'Mme. Edouard Herriot' (orange-yellow with pink and scarlet)
'F. Joseph Lipsipman' or 'Looyman' (?)
'Countess Vandal' (salmon-pink with yellow)
'Betty Uprichard' (salmon-rose)
'Mrs. Erskine Pembroke Thom' (yellow hybrid tea)
'Golden Dawn' (yellow hybrid tea)
'Julien Potin' (yellow hybrid tea)
'President Herbert Hoover' (red with yellow base)
'Mrs. Aaron Ward' (creamy yellow, flushed with pink)
'Louise Krause'
To leave Orange, Virginia, by way of the Rapidan Road (Route 615) is a treat in itself. Orange is a lovely town, the seat of Orange County. The first courthouse was moved to Orange in 1749, there are, however, no buildings standing from that time. The present courthouse was built in 1802. The town is nestled in the foothills east of the Blue Ridge Mountains and is still blessed with houses and churches dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Traveling eastward on East Main Street, one passes the business and residential districts, gradually noting the softening effects of trees. Eventually the traveler emerges into rolling farmland without the distraction of the trappings of modern civilizations.

The gate of Little Yatton is a short distance down this country road just beyond the gate to Midland. At the gate, there is a pond on the right, home in winter to Canada geese. Between the road and pond there is a solitary copse of the deciduous *Ilex verticillata* (black alder or winterberry). This shrub is loved by a variety of birds. Originally, this pond, with steep, red clay banks, was used as an ice pond for Midland Farm, later called Yatton Farm. The ice cut here was stored in an icehouse situated near the main farm house.

The unusual red stone driveway rises, following a graceful curved path to the double-porch farm house of Little Yatton. The paint on the frame house is a shade lighter than the colored stone in the driveway. This color had been selected long before the present owners found the red stone at the Culpeper quarry.

The land of Little Yatton originally was part of the middle section of the Taylor Grant. In early days, this tract, with a house built by George Taylor in 1786, was called Midland. After William Clayton Williams bought Midland it was renamed Yatton. According to the story, his wife expressed a desire to rename the property as they first drove up the driveway in their carriage. She had been reading an English novel entitled *Ten Thousand a Year* in which there was a country place in Wales called Yatton. Intrigued by the name, she adopted it, with her husband's consent, for their new home. Recently, a portion of Yatton, called Little Yatton, was separated from the larger property, the remainder of which is once again known as Midland.

Upon their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Wyatt Williams temporarily moved into an existing building at Yatton farm until they could build their own house. But, children were born, various additions were made to the house, improvements were made to the grounds, and it became their home. Now, years later, they still reside in their "temporary house," Little Yatton.

Mrs. Williams began her garden at the back of the house. While working on the renovation of St. Thomas Episcopal Church yard in Orange, she and her husband met Charles Gillette. In 1948 they asked him to design a garden at the back of the house. This first garden consisted of roses, daffodils, forget-me-nots, and *Pachysandra*. Mrs. Williams thinks *Pachysandra* must have been one of Gillettes favorite plants, for it was the first plant to appear in most of his
gardens. These four species were planted in patterns around a small pool. The pool still exists. The lawn leads the eye downward to the fence dividing the house and garden area from the pastures. Cattle complete the scene, quietly munching the greening fields.

Gillette returned in 1959 to design a parking area at the front of the house. His design involved building a fifteen foot long retaining wall, built by a stone mason from Catawba Valley, near Blacksburg. The wall incorporates stone gathered from Yatton Farm.

It was not until 1965 that Gillette returned to begin the design of the existing pool and garden. Until that time, there had not been sufficient water available to fill this pool and care for the garden. A large amount of soil was brought in, creating a hillside against the retaining wall of the parking area. The owner’s desire was to make this primarily a wild garden. Since it is situated below the parking area, one does not see the natural beauty of this garden until descending the steps past the front porch. Large tulip poplars beyond the pool form a tree temple, offering a gentle invitation to rest and to feast the eye on the intriguing loveliness of this garden. In 1967 the present gazebo was designed and built according to Gillette's plan.

