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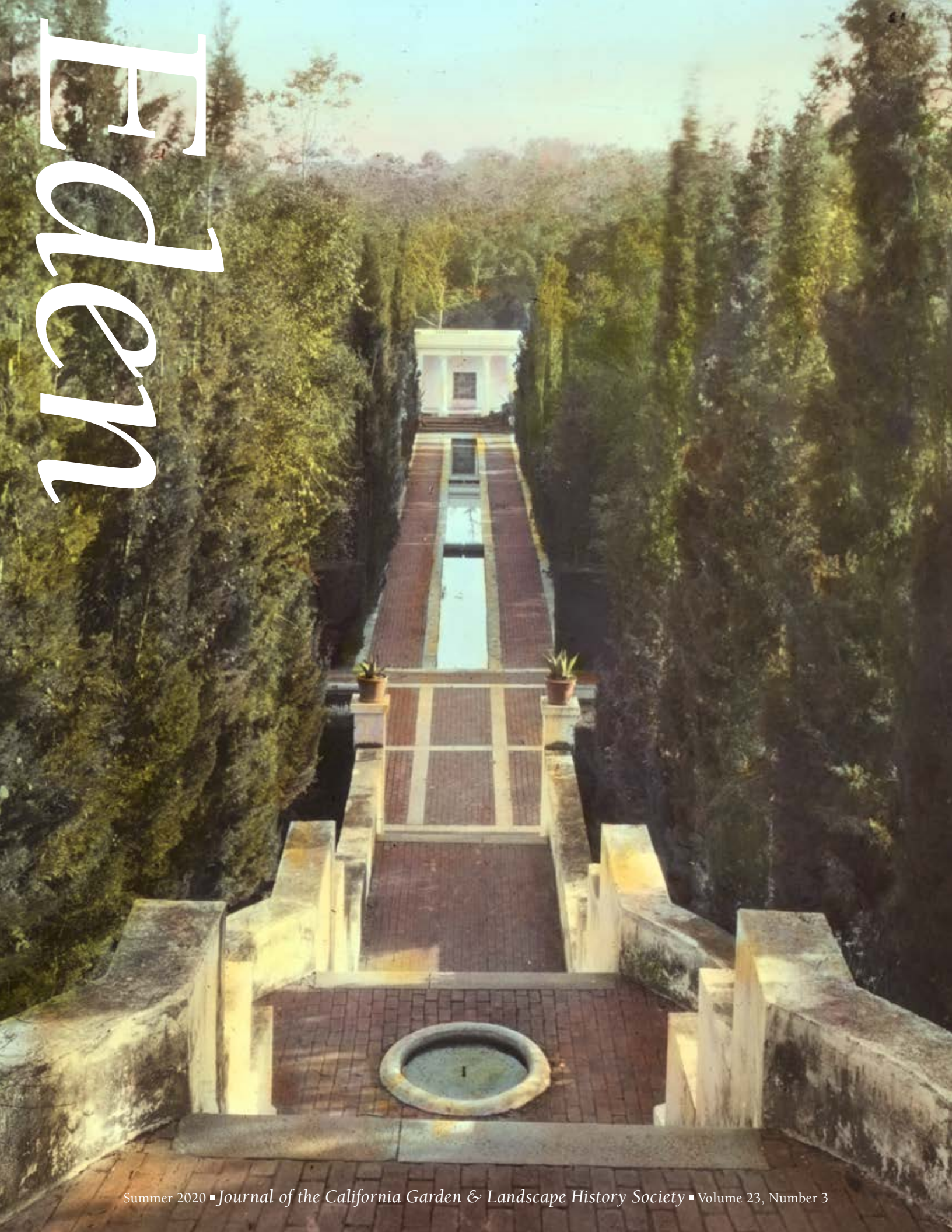

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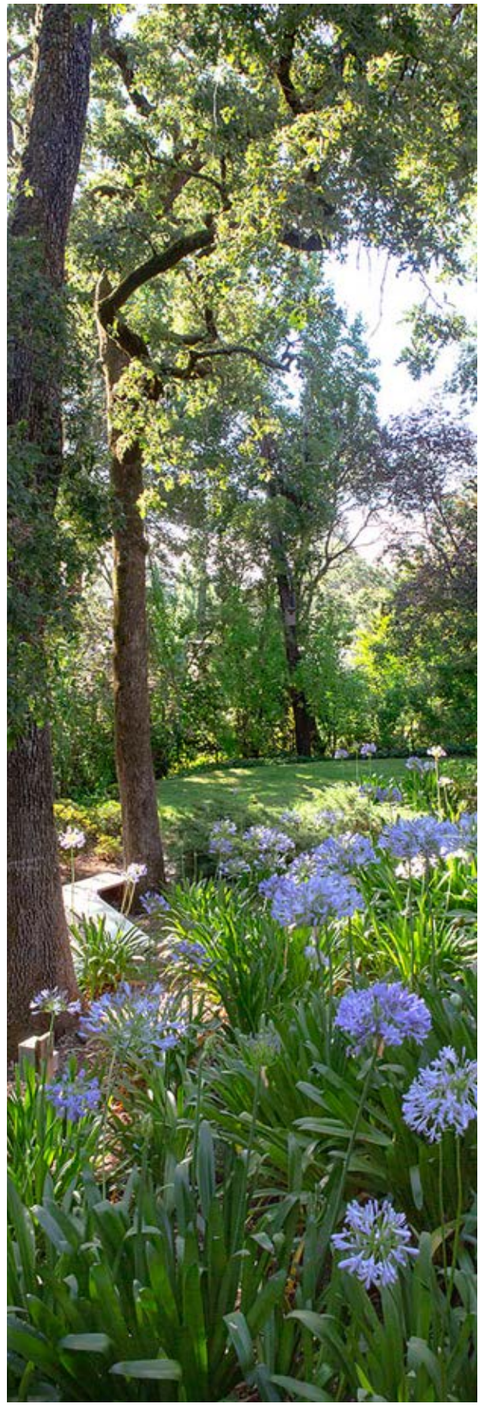

Above: *Agapanthus* bloom in a Thomas Church-designed garden from 1956. Photo by Harley Jessup.

Eden

JOURNAL OF THE CALIFORNIA GARDEN & LANDSCAPE HISTORY SOCIETY

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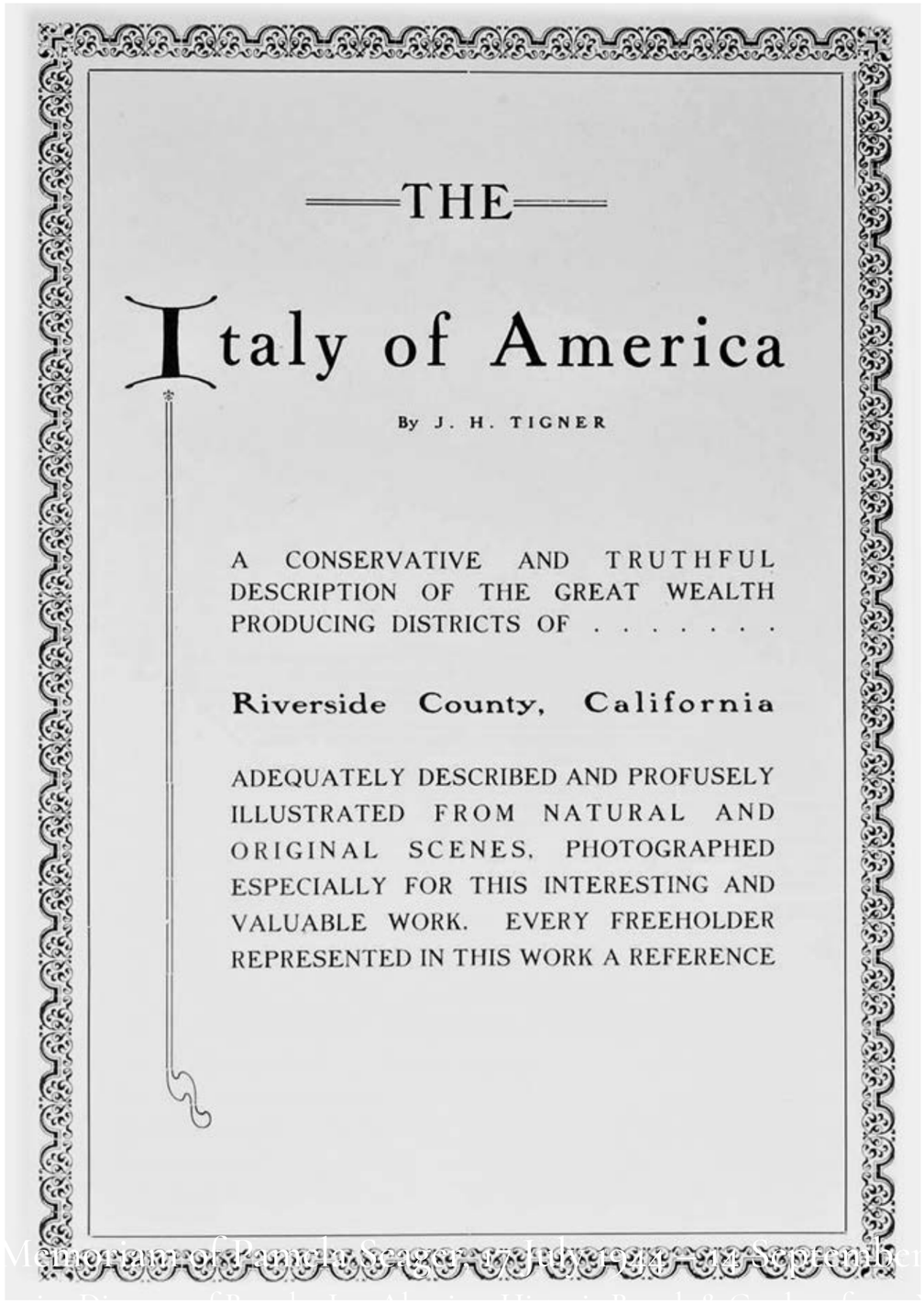
Wealthy film star Harold Lloyd hired landscape architect A.E. Hanson to design the gardens of his 16-acre property in Benedict Canyon. No expense was spared in creating a grand Golden Age estate. Postcard from the author's collection.

Contents

Architect Guy Lowell designed an unusual half-moon pool with Roman columns at *Ca' di Sopra*, built in Montecito in 1916. Author's collection.

FROM A RENAISSANCE VILLA: *THE ITALIAN LANDSCAPE STYLE IN AMERICA*

NANCY CAROL CARTER


THE

Italy of America

By J. H. TIGNER

A CONSERVATIVE AND TRUTHFUL DESCRIPTION OF THE GREAT WEALTH PRODUCING DISTRICTS OF . . . . . .

Riverside County, California

ADEQUATELY DESCRIBED AND PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED FROM NATURAL AND ORIGINAL SCENES, PHOTOGRAPHED ESPECIALLY FOR THIS INTERESTING AND VALUABLE WORK. EVERY FREEHOLDER REPRESENTED IN THIS WORK A REFERENCE

Left: Riverside County capitalized on trendy comparisons of California and Italy with its own 1908 promotional publication. Author's collection.

Part 2: Origins and Adaptations of the Italian Style in California

Introduction

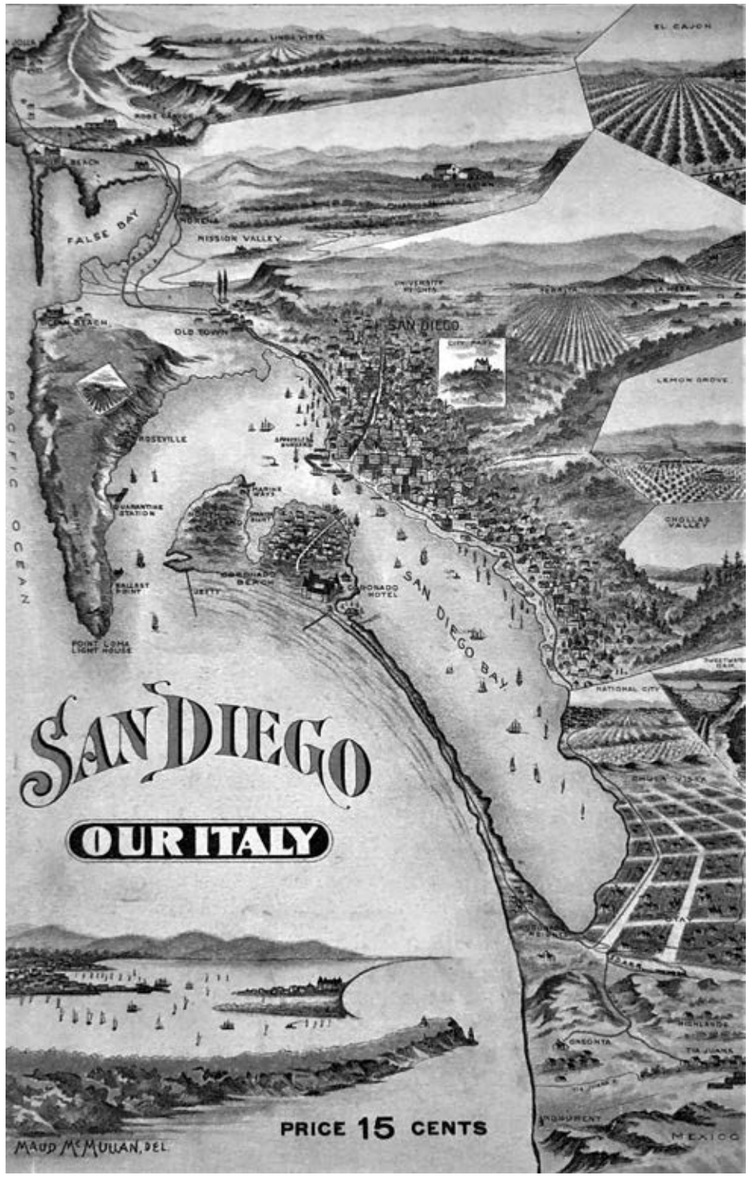
This is the second part of an article exploring the origins and adaptations of the Italian landscape style in the United States. Part 1, published in the Spring 2020 issue of *Eden*,[1] describes the long-term and wide influence of Italian Renaissance villa design, its early adaptation in England and the arrival and maturing of the Italian style in the United States. Leading scholarship on the British and American reception of Italian landscape design was reviewed and the earliest Italian gardens in the United States were identified.

