

Eden

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Eden

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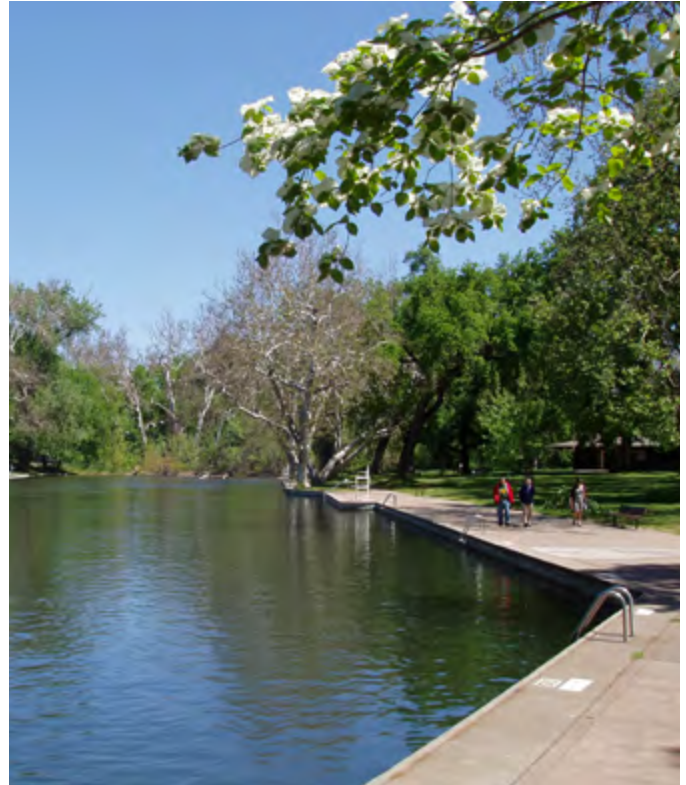
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Front Cover: *Carlotta and Eugene O'Neill posing in the Tao House courtyard garden under the bough of the Chinaberry tree. This photo is from a series taken by Life Magazine in 1943 for an essay that was never written or published. Life Magazine, photographer unknown.*

Above: *A focus of summer life in Chico, Sycamore Pool is one of the principal amenities of the far-stretching and bucolic Bidwell Park.*

Right: *Eugene O'Neill posing in the Tao House loggia, 1943. Life Magazine, photographer unknown.*

A Playwright's Garden

Eugene O'Neill's Tao House, 1937 to 2016

Keith Park and Paul Scolari



Managing the cultivated landscape at Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site in the northern California town of Danville, which is nestled in the San Ramon Valley a dozen or so miles east of San Francisco Bay, can be challenging. Perched halfway up a steep mountainside, at 700 feet above sea level, the elevated site commands sweeping 180-degree views of Mount Diablo and the San Ramon Valley. The solitude, the landscape, and the climate inspired O'Neill (1888-1953) and his third wife, Carlotta (1888-1970), to build Tao House, a home and garden retreat in a remote spot in eastern Contra Costa

County in 1937. In the end it was those same qualities that drove the author of such twentieth-century American classics as *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *The Iceman Cometh* from it.

1937 to 1940: Establishing the Garden

Just six months after O'Neill won the Nobel Prize for literature (1936), the couple took \$17,500 of the prize money and purchased 158 acres of rural, hillside farmland near Danville. The move west from their home on the coast of Georgia was prompted in part by a desire for privacy and peace so

Eugene could work without distraction and also by a hope that California's famed climate would invigorate them both. "We have a beautiful site in the hills of the San Ramon Valley with one of the most beautiful views I've ever seen," wrote O'Neill. "This is the final home and harbor for me. I love California. Moreover, the climate is one I know I can work and keep healthy in."

Once on site, the O'Neills planned and developed the surrounding gardens, orchards and site amenities with the aid of a landscape architect, landscaper, and gardeners. And before long the hillside



property and its old barn and adobe buildings, which hearkened back to an earlier, pastoral California, were transformed into the sanctuary they desired.

Much of what is known about the O’Neills’ time at Tao House comes from their personal diaries, mostly from Carlotta’s. In her first diary entry regarding the property, on April 22, 1937, she writes: “Gene and I both love the Bryant property ... It is more than we wanted and more expensive....” Almost

Above: This painting by Dutch artist and Oakland resident Marius Schmidt depicts the Tao House landscape ca. 1900. Notice what is presumably the Chinaberry tree, adjacent to the two adobe structures referenced by the O’Neills. Painting by Marius Schmidt, 1868-1938.

immediately they chose the ideal location on which to construct their new house and garden—the leading edge of the only flat and easily buildable spot along this portion of the Las Trampas Hills range.¹

Soon after acquiring the property the couple hired local architect Frederick Reimers to design the house and garden complex. For reasons that are unclear, Reimers was soon released from the project and on May 7, 1937, architect Frederick L. Confer assumed the role.

Access to the site was one of the most immediate issues. A right-of-way was needed. After intense negotiation to secure permission to build a road across a neighboring parcel at the foot of the hill owned by Mabel

Kuss, the matter was settled. Mrs. Kuss signed the agreement permitting the construction of a narrow driveway to the Tao House site. “The new road is really a boulevard” wrote Carlotta, “...hope it lasts!”

The O’Neills were actively engaged in the home design process and expressed a strong desire for a Spanish-colonial theme, one reminiscent of Casa Genotta, the home they had left behind on Sea Island, Georgia. Confer’s original concept for the house and courtyard was significantly different from what was actually built, at least in scale if not style. The only known design rendering shows a Spanish-colonial/Monterey building and a mission-inspired courtyard, with four equal panels of lawn intersected by stone walkways and anchored by a faux



water-well structure as a folly. The eventual house and courtyard was a scaled-down version of this conceptual sketch.

The name “Tao House” was first referenced by Carlotta and Eugene in their respective diaries soon after moving in on December 30, 1937. It was something of an incongruous name for what was clearly a Mediterranean-inspired building. However, the interior finishes of the home and its Asian furnishings from Gumps in San Francisco, together with the courtyard landscape, lent some veracity to the name. The O’Neills had the courtyard entry gate painted black and affixed with Chinese characters that translated as “the right way of life.” Mai-mai Sze, a Chinese friend of Carlotta’s who had been consulted about

the Taoist slogan, would later recall: “I didn’t think it was particularly apt, but I thought, what does it matter, if it amuses them.” While Eugene read and embraced Asian philosophical and religious writings as an alternative to Western convention, this saucy quote aptly reflects the fact that the O’Neills’ eclectic tastes were indeed Romantic—as much about style as substance.²

Perhaps the most conspicuous landscape manifestation of the O’Neill’s interest in Taoism is the zigzag entry walkway leading through the courtyard from the entry gate to the front door of the house. This feature is a reference to the Taoist belief that evil spirits will be confused by non-linear paths of travel and thus unable to enter a building. While the novelty of this circulation feature likely would have amused arriving guests, from a design perspective the overall effect was to slow down the rate of travel and compel visitors to experience the landscape around them in a conscious way. For subsequent owners of the Tao House, however, this design would prove more of an inconvenience than an amusement.

Of all the designed areas at Tao House, the entry courtyard is the most complex space. It is a rectangle enclosing approximately 7,000 square feet of space, with two large panels of lawn near the entry gate and two narrow strips of lawn nearer the front door. The courtyard contained numerous planter beds, a fishpond, climbing vines, potted plants, and a rock garden and patio space. Interestingly, Confer’s conceptual design sketch shows the main entry gate into the courtyard slightly off center from the axis of the interior entry walk and front door. Whether intentional or not, this idiosyncrasy became a significant feature of the final landscape design.

One of the more interesting ornamental trees on the property is the stately Chinaberry tree (*Melia azeradach*), which pre-existed the construction of the house. The O’Neill’s and their architect chose to enclose the Chinaberry tree within the walled courtyard garden and planted turf grass around it—a practical decision that achieved an area of “instant” shade for the patio at the eastern end of the courtyard. Numerous photographs of the Chinaberry tree exist, including one of a series taken for *Life Magazine* in 1943 showing Carlotta and Eugene sitting under the shade of the Chinaberry’s canopy. The tree is clearly visible in photos taken during the construction of Tao House in 1937, and was even painted by artist and Oakland resident Marius Schmidt sometime around the turn of the century.