Spring begins early in this magical dell with Helleborus niger and H. orientalis protecting a large swath of yellow Eranthus hyemalis (winter aconite). The white feathery blooms of a very large specimen of the indigenous Amelanchier arborea (shadblow, shadbush, or serviceberry) grows tall, on the hillside near the steps. After the early plants bloom, many wild plants emerge with their delicate flowers accompanied by numbers of azaleas and perennials. To the delight of most visitors, the names of the plants can be read next to each plant.

Throughout the garden one finds intricate mottled fronds of the fern, Athyrium goeringianum (Japanese painted fern). The parent to these plants was given to the Williams family many years ago during a visit to their landscape designer and close friend. Gillette gave Mrs. Williams a small fern from the garden behind his Richmond office. The story goes that one of his clients had brought it to him from the Orient in the toe of her dancing slippers, commenting, "it would flourish because it was both stolen and smuggled." Now, these lovely ferns can be found commercially, but not until long after this stowaway took hold in Orange county soil.

The beauty of the gardens at Little Yatton has been captured in photographs gracing several publications, including: the 1972 Time-Life Encyclopedia of Gardening, in a photograph by Leonard Wolfe; the spring, 1987 issue of Garden Design magazine, in a photograph by Michael Selig; and the wonderful 1992 Gardener’s Guide Calendar, another photograph by Michael Selig.

The pool, alive with plants and creatures, invites quiet reflection. Mr. Williams has many unusual fish, including Chinese shibunkins flashing their colors throughout the shadows of the dark water. The quiet found here, the meticulous care, combined with the imagination of its designer and owners cannot help but thrill any gardener.

Elizabeth Lottimer

Figures 24 and 25 were supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Wyatt Williams.
PLAN LISTS FOR LITTLE YATTON

1966 Planting

125  *Ajuga reptans*  Creeping Bugleweed
50  *Anemone blanda*  Windflower
50  *Anemone fulgens*  French Windflower
40  *Aquilegia hybrida*  Columbine
25  *Arabis alpina*  Rock Cress
50  *Aster 'Survivor'*  Aster
30  *Aster 'Violetta'*  Aster
35  *Asarum shuttleworthii*  Wild Ginger
24  *Aster*  Astilbe
70  *Bergenia (Megasea)*  Bergenia
27  *Dicentra exima*  Bleeding Heart

70  *Epimedium grandiflora (macranthum)*  Ferns
25  *Hosta (Funkia) caerulea 'Lanceolata'*  Plantain Lily
50  *Hesperis matronalis*  Dame's Rocket
25  *Helleborus niger*  Christmas Rose
3  *Hydrangea petiolaris*  Climbing Hydrangea
10  *Hydrangea 'Summer Beauty'*  Hydrangea
32  *Hypericum calycinum*  St. John's Wort
190  *Iris pumila*  Dwarf Iris
12  *Iris kaempferi*  Japanese Iris
40  *Iris reticulata*  Iris
30  *Leucojum aestivum*  Snowflake
50  *Lilium henryi*  Lily
15  *Lythrum 'Morden's Pink'*  Loosestrife
75  *Lycoris radiata*  Spider Lily
125  *Mazus*
50  *Mertensia virginica*  Virginia Bluebells
150  *Narcissus campanellii*  Jonquil
75  *Narcissus poeticus*  Poet's Narcissus
125  *Phlox divaricata*  Blue Phlox
235  *Plumbago capensis*  Leadwort
25  *Polygonum reynoutria (P. cuspidatum var. compactum)*
35  *Primula*  Primrose
16  *Saponaria ocymoides*
235  *Endymion hispanicus (Scilla campanulata)*  Wood Hyacinth
300  *Scilla sibirica*  Siberian Squill
30  *Silene acaule*  Cushion Pink
190  *Ipheion (Tretelia) uniflora 'Violacea'*  Mexican Star
30  *Trillium grandiflorum*  Great White Trillium
18  *Kniphofia (Tritoma)*  Red Hot Poker
20  *Uvularia grandiflora*
30  *Viola pedata 'Bicolor'*  Bird's Foot Violet
Supplementary List

Allium moly
Anemone 'De Caen'
Anemone 'St. Bridgette's'
Chionodoxa luciliae
Colchicum autumnalis
Crocus
Eranthis hyemalis
Erythronium
Galanthus nivalis
Hepatica
Muscari botryoides
Sanguinaria canadensis
Sternbergia lutea
Tulipa clusiana
Tulipa Kaufmanniana
Tulipa marjolettii