Part 2 focuses the story on California, where the Italian style found a natural home. The terrain and growing conditions in some parts of the state could support its pure form. Italian design was introduced to California alongside an existing vernacular design tradition. By the time California became a state in 1850, three hundred years of Spanish and Mexican influence had been present. That heritage was largely undervalued in the earliest decades of statehood, but a late nineteenth-early twentieth century reassessment and romanticization brought the Spanish style to the fore in California. Interest in Old California and its cultural legacy burst forth at the same time that Charles A. Platt[2] and other East Coast practitioners were successfully adapting the Italian style of estate-scale landscape design (along with its northern European Renaissance French and English counterparts) to the United States and propelling geometric neoclassical villa design toward its American zenith.

Californians were not design purists. Rather than being forced to a choose among appealing and appropriate styles, owners, and designers happily fused Italian, Spanish and Near Eastern design elements into the "Mediterranean style." The Montecito home of James Waldron Gillespie, *El Fureidis,* designed by Bertram Goodhue and built in 1905-06, is identified as the first example of a Mediterranean-style estate in California. It features a mix of Italian, Persian and Spanish elements.[3] Architectural historian David Gebhard suggests that even the Spanish Colonial Revival period of 1910 to 1930 "could be properly called Mediterranean" because architectural elements from different traditions were readily combined.[4]

Jere Stuart French diagrams California's garden ancestry in his garden history, tracing two lines of descent. One begins in Mesopotamia, moving to Persia, then to Moorish-Spain, then to Old California. With origins in the modern Middle East, this tradition perceived the garden as an earthly paradise where greenery and precious water could be enjoyed within sheltering walls. Islamic colonists carried Persian garden influences to North Africa, and then to Spain which was occupied by the Moors from 711 until 1492. Moorish garden design was a high art reliant on Islamic symbolism and advanced water engineering. In the classic Moorish garden, geometric symmetry was achieved with a cruciform dividing the garden into four equal sections representing life, growth, death and rebirth. The Moorish-Spanish garden traditions that came to the Americas with the Spanish colonists evolved over more than 300 years into the gardens of Old California.

The second line of descent in French's diagram is a simpler one, starting with the Visigoths and Romans and moving to the Italian Renaissance. The western Roman Empire, extending into Spain and Britain, declined under pressure from nomadic tribes. The Germanic Visigoths pressed in, eventually sacking Rome in 410. The cultural and artistic influence of classical antiquity was slowly arrested; the medieval Middle Ages began. Centuries later Italy became the center of a rebirth of classical culture and knowledge. Fully blossoming in the 1400s, this Renaissance influenced education, culture, art, architecture, economics and politics, leading Europe into the modern era. In Part 1 of this article, notable characteristics of the Italian Renaissance garden are identified, including a wholeness in the composition of house and garden, a formal axial design, an emphasis on outdoor living, and moving water. In French's "family tree" of garden lineage, the marriage of Old California and Italian Renaissance



influences produces the California garden.[5]

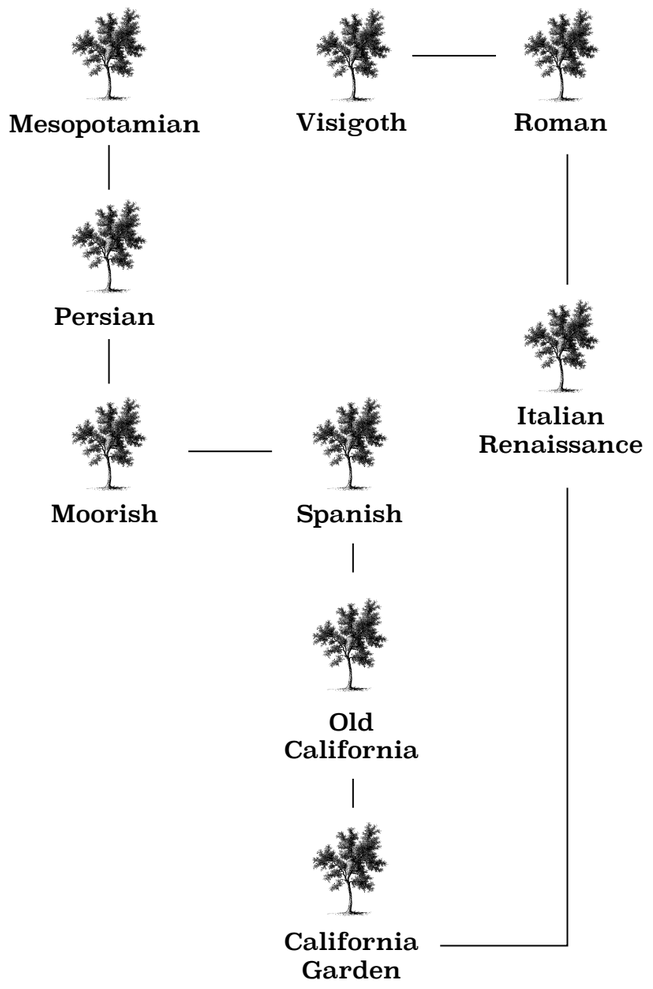
Yet, amidst the mix of design traditions and the domination of Mediterranean style, a few owners, architects, and landscape designers continued to look to the Italian Renaissance villa as a model for the ideal California home and garden. This article recounts the history of "California as the American Italy" and traces the Italian style into twentieth-century California.

California: Our Italy

When explorer John Charles Frémont (1813-1890),[6] made an enthusiastic report to the United States Senate in 1848 on one of his expeditions to the American West, he drew analogies between the size, climate and topography of California and that of Italy. He is believed to have originated this comparison, having previously commented on the Mediterranean cast of the California mission gardens. Frémont went on to produce popular books on the American West and became an influential politician. In 1848, prior to statehood, he and his accomplished wife, Jesse, built one of the earliest Italian villa-style dwellings in California.[7] The home was a rustic, Sierra gold-country construction, but it was artistically nestled into the contours of the Las Mariposas[8] hills and surrounded by a protected formal garden created as one with the house. "In the design of their house and grounds," a biographer observed, Jesse and John Frémont "sought to architecturally underscore John's vision . . . of California as a New World Mediterranean province."[9]

The similarities between Italy and California were reinforced throughout the nineteenth century. Historian Kevin Starr noted the influence of California's immigrant Italian wine colonies, which added to an already strong Catholic presence, evoking in some minds an "ecclesiastical aspect" to California-as-Italy.[10] After his American tour in 1882, Oscar Wilde brought an often-quoted comparison to his readers with the observation: "California is an Italy without its art."[11] Three increasingly important California exports of the late nineteenth-century—wine, oranges, and olives—further cemented the comparison. Publicity stunts like the first full cars of citrus from Los Angeles to St. Louis in February 1889 on a special "Orange Train" and the winter-time rail delivery of navel oranges to New York in 1892[12] enhanced California's reputation as "our Italy," an exotic, sun-kissed land.

Prolific author Charles Dudley Warner, editor of the *Hartford Courant* and a contributor to *Harper's Magazine*, entitled his 1891 Southern California travel book *Our Italy.*[13] The American Italy, he wrote, offered



Opposite: San Diego's Chamber of Commerce claimed a Mediterranean kinship in this 1895 promotional pamphlet. Courtesy San Diego Public Library.

Left: Jere Stuart French provided this "family tree" in his book *The California Garden*.

perpetual sun, healthy living conditions and a promise of strong agricultural development. Real estate promoters quickly picked up on the theme. *San Diego: Southern California, the Italy of America* was published in 1892.[14] Three years later, ostensibly in response to a constant flow of letters seeking information about the region, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce released a promotional booklet adapting Warner's title. The attractive 63-page document was entitled *San Diego "Our Italy": Illustrative & Descriptive of the Natural Resources, Developments and Prospects of San Diego County.*[15] Riverside County, without a coastline or Apennine hill in sight, picked up the theme with its own claim in 1908: *The Italy of America: A Conservative and Truthful Description of the Wealth Producing Districts of Riverside County.*[16]

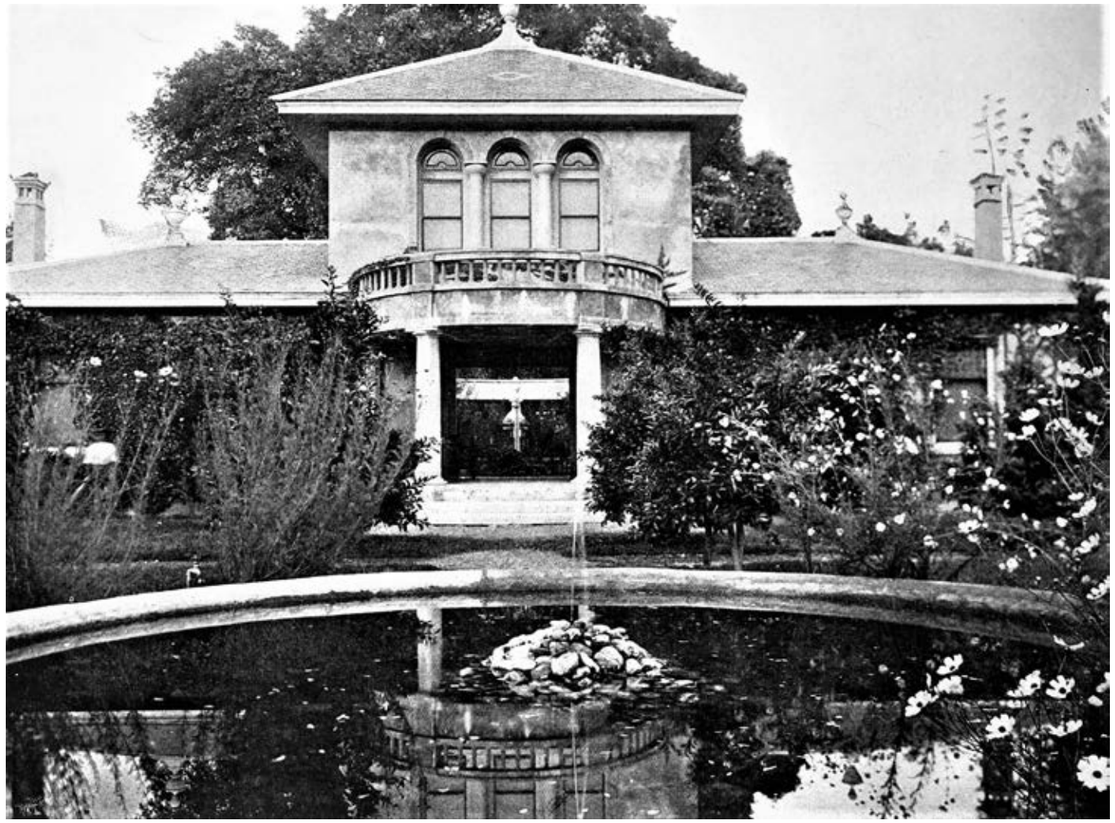
In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Italy was one of the most popular foreign destinations for American tourists. Hoping to attract some of those travelers to the "Italy of America", California boosters exploited all comparisons with the old country to increase the state's tourism and development. One strand of promotion was particularly effective. It was built around the notion of California as a healthy place to visit and live. There was no need to go to Cuba or make a tedious voyage to the Mediterranean Sea to promote health, one author suggested, when California offered a "natural sanitarium."[17] The concept was captured in the title of an anonymous tract, *Southern California: The Italy of America: The Haven of the Invalid, the Delight of the Tourist . . . .*[18] Another widely read book, *California: For Health, Pleasure, and Residence*, made the bald claim that California's climate effectively treated disease.[19] Before these types of publications were common, Samuel Brannan, California's first gold rush millionaire, showed the way by purchasing land around thermal springs in the Napa Valley. He built the Hot Springs Hotel in 1862, establishing the Northern California town of Calistoga as a health resort. Later in the century, many communities across the state jump-started their growth and attracted an affluent population by catering to seekers of healing and health.

As transcontinental rail travel became more comfortable and affordable, people flocked to California for pleasure, economic advantage, and adventure, as well as health. As modern modes of transportation developed, the Golden State's ability to draw in new residents was seemingly inexhaustible.[20] Millions of homes were built and gardens made.