Outside the courtyard there were other garden spaces, though these were less stylized than the courtyard itself and served more utilitarian purposes. Early on in the design phase Eugene O’Neill expressed interest in a swimming pool. Constructed downhill from the Tao House, adjacent to an oak-studded ravine, the swimming pool was completed and filled in April 1938 and its sloped sides were planted with *Dichondra* groundcover. Access to the pool was by way of narrow brick walkways planted on either side with groundcovers of iceplant (*Carpobrotus edulis*) and lippia (*Phyla nodiflora*). Horsetail trees (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) and coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) were also planted, providing a sense of enclosure and privacy to the pool area. Based on diary accounts, the pool was Eugene’s favorite location for relaxing.

Approaching the Tao House from the driveway, visitors were greeted by a circular turnaround in front of the entry gate that was designed around a massive valley oak tree (*Quercus lobata*). The circular bed around the oak was defined by a low hedge of boxwood (*Buxus sp.*) and planted with various ornamentals such as Bank’s rose (*Rosa banksiae*), pelargoniums, and a fig tree. On the west side of the turnaround drive the O’Neill’s planted a semi-circular row of plane trees (*Platanus x acerifolia*) to protect the house and courtyard from the stiff winds that frequently blew down from the Las Trampas Hills. Beyond the plane trees to the west a small patch of open field marked the transition from formal landscape area to vernacular working space. Opposite this field is an old barn that dates to the time when the property was used as a cattle ranch outpost. The O’Neill’s did not keep livestock but they did have numerous chickens that they kept in a large coop constructed in 1938 on the other side of the old barn.

As early as May 1938 discussions were under way about expanding the existing walnut orchard at the foot of the steep incline south of the old barn. By 1941 the talk of orchards expanded to include other vacant areas around the Tao House, and by February 1941 an almond orchard was established on terraces descending from the east side of the Tao House between the entry drive and the pool, and a small kitchen orchard of approximately two-dozen pome and stone fruit trees was established north of the house. The north-west side of the house facing the kitchen orchard contained the servant’s quarters, kitchen and related utility areas.³

Providing enough water for all the new ornamental and orchard plantings at the



Tao House would prove to be daunting, particularly during the summer of 1939 when a bad drought descended on the San Ramon Valley. As early as 1937 plans to tap into an existing artesian spring upslope from the property were implemented. A series of three 12,000-gallon redwood water tanks were installed to provide water to the house and grounds through a series of underground pipes. Carlotta recorded several exasperated entries in her diary from 1939, exclaiming “our lack of water is ruining our garden ... this means our garden must be sacrificed ... Heartbreaking – we have worked so hard!”⁴ In the 1990s two of the three water tanks were reconstructed according to historic preservation standards and are still in operation, providing nearly 100 percent of the landscape irrigation water needed to maintain the gardens and grounds.

Above left: O’Neill “tacking up vines” of Star Jasmine to the east-facing wall of the Tao House, 1941. Photographer unknown.

Above center: The Tao House under construction, 1937. Photographer unknown.

Above right: The original 1937 concept for the Tao House, drawn by Frederick Confers. Frederick L. Confers, Architect.

During their six years at Tao House both Carlotta and Eugene O’Neill enjoyed spending time in their gardens, which provided peace, solitude, and privacy while Eugene was engaged in writing some of his most famous works. Between 1937 and 1943 Carlotta made 475 garden-related entries in her diary. In contrast, Eugene recorded just twenty-four, preferring instead to spend time outside when not playwriting. Together with swimming in the pool and tending his chickens, hobby gardening provided Eugene with an antidote to his intense writing. Carlotta recorded that among her husband’s favorite garden activities were “tacking up” jasmine and fig vines to the house (*Trachelospermum jasminoides* and *Ficus pumila*), pruning “his” hedges (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), and “pruning walnut trees” (*Juglans regia*).⁵

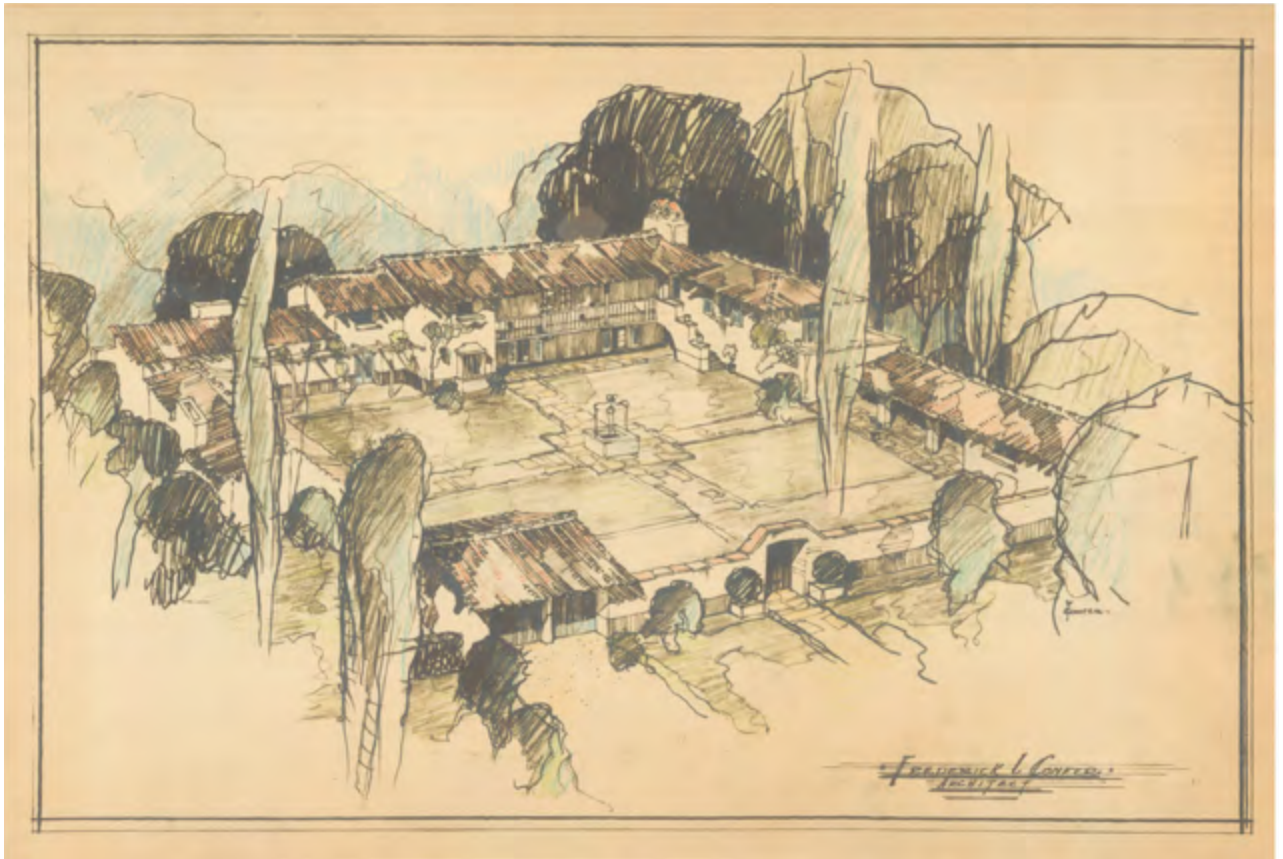
As Eugene’s health and ability to write worsened due to tremors in his hands, so did the O’Neills’ attitude to the very isolation they had originally sought in 1937. In a personal letter dated December 4, 1944, Eugene writes: “One thing our ranch in the San Ramon Valley taught me was that no matter how beautiful the hills and woods and meadows, and a valley of orchards with fertile earth, I can admire it objectively but not in any deep spiritual sense. I don’t

belong. I am not it and it is not me.”⁶ And despite her earlier fondness for the country and being away from people, by the end of 1943 Carlotta was despondent and wrote to a friend, “I loathe the country, for more than a few days. I always have! I have lied to everyone, & myself, all these years trying to make myself like it!”⁷

In January 1944 the O’Neills sold Tao House to Arthur Carlson and his wife at a substantial loss. Eugene O’Neill’s final written word about life in California is found in a letter dated April 27, 1944: “What we do now is that we go east...we have both had enough of the coast.”⁸

Carlson Period: 1944 to 1976

Upon moving in to the Tao House in 1945 the Carlsons wasted little time reevaluating the landscape and making substantial changes, particularly within the courtyard. In February 1947 the landscape architecture firm of Osmundson-Staley (known today for their seminal mid-century design of the Kaiser Center roof garden in Oakland) were hired to redesign the Tao House gardens by Mrs. Carlson. The most significant alteration to the O’Neill design was the transformation of the zigzag entry walk into a wider path that led straight from



the entry gate to the front door. In other changes to the courtyard, the small fish-pond (which had failed as a pond and was filled in as a planter bed by the O'Neills) was bricked over and the paved patio areas were expanded.

