

Spring 2010

The Beatrix Farrand Society NEWS



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BFS Acquires Photos of Garland Farm

By Judith B. Tankard

The BFS recently acquired an important collection of over 200 photographs of Garland Farm that formerly belonged to the Garland family. These photographs, along with other memorabilia, were bequeathed in 1996 to BFS member Diane Cousins, a great-niece of Lewis Garland. Thanks to the generosity of two anonymous donors, the BFS was able to add these extraordinary photographs to their archives. The black-and-white images depict the entrance and terrace gardens in the early 1960s just after Beatrix Farrand's death in 1959 as well as caretakers and visitors to Garland Farm during that period. These photographs will be an invaluable resource for ongoing research in the restoration of the gardens at Garland Farm as well as for interpreting the history of the property.

Garland Farm was the ancestral home of Lewis Garland, who had been the property manager at Reef Point prior to retiring in 1955. His wife, Amy Garland, was Farrand's housekeeper and cook at Reef Point and also wrote several articles on horticulture for the *Reef Point Bulletins*. After Lewis Garland's death in 1964 Amy lived in England for several years before returning to Bar Harbor where she lived in a small house on Snow Street until her death in 1996. Amy Garland, who was born in England in 1899 and came to the United States in 1921 to work for Beatrix's mother, Minnie Jones, in New York, began working for Beatrix shortly afterwards.

The collection includes many of the photographs that were used in the preparation of the *Cultural Landscape Report*, plus others that have never been published before. After the collection has been digitized, the photographs will be available for research purposes in the library by appointment only.



Amy Garland in 1921.
Diane Cousins Collection



Front garden and birdbath.
Diane Cousins Collection



In an ideal world, Judith Tankard's new book, *Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes* (Monacelli Press, 2009), would have been written in two volumes, Volume I: The Life and Volume II: The Work. It is to the author's immense credit that she interweaves the two flawlessly so that we see how the work Farrand did come directly from the life she chose to lead and how one complemented the other. All BFS



Carmen Pearson is not a landscape historian, or a horticulturist, or even a garden designer. She is a distant cousin of Max Farrand (Beatrix's husband) and began her research in the hope of uncovering and defining the role Beatrix played in the Farrand family. She discovered much more, including a trove of insights into the developing professional mind of the young Beatrix Jones and the more mature Beatrix Farrand as well as Max Farrand's

members will benefit enormously from reading this book and carefully studying the plans and photographs. Many of the gardens are given thoughtful attention from their initial planning through their implementation, and their eventual demise. Today, after completing this cycle, several of the gardens have been restudied and preserved by inspired restoration. Tankard takes us through this process so that we can clearly see that the gardens are living examples of Farrand's work. No matter what one's particular interest is—plants, both native and exotic, books on horticulture and landscape gardening, architecture, planning and travel—these subjects are treated in detail so we begin to see their inter-relationships and how Farrand expressed them in garden design.

One particular fascination to me is her early life as Beatrix Jones and how she came to realize that her life's work lay in a different direction from her conventional upbringing. One important influence on her was her mother, Minnie Jones, and her aunt Edith Wharton, both of whom led by example. Especially important was her life in travel, particularly in England and Scotland where she learned at an early age to appreciate the beauty of the natural landscape and how this could contrast with the designed garden.

One important aspect of Farrand's creative life that is missing from this book is the correspondence which Farrand had with her clients. She left a small amount of correspondence, but the larger amount of it was not part of her bequest to the University of California at Berkeley and we have to assume that it was destroyed. This kind of correspondence is also helpful in any biographical study because it reveals the creative mind in action. In spite of this, Tankard is able to present us with many of the joys and vicissitudes of the client-designer relationship. She also reveals the competitive relationship of many of the landscape architects practicing at this time. This was especially true of her work in California where she came into conflict with established practitioners as Lockwood de Forest, Jr., William Hertrich, and Florence Yoch.

This is truly a remarkable book which defines Beatrix Farrand as a superb designer, a woman of exceptional character, and a person of a very private nature. Tankard manages to present her as a vibrant human being, which is the best that can be said about any biographical undertaking.