How influential was nineteenth-century Italian imagery on the development of California styles of architecture and landscape?

Italian Villas on the California Frontier

In his social history of California architecture, Harold Kirker describes how frontier California differed from the frontier lines emanating from the eastern United States. California was not colonized by the westward pressure of farmers and ranchers seeking new land. Rather, it was a coastal frontier, made important by the port of San Francisco, the



China trade, and eventually the discovery of gold. California's frontier also differed in its cultural and economic diversity. The cosmopolitan population of early statehood introduced almost every kind of design and building tradition with little or no attention to the existing Spanish and Mexican precedents. Moreover, construction in rapidly growing California achieved a level of sophistication surpassing that seen on the frontier lines east of the Rocky Mountains.[21]

Shortly after statehood in 1850, "Italianate" was the first of the imported styles to become noticeably more popular than others. California architects were partial to the Italian style largely because it was popular in the eastern United States and had won the approval of national tastemaker Andrew Jackson Downing in his much-admired *Treatise*.[22]

Architect Henry W. Cleaveland, a friend and acolyte of Downing, became a leading San Francisco architect and built some of the earliest and most impressive examples of the Italian villa style in California.[23] His design for soldier, farmer, gold miner, and politician General John Bidwell is said to represent the Italian villa at its purest in California. The three-story pink brick 26-room mansion was built in 1865 and is preserved in Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park at California State University, Chico.[24]

Further south, on the San Francisco Peninsula, wealthy San Franciscans built lavish country houses, introducing the first large estates west of the Mississippi River.[25] Many were built in the Italian style. Banker and entrepreneur William Chapman Ralston purchased the Belmont villa of Count Leonetto Cipriani, the Italian consul in San Francisco. Over three years, the villa was expanded into an opulent mansion and showplace garden. Completed in 1867-68, the splendor and size of the Italianate Ralston Hall dazzled San Francisco high society and visitors like Mark Twain. Today the mansion is part of Notre Dame de Namur University.[26]

Not to be outdone, affluent East Coast banker and philanthropist Darius Ogden Mills purchased 1,500 acres on the peninsula and commissioned Henry W. Cleaveland to design what became the most elaborate county house in the state of California.[27] The Millbrae Estate was completed in 1868. The 42-room house was surrounded by manicured gardens with a conservatory and three artificial lakes. The house was destroyed by fire in 1954; the San Francisco Airport stands on land that was once part of the estate.

With the exception of John C. Fremont's villa built at Las Mariposas, these early California Italianate homes do not necessarily demonstrate a thoughtful decision to build in a style appropriate to the "Italy of America." Fashion was the strongest impetus for Bidwell, Ralston and Mills. Italianate was in vogue and architect Cleaveland was its first important interpreter on the West Coast. There was not always a unity between these houses and their gardens as Italian Renaissance style would mandate, although at these large estates, a European formality was imposed on the landscape.

From the 1870s, California gardens became more elaborate and the naturalistic garden style favored by the Arts and Crafts Movement vied with a growing interest in formalism. Knowledge and appreciation of California as a horticultural paradise also grew during this period as growers and gardeners experimented with an exceptionally wide variety of plants from around the world.[28] Despite the limited water supply, this was the time when gardeners in largely frost-free Southern California developed a taste for exotic tropicals.

In Search of a California Style

Toward the end of the nineteenth century California architects began to reassess the use of popular imported styles. It was time, many believed, for California architecture to mature into a style that reflected regional, rather than alien traditions. When architects began looking closer to home for inspiration, they studied the oldest buildings to be found: the Spanish missions and Mexican adobes originally dismissed as primitive relics.

Several cultural threads fed into this architectural reassessment. A few scholars were favorably reappraising the Spanish colonization of Alta California and the society of the Californios.[29] Popular literature played a surprisingly large role in shifting sensibilities about the Spanish past of California. Misinterpreted but wildly popular, Helen Hunt Jackson's novel Ramona was the dominant literary force that infused the public imagination with sentimental and romantic notions of pre-statehood California.[30] And finally, newfound efforts to preserve missions and historic adobes signaled the higher value being accorded California's early history. The preservation thread is most closely associated with flamboyant Los Angeles journalist and activist Charles Fletcher Lummis who in 1895 founded the Landmarks Club, staffed its board with prominent Californians, and set a goal of preserving the state's historic sites.[31]

Mission Revival architecture, with its curvilinear parapets and deeply set window and door openings, began to appear in the mid-1880s. Names associated with early Mission Revival architecture include Arthur B. Benton, Irving Gill, Sumner Hunt, and Lester S. Moore.[32] Hunt and Benton were both founding board members of Lummis' Landmarks Club and Benton worked on stabilizing the mission buildings of San Diego and San

Opposite: General Bidwell mansion in Chico, built 1865, was described as the Italian style at its finest. Courtesy Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park.

Above: Villa Pompeii was built in 1902 in Sonoma County as the summer home of San Francisco banker Andrea Sharbaro. Photo from "American Homes and Gardens," October 1910.

Below: The Villa Pompeii in Sonoma County featured a Roman peristyle opening to a larger garden and existing native oaks. Photo from "American Homes and Gardens," October 1910.

Opposite: The lower garden at Il Paradiso, the Pasadena home of the Culbertson sisters designed by Greene & Greene in 1911. Photograph by Frances W. Johnston, 1917. Courtesy Library of Congress.

Juan Capistrano. In San Francisco, Willis Polk (architect of Filoli) ran long articles on the California missions in his short-lived 1890s publication *Architectural News*.[33]

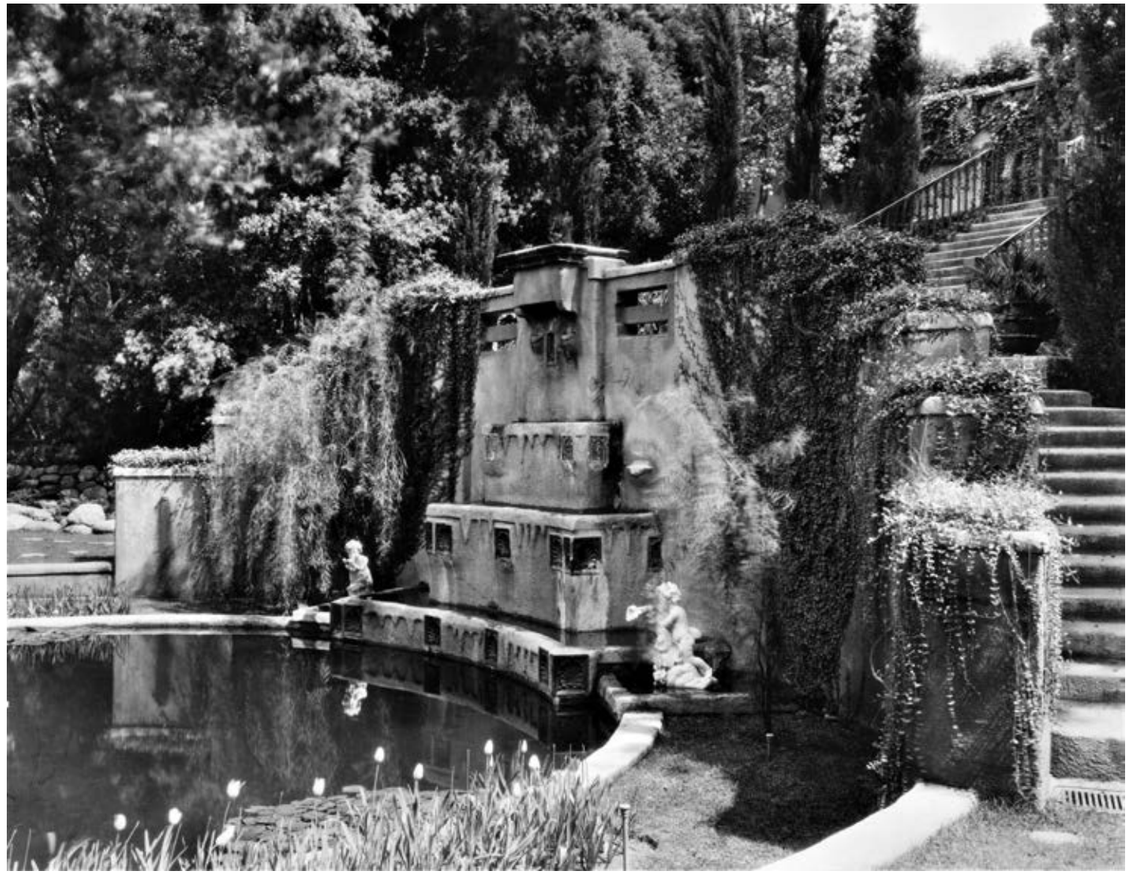
The Mission Revival style came to national attention with the California Building at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, designed by San Francisco architect A. Page Brown (remembered today for the San Francisco Ferry Building).[34] By 1905, *Architect & Builders Magazine* was able to run a long article on Mission Revival architecture with numerous photographs of representative buildings.[35]

The gradual embrace of California's past in the last quarter of the nineteenth century heavily rested on a mythologized, rather than a factual, understanding of earlier times. However, the growing celebration of olden days brought design preferences to what historian David C. Streatfield identifies as a colonial settlement's "regionalism" phase. In this phase, cultural choices shift to recapturing the local past and looking to design traditions of similar or analogous regions.[36] Thus the early Mission Revival movement was soon enlarged to a broader exploration of the Native American and colonial architecture of New Mexico and Arizona, and later still, to a Spanish Colonial Revival style rich with Moorish influences.

The ripening of interest in Spanish-style variants received a mighty boost from the admiring reception of Bertram Goodhue's 1915 Panama-California Exposition buildings. At the San Diego exposition, Spanish Colonial Revival was enhanced with Goodhue's heavy flourish of plateresque and churrigueresque decoration. This adaptation propelled Spanish Colonial Revival to the forefront of popular taste, particularly in the architecture of the Southland.[37]

As Spanish style became prevalent in California, there was a strain of dissent, voices that did not accept the inevitable "rightness" of a California architecture inspired by Spanish colonial structures. This narrative championed the Italian style as more refined and fitting for California. As early as 1906 Herbert D. Croly, editor of the *Architectural Record*, argued that the Mission Style had failed. California needed a "single good and appropriate style," he wrote, and that style should be associated with "the most complete embodiment of the classical spirit in domestic architecture," that is, "the Italian villa and garden." California's opportunity to employ this superior architectural aesthetic was "rare and unique in the United States."[38]

In 1910 journalist Horatio F. Stoll crankily editorialized that the Italian villa "was a welcome change from the Spanish patios, Persian gardens and Moorish courts that have been so extensively introduced in pretentious summer homes in California."[39] The observation was in an appreciative article about the Villa Pompeii built in Sonoma County in 1902.



"Villa Pompeii," Thomas John Welsh, Sonoma County, 1902

Seeking inspiration for the design of a planned vacation home in Sonoma County, San Francisco financial virtuoso Andrea Sbarbaro (1839-1923) traveled back to his native Italy. While there, he visited Pompeii and was captivated by the recently excavated Casa dei Vettii, an elegant townhouse. He returned to California with drawings of the ancient villa.

Architect Thomas John Welsh (1848-1918) was hired to translate the Casa dei Vettii design into Sbarbaro's new "Villa Pompeii." Welsh's connection with the project appeared in a brief newspaper announcement, but no landscaper or gardener was identified.[40] Welsh was well established in San Francisco and known for his work as chief architect of the Catholic Archdiocese.

The villa built in 1902 near the Russian River was not a full reconstruction of the Casa dei Vettii, as Sbarbaro had originally envisioned, but did borrow the plan of facing every room out to a columned court, the classic Roman peristyle. (The Getty Villa in Malibu presents a large-scale example of this Roman architectural feature.)

A formal entrance to Villa Pompeii was completed and landscaping established by the time a published description appeared in 1910. The dwelling was constructed entirely of concrete, rendering it of interest to the readers of both *Cement Age* and *American Homes and Gardens*.[41] Horatio F. Stoll published articles in each journal. Roman Doric columns and a folly-like castle tower marked the entrance to the grounds of Villa Pompeii. A long drive, densely bordered with eucalyptus and acacia trees, led to a tropical setting near the house of palms, orange and olive trees and bamboo thickets with roses, heliotrope, and jasmine scenting the air. A large round fountain was centered at the front entrance to the villa. Upon stepping into the villa vestibule, Stoll described "an enchanting vision" that extended 70 feet into the planted and decorated peristyle and garden. A fountain played in this garden, and at the open end of the peristyle, two towering native oak trees, festooned with wild grapevines, were silhouetted against the sky.

The villa was at Asti, the community established by Andrea Sbarbaro in Sonoma's Alexander Valley in 1881. Asti was home to his Italian Swiss Agricultural Colony, a cooperative wine-making business intended to provide employment and an economic stake for recent immigrants to the San Francisco area. The winemaking operation developed into a viticultural showplace that, along with the Villa Pompeii, attracted throngs of visitors.