In the late 1940s *Sunset* magazine profiled the garden makeover in a one-page article entitled "Opening up' an older garden." Three sets of before-and-after photos showcased the alterations and described the work with captions such as "In garden remodeling, a small change in design will often make a big difference in livability."⁹ Other alterations to the landscape during the Carlson period include construction of a large "new barn" in the 1950s for boarding horses, which functions today as storage and office space.

1976 to present: NPS Courtyard Restoration / Landscape Rehabilitation

In 1980, after the private Eugene O'Neill Foundation successfully raised funds for purchase of the property and convinced state and federal legislative representatives of the public value of the property, the National Park Service (NPS) assumed ownership and stewardship of the Tao House, officially known as the Eugene

O'Neill National Historic Site. In 1986, NPS Historical Landscape Architect Cathy Gilbert drafted a study and design proposal for the NPS for the restoration of the Tao House landscape back to its O'Neill-period character, following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

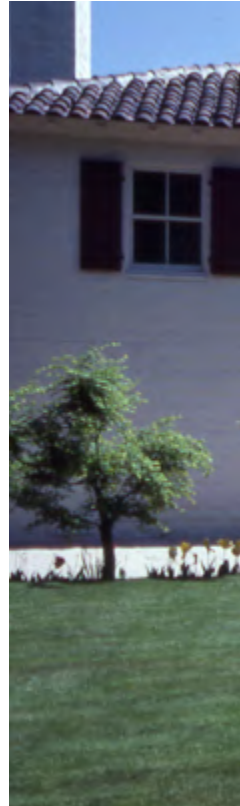
In the study it was determined that the period of greatest significance to the landscape was the six-year period when the O'Neills resided at Tao House, and hence the garden should be restored to its appearance during those years. Extensive research was conducted to understand the historic elements that existed between 1938 and 1944 so that informed decisions could be made that balanced historic authenticity with maintenance limitations.

Work began in the late 1980s and within two years all the Carlson-era alterations were removed and the landscape was restored back to the way it was during the O'Neill period. Although "restoration" was chosen as the primary treatment for the courtyard, certain features of the project would be more correctly described as "rehabilitation," which is defined by the Secretary of the Interior as an alteration that is compatible with historic character

but allows for contemporary use, since the courtyard was not 100 percent restored back to its original design intent.¹⁰

A National Park Service cultural landscape report completed in 2004 analyzed the Tao House property and recognized in it several character areas that had been created by the O'Neills. The designed landscape includes several elements located immediately adjacent to the home: Kuss Road, the access road from the town of Danville; the turnaround and courtyard entrance, which served as the terminus of the steeply pitched Kuss Road and access to the home through the courtyard garden; the courtyard; and finally garden areas to the south and east of the house and a swimming pool a short stroll from the house to the northeast where O'Neill swam daily from May to October.

As one moved away from the home the landscape areas took on a less formal character. A kitchen orchard of fruit trees was north of the house. To the west a barn working area included the old barn that the O'Neill's retained on the site as well as a chicken coop for the fowl that O'Neill kept for his amusement. Finally, walnut orchards spread out to the south and a compact almond orchard crowded the area to the east of the home.



As a public agency the NPS has a duty to make all parks and sites as accessible as possible for all visitors, something that is not always easy to achieve with historically significant structures and landscapes. In the Tao House courtyard, for example, the narrow zigzag entry path and stone steps leading to the front door are impossible to navigate by wheelchair. To remedy this a discreet portion of the boxwood hedge inside the courtyard door was left unplanted, and at this opening, beneath the turf grass, an underlayment of rigid plastic grid forms a firm pathway that, when

overplanted with sod, allows a wheelchair to traverse the turf to the brick patio that leads up to the Tao House front door.

The large Chinaberry tree that once shaded the patio area was severely damaged in a storm and was removed for safety reasons. As a result, understory plants that once grew in full shade now suffered under full sun exposure. With rehabilitation as a preservation philosophy, it has been possible to plant non-historic sun-tolerant plants in this space until a new Chinaberry tree sapling (propagated from the stump of the

parent tree and currently 8 feet tall) can provide full shade to this corner of the courtyard once again.¹¹

Although Tao House and the California climate did little to improve Eugene O'Neill's declining health, they did inspire the playwright's artistic output and ensured his place in the canon of American dramatists. O'Neill would write five plays at Tao House, his last and greatest—*A Touch of the Poet*, *Hughie*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, before leaving



the property to return to the East Coast on February 25, 1944. He would write no more after Tao House, and died in Boston in 1953.

Authors' Note

Eugene O'Neill NHS is open to visitors Wednesday through Sunday year round (<http://www.nps.gov/euon>). The Eugene O'Neill Foundation is the park's partner—it stages dramatic performances and runs youth educational programs at Tao House seasonally every year (<http://eugeneoneill.org>).

Endnotes

1. Ibid.
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3. Hankinson, Michael J., *Cultural Landscape Report - Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site* (2004): 19.
4. Hankinson, Michael J., *Cultural Landscape Report - Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site* (2004): Appendix C.
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9. Gilbert, Cathy A., *The Tao House Courtyard: Historic Landscape Study and Design Proposal* (1986): Appendix.

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11. Birnbaum, Charles; Dolan, Susan and Gilbert, Cathy, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process and Techniques*, (1998): 87.

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Top left: Changes to the Tao House courtyard during the Carlson era included straightening the original zigzag entry walk, a design treatment effected by the firm Osmundson-Staley in 1947. Note the old, white barn in the distance. Library of Congress, HABS collection.

Top right: Reverse view of the Carlson-era entry walk, ca. 1980s. This photo was taken after significant architectural renovation was undertaken by the National Park Service to restore the Tao House back to its original form, but prior to the garden restoration. National Park Service, photographer unknown.

Bottom left: Aerial view of the courtyard garden restoration, ca. late 1980s. Significant research and effort went into this extensive garden restoration; virtually nothing in the courtyard was left intact, except for the ailing Chinaberry tree, still alive during construction. National Park Service, photographer unknown.

Bottom center: Tao House courtyard garden restored back to its O'Neill-era character, including features such as the L-shaped "fish pond" in the foreground, which functioned historically as a planter bed. National Park Service, photographer unknown

Bottom right: The restored O'Neill-era entry walk and Tao House courtyard, ca. 1990's. New plantings have grown in nicely, but the Chinaberry tree is dead and the stump has yet to be removed. National Park Service, photographer unknown.

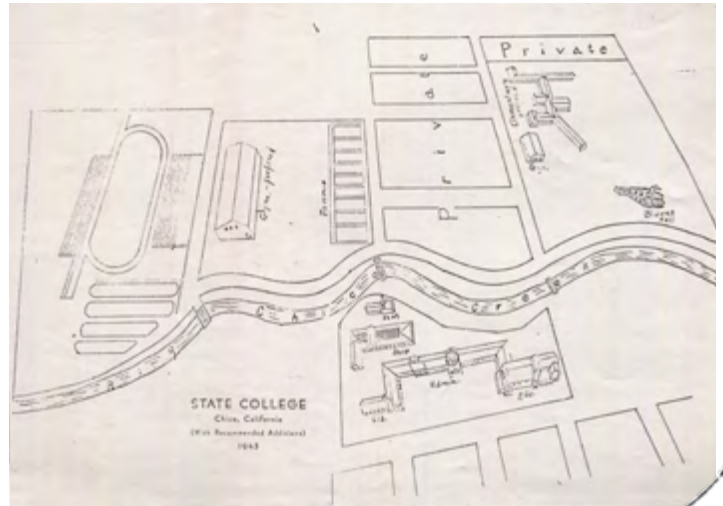
Big Chico Creek Runs Through It

Phoebe Cutler

These photos encapsulate, chronologically, some of the highlights of September's pending conference tour. Going against the flow of the river, the path traced by these images extends from the 1868 Bidwell Mansion to a 1996 residence in outlying Forest Ranch. Here, as the stream enters the foothills, rock palisades rim its banks. As key as it is to the area and to this narrative, Big Chico runs only 30 to 40 miles, beginning with its source in the Sierra and ending with its joining the Sacramento River at the border of Glenn and Butte Counties.