—Diane Kostial McGuire

partnership role in her life. Carmen's book, *The Collected Writings of Beatrix Farrand: American Landscape Gardener, 1872-1959* (University Press of New England, 2009), is a compilation of the published articles that gave Beatrix early visibility in the landscape world as well as an array of professional correspondence that illuminates her philosophy, professional style, and tireless work ethic. Although many of these articles can be found in archived publications, having them assembled in one book brings continuity and deeper insights into her work. This book complements several recent publications that examine the work of Beatrix Farrand, including Judith Tankard's new book, Theresa Mattor and Lucie Teegarden's *Designing the Maine Landscape* (Down East Books, 2009), and Thaisa Way's *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century* (University of Virginia Press, 2009).

A favorite inclusion is Farrand's formative gardening journal, she kept from 1893 to 1895 and which is now in her archives at the University of California at Berkeley. The handwritten journal has been transcribed and included without analysis, to be read as an unselfconscious exploration through the landscapes of the western world. The first entry, written in Bar Harbor and dated October 1893, begins a lifelong inventory of notable plants and landscape features she encountered wherever she went. Her greater adventures begin with a trip later in the year to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in the company of her mentor, Professor Charles Sprague Sargent, and his wife. Here her critical eye quickly and thoroughly takes in the details of Olmsted's epic landscape there. More extensive travels follow in Europe, especially to Italy with "P.W.," her code name for her soul-mate and aunt, Edith "Pussy" Wharton. A pilgrimage to all significant Italian villas reveals architectural and spatial insights as well as planting details. She held a special reverence for the Villa Lante in Bagnaia, which she described in great detail. Throughout these landscape explorations one feels like a bird—a very lucky bird—on her shoulder, seeing these gardens through her eyes and being privy to her private views and comments. Carmen Pearson's book is a must for landscape history scholars and for Beatrix Farrand fans. —Patrick Chassé, ASLA

Corliss Knapp Engle (1936–2009)

When Corliss Engle died on November 26, 2009, the BFS lost a good friend and benefactor. Her impressive list of achievements included serving as a director, committee chair, and horticulture and photography judge of the Garden Club of America. She received many awards, including the Garden Club of America's Achievement Medal, a national honor. She was a trustee of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and the New England Wildflower Society as well as an active member of numerous plant societies and garden groups. She also served as a horticulture judge and was a frequent exhibitor at flower shows as well as a gifted photographer. In 2008, I brought her to Garland Farm to meet Emily and Jim Fuchs as well as the BFS archivist, Marti Harmon. After this meeting she quickly decided that the BFS was to be the home of her Farrand family papers. Corliss's great aunt, Daisy Farrand

was a sister of Corliss's grandmother, May Carleton Knapp, and the wife of Cornell president Livingston Farrand, one of Max Farrand's brothers. When Daisy learned that Max Farrand was interested in Miss Beatrix Jones, she visited Beatrix at Princeton and found her ably supervising a large crew of men. When she returned to Cornell, she reported to her husband that if Beatrix wanted his brother, she would have him. Daisy Farrand, who was a gardener in her own right, has a peony named after her, and I suspect this was something of a family tradition, as there is a begonia named 'Corliss Engle.' —Margaret P. Bowditch

Ed.: Donations may be made to the Corliss Knapp Engle Scholarship Fund established by the Chestnut Hill Garden Club, P.O. Box 67442, Chestnut Hill MA 02467.

Past Events

On September 10, Dan Farrenkopf, co-founder of Lunaform, gave a lecture on the firm's distinctive hand-built, all-weather garden vessels that are inspired by classical designs as well as the work of Eric Soderholtz, who designed the birdbath at Garland Farm. On October 9, BFS board members and guests celebrated the opening of the new education center at Garland Farm. Architect Scott Koniecko led a group through the barn to see the new ramp, audio-visual installation, and lighting. The tour concluded with a special cake decorated with architectural tools and made Janice Strout of Hulls Cove. Under the guidance of Sam Coplon, the group then had a chance to admire progress on the new irrigation system in the terrace gardens. The afternoon concluded with a reception sponsored by the Library and Collections Committee in honor of Judith Tankard's new book on Beatrix Farrand.