Now owned by a large winery, the villa has been incorporated into the city of Cloverdale. "Asti Villa Pompeii" was designated a Sonoma County Historic Landmark in 2004.[42]

While not very well known, Villa Pompeii proved to be a significant watershed in the history of the Italian style in California. It was a break from Italianate as a default architectural fashion. It marked a return to first cases. It was followed in the first two decades

Above: Formal gardens near the house were extended onto lower terraces at Il Paradiso, the Pasadena home of the Culbertson sisters designed by Greene & Greene in 1911. Photograph by Frederick W. Martin, ca. 1911. Courtesy California State Library History Room.

Opposite: A long stairway connected three garden levels at Il Paradiso. Photograph by Frederick W. Martin, ca. 1911. Courtesy California State Library History Room.

of the twentieth century by new examples of conscious and thoughtful Italian design work. Elements of the Italian style and Italian garden ornament were everywhere, but efforts to design in an unalloyed Italian style were rare. For those who did so, California became the "playground for Italian garden designers," a new generation of landscape architects who involved horticulture more fully and creatively in their designs.[43]

Finding Italian Style Landscapes (Not Spanish; Not Mediterranean)

When historian Richard G. Kenworthy wanted to understand the chronological span of Italian influence on American gardens, he undertook a state-by-state survey to learn where and when Italian gardens of consequence had been built.[44] In deciding which landscapes to include as Italianate, he researched whether a garden was directly described as being in the Italian taste or otherwise clearly identified with Italy. Gardens thought to have some Italian features were *excluded* from Kenworthy's survey (1) if the garden was perceived by its owners or creators as belonging to another tradition; or (2) if the garden was "described by the nebulous term 'Mediterranean.'"[45]

While fully acknowledging the hazards of this research model, Kenworthy's documentation is impressive and useful. Under his strict criteria, just twenty California landscape designs made his list.[46] With the long dominance of the Italian style in mind, this may look like an undercount. However, Kenworthy's statistic is less suspect when his exclusion of Mediterranean landscapes is considered. As earlier discussed, Californians have long embraced an eclectic design blend in their homes and gardens. Not too many residential landscapes are created with adherence to the prescribed principles of a single landscape tradition.

With Kenworthy's list as a guide, this article concludes by following the influence of the Italian Renaissance villa into seven individual California gardens (one is an addition to Kenworthy's survey). These gardens are attributed to the most prominent creators of

Above: Charles Greene designed symmetrical twin stairways for the Roman Pool at "Green Gables," the San Francisco Peninsula estate of Mortimer Fleishhacker, Sr. Photo from the Historic American Buildings Survey, courtesy Library of Congress.

Opposite: Charles Greene's inspiration for the Roman Pool at "Green Gables," the San Francisco Peninsula estate of Mortimer Fleishhacker, Sr., was the Tivoli villa of Hadrian. Photo from the Historic American Buildings Survey, courtesy Library of Congress.

Italian gardens in California. They were architects and landscape designers working in a tradition extending back hundreds of years. They honored the weighty principles of Italian design with varying degrees of fidelity. Some had visited Italy; others had never seen an authentic Italian garden. Some had studied the Renaissance villa in college courses, others lacked any formal education in landscape history. Some were conversant with the clarifying work of Charles A. Platt in his American adaption of the Italian style; others may not have heard of him. Despite the different starting points, the six remarkable practitioners of the landscape art discussed below produced gardens respectful of one of the world's greatest design traditions and they created gardens entirely appropriate to California.

Il Paradiso, Cornelia A. Culbertson House, Greene & Greene, Pasadena 1911

Gamble House, the celebrated Arts and Crafts building in Pasadena, is the work most closely associated with the architectural firm of Greene & Greene. But Charles and Henry Greene also did notable landscape work in the Italian style. Their two most important Italian-influenced projects, *Il Paradiso* and "Green Gables," were initiated in 1911.

The Greenes designed *Il Paradiso*, the Cordelia A. Culbertson House in Pasadena's Oak Knoll district, as a home for three unmarried sisters. With its injection of Chinese flavor, the house remains famous as a recognized departure in style for Greene & Greene. The house was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.[47]

Along with the house, an elaborate Italian garden was created for the Culbertsons. The best description appeared in 1919, after the property had passed to new owners. On the building site, land drops away behind the house. Very much in the Renaissance villa tradition, the Greenes made this awkward space useful by terracing the garden into distinct and usable levels. The Upper Garden near the house was gently terraced and had axially designed formal gardens with box hedging, flower beds and a pergola supporting climbing roses. The Middle Terrace was kept relatively simple. The Lower Garden was a showy area with a large round pool, statuary, an inviting poolside loggia, and lush plantings more characteristic of California than Italy. A long stairway, entered through a vine-covered arch, connected all garden levels. Italian cypress trees lined the stairway from the Middle Terrace to the Lower Garden, and other large trees were present, some native to the site. This Italian garden, said one chronicler, exhibits the "dignity and grace of Old World villas."[48] The Culbertson garden was razed in the 1960s.

"Green Gables," Greene & Greene, San Francisco Peninsula, 1911

Charles Greene was commissioned in 1911 by banker and businessman Mortimer Fleishhacker, Sr. to design a house and garden near Woodside, south of San Francisco. Work on the 75-acre Green Gable estate continued over many years. It was the largest project completed by Greene & Greene.

The Fleishhackers wanted and got an English-inspired country house, but the overall project and some specific features make Green Gables one of Northern California's most important Italian-influenced designs. It reflects the Italian Renaissance lessons of unity in the design of home and garden, and it stands in a harmonious relationship with the natural site. Italian antecedents are most noticeably seen in the terraced lawn in front of the house and, on a lower level, in the design of a large Roman pool inspired by Hadrian's Tivoli villa. The pool is reached via symmetrical double staircases and wrapped at one end with a tall, arcaded hemicycle recalling the appearance of a Roman aqueduct.[49]

The several formal gardens near the house have been maintained along with the natural woodlands and old-growth trees. Towering redwoods, blue spruce, Monterey pines, Atlas cedars, oaks, and eucalyptus are in the mix. East of the house, on a lower terrace, a brick walkway passes through an allée of Camperdown elm trees, an uncommon draping elm with decorative bark and artistically contorted branches. The estate has natural springs and a large reservoir for irrigation.[50]

The collaboration of owner, designer, and garden theory is probed by landscape historian David C. Streatfield in "Echoes of England and Italy . . . Green Gables and Charles Greene."[51] Further analysis of the design process—as the estate was built out over a number of years—is provided by Anne Bloomfield based on her study of the original documents used to prepare a nomination of Green Gables as a historic site.[52]

Green Gables was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. The Garden Conservancy was granted a conservation easement at Green Gables in 2004. This property has remained intact and in the private ownership of the Fleishhacker family since 1911. News sources began in 2018 to report a possible sale of the property.

Ca' di Sopra "House Above the Clouds," Guy Lowell, Montecito, 1916

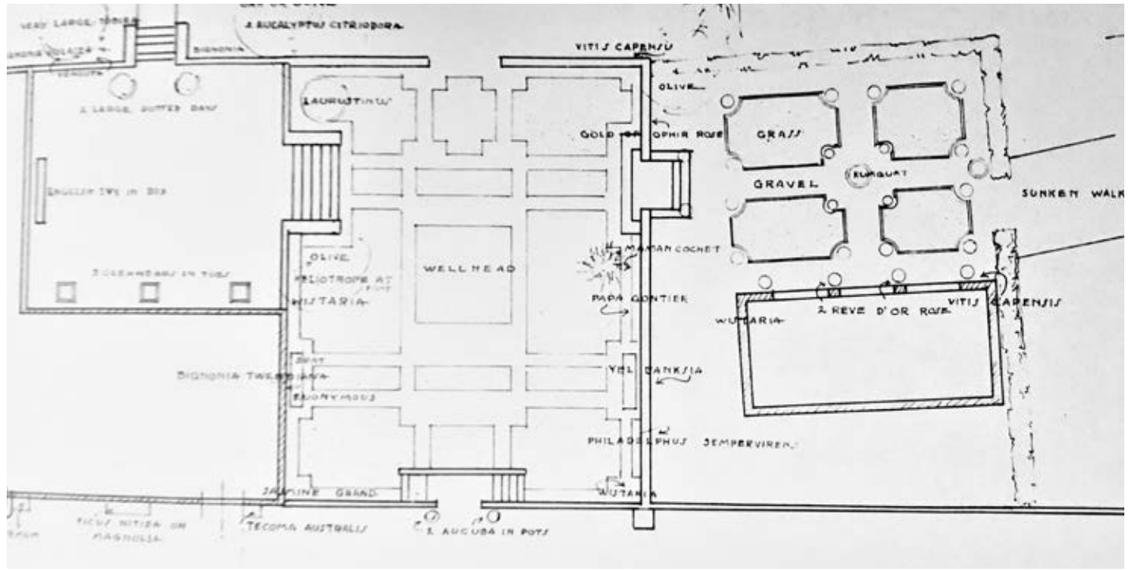
Success in the manufacturing of heavy machinery allowed Robert G. McGann and his wife Grace to retire to a seasonal life divided between Southern California and Lake Forest, Illinois. After first leasing a winter home, the McGanns purchased six acres in Montecito and began building their sea view home, *Ca' di Sopra* in 1916-17.[53] The exceptional part of this story is their choice of architect.

Guy Lowell (1870-1927) was engaged for his first and only West Coast commission. By any measure, Lowell's credentials were superior.[54] His brisk Boston architectural practice included high-end residential work, but he was best known for large business and civic buildings. He designed the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the New York State Supreme Court building.[55] More than a busy architect, Lowell also had extensive training as a landscape architect and was an academic. He founded the MIT landscape architectural program and directed it from 1900 until 1910.

Italian architecture and landscapes were Lowell's special interests. In 1902 he published *American Gardens*, one of the earliest efforts to capture garden history in the United States. He explored the rising popularity of formalism in American landscape design, with particular attention to the projects of Charles A. Platt, a recognized interpreter of the Italian style. Lowell spent a great deal of time in Italy and published two books on Italian villas.[56] Few, if any, architects in the United States shared Guy Lowell's nuanced understanding of Italian villa architecture and

Right: One end of the Roman Pool is wrapped with an arcaded hemicycle crafted with decorative stonework and recalling the appearance of a Roman aqueduct. Photo from the Historic American Buildings Survey, courtesy Library of Congress.

Opposite: Architect George Washington Smith and landscape architect Florence Yoch collaborated on the site plan for *Il Brolino*, built 1922 in Montecito. Photo from *Landscaping the American Dream* by James J. Yoch.



the adaptation of the Italian style to America. He wrote that the style was most successful in Southern California.[57]

Lowell designed a striking Tuscan-style villa with rooms surrounding an inner atrium. The house was set at the high point of a lot that drops 300 feet to another level. Formal gardens around the house are constrained by the available space, but Lowell designed additional gardens on the lower level of the property. The back of the house opens up to expansive views and a garden ornamented with an unusual half-moon pool framed by Roman columns.

The McGanns lived quietly in their Montecito home. Grace McGann died in March 1949 and Robert followed her in death four years later. The estate has changed hands several times and has been altered. One owner installed a funicular between the house and the lower garden. A 2006 renovation reportedly was undertaken with attention to Guy Lowell's original intentions.

Ca' di Sopra is not listed in Kenworthy's Italian garden survey.

Il Brolino, Florence Yoch and Lucile Council, Montecito, 1922

Not pigeonholed as an Italian landscape designer, Florence Yoch did occasionally work in the Italian style and her gardens usually contained an underpinning of classical formality, relieved by exuberant use of plants. She "paired formal elements with unbridled nature."[58] Her outstanding contribution to the Italian canon was *Il Brolino*, the Montecito home of Mary E. Stewart.

Stewart was the daughter of a Wisconsin lumber baron who had served in the United States Congress. She purchased property in Montecito after a brief marriage ended. Retaining an existing stone cottage as an art studio, Stewart hired architect George Washington Smith to design a Tuscan-inspired villa and commissioned the firm of Yoch and Council to landscape six acres of the grounds.[59]

Yoch worked with the architect on the overall plan and included in the landscape design separate garden rooms and many standard features of the Italian Renaissance villa: topiary, citrus in pots, parterres with elaborate box hedge designs, a bosco, secret garden, pergola, sunken garden, loggia and rose garden. A fountain was directly inspired by one at Rome's Villa Medici. Great care was taken to create a landscape that framed the mountain views from *Il Brolino*.[60]

Florence Yoch (1890-1972)[61] lived in California from a young age. She was born into comfortable circumstances and within a family that valued education. The youngest of five girls, she followed her older sisters in pursuing a college degree. She enrolled in landscape architecture studies at UC Berkeley, transferred to Cornell, and eventually earned a degree at the University of Illinois in 1915. She was intelligent and discerning, and her early travels inspired a lifetime admiration of the Italian villa.

Upon returning to Southern California after college, she began to take on landscape design projects through family contacts, eventually opening an office in 1918. Three years later she brought in an apprentice, Lucile Council (1898-1964), who had studied at the Cambridge School of Domestic and Landscape Architecture in Massachusetts. They formed a lifetime personal partnership and, in 1925, formalized a landscape architecture business partnership. Yoch was the primary designer while Council contributed her knowledge of plants and managed the business.

Yoch and Council worked chiefly on residential projects, but their hundreds of jobs also included public parks and college grounds. They worked primarily in Pasadena and in greater Los Angeles and Santa Barbara until 1960 when they relocated and worked in the Carmel-Monterey area.