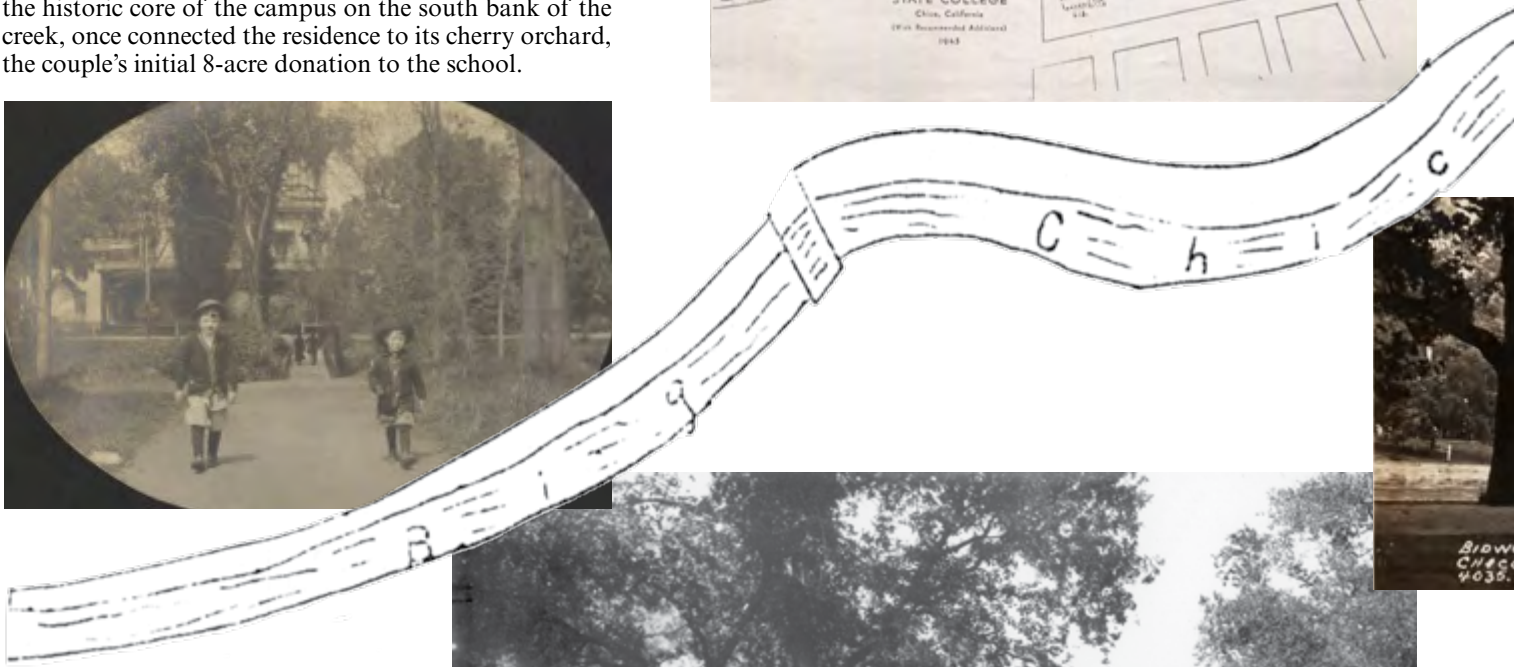
1941 PLAN OF STATE COLLEGE, CHICO BIDWELL BOWL

In 1945 Big Chico Creek is the most prominent element of the small college campus. The Bidwell Mansion, in one of its many iterations, is a girls' dormitory. The college expanded rapidly in the next 25 years. The noted Bay Area architect, George Rockrise (1935-1991), who initially worked in Thomas Church's office and was a founding partner of the firm ROMA, prepared the 1965 master plan.



BIDWELL MANSION BRIDGE

John (1818-1900) and Annie (1839-1918) were still occupying their house, as seen in the background, when this photo was taken in 1897. The bridge behind the children, which now links Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park to the historic core of the campus on the south bank of the creek, once connected the residence to its cherry orchard, the couple's initial 8-acre donation to the school.



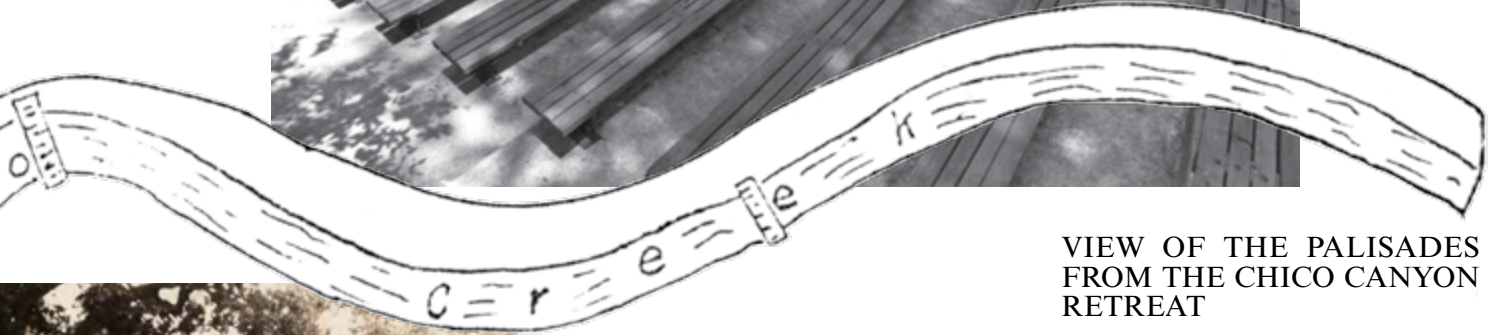
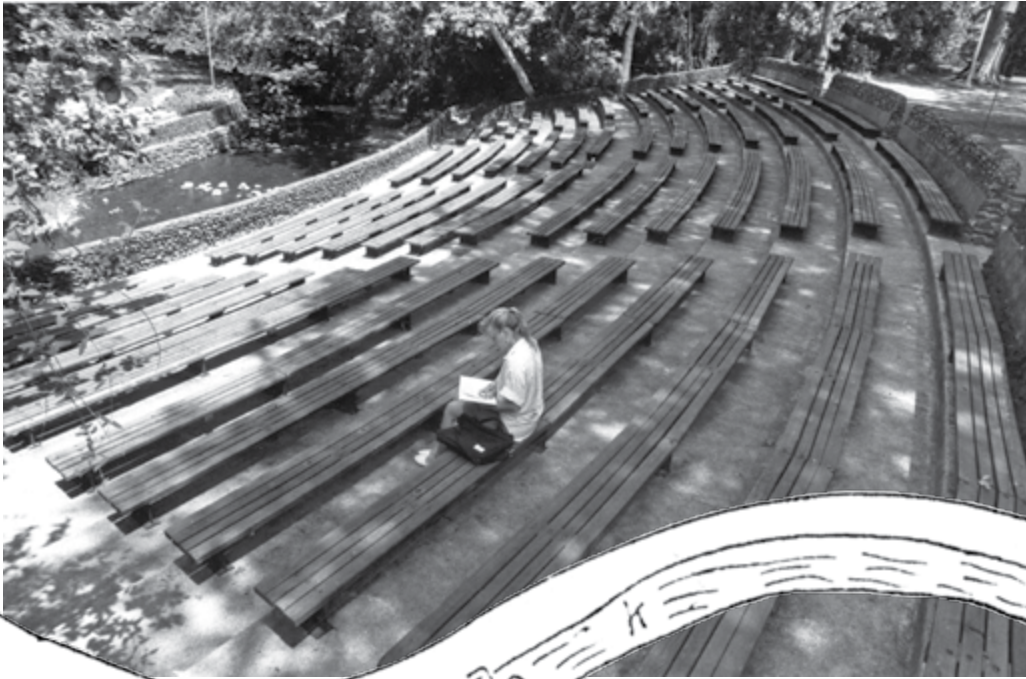
PICNICKERS ON THE BANKS OF BIG CHICO CREEK

A quarter of a mile upstream from the campus, a 2,500-acre Bidwell donation became the core of Bidwell Park, one of the 25 largest municipal parks in the U.S. Home to the Hooker Oak and the state's second forestry experimental station (a relict grove remains), the land still belonged to the Bidwells in 1900, when this photo was taken.