Special cake decorated with architectural tools.



BFS board members admire terrace gardens.



Judith Tankard signs copies of her book.

Plant Profile: *Scilla siberica*

By Carolyn Hollenbeck



Scilla siberica. Carolyn Hollenbeck

Springtime at Garland Farm brings color back to the grounds with the emergence of many small bulbs. Winter Aconite, Snowdrops, and *Chionodoxa* appear at the end of March, but by late April, the carpet of *Scilla siberica* in the entrance garden puts on a show that should not be missed.

Scilla siberica, under cultivation since 1796, originated in Russia and Eurasia. Hardy in zones 2 to 8, these bulbs thrive in rich soils that have good drainage. Classified as a "true bulb," *S. siberica* has five major parts: a basal plate from which the roots grow, fleshy scales serving as storage tissue, a tunic, or skin-like covering, protecting those scales, a shoot consisting of the developing leaf buds and flowers, and lateral buds which develop into bulblets.

Scilla siberica produces nodding blue or white flowers on stalks that arise from the center of a rosette of narrow, dark green foliage. A single flower up to 1" wide

or a raceme of two to three flowers appear on the stalk. Flowers have six tepals (petals) with blue anthers. On blue flowers, a single dark blue vein runs down the middle of the tepal. Pollinators are attracted to the little flower, and if fertilized round seed capsules are produced, yielding reddish-brown seeds. Lateral buds offer a second method of propagation. It should be noted that all parts of this plant are poisonous.



Scilla siberica. Carolyn Hollenbeck

For maximum effect, plant *S. siberica* in masses during the fall months. Full to part sun is required, but early flowering of these spring bulbs allows us the ability to naturalize them in deciduous woodlands, enjoying the blooms prior to the trees leafing out and casting shade on the ground. Planting them along walkways or paths allows full appreciation of their beauty and fragrance, a welcomesight after the long winter months have passed.

The Quotable Gardener

"Gardening, reading about gardening, and writing about gardening are all one; no one can garden alone." Elizabeth Lawrence, 1957

From the Library Shelves

By Marti Harmon



The Library continues to receive wonderful donations from many generous friends. In addition to the photographs from Diane Cousins, we have recently received several Farrand, Wharton, and Cadwalader family artifacts, such as linens, a suitcase, stationary folder, and flower vases. We have also been fortunate to

have received several large collections from devoted fans of Beatrix Farrand, such as Patrick Chassé and Professor Jack Hagstrom. Judith Tankard's recent gifts include framed original photographs of Beatrix Farrand, Max Farrand, and Mary Cadwalader Jones, as well as a hand-colored tearsheet from an 1898 issue of *American Architect and Building News* depicting Beatrix Jones's design for a lych-gate for a Seal Harbor church. In addition Judith has donated a number of books for the Morning Room Collection. One of these volumes is Leicester Holland's *The Garden Blue Book: A Manual*

of the *Perennial Garden* (Doubleday, 1915). In this book, Holland compares a garden with a symphony: the conductor/gardener must keep in mind all of the qualities and possibilities of every instrument/plant in the orchestra/garden. The heart of the book itemizes 169 plants common to perennial borders, listing a history of the Latin name, common names, area of origin, time of bloom, and an informative paragraph about versatility and variations. It is the chart at the back of the book that sets out in remarkable clarity a seven-point database on each plant. It is easy to read and follow. Do come and look at this book before starting a new perennial bed.

For those who want to learn more about the era in which Beatrix Farrand grew up, we can recommend *Dear Munificent Friends*, a collection of letters from Henry James to his four favorite ladies, including Mary Cadwalader Jones. The travels and travails of both Edith Wharton and Minnie Jones are detailed, including James's letter to "Dear Trixy" who shocked her mother's world by marrying a history professor. Thanks to Diane Cousins for donating this book.

The Library is looking for volunteers this summer to spend two hours a week assisting with typing, adding our new bookplates to all books, and entering new acquisitions into a database.

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