Yoch's other Italian design work includes the Italian Roof Garden on the Los Angeles Women's Athletic Club and a Roman garden on a rocky hillside for pioneer woman film director and prominent lesbian Dorothy Arzner. Delighted by her garden, Arzner introduced Yoch to Hollywood film moguls who were building large estates. Yoch's garden for George Cukor was described as a "voluptuous Pompeian setting" with evocations of classical antiquity.[62] Jack Warner and David O. Selznick also became clients. These connections led to a lucrative sub-specialty: Yoch designed and supervised construction of sets for five films, including *Gone with the Wind, The Good Earth* and *Romeo and Juliet*, the latter calling on her knowledge of Italian Renaissance style.[63] Some of these Hollywood projects stretched well into the 1930s, cushioning the Great Depression economic downturn that shuttered many other landscape practices.

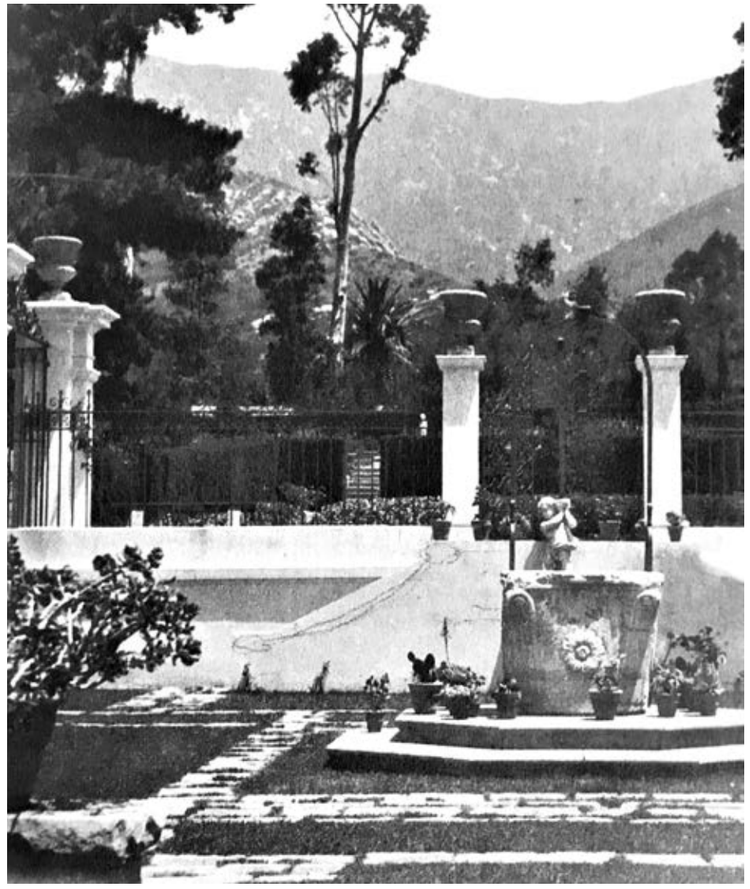
Yoch found inspiration in the works of English Arts and Crafts garden writer Gertrude Jekyll and Edith Wharton's *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* was a favorite reference. Travel was a respite and an inspiration. Yoch and Council toured North Africa and Mexico and tried to visit Europe annually. New sights and new gardens were recorded in notebooks and photographs, refreshing the store of ideas that kept Yoch and Council in demand for decades.

"Westwood," the John L. Severance Estate, Paul G. Thiene, Pasadena, 1922

John L. Severance was born to wealth and added to his fortune with his own canny business ventures. He and his wife were leading art and music philanthropists in Cleveland. When the couple decided to build a winter home in California, they purchased land in Pasadena and hired a newly fashionable design pairing: the architecture firm of Johnson, Kaufmann and Coate with landscape architect Paul Thiene.

Early approaches to the Severance project won praise in *The Building Review*. Unlike "the old custom of leveling a plot, cutting down all existing trees and plants and beginning with a bald bare house," the design team worked to preserve existing features of the site. In a then uncommon arrangement, landscape architect Paul Thiene was brought into the project at the beginning to work with the architects on a site plan that salvaged existing plantings and old-growth trees.[64] This approach added to the challenge of imposing an orderly and formal design onto the final plan for the estate, but, wittingly or not, conformed to the design lessons of the Italian Renaissance villa.

Paul Thiene (1880-1971) appears on every list of leading California interpreters of the Italian style. At the Severance Estate he created elaborate design features ranging from a highly formal rectangular pool with twin pergolas and sturdy Roman columns to an inviting, fern-laden woodland pond fed by a cascading stream. The house and formal gardens stood in a strong axial "L" shape with the house on the shorter axis. A long panel of lawn extended from the house and was planted on each side with a deep border and lined with clipped hedges. The cross axis extending down the longest side of the "L"



Above: Florence Yoch took care to frame the mountain views from *Il Brolino*, the Montecito home of Mary E. Stewart built in 1922. Photo from *Landscaping the American Dream* by James J. Yoch.

Opposite: Florence Yoch accommodated her design for the gardens of *Il Brolino* in Montecito to existing large trees and a terrain requiring a connecting series of terraced levels. Photo from *Landscaping the American Dream* by James J. Yoch.

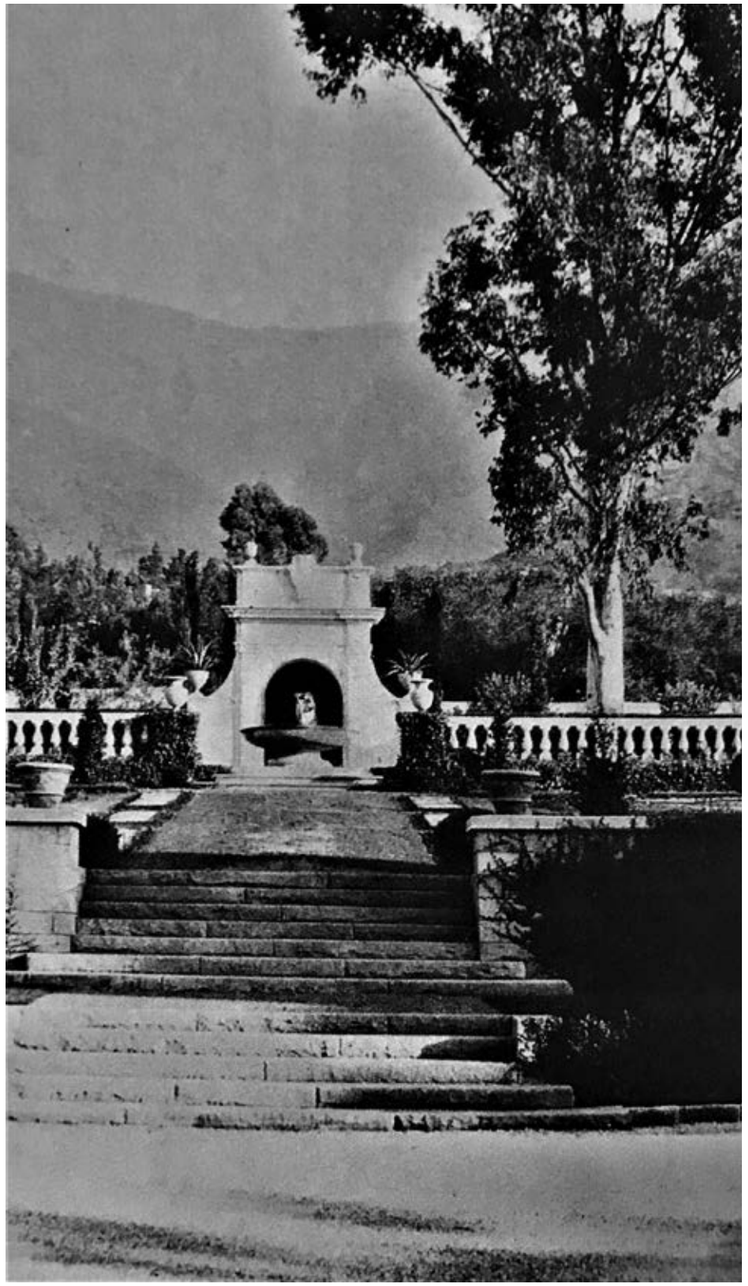
was a series of lavishly planted formal gardens terraced down to a pool pavilion at the far end, a feature inspired by the Pazzi Chapel in Florence. Garden art and careful stonework enhanced the formal areas, with paved walkways giving way to winding paths through an old live oak forest. Azaleas, tree fern, cycads and other underplanting, particularly around the woodland pond, added color and texture to the landscape.[65] Paul Thiene won a Southern California architectural award for his work on the Severance estate, and he published photographs of the project in a *Landscape Architecture* article.[66]

The former Severance estate has retained a large footprint and a dense grove of trees. A replacement house was apparently erected on the property, but Thiene's original elongated configuration of terraces is extant. The decorative Roman lily pond is today a swimming pool.[67]

The origin of Paul Thiene's interest in the Italian style remains unclear. Immigrating from Germany in 1903 with some early training at a horticultural school, Thiene initially worked in Philadelphia (possibly at a seed company) and from 1906 until 1908 he was a partner in a nursery, florist and landscape gardening firm in Portland, Oregon. After selling his business interest, he secured a promising position with up-and-coming New York landscape architect Daniel W. Langton. Langton designed the celebrated Italian terrace gardens at the Drumthwacket estate (now the official home of the New Jersey governor), but whether he sparked Thiene's interest in Italian design is unknown.

After Langton's untimely death in 1909, Thiene struck out for California and by 1910 was settled in San Diego developing his Ramona Nursery. As his business struggled, Thiene found employment at the nursery established to grow plants for the planned 1915 Panama-California Exposition. Management changes led to increasingly responsible positions for Thiene; he eventually was named landscape superintendent. His work on the Balboa Park exposition grounds was a triumph—the "Garden Fair" was celebrated for its beautiful landscaping.

Two people Thiene met in San Diego aided his post-exposition transition to private practice. He partnered with Frank Lloyd Wright, Jr. (an Olmsted employee who also worked at the exposition nursery) to launch a Los Angeles landscape architecture practice late in 1915. Wright's famous name helped the new firm attract clients. A separate boost came from the exposition's chief architect Bertram Goodhue. In 1916 he brought Thiene on as landscape architect for *Mi Suena*, the Pasadena estate Goodhue was designing for Herbert Coppell. After an amicable parting with Wright, Thiene moved his practice to Pasadena. He worked with most of the leading architects of the period and made a great success of his business during the golden age of estate building. When commissions dried up after the 1929 financial collapse, Thiene settled into a comfortable retirement.



Harvey S. Mudd Estate, Edward Huntsman-Trout, Beverly Hills, 1923

The Tudor style house on Benedict Canyon Drive in Beverly Hills is not at the center of a vast estate but is famous as the home of mining engineer and copper magnate Harvey Seeley Mudd who was active in Southern California civic life and philanthropy and is memorialized in the name of one of the Claremont Colleges. Mudd purchased the property in 1925 and lived there until his death in 1955.

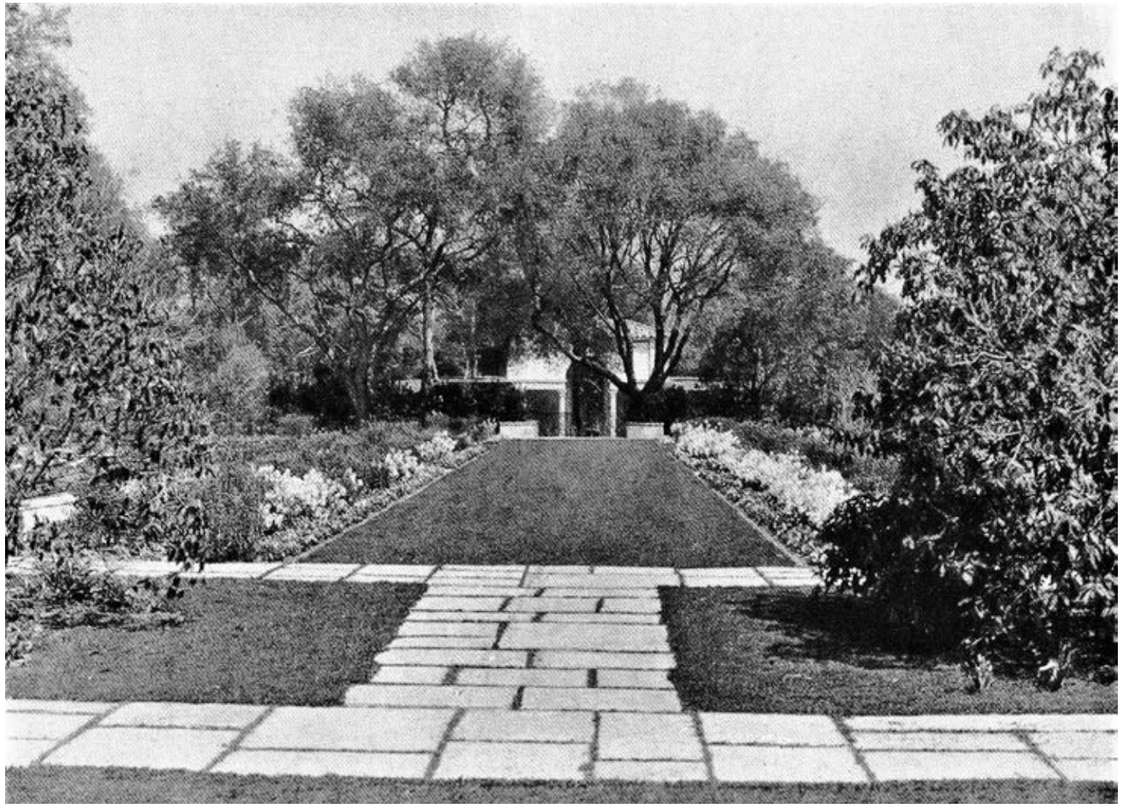
Mudd's house was built by Ohio glass manufacturer Charles Boldt (the maker of Mason jars). He retained architect Elmer Grey to design the house in 1922 and commissioned Edward Huntsman-Trout to landscape the steep one-acre grounds.