BIDWELL BOWL, CAMPUS 1938

The stream becomes the theater in 1938 when the Works Progress Administration (WPA) builds an amphitheater across from the Bidwell house and footbridge.

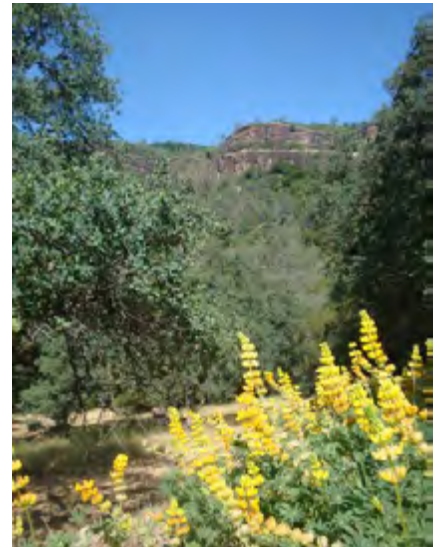


VIEW OF THE PALISADES FROM THE CHICO CANYON RETREAT



SYCAMORE POOL

By around 1920 the concrete surfacing of a watering hole in Lower Bidwell Park facilitated access to Big Chico Creek. Unsightly additions, such as this wall and sign and a later bathhouse, probably Depression-era, have been removed from this bucolic attraction.



HOOKER OAK

The Hooker Oak was named for British botanist Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817-1911), who declared it the largest valley oak in the world. When it fell in 1977, it was 326 years old, 105 feet tall, and had a caliper of 28 feet. Its crown covered an area of 18,000 square feet. No remnants of it remain in the recreation area named in its honor.

Remnant Home Garden Ornamentals Along the Upper Klamath River

Donn L. Todt and Nan Hannon



Along the Upper Klamath River on the Oregon-California border, economic plants as well as ornamentals were planted on early homesteads and ranches. When homes were abandoned, many introduced plants disappeared. The surviving ornamentals are living artifacts. They suggest the nature of early vernacular landscapes and the sensibilities of those who planted them. These scattered fragments of home landscapes provide one of the regional baselines for understanding an overlooked aspect of the ornamental landscape history of the Far West.¹

Rising from the Ashes

Miles from nowhere, where the Pokegama Plateau drops abruptly to the Klamath River, a few ornamental plants grow around a shallow, irregular depression in the earth. Though these plants resemble the nearby native flora, the trained eye recognizes them as non-native. One might notice that a structure once stood in their midst.

Above: *Osburger Gulch on the Upper Klamath River. Photo by Donn L. Todt.*

A cowboy, driving cattle up onto the plateau in spring, might see the lilac blooming in this unlikely place and wonder who had planted it.

On the edge of this wind-swept, woods-bounded “prairie”² with long views and open skies, someone once wished for the sweet scent of that lilac, the sunburst yellow of the rose, and the purple of iris petals ruffling in a warm May breeze. Perhaps the soft fragrance of springtime blossoms evoked memories of a long-ago time in a place left far behind. The log cabin around which these ornamentals were planted burned in 1924.³ The plants remain, living artifacts as poignant and precise as a lone standing stone chimney. All along the Upper Klamath River are home sites occupied in the late 1800s and early 1900s and later abandoned.⁴ Many of the houses burned. Heat-deformed bricks and ceramic shards mark their brief existence. Small, remnant orchards, an occasional shade tree and several in a suite of tough ornamental plants comprise living fragments of former home landscapes.

Surviving ornamental plants were documented at six abandoned home sites and one town site along the Upper Klamath River. Five of the sites are in California and two are just across the border in

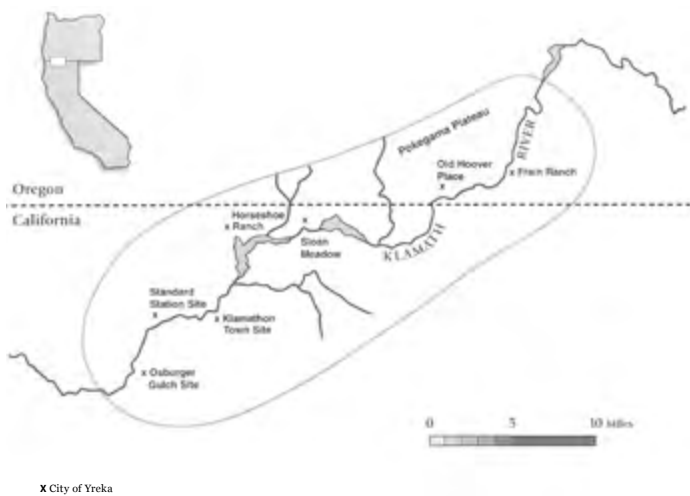


Figure 1. - Location of the sites surveyed for remnant ornamental plants.

Oregon. There are precise dates for the occupation of some of the sites. For example, the small town of Klamath was established in 1888 and burned in 1902.⁵ This indicates that around the turn of the century pioneer roses and matrimony vines, the two ornamentals found at that site, were being planted along the river. The Hoover cabin was built sometime before 1884 and burned in 1924.⁶ Pioneer roses, a lilac, and iris mark this site. Other sites were occupied for longer periods of time or the precise dates of occupancy are unknown. Nevertheless, the earliest documented ornamentals—lilac, iris, pioneer rose, and matrimony vine—are also the most commonly-encountered ornamentals within the survey.

The surviving taxa, relicts of an early landscaping tradition in the interior Far West, share characteristics that are often attributed to the Western pioneers. They are resilient and tenacious but sometimes prickly and rough around the edges. The plants are also long-lived, cold-hardy, drought-tolerant, livestock and deer-resistant, and fire-adapted. While houses burned to ash and rubble, some of the surrounding ornamental plants have survived, rising from the ashes. All of the surviving ornamentals may be easily propagated by division and most of these remnant plants originated within the Northern Hemisphere but far away from the Upper Klamath River, in Eurasia.⁷

The Pass-Along Tradition

Many plants that moved west across North America with waves of pioneers had already gone through a selection process that had pre-adapted them for life in the arid Far West. The extremes of weather through the middle of America's heartland had winnowed out the less hardy, less thrifty, and less drought-tolerant ornamentals. Plants that needed a great deal of attention perished beside the porches of settlers whose wheat harvest easily trumped fooling with finicky plants.

Many of the first ornamentals planted in the rural Far West were

“pass-along plants.”⁸ A small, rooted portion was lifted and gifted, passed along as one might pass along sourdough starter to a friend. If a person wanted to share a plant with a new neighbor or take a memorable plant to a far-off land, they often shoveled up a start. Iris rhizomes, for example, can survive for many months aboveground. To move a matrimony vine, a pioneer rose, or a lilac one merely digs up a small rooted portion from the outside of an existing clump.⁹

Pass-along plants, like a treasured set of dishes, helped turn raw, newly constructed houses into homes that shared familiar continuity with the past. These no-cost plants appealed greatly to women who appreciated the patina of domestic charm that ornamentals conferred upon a house, but who couldn't spend dear dollars on such non-essentials as ornamental plants. Pass-along plants came with a guarantee of survivability, not from a nursery but from the shared experience of neighbors and relatives. Mothers often passed starts along to daughters who established their own households nearby or far away. The familiar plants that daughters established through division of their mother's cherished plants were clones, genetically identical to the those they had grown up with.

As people moved west, they traveled with a garden of memories, bringing cherished plants as well as provisions. Euro-Americans who settled along the expanding Western Frontier decorated their new dwellings with a variety of ornamentals. Those plants that easily survived the rigors of the new environment became the most likely candidates for another hop-scootch move west. It was a selection process in which plants, people, and climate all participated.

By the late 1800s Euro-Americans establishing homes along the Upper Klamath River had access to an array of tough ornamentals that could be counted on to propagate easily and to survive. Most early residents along the river lived frugal, close-to-the-bone lives, relying on local resources such as wild game to make ends meet.¹⁰ Isolated women, living on backcountry ranches and homesteads, no doubt relished the companionable beauty of ornamental plants. Lacking disposable income, they probably counted on the generosity of family and friends to provide them with plants. Since all of the still-surviving ornamentals are so easily propagated by division, it seems likely that many were distributed through the “pass-along” tradition.