Lily Leek
Windflower
Windflower
Glory-of-the-Snow
Autumn Crocus
Crocus
Winter Aconite
Trout Lily
Snowdrop
Liver Leaf
Grape Hyacinth
Bloodroot
Winter Daffodil
Species Tulip
Species Tulip
Species Tulip

Additions, Fall 1967 and Spring 1968

5 Lobelia cardinalis
1 Potentilla 'White Gold'
100 Eranthis hyemalis
6 Salvia 'De Streisland'
3 Asclepias tuberosa
3 Achillea
6 Monarda 'Snow Queen'
25 Anemone blanda
6 Penstemon
10 Cimicifuga racemosa
6 Tiarella cordifolia
10 Chamaelirium luteum
3 Habenaria ciliaris
5 Pedicularis canadensis
10 Dicentra cucularia
10 Arisaema triphyllum
10 Erythronium americanum
12 Tulipa turkestanica
12 Tulipa clusiana

Cardinal Flower
Cinquefoil
Winter Aconite
Sage
Butterfly Weed
Yarrow
Beebalm
Windflower
Beard-Tongue
Black Snakeroot
Foam Flower
Blazing Star
Yellow Fringed Orchid
Lousewort
Dutchman's Britches
Jack-in-the-Pulpit
Trout Lily
Species Tulip
Species Tulip

48
Fig. 28
Meadowfarm

Orange County
Gillette Clients: Mr. and Mrs. Jaquelin P. Taylor
Mr. and Mrs. Jaquelin E. Taylor

Few estates in Virginia have been in the possession of one family over a longer period of time than Meadowfarm, the Orange County home of the Taylors. There is romance as well as history in the story of this lovely old plantation, an original grant to Colonel James Taylor II, of Caroline County, a great, great, great, great, great grandfather of the present owner, Howell Lewis Townshend Dade Taylor.

Colonel Taylor was a member of the staff of Governor Alexander Spotswood and in 1716 rode with him on that famous adventure that led from Williamsburg to the Blue Ridge Mountains and the valley beyond. He was thus of that famed band known as the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe. Following the transmontane expedition, Governor Spotswood, Colonel Taylor, and others of the group received from King George II large grants of land in this foothill section of the Piedmont. A grant of 13,500 acres in what was to become Orange County was made to Colonel Taylor in 1722. Soon thereafter he completed Bloomsbury, said to be the oldest residence in the county. In 1964 the late Jaquelin E. Taylor, father of the current owner, purchased Bloomsbury as a wedding present for his cousin and wife-to-be, Helen Marie Taylor, thereby reuniting the original manor house to the property. This ancestral home of two presidents is now restored, and has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Colonel Taylor and his wife, Martha Thompson, raised a large family at Bloomsbury, and two of their great grandsons, James Madison and General Zachary Taylor, became presidents of the United States. As Taylor children married, the original grant was subdivided into smaller estates for their homes. Meadowfarm was given by Colonel Taylor to his son Zachary upon his marriage to Elizabeth Lee, daughter of Hancock Lee of Ditchley. These were the grandparents of President Zachary Taylor. Colonel Taylor's daughter, Frances, married Ambrose Madison, and they were given the property which became known as Montpelier. They were the grandparents of President James Madison. Midland (sometimes known as Yatton), Red Bud, Piedmont, Hare Forest, and Greenfields were all Taylor places included in the original grant, but Meadowfarm alone of the group has remained in the family, in uninterrupted ownership for 270 years. The estate now, once again, comprises approximately 13,500 acres, 6,000 of which are in woodland.

General James Longstreet established headquarters at Meadowfarm in the autumn of 1863 and, with his staff, occupied the lower floor of the mansion. Colonel Erasmus Taylor, great grandfather of the present owner, was a member of General Longstreet's staff. General Lee was encamped nearby at Bloomsbury and he and Traveler were frequent visitors. A cherished reminder of the period is in the parlor at Meadowfarm--an autographed photograph given by General Lee to Mrs. Taylor in appreciation of her hospitality and nursing of the wounded soldiers.
Meadowfarm is distinguished by its lawns, trees, ancient boxwood, and rolling green meadows from which is derived its name. The present house of white-painted brick, Greek Revival in design, was completed in 1855. It stands in a beautiful park of 25 acres immediately in front of the site of the original homestead built by the first Zachary Taylor and Elizabeth Lee in 1729 and is approached by a long driveway winding through an avenue of red and silver maples. The old kitchen wing, now used as a guest house, is connected with the main building by a particularly interesting arcade, from which doors open to various service rooms. The architect of the 1920s, when extensive remodeling was done, was Duncan Lee.