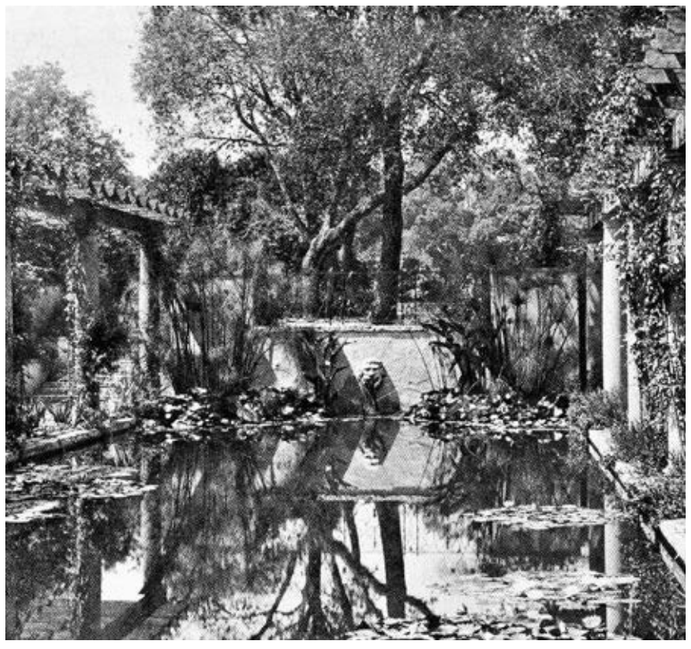
The Harvey Mudd estate is considered Huntsman-Trout's finest residential garden of the 1920s. He created an elaborate series of formal gardens on the steep slopes of the site, tying them together with the Renaissance villa device of decorative flights of stairs. Huntsman-Trout's skill with retaining walls was particularly apposite on this design site and the walls built at the Mudd garden show "consummate craftsmanship."[68] One area of the garden emphasized the Italian ethic with a balustraded terrace, urns, and topiary. Pools, sculpture, brick paving, and geometrically clipped hedges add to the effect.

The Harvey Mudd estate has changed hands many times and gained fame through an association with some famous owners, including a Rothschild and actor-director Martin Landau. The bones of the original garden are preserved, but some decorative alterations have been made.

Canadian-born Edward Huntsman-Trout (1889-1974)[69] had substantial experience in landscape work but was new to private practice when commissioned for the Harvey Mudd estate. He studied at the Harvard School of Landscape Architecture during 1913-15 immediately after attending the University of California, Berkeley. He did not complete a Harvard degree, reportedly because he was dissatisfied with the program's emphasis on the English landscape gardening style. His first professional work was in 1916 at the Boston offices of Fletcher Steele. He then worked with A.D. Taylor in Cleveland until moving to Los Angeles in the early 1920s. First employed by the Rodeo Land and Water Company and in designing gardens for the Beverly Hills Nursery, he established a private landscape practice in 1923.

In addition to residential gardens, Huntsman-Trout re-landscaped Pershing Square in Los Angeles, worked on the design of the upscale Lafayette Park neighborhood, and contributed several designs to the Los Angeles





County Arboretum & Botanic Garden.[70] His most highly regarded work is his collaboration with architect Gordon Kaufmann on the campus of Scripps College in Claremont, completed between 1927 and 1939. He was credited with achieving a "tremendous result" with a strongly unified design that used "a variety of material and spaces that are pleasing and exciting to walk through."[71] The Scripps College campus is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a uniquely Southern Californian historic landscape.[72]

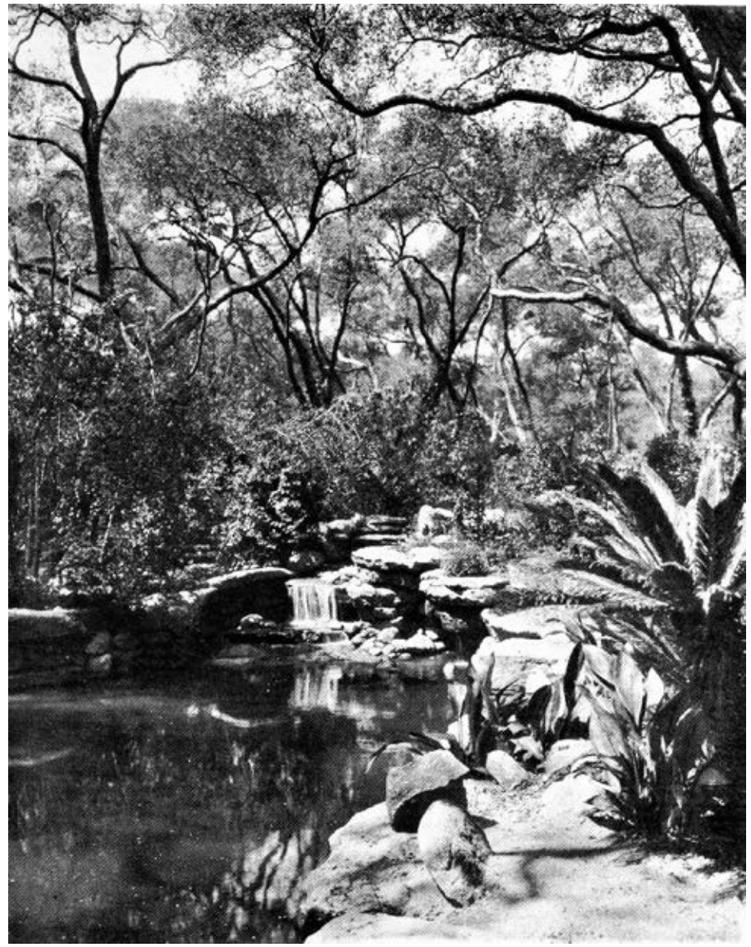
"Greenacres," Harold Lloyd Estate, A.E. Hanson, Beverly Hills 1925-1929

California native A.E. Hanson (1893-1986)[73] grew up in a family nursery business at Chino. Leaving high school after two years, he found work with a Canadian property developer through a family connection. Hanson hired on at the Theodore Payne nursery in Los Angeles after returning to California. During 1915 he visited the two California expositions mounted to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. The showy displays of San Francisco's "landscape magician" John McLaren and San Diego's "Garden Fair" gave him a new appreciation of landscape architecture. He secured an apprenticeship in the office of landscape architect Paul J. Howard.

Army service during the First World War took Hanson to France where he was able to follow the advice of Theodore Payne to visit Versailles and other classical gardens. Once back in California, Hanson felt ready to strike out on his own as a landscape architect. He started with small design-build work and developed an ability to quickly size up jobs and interact smoothly with clients. He knew plants and could expertly evaluate new species and imports for their usefulness in the California garden.

By 1925 Hanson was securing the substantial and lucrative commissions for which he is best known. Although Hanson was called a "natural designer," by one observer,[74] his employee Geraldine Knight Scott, who had recently earned a degree in landscape architecture, saw it differently. "I soon learned that A.E. Hanson was no designer," she said. "He had never had any design training at all, but he was a super businessman and super promoter. He landed most of the big landscape jobs and had his own construction company." Scott attributed the design work in A.E. Hanson's office to the brilliant Lee Rombotis.[75]

In 1927 Hanson returned to Europe for a careful look at the gardens of Spain and Italy. He thought the gardens of Andalusia were good models for Southern California.[76] Yet he was entranced by the gardens of Italy.



Although perhaps not totally "converted" to the Italian style, as one author suggests,[77] he created celebrated Italian gardens and fused Italian influences into others.

Hanson's European trip occurred during work on his largest undertaking. In the 1920s silent film comedian Harold Lloyd acquired 16 acres in Benedict Canyon and engaged Hanson to create one of the most elaborate gardens of the time. The project began in 1925 and generated a torrent of free publicity for Hanson. One full page article with Hanson's photograph imposed over the plot plan read: "Gorgeous Fairyland Playground Being Created by Landscape Architect for Harold Lloyd . . . Will Be Modern Eden of Groves and Gardens."[78]

The Lloyd property had a challenging change of elevation, leading inevitably to the placement of the house, designed by architect Sumner Spaulding (of Webber, Staunton, and

Opposite, top: Paul Thiene's long lawn at the John L. Severance Estate in Pasadena led to a series of landscaped terraces stepping down to a Roman pool. Photo from *California Gardens*, 1931.

Opposite, bottom left and right: On the John L. Severance estate, a series of terraces led to a pool with rose-entwined matching pergolas at each side. Photo from *California Gardens*, 1931.

Above: At the John L. Severance Estate, amid a grove of old oak trees, Paul G. Thiene created a woodland pond with cascading stream and surrounded it with a rich variety of plants. Photo from *California Gardens*, 1931.

Opposite: Landscape architect Edward Huntsman-Trout tamed a challenging Beverly Hills site at the Harvey S. Mudd Estate by creating terraces supported by retaining walls and connected with flights of stairs. This is a downward view of a walled sundial terrace, with central sundial, and cruciform walks forming four planting beds, with Italian cypress. Photo by Ralph D. Cornell, 1933. Ralph D. Cornell Papers, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Left: A courtyard featuring a quoined exedra and fountain decorated with a sculptural relief of dancing maenads, invite an extended stay in this generously planted area of the Harvey Mudd Estate landscaped by Edward Huntsman-Trout in 1922. Photo by Ralph D. Cornell, 1933. Ralph D. Cornell Papers, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Spaulding), on the crest of the hill and the need for a landscape design that connected the house to the rest of the estate. Seven formal gardens of different designs surrounding the house and Hanson constructed a series of Italianate parterres that stepped down to the valley below where a regulation golf course and the entrance to the property were located. Hanson wrote in his own description that the gardens were modeled directly on famous Italian gardens. The *Villa Gamberaia* near Florence was a strong influence and the main fountain at the Lloyd estate was a copy of one at Villa Medici in Rome.[79]

Harold Lloyd resided on the estate until his death in 1971 but the condition of the house and gardens had deteriorated over many years due to his financial decline. Lloyd wanted the estate to serve a public purpose after his death, but in 1975 the property was purchased by a private investor who subdivided and sold all but five acres surrounding the main house. That property, designated as "one of the greatest estates of Hollywood's Golden Era," became California Historical Landmark Number 961 in 1984 as the Harold Lloyd Estate (Greenacres).

AFTERWORD

What? No mention of Katherine Bashford, Wilber David Cook, Jr., Lockwood de Forest Robert David Farquhar, Thomesella H. Graham, Elmer Grey or Helen S. Thorne? What about the Hollywood Garden of Gurdon Wallace Wattles or Oakleigh Thorne's *Las Tejas* Italian extravaganza in Montecito?

There is so much more to know about the journey of the Italian Renaissance villa from its origins to its presence in our California homes and gardens, more examples of the style, and more notable landscape architects who were inspired by Italian design. More than can be included in a contribution to *Eden*. There is a rich and evolving literature available to readers who want to delve deeper into the Italian style and its California interpretations. An annotated bibliography of sources has been made available on the CGLHS website.

End Notes

[1] Nancy Carol Carter, "From a Renaissance Villa: The Italian Landscape Style in America," *Eden* 23:2 (Spring 2020), 18-35.

[2] The influence and work of Charles A. Platt (1861-1933) is described in Part 1 of this article. He published the first English language book on Italian gardens in 1894 and with great success adapted the principles of Italian Renaissance villa design to homes and gardens in the United States.

[3] Wade Graham, *American Eden: From Monticello to Central Park to Our Backyards.* New York: Harper, 2011, 224-25.

[4] He lists the influence of Spain, Mexico, Italy and North Africa. David Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1895-1930)," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 25:2 (May 1967), 131-147, 132.

[5] Jere Stuart French, ***The California Garden and the Landscape Architects Who Shaped It***. Washington, D.C.: The Landscape Architecture Foundation, 1993, 76-83.

[6] Frémont explored and mapped the American West on five expeditions during the 1840s. He and his guide Kit Carson gained national and international fame. More than 20 plant species found west of the Rocky Mountains are named *Fremontodendron* or *Fremontii* in his honor. The California Native Plant Society named its journal *Fremontia*.

[7] John Charles Frémont romanticized Old California in his widely read *Report of the Exploring Expedition to Oregon and North California* (1845) and *Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California* (1848). His California villa is noted in Mac K. Griswold, Eleanor Weller and Helen E. Rollins, *The Golden Age of American Gardens: Proud Owners, Private Estates, 1890-1940*. H. N. Abrams, 1991, 314.