Journeys Long and Short

Some ornamentals reached the vicinity of the Upper Klamath River surprisingly early. The pioneer rose took a long-distance leap from Missouri to Southern Oregon in the early 1850s. It arrived via the Applegate Trail and was planted in Oregon's Rogue Valley, just north of the California border.¹¹ The Rogue Valley may have served as one donor area for ornamental plantings along the Klamath River. It was more populous than the sparsely settled backcountry of the Upper Klamath region and there was regular contact between the two adjacent areas. Yreka, California, near the lower portion of the study area, and Klamath Falls, Oregon, above the upper portion, may also have been donor areas. The final climate-mediated selection of plants took place after the homes

were abandoned. Some survivors remain in place, unassisted by those who originally planted and nurtured them.

Notes on the Surviving Ornamentals

Deep in the Klamath River Canyon, below a narrow, steep and rocky road, is the site of the old Frain ranch. Hardly a fragment remains of the old cabin, torn down about 1910,¹² or even of the house that replaced it, but a remarkable group of plants testifies to their existence. Lilacs mark the site of a gated front fence. Iris sprout within the interior of a wild plum thicket that has overgrown the home site. A remnant matrimony vine winds through the wild plums. Nearby is an enormous expanse of pioneer rose, dazzling when it blooms in May. These plants represent the most common surviving ornamentals on the Upper Klamath River. Aspects of the cultural history of these plants and of the other, less commonly encountered ornamentals, are briefly noted below.

LILAC • *Syringa vulgaris*¹³



The common lilac is so characteristic of older homes and cemeteries in the West that it is no surprise to find that it is the most common ornamental shrub remaining around old home sites on the Upper Klamath River. At the Frain Ranch, two lilacs border the site of the former approach to the front

door. One bears characteristic lavender-colored flowers, while the other is white-flowered. The common lilac is native to the Balkan Peninsula of Southeastern Europe.¹⁴ The white-flowered form is a color variant found in wild populations. Northern Europeans cultivated both types as early as the 1500s.¹⁵ In North America the lilac has become an exceedingly popular and emblematic plant. Its association with abandoned American home sites has been recognized for more than a century.¹⁶

MATRIMONY VINE • *Lycium barbarum*



The matrimony vine is really less a vine than a gangly shrub that was, in the Far Western tradition, trained to an upright form along walls or up a front or back porch post. The name may derive from the plant's tendency to produce two small lavender flowers in the leaf axils. This species grows as a

native plant primarily within the dry steppe region of Western China, particularly within the provinces of Xinjiang and Guizhou. The matrimony vine is scarcely mentioned in twentieth-century American or European garden literature, but it was commonly planted in the 1800s.¹⁷ In the Interior Far West it is an inconspicuous resident of old home landscapes, especially from the Modoc Plateau of California north through eastern Oregon and Washington. In the vicinity of the dry Columbia River Basin in eastern Washington, matrimony vines still survive in at least 50 locations; many mark the sites of abandoned houses. A concentration of these introduced shrubs is located in the abandoned town site of Hanford, Washington.¹⁸

In their Western classic *The Oregon Desert*, Jackman and Long wrote: "Homesteaders' wives needed something green in the

middle of the gray desert. Nearly all of them planted a matrimony vine. In addition to the spot of green, it furnished shade for the kitchen and was kept growing by dishwasher and scrub water."¹⁹ Plantings of matrimony vine filtered west down the Klamath River at least as far downstream as the Standard Station site. Old specimens also grow about the sites of old ranches and gold-mining towns in the Scott Valley of far Northern California. Matrimony vine has attracted recent horticultural attention, not for its ornamental qualities, but as the source of goji berries, a health food.

PIONEER ROSE • *Rosa x 'harisonii'*



Remnant pioneer roses are inconspicuous throughout much of the year, often blending into landscapes now dominated by native woody shrubs. The native roses, however, always have single pink flowers, while the pioneer rose bursts into bloom with larger, semi-double, bright

yellow blossoms. This rose may be a hybrid between the Persian rose (*Rosa foetida*) and the Scotch rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*). In May, blooming pioneer roses brighten old homes, abandoned home sites and cemeteries throughout the arid west.²⁰

SMALL-FLOWERED TAMARISK • *Tamarix parviflora*



At the Osburger Gulch site, beside the Klamath River, a large tamarisk blooms a soft, pastel pink in May. Though this species and a number of its close relatives may become invasive along riparian corridors,²¹ so far this has not occurred along the Klamath River. Small flowered tamarisk is native to Western Asia and the Balkan Peninsula, though its precise region of origin is obscured by the widespread human dispersal of this easily-propagated species. It may be started by offsets or even by quite large cuttings struck directly into the ground.

The specimen at Osburger Gulch, near a historic north-south transportation route (now Interstate 5), may derive from stock originally brought from farther south in California, where the species has long been well established and invasive.

FLOWERING QUINCE • *Chaenomeles speciosa*



The flowering quince is native within a band extending from west to southeast across China. The Age of Exploration resulted in the introduction of many East Asian plants to formal European and American gardens and eventually to vernacular gardens as well. However, few of these East

Asian ornamentals can withstand the rigors of the arid, rural Far West without a gardener's care. The flowering quince is an exception. Once established, this gnarled and prickly shrub endures heat, cold and drought nearly as well as the dry-land adapted natives. In early spring, when the quince blooms at the Standard Station site, its bright coral red blossoms signal its exotic patrimony. Historically, the flowering quince is an early representative of the biogeographically eclectic European and North American gardens that have come to rely extensively on plants derived from East Asia.

PERIWINKLE • *Vinca major*



Periwinkle, from the Mediterranean region, has exceptional drought tolerance. In Northern California and Southern Oregon, it is common to rural home sites occupied during the Great Depression and abandoned when urban opportunities drew people away. The

delicacy of the periwinkle's lavender-blue flowers contrasts with the plant's propensity to survive and expand its range long after those who planted it have moved on. A remnant evergreen patch of periwinkle is often the most obvious clue that a backcountry site was once a home. Careful searching usually yields other clues, including less obvious surviving plants. While the periwinkle isn't found exactly within the surveyed sites, it is found not far from the old Hoover site near an intact but abandoned house that replaced the original cabin. It is also found just downstream from the Osburger Gulch site in California.

DOG ROSE • *Rosa canina*



The dog rose is so widely distributed in southern Europe that its region of origin is obscure. This rose's drought tolerance suggests a Mediterranean climate homeland. Along the Upper Klamath River there is a concentration of these roses in the vicinity of the Standard Station site. This may be an unintentional distribution with the donor area located at the far southern end of the Rogue Valley in Oregon. There the

roses cluster heavily near one of the earliest home sites in the valley and have spread along the historic transportation corridor running south toward the Upper Klamath River.

YUCCA • *Yucca filamentosa*



Yucca is the only native North American representative of the surviving ornamental flora within the sites surveyed. Although it appears "Southwestern," it is native to eastern North America. Like the previous ornamentals, it may be easily propagated by offsets. It also propagates from root cuttings. In the late 1800s and early 1900s yucca was popularly used to achieve a tropical effect within decidedly nontropical climates.²² Yucca was noted only at one site, the Frain Ranch, and it was in a stunted

and declining condition. It has a much more robust appearance in a photograph taken about 1900.²³

BLUE-FLAG IRIS • *Iris x germanica*



The iris growing around old home sites along the Upper Klamath River is the iris characteristic of older gardens around much of the Northern Hemisphere. Though the species name *germanica* seems to imply northern European roots, this iris may actually be an ancient hybrid derived from species growing

in the eastern Mediterranean, including the Balkan Peninsula. In Europe, forms of this iris have been grown since at least the ninth

century, likely derived from plants cultivated in the ancient gardens of Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome.²⁴ It is easily propagated and distributed by division; even fragments of its rhizome tossed on the ground often root and survive.

**DOUBLE DAFFODIL • *Narcissus telamonius plenus*
• *Narcissus 'Van Sion'***



This double daffodil might be assumed to be a recently planted ornamental. However, these particular heirloom double flowers are now seldom planted. Although double daffodils have, so far, been found at only one location along the Upper Klamath River, they have a widespread regional occurrence. The single-flowered species (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) from which this double daffodil is likely derived, is native primarily from the northern Mediterranean north into the higher rainfall climates of North-western Europe. At some time in the early

1600s, a double form was propagated in Britain,²⁵ where it had been introduced from Florence.²⁶ In Ireland the 'Van Sion' variety is said to "grow in ditches and banks as freely as a dandelion."²⁷ It was brought to eastern North America by at least the early 1800s. Keeler, writing in the very early 1900s, describes it as "the common daffodil of old-time gardens."²⁸ This old double daffodil is common around the Gold Rush towns of Shasta, California, and Jacksonville, Oregon, and near older homes, home sites, and historic cemeteries within the Oregon-California border region.