Through the years the Taylors have, in each succeeding generation, beautified the grounds and gardens. Extensive work was undertaken in the 1930s to carry out the designs of Charles Gillette, commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Jaquelin P. Taylor. A study and restoration of Gillette’s plans, to coincide with the 1992 forum in Richmond honoring Gillette on the 110th anniversary of his birth, is currently underway.

From the back terrace of the house a long broad grass walk lined with magnificent boxwood and tulip poplars leads to a brick octagonal summerhouse. An ancient sycamore once towered above the moss-covered shingle roof and stone walkways. From here the ground falls away to a panorama of lush meadows and undulating fields of wheat and corn with dense forests in the distance. A preliminary sketch of the pavilion (fig. 27) is in the possession of the owner, as well as the detailed plans. Gillette’s concept was unified geometrically with the main lines relating to the house. On the west the work ends at the old graveyard where Elizabeth and Zachary Taylor, and seven generations of the family, are buried.

At the entrance to the main garden, on the eastern slope, grows a huge black walnut of gigantic limb spread, probably the oldest tree on the place. Triple grass walkways between massive boxwood hedges lead down to a swimming pool, dark with the reflection of the tall clipped cedars. The overflow from the fountain beside the pool ripples over a rocky rill, one of Gillette’s most enchanting creations (fig. 26). This leads into two small basins, before spilling into a fish pond bordered with swamp laurel, magnolias, weeping cherries, beeches, and willow oaks. The pond is filled in summer with Egyptian lotus and water lilies. Forget-me-nots, plumbago, and great clumps of yellow hemerocallis give accents of color. There are pink dogwood, underplanted with Mertensia and many other moisture-loving plants such as: Iris pseudacorus, I. versicolor, I. sibirica, Lythrum roseum, Thalictrum aquilegifolium, and Clethra alnifolia. Waterlilies, Nymphaea marlata 'Chromatella Carnea' and N. 'Paul Haviat' float in the pond. The present owner has recently drained and repaired the original cypress tubs that held the rhizomes, and many old plantings are still to be seen. Bordering the pond on the east, Gillette repeated the dogwood, cherries, and willows, and added pin cherries, crab apples, Magnolia virginiana, and Amelanchier. For added color under these trees, he placed Lilium superbum, Thalictrum cornutum, and Lobelia cardinalis.

At Meadowfarm, Gillette expanded the scope of his design to include spring house, bath house, guest quarters, tennis court, and, in later years, other charming and useful dependencies (fig. 28). In addition, he showed with meticulous selection from rock quarries on the place, how small stone could suggest intimacy and seclusion while gradation to stone of larger size and texture made a bold definition in the landscape. Nowhere is this as evident as in the east garden. Always a master with masonry, Gillette employed his skill to perfection at Meadowfarm. There, too, he displayed his ability to deal with an old site of national importance
that served as home to an active family. According to Helen Marie Taylor, widow of the late Jacquelin E. Taylor, Gillette and their family maintained a continuing professional and affectionate personal friendship over more than thirty-five years. Gillette continued to assist the family into his early nineties, providing substance to his client’s wishes in a manner that was both practical and beautiful and always enhancing and unifying to his original themes and the natural beauty of the land, for beyond the gardens lie the great meadows of singular pastoral beauty. In the clear sunlight of the late afternoon, herds of Angus grazing in the long shadows of the trees make an unforgettable picture of serenity and peace.

Helen Marie Taylor

SOURCE:


Figures 26, 27 and 28 were supplied by the Honorable Helen Marie Taylor.

### PLANT LIST FOR MEADOWFARM

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<th>Species</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
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<td><em>Hypericum moseranum</em></td>
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<td><em>Amelanchier</em></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Juniperus virginiana</em></td>
<td>Cedar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram](image-url)
NOTES

Snow in Summer

Cerastium tomentosum - white flowers in gray leaves - good w/ Phlox divaricata
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