[8] Frémont purchased the Las Mariposas Mexican land grant near Yosemite Valley and moved there in 1848. A rich vein of gold was later discovered. Morris Ketchum purchased the land from Frémont in 1863 and created the publicly traded Mariposa Company. Students of Frederick Law Olmsted's career will recognize this as the employer that brought Olmsted to California in 1863 as manager of the Mariposa holdings.

[9] Sally Denton, *Passion and Principle: John and Jessie Frémont, the Couple Whose Power, Politics, and Love Shaped Nineteenth-Century America.* Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2007, 272.

[10] Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973, 375-77.

[11] *Oscar Wilde in Quotation*, ed. Tweed Conrad. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006 [Quotation no. 230], 22.

[12] Jared Farmer, *Trees in Paradise: A California History*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2013, 250.

[13] Charles Dudley Warner, *Our Italy, etc. [A Description of Southern California]*. New York: Harper and Bros., 1891.

[14] Dwight Braman. *San Diego: Southern California, the Italy of America* [San Diego]: San Diego Land & Town Co. [1892]. Another iteration was: *San Diego: Southern California. The Italy of America. Its Advantages: Climatic, Agricultural and Commercial - Orange and Lemon Growing: Their Profit and Prospects*. [National City, Calif.: Press of the Record Pub. Co., 1894.]

[15] The Chamber of Congress publication had an attractive color cover and described the climate, topography, soil, products, mining, land values, irrigation, fish and game, schools, harbor, development of downtown San Diego and descriptions of towns and settled locales throughout the county, compiled by the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. *San Diego "Our Italy": Illustrative & Descriptive of the Natural Resources, Developments and Prospects of San Diego County.* San Diego: Gould, Hutton & Co., 1895.

[16] J. H. Tigner, *The Italy of America: A Conservative and Truthful Description of the Wealth Producing Districts of Riverside County.* Los Angeles: Press of Home Printing Co., 1908.

[17] Ben C. Truman, *Semi-Tropical California: Its Climate, Healthfulness, Productiveness and Scenery: Its Magnificent Stretches of Vineyards and Groves of SemiTropical Fruits, Etc., Etc., Etc.* San Francisco: A. C. Bancroft and Co. Publishers, 1874, 32. Many of these promotions were underwritten by railroad companies. Truman edited a Los Angeles newspaper and was chief of the library bureau for the Southern Pacific Railroad.

[18] The full title of the 16-page booklet was: *Southern California: The Italy of America: The Haven of the Invalid, the Delight of the Tourist: The Only Perfect Climate in the World and the Grandest Scenery Under the Sun.* Monrovia, Calif.: W. N. Monroe & Son, 1887

[19] Charles Nordhoff, *California: For Health, Pleasure, and Residence: A Book for Travellers and Settlers.* New York: Harpers & Bros., 1872.

[20] California experienced 160 years of sustained population growth, adding residents every year from statehood in 1850 until 2010, the first year the state experienced a population decline. "Just the Facts: California's Population." Public Policy Institute of California, accessed April 29, 2020, https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-population/

[21] Harold Kirker, *California's Architectural Frontier: Style and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century.* San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1960, vii-ix.

[22] Published in many editions, the first was Andrew Jackson Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America.* New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1841. Downing was not, however, approving of the "ancient Roman" style of formal garden seen in Italian villas.

[23] Henry W. Cleaveland's popular pattern book *Village and Farm Cottages* (1856) influenced the Victorian houses built in San Francisco. Kirker, *California's Architectural Frontier,* 47, 69.

[24] Participants in the 2016 CGLHS Chico conference visited the Bidwell Mansion site. Bidwell Mansion, HABS No. Ca-1317, 2. Bidwell HABS report: https://web.archive.org/web/20121022121525/http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/ca/ca0000/ca0059/data/ca0059data.pdf; Additional information about Bidwell and the house is at https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=460.

[25] David Streatfield, "The Evolution of the Southern California Landscape," *Landscape Architecture* 66:1 (January 1976), 39-46, 46.

[26] Ralston Hall had 55,000 square-feet of living space and was four stories high. National Historic Landmark designation recognized Ralston Hall as one of the few intact examples of a mid-nineteenth century Italian Victorian Villa, accessed May 1, 2020, https://www.ndnu.edu/media-center/history-of-ralston-hall/. It is designated as a National Historic Landmark and California Historic Landmark.

[27] Kirker, *California's Architectural Frontier,* 70.

[28] See generally, David C. Streatfield, "Western Expansion." In *Keeping Eden: A History of Gardening in America*, Walter T. Punch, gen. ed., Massachusetts Horticultural Society. Boston: Bulfinch Press, Little, Brown and Co., 1992, 97-117, 100-01.

[29] Californios were Catholic, Spanish speaking residents of Alta California between 1769 and 1848 who had descended from Latin Americans. David C. Streatfield, "'Californio' Culture and Landscapes, 1894-1942." In *Design With Culture: Claiming America's Landscape Heritage*, ed. Charles A. Birnbaum and Mary V. Hughes. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005, 103-135.

[30] Helen Hunt Jackson. *Ramona. A Story.* Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1884. [Reissued in many editions, including New York: Modern Library, 2005.] The first novel set in Southern California, *Ramona* was meant to raise public consciousness about the poor treatment of indigenous Californians. Ironically, the novel fueled a romanticized view of the post-mission era and launched a "Ramona" tourist boom. Many books and articles discuss the social impact of the novel, including: Dydia DeLyser. *Ramona Memories, Tourism and the Shaping of Southern California.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

[31] Charles Lummis wrote of California and the Southwest as distinctive cultures within the nation, shaped by a romantic Spanish and Mexican past and home to traditions, arts and architecture worthy of preservation. There are several books chronicling the life and influence of Lummis, including: Gordon Dudley. *Charles F. Lummis: Crusader in Corduroy.* Los Angeles: Cultural Assets Press, 1972; Turbesé Lummis Fisk. *Charles F. Lummis: The Man and His West.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975.

[32] David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *An Architectural Guide to Los Angeles*, ed. and updated Robert Winter. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith Publishers, 2013, 19. Benton

Above: Harold Lloyd's Greenacres mansion was surrounded by seven formal gardens. Photo from the Historic American Buildings Survey, courtesy Library of Congress.

Below: A hillside cascade at "Greenacres" the Beverly Hills estate of Harold Lloyd landscaped by A.E. Hanson as the largest project of his career. Photo from the Historic American Buildings Survey, courtesy Library of Congress.

Opposite: The Villa Gamberaia near Florence was a strong influence on the gardens of "Greenacres," and the main fountain at the Lloyd estate was a copy of one at Villa Medici in Rome. Photo from the Historic American Buildings Survey, courtesy Library of Congress.

designed the first phase of the Mission Inn, Riverside; Gill's spare Mission adaptations were first seen in San Diego; Hunt was one of the architects for the Southwest Museum; and Moore is credited with promoting the Mission Revival style.

[33] The November and January 1890 issues of *Architectural News* (Volume 1, Numbers 1 and 2) devoted several pages to a discussion of architecture of specific California missions. Polk worked on the reconstruction of San Francisco's Mission Dolores after the 1906 earthquake.

[34] See generally, Kirker, *California's Architectural Frontier,* 122.

[35] Wm. Phillips Comstock, "Modern Mission Architecture in Southern California," *Architect & Builders Magazine* 6:8 (May 1905), 335-352.

[36] David C. Streatfield, "Where Pine and Palm Meet: The California Garden as a Regional Expression." *Landscape Journal* 4:2 (1985), 61, 65.

[37] David Gerhard emphasizes that the San Diego exposition was not an introduction of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, but the exposure that "make this mode popular and fashionable." Gerhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1895-1930)," 136.

[38] Herbert D. Croly, "The California Country House," *Architect and Engineer of California* 7:2 (December 1906), 24, 32-39. Croly (1869-1930) was a New York journalist and brilliant progressive thinker who wrote architectural criticism on the side (his abilities in the field have been questioned but his views reached a wide audience). Croly was a friend of Charles A. Platt, the leading architect of the Italian style in America.

[39] Horatio F. Stoll, "A Pompeian Villa with a California Background," *American Homes and Gardens* 7:10 (October 1910), 382, 386.

[40] [News Item], *Cloverdale Reveille*, June 7, 1902, 3 (Author's file of information provided by Sonoma State University Library.) Thomas John Welsh (1848-1918) designed several Bay Area churches, schools and convents and completed a few residential commissions. His Italianate Sacred Heart Church in San Francisco and the Captain John Slater House in Berkeley are extant.

[41] Horatio F. Stoll, "Novel Uses of Concrete in One of California's Largest Wine Plants," *Cement Age* 11:1 (July 1910), 5-11; Stoll, "A Pompeian Villa," 382-86.

[42] Villa Pompeii is Sonoma County Historic Landmark number 191. The official report for historical designation is on file with Sonoma County but is not electronically published.

[43] Keith N. Morgan, "The Rise and Fall of the Italian Garden in America," in Robin Karson, ed., *Masters of American Garden Design IV: Influences on American Garden Design: 1895 to 1940. Proceedings of the Garden Conservancy Symposium held March 11, 1994.* New York: The Garden Conservancy; Paine Webber, [1995], 7-16, 13.

[44] Richard G. Kenworthy, "Published Records of Italianate Gardens in America," *Journal of Garden History*, 10:1 (1990), 10-70. Kenworthy dates the American Italianate period as extending from 1840 until 1940. The most intense period of Italian influence is generally dated from 1890 to 1930.

[45] Ibid., 10-11.

[46] In addition to the gardens described below, Kenworthy's list of Italian gardens and designers includes: Beverly Hills: Henry Kern (A. E. Hanson) and Ben Meyer Estate (Paul G. Thiene); Burlingame: George A. Newhall Home (Lewis P. Hobart); Hollywood: Gurdon Wallace Wattles (Elmer Grey); Los Angeles: Earle C. Anthony (Bernard R. Maybeck) and Daniel Murphy (Wilbur David Cook, Jr.); Montecito: W. T. Carrington (Josephine Wright Chapman) and Emily Martindale (Stuart Chisholm) and Oakleigh Thorne (Helen S. Thorne); Redlands: G. B. Montgomery (owner designed) and "Undetermined Owner" (designer unknown); Sierra Madre: Thomasella H. Graham (Robert David Farquhar and Thomasella H. Graham).

[47] Lorraine Melton, "The Cordelia A. Culbertson House." National Register of Historic Places Inventory, Nomination Form, August 6, 1984, https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/85002198_text.

[48] Bertha Scott, "An Italian Garden in California," *The Touchstone* 5:3 (June 1919), 224-229, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951001918773d&view=1up&seq=238.

[49] Margherita Azzi Visentini, "The Italian Garden in America: 1890-1920s." In *The Italian Presence in American Art 1860-1920*, ed. Irma B. Jaffe. New York: Fordham University Press, 1992, 240-265, 254.

[50] Additional descriptions of the Green Gables gardens is in Russell Beatty, "Green Gables," *Pacific Horticulture* 66:1 (January 2005); gardens and later architectural work by Thomas Church are described in Ann Scheid, "Green Gables: An English House, An Italian Garden, On The San Francisco Peninsula," Gamble House, https://gamble-house.org/green-gables/.

[51] David C. Streatfield in "Echoes of England and Italy 'On the Edge of the World': Green Gables and Charles Greene." *Journal of Garden History* 2:4 (1982), 377-398.

[52] Anne Bloomfield, "The Evolution of a Landscape: Charles Sumner Greene's Design for Green Gables." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 47:3 (September 1989), 231-244.

[53] Stories of the building of the house, the McGanns and subsequent owners are told in David F. Myrick, *Montecito and Santa Barbara Volume II: The Days of the Great Estates.* Glendale: Trans-Anglo Books, 1991, 439-41. Note: some sources date the McGann house to 1914.

[54] Lowell's formal education and training included: Harvard College (1892); Architecture degree Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1894); Landscape and horticulture studies, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; and Diploma in Architectural history and Landscape architecture, École des Beaux-Arts, Paris (1899). He was also the son-in-law of Charles Sprague Sargent, director of Harvard's Arnold Arboretum.

[55] Biographical information in this section relies upon "Guy Lowell." In *Pioneers of American Landscape Design II: An Annotated Biography,* ed. Charles A. Birnbaum and Julie K. Fix. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1995, 89-91.

[56] Guy Lowell, American Gardens. Boston: Bates and Guild Company, 1902; Guy Lowell, *Smaller Italian Villas and Farmhouses.* New York: Architectural Book Publishing, 1916; Guy Lowell, *More Small Italian Villas and Farmhouses.* New York: Architectural Book Publishing, 1920.

[57] Guy Lowell, "Is 'Italian' Architecture Really Italian?" *House & Garden* 38:5 (November 1920), 18-21. Lowell published photographs of Ca' di Sopra with this article.

[58] Nancy Goslee Power, *The Gardens of California: Four Centuries of Design from Mission to Modern.* Santa Monica, CA: Hennessey & Ingalls, 2001, 57.

[59] Myrick, *Montecito and Santa Barbara Volume II,* 442-43.

[60] "Il Brolino," Cultural Landscape Foundation, https://www.tclf.org/landscapes/il-brolino.

[61] Sue Tyson, [Biographical Note], Florence Yoch Papers: Finding Aid The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, bihttps://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8cn792r/entire_text/.