BOUNCING BET, SOAPWORT • *Saponaria officinalis*



Bouncing Bet is another well-traveled plant, so much so that its widespread, human-assisted distribution obscures its original region of origin. Its long use as an effective soap prompted widespread cultivation throughout much of Europe and resulted in the

early common name "soapwort." Its extreme drought and cold tolerance suggests that it may have evolved north and east of the Mediterranean. European colonists planted it in early New England gardens. It was used medicinally to alleviate the symptoms of poison ivy.²⁹

Although soapwort lost favor in the formal gardening tradition of the East Coast, its ease of culture, fragrance, and abundant summer-blooming flowers endeared it to garden-minded travelers along the western trails. It bounced from settlement to settlement. Soapwort may be propagated by division or seed, and plantings often escape into nearby wildlands. As an escapee it often populates riverine gravel-bars in Southern Oregon and Northern California.

Rural Vernacular Plantings as Landscape History

The abandoned doorstep ornamentals of the Upper Klamath River have fended for themselves from 40 to more than 100 years. They have endured biting cold and withering drought. They have survived browsers and grazers and re-sprouted after fires. Mostly, they blend cryptically into the landscape, matching the textures and shades of native plants. In spring, they show their true colors—a bright patch of yellow roses, a lilac blooming amidst a wild plum



thicket, purple iris delineating an old fence line or marking a grave site. These hardscrabble survivors invite us into regional rural doorway gardens. Now growing where no walls stand, these remnant ornamentals are living artifacts reflecting transience and continuity within this particular place as well as within the wider world.

Endnotes

1. This study is part of a larger project covering the archaeology, history and landscape history of the Upper Klamath River Canyon. Dr. Joanne Mack (University of Notre Dame) is the principal investigator. Field work for this particular study took place between 1992 and 2015.
2. Large openings in the predominantly coniferous mountain forest of the region are locally known as "prairies."
3. Alice Overton Hessig, *Looking Back*, (self-published 1978) p. 60. (This is a local history of the Upper Klamath River with black and white photographs, available from Siskiyou County Historical Society, Yreka, California.)
4. Many of the property owners along the Upper Klamath River relocated when Pacific Power or its predecessor companies purchased their properties.
5. Stephen Dow Beckham, *Historical Landscape Overview of the Upper Klamath River Canyon of Oregon and California*. Cultural Resource Series No. 13. U. S. Department of the Interior. Bureau of Land Management. (2006): 95.
6. Hessig, (op. cit. 1978): 60.
7. The greatest degree of range overlap of these species occurs within the Eurasian borderland regions of Eastern Europe and Western Asia.
8. The pass-along tradition is well described by Steve Bender and Felder Rushing, *Pass-along Plants*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
9. The author has successfully propagated most of the specific plants discussed.
10. Alice Overton Hessig, *Looking Back*. (op. cit. 1978).
11. Donn L. Todt and Nan Hannon. "A Rose by Many Names," *Southern Oregon Heritage Today*, Vol. 2 No. 4 (April 2000): 16.
12. Rita Black, "Pioneer Shares Memories," *The Klamath Falls Herald and News*. Klamath Falls, Oregon, March 23, 1984, 41.
13. Botanical nomenclature, with two exceptions, is according to Thomas G. Tutin, (editor) *Flora Europae*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993). The double daffodil is according to Michael Jefferson-Brown, *Narcissus*, (Portland Oregon: Timber Press, 1991). The pioneer rose is according to Arthur Cronquist, Noel H. Holmgren, and Patricia K. Holmgren, *Intermountain Flora: Vascular Plants of the Intermountain West, U.S.A.* Vol. Three, Part A. (New York: The New York Botanical Garden, 1997).
14. Native ranges of ornamental plants were extracted from the National Plant Germplasm System. <https://npgsweb.ars-grin.gov/gringlobal/taxonomy>. Accessed: March 5, 2016.
15. Ernest H. Wilson, *Aristocrats of the Garden*, (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1926) 213.
16. Alice Morse Earle, *Old Time Gardens*, (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2005) (reprint of a 1901 edition), 148.
17. Ibid, p. 449. Harriet L. Keeler, *Our Garden Flowers*, (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910) 393.
18. John Trumbo, "Only Vines Still Flourish at Hanford Homesites" In: *The Oregonian*. Portland, Oregon, Oct. 20, 2004, D-1.
19. E. R. Jackman and R. A. Long, *The Oregon Desert*, (Caldwell ID, Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1964) 44.
20. Donn L. Todt and Nan Hannon. (Op. cit. 2000): 16.



21. Carla C. Bossard, John M. Randall and Marc C. Hoshovsky (Eds.), *Invasive Plants of California's Wildlands*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000):16.
22. Denise Wiles Adams, *Restoring American Gardens: An Encyclopedia of Heirloom Ornamental Plants- 1640-1940*, (Portland: Timber Press, 2004): 206.
23. Rita Black, "Pioneer Shares Memories" (op. cit. 1984).
24. Alice M. Coates, *Flowers and Their Histories*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956): 128.
25. Ibid, 178.
26. Roger Phillips and Martyn Rix, *Bulbs*, (New York: Random House, 1981): 123.
27. Michael Jefferson-Brown, *Narcissus*, (Portland OR: Timber Press, 1991): 62.
28. Harriet L. Keeler, *Our Garden Flowers*, (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910): 66.
29. Tovah Martin, *Heirloom Flowers*, (London: Gaia Books Limited, 1999): 136.

Ethnobotanist Donn L. Todt served as horticulturist for the Ashland, Oregon Parks Department for 30 years. He now serves as head gardener for the landscape around his old house in Corvallis, Oregon. His current research focuses on landscape history and human roles in plant geography. Anthropologist Nan Hannon taught archaeology and cultural anthropology at Southern Oregon University. She served as a curator for the Southern Oregon Historical Society. For the past 20 years, she's been breeding hellebores.

Above left to right: A lilac sprouts from the base after having been recently burned at the Osburger Gulch site (Upper Klamath River in the background); Ash and charcoal from two burned homes at Osburger Gulch on the Upper Klamath River. Photos by Donn L. Todt.

CGLHS MEMBERS NEWS



A WPA photo records the just completed paving of the road that leads into Buena Vista Park, the oldest park in San Francisco. This past March, on behalf of CGLHS and an Upper Haight neighborhood group, environmental activist Jock Hooper led a tour of 30 people, in the course of which he noted the discarded gravestones that reinforce the road's gutters. The event garnered CGLHS two new members.

Prof. Christy O'Hara gave a CGLHS Tour & Talk in Palos Verdes Estates in June.



CGLHS member Paula Panich will be giving a talk on M.F.K. Fisher and the landscape of Southern California on Saturday, October 8, 2016, at 10:30 a.m. at the Los Angeles County Arboretum, 301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia. Photo of Fisher and her husband Dillwyn Parrish at their home, Bareacres, in the Hemet Valley, ca. 1941. Courtesy of Counterpoint Press, Berkeley, Calif.

Check these out:

Links to episodes of new CGLHS member Jennifer Jewel's weekly "Cultivating Place: Conversations on Natural History and the Human Impulse to Garden" broadcast:

<http://mynspr.org/post/cultivating-place-mia-lehrer-and-urban-landscapes>

<http://mynspr.org/post/cultivating-place-ernie-wasson-and-salvias>

Also of interest:

CGLHS Member David Laws' website on California gardens:

<http://northerncaliforniagardens.sutromedia.com/introduction.html>



June CGLHS Board Meeting and Retreat at Serra Retreat in Malibu. From left to right: Director-at-Large Nancy Carol Carter, Member Christy O'Hara, Recording Secretary Ann Scheid, Treasurer Steven Keylon, Membership Officer Brandy Kuhl, Director-at-Large Cecily Harris, President Kelly Comras. Attending but not shown: Carolyn Bennett, Judy Horton, and Libby Simon.

Kelly gave a talk on Ruth Shellhorn, the subject of her newly released book, at The Huntington in May.



CGLHS Member Chris Pattillo, FASLA, and Principal of PGA was recently hired by the Marin Art & Garden Center to prepare a cultural landscape inventory and planning diagrams that will be used to plan for the future.



Congratulations to CGLHS member Eleanor Cox, the new research and writing associate for The Cultural Landscape Foundation in Washington, DC.

What Is Landscape?

John R. Stilgoe

Book Review by Paula Panich

John Stilgoe, in a video clip available for anyone to see, delivers what might seem to be a throwaway line: *You'll never think about it if you don't see it.*

These ten words are in fact a summary of his seven books, hundreds of articles and essays, and the essence of his forty years of teaching.

He's been called the "Audubon of the built landscape" and a "connoisseur of noticing." He's the J. B. Jackson of the present moment. (More on Jackson shortly.) Stilgoe might be called a landscape philosopher but for the fact that he's an explorer, first on the ground and then in the mind. And he thinks this path—literally and figuratively—is open to everyone.

The first book of Stilgoe's that claimed my attention, eight years ago, is *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places* (1998). *Outside Lies Magic* is a manifesto of looking and exploring. Most people look around and see things, Stilgoe writes, but "[t]he explorer looks around and sees patterns and revelations disclosed by things absent." How does an explorer do this? On foot. On a bicycle. Never in a car, truck, motorcycle, train, or plane.

In *What Is Landscape?* Stilgoe, a Harvard professor, opens an inquiry into the meaning of landscape-related words, which is not only enlightening, but also a pleasure to read. The gorgeous linguistic byways of these mostly everyday words will astound. The words are as complex as is human culture. The book is an exploration through language and history, not to mention through Stilgoe's nimble, imaginative mind.

The result will heighten the reader's ability to see acutely and to make connections to the actual world under our feet.

The modern practice of landscape architecture barely registers in this rich story during which Stilgoe riffs wittily on his own "field," landscape studies.

The new book is divided into nine sections: eight nouns and one verbal, "Making," which contends that we all make our own landscape by the way we see and perceive.

It's a complicated subject, and one that especially interests me.

In the first section, Stilgoe weaves together fires, candlelight, headlights, sun, sky, clouds, screens, color, photography, Goethe, the Upper Paleolithic, and the 1859 solar flare that scared the United States and Great Britain beyond measure.

He quotes the scientist Donald Hoffman's *Visual Intelligence: How We Create What We See* (2000) and the fantasy writer Ursula Le Guin, who holds that magic itself can be simply the fall of light on a place.

We can only imagine how different our own perception of landscape would be if we were completely earthbound, without any locomotion other than our own feet, and had never seen the earth from the perspective of the moon.

(Stilgoe explores photography and other technological phenomena in the shaping of ideas about landscape in *Landscape and Images*, 2005).

The word *hitchhiker*, for example, "harks back to harness, wagons, lifts, teams hitched to whiffletrees and neaps. The equipment of long-distance travel before railroads."* The discussion takes a "byeway" (also defined) to the human significance of inns in the landscape, which leads to a discussion of Tolkien and the role inns play in his books. (I've never read Tolkien, and probably won't, but this revelation of the depth in his work was enlightening.)

The Tolkien discourse appears in the seventh of the book's sections, called "Ways." What Stilgoe means by *ways* is this: "Ways, roads, the essence of roads, highways, prove critical in any understanding of landscape; and road terminology, changing so fast in the sixteenth century but still waiting at any truck stop for the thoughtful traveler, deserves a book."

Stilgoe often draws a direct line—five hundred years, perhaps—to the present. It is a thrilling jolt.

The word *glade* begets a two-and-a-half-page discussion through the Nordic languages, to Old English and Old French,



What Is Landscape?
John R. Stilgoe
Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2015

to Spenser (1596), before settling down on *lawn* and *land*.

Photography, movies, literature—all are mixed into this ongoing defining of landscape and its attendant terms. Stilgoe mentions other books begging to be read—at least by me; I had not heard of these two: *A Trail Through Leaves: The Journal as a Path to Place*, by Hannah Hinchman; and Donald Maxwell's 1929 *A Detective in Kent: Landscape Clues to the Discovery of Lost Seas*.

A quote from Maxwell serves as a bellwether for Stilgoe himself: "Observation and accumulation of clues in a landscape are of immense value, but the deductions made from them must be tested and cross-examined by reference to other lights—history, etymology, architecture, agriculture, or knowledge of local conditions."

In the section called “Stead,” in which he discusses the roots of what became the American suburban house, Stilgoe thinks its wholeness “reveals the deep power of being established, living in place, being stable, and living in light.” He delivers a tribute to the writer and thinker J. B. Jackson (1909–1996), and praises Jackson’s “effort to direct the attention of educated people to the vernacular or common landscape.” As does Stilgoe.

If this sort of thing interests you, and you have the patience and curiosity to wander and wonder and to look beyond, around, under, and over the bundle of everything we take for granted, *What Is Landscape?* awaits.

*N.B.

whiffletree. Crossbar, pivoted at the middle, to which a harness is fastened to pull a cart.

neap. The pole or tongue of a cart.

CGLHS member Paula Panich is a writer and printmaker who lives in the tiny Larchmont Village/Los Angeles paradise of a garden designed by CGLHS past president Judy Horton. Panich had her first one-woman show of her monotypes in Los Angeles in January 2016. Her column, “Home Ground,” appears monthly in the Larchmont Chronicle. New and new-ish work can be found on www.theliterarygardener.com and www.whattheinkknows.com. Please see Member News for details on an upcoming talk on M.F.K. Fisher.



M.F.K. Fisher and the Language of Landscape

Paula Panich

As this will be my final contribution to *Eden*, I would like to mention, in light of Stilgoe’s luscious book on the language of landscape, my rethinking of the work of the Californian M.F.K. Fisher (1908-1992).

I first wrote about Fisher for *Eden* in the Summer 2012 issue, “MFKF: A Connoisseur in Sonoma,” as a precursor to the 2012 CGLHS conference in Sonoma County. As I have read and reread her over these last forty years, I’ve come to the conclusion that for her, landscape is truly the mother of all.

Landscape as the mother of her focus and passion for food, history, people, place, and life.

Though she is closely identified with her writing about food and about France, I have written an essay about Fisher and landscape, especially that of Southern California and the Hemet Valley, which will be published in the *Los Angeles Review* in the Fall of 2016.

Fisher and her second husband, the painter Dillwyn Parrish, bought their “ninety acre hell of red-hot rocks and rattlesnakes,” as one of their guests called it, around 1940. They were fleeing the war in Europe (they had been living in Switzerland) and needed an isolated, calming environment in order to face Tim Parrish’s horribly painful and fatal illness.

Remarkably, she finished her second book here, *Consider the Oyster*, in April of 1941. And Tim kept painting. It always shocks me to think she was only thirty-two, and Tim, forty-seven, when he died in 1941. She kept a journal and in it I find some of her most beautiful writing.

Here is a good example of her sensibility, and passion for landscape.

Just now T. and I went out from the warm lighted study and the whuddering firelight of the living room to the porch and watched a half rainbow grow and die against the hills. Sunlight, long and yellow, flung itself into the middle distance of San Jacinto in an intense blot — San Jacinto hills, not the mountain, which was blue and far from us. The hills showed their folds and meadows like old elephant hide, and in front of them the valley and the little lizard of land blazed with arsenic, Paris gray, as violent as dying California leaves can be, yellow and hideously beautiful.

She was truly a poet of the landscape.

Above: M.F.K. Fisher in her office at her home in Sonoma. AP Photo/Richard Drew.



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SAVE THE DATE! **“Bashford and Barlow: Landscape Collaborations that Bridged the Traditional to the Modern”**

Steven Keylon, landscape historian and author, presents a lecture on the work of Los Angeles landscape architects Katherine Bashford and Fred Barlow, Jr., on Sunday, November 6, at The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

This lecture will highlight Bashford and Barlow’s forward-thinking partnership and broad scope of work—from the grand gardens of Pasadena and Bel Air in the 1920s to socially responsible public housing projects just prior to World War II.

Please join us in the third of a series of lectures that focus on cultural landscapes in California, co-sponsored by CGLHS and The Huntington.

Free. More details coming in the fall issue.



Above, left to right: *Residence of Mr. and Mrs. George Miller, Bel Air, 1938; Wallace Neff, architect; Bashford and Barlow, landscape architects. Landscape of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur K. Bourne, San Marino, 1925; Wallace Neff, architect; Katherine Bashford, landscape architect.*