[62] Peter J. Holliday, *American Arcadia.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, 247.

[63] Yoch's cousin, an English Literature professor at the University of Oklahoma, published a biography of Yoch and her work: James J. Yoch, *Landscaping the American Dream: The Gardens and Film Sets of Florence Yoch: 1890—1972.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989.

[64] Esther Matson, "Two Stately Gardens," *The Building Review* 24:1 (July 1923), 5.

[65] In his discussion of the Severance garden, David Streatfield points out the error of planting water-dependent plants among native oak trees, a level of horticultural understanding not yet reached in the early 1920s. *David C. Streatfield, California Gardens: Creating a New Eden.* New York: Abbeville Press, 112-13.

[66] Paul Thiene, "Water Features: Notes on Experience in California Gardens," *Landscape Architecture* 18:1 (October 1927), 43-51. The article includes photographs of Thiene's spectacular water features at the Doheny, Eisner and Ben Meyer estates.

[67] The Severance address is 1100 Oak Grove, Pasadena. A satellite image of the property clearly shows the long series of terraces, a large grove of trees and a house in a different alignment than the original.

[68] David Streatfield, "The Evolution of the Southern California Landscape," 420.

[69] Biographical information is derived from "Edward Huntsman-Trout: Innovation and Practicality," French, The California Garden, 118-120; and "Edward Huntsman-Trout." In Charles A Birnbaum and Robin S Karson, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design.* New York: McGraw Hill, 2000.

[70] Two graduate theses have been written about the work of Edward Huntsman-Trout: Susan Jane Gross, "The Gardens of Edward Huntsman-Trout." M.A. thesis, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, 1976; Lynn Marie Bryant, "Edward Huntsman-Trout: Landscape Architect." M.A. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1982. Landscape historian David Streatfield included three Huntsman-Trout garden designs in *California Gardens: Creating a New Eden*, 213-16.

[71] Howard O. Boltz, "Guide to Landscape Architecture of Los Angeles." *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 59:2 (January 1969), 119.

[72] Descriptions and historic photographs of the campus design are in *Scripps College Landscape & Architectural Blueprint, April 2004*, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2d6b/c55cbc4d0a2ab72a1f1d2c8d9804ec1e9371.pdf.

[73] Biographical information is derived from: "A. E. Hanson," French, *The California Garden,* 108-113; and "E. A. Hanson," The Foundation for Landscape Studies, https://tclf.org/pioneer/ae-hanson?destination=search-results.

[74] French, *The California Garden*, 108.

[75] "Geraldine Knight Scott: A Woman in Landscape Architecture in California, 1926-1989," transcript, oral history interview conducted in 1976 by Jack Bukteníca, Regional Oral History Office, UC Berkeley Bancroft Library, 1989, https://ohc-search.lib.berkeley.edu/catalog/MASTER_698; Lee (Leonidas) Rombotis (1899-1985), had a long and successful career as a designer; his natural talent and productivity were legendary.

[76] His travels are discussed in A. E. Hanson, An Arcadian Landscape: *The California Gardens of A. E. Hanson*, ed. David Gebhard and Sheila Lynds. Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1985.

[77] Visentini, "The Italian Garden in America: 1890-1920s," 258.

[78] Charles Sloan, "Gorgeous Fairyland Playground Being Created by Landscape Architect for Harold Lloyd Home: Beverly Hills Estate Will Be Modern Eden of Groves and Gardens," *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 1925, 24.

[79] Hanson, *An Arcadian Landscape,* 10.

THE FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE: EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF ARTHUR G. BARTON IN THE ARCHIVES:

USING GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO RESURRECT A LONG-LOST LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

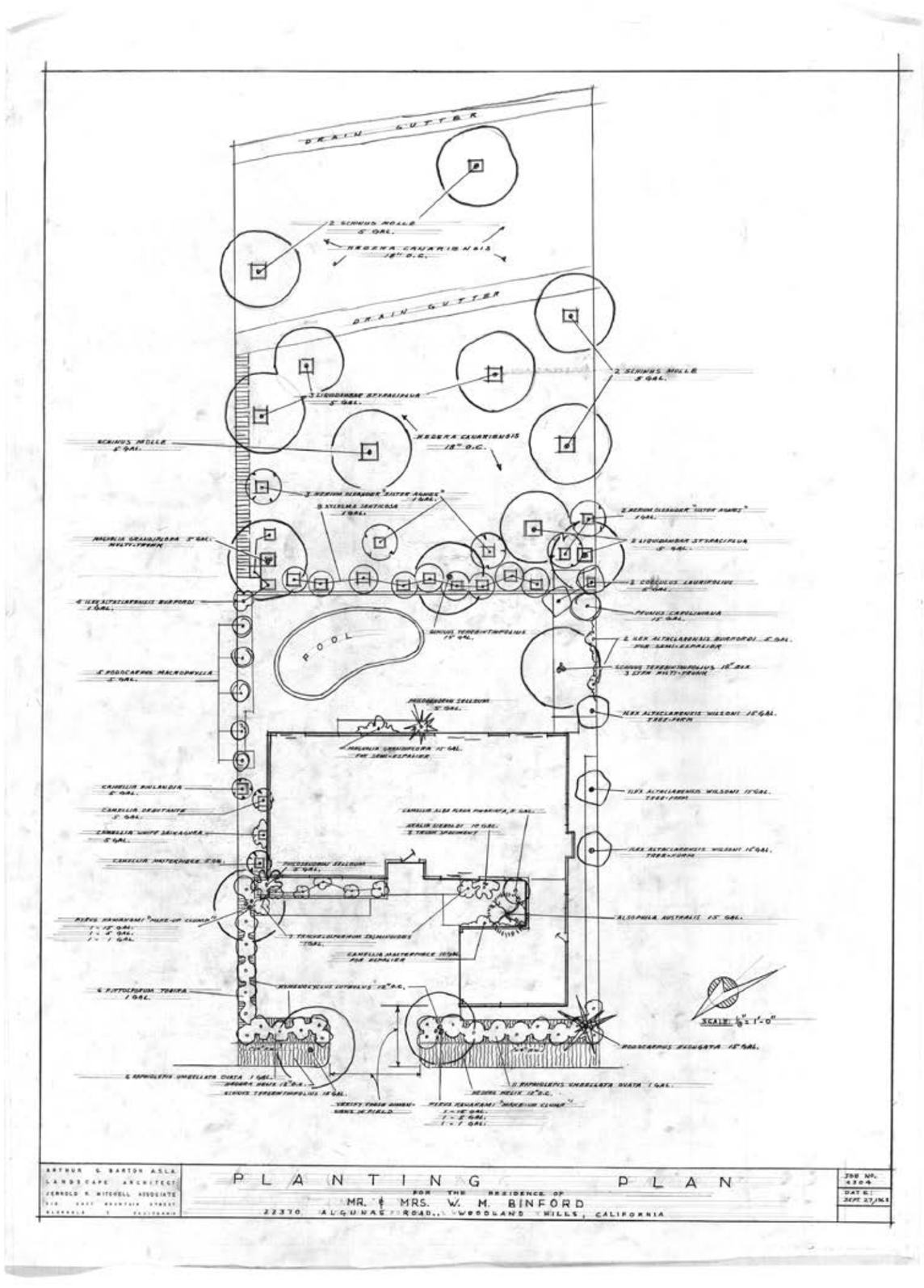
ELLA BAN

CAL POLY, SAN LUIS OBISPO, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

Though he is mostly forgotten today, landscape architect Arthur G. Barton was a renowned and respected professional in his field during his lifetime. Working on over 2,000 projects throughout his long career, Barton also helped develop the first licensure process for landscape architects, succeeding in 1953. The Arthur G. Barton Papers are housed at the Special Collections and Archives department at Robert E. Kennedy Library, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo [SLO]. The collection consists of forty-two boxes, 262 flat files, nineteen tubes, and 500 rolls, and spans approximately 850 linear feet. The archive was donated by Lucile Barton and Larry G. Tison & Associates in 1982 and 1984. Though it was largely unprocessed until recently, Arthur G. Barton's portfolio is the most extensive collection of landscape architecture at Cal Poly SLO.

I was first introduced to Arthur G. Barton's collection while working as a student assistant for the Special Collections and Archives department. As an environmental management major, I was intrigued by the idea of using geographic information systems as a spatial database for historical data. With an interest in landscape architecture and planning, I was immediately drawn to the architectural collections in the archives.

Cal Poly SLO's College of Architecture and Environmental Design (CAED) consistently ranks as one of the top environmental design programs in the United States. In support of this program, Special Collections and Archives holds many collections related to the built environment and landscape of California, as well as a collection of books on the history of architecture and landscape architecture, design, and city and regional planning. Students from the College of Architecture frequently utilize the archives for their classes and research projects. Prominent collections include those of architects Julia Morgan, William F. Cody, and Mark Mills. Laura Sorvetti, Reference and Instruction Specialist, writes, "CAED students often study the drawings of Morgan, Cody, and Mills, who have beautifully drawn, exquisite plans. Students are struck by the detail and artistry of the hand-drawn drawings. The students are often inspired



Opposite: This planting plan for a residence in Woodland Hills, California, highlights Barton's use of native and drought tolerant plants in his professional practice. Unless otherwise credited, all images courtesy Arthur G. Barton Papers, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

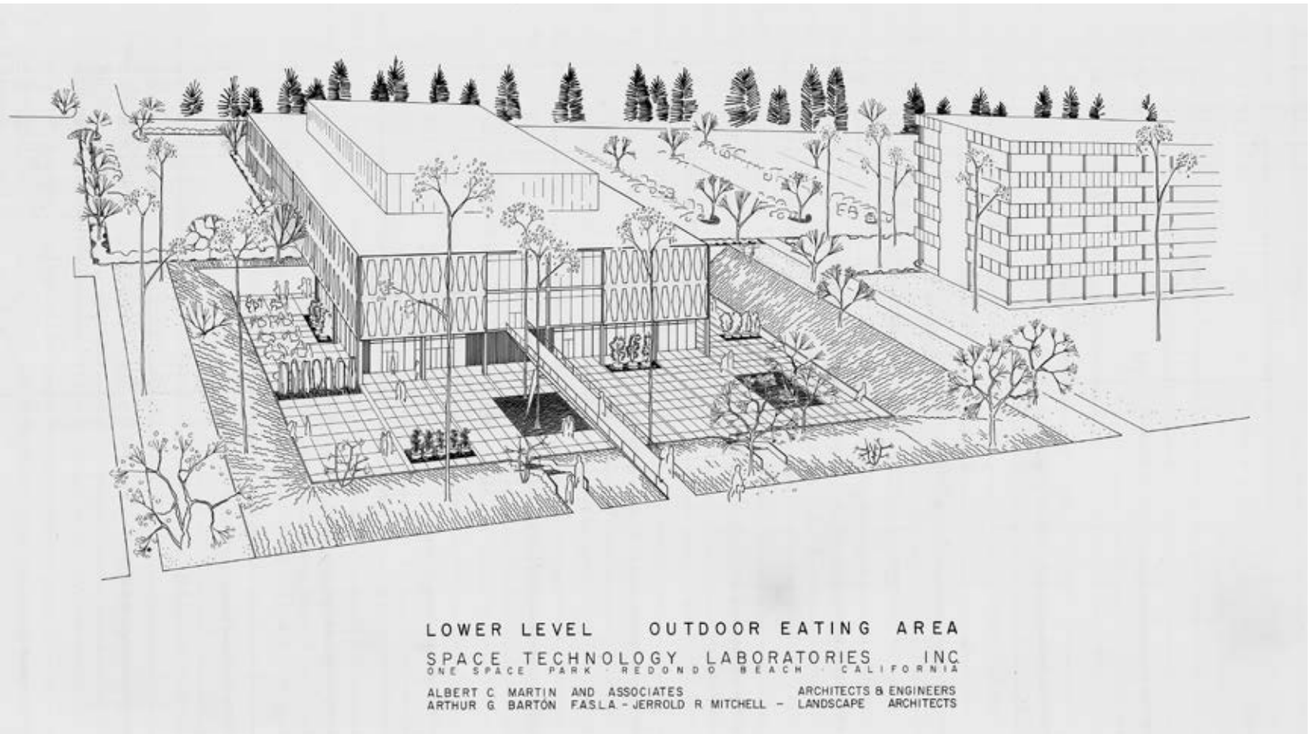
by their artistry and detail, because in their classes they learn digital tools and do not have many opportunities to practice drawing by hand."[1]

Cal Poly SLO's Special Collections and Archives is best known for its extensive collection of Julia Morgan's work, including photographs, drawings, sketches, and ephemera donated by Morgan's heirs, clients, and colleagues. A portion of the collection focuses on the design and development of Hearst Castle, which is located just thirty miles north of the campus. This valuable collection is a focal point of architectural research on the Central Coast and served as a catalyst for my own research into California architects.

As a student assistant, I often work with the architectural collections before and after they are processed. I prepare requested materials for students and researchers, replace drawings after they've been digitized, transcribe notes and relevant text to be uploaded with the images into the Online Archive, and ensure that all the documents belonging to a specific person or collection are searchable in the Online Archive. Along with architecture and landscape architecture collections, the Special Collections and Archives specializes in local and California family and organization's collections and artists' books. A majority of collections in Special Collections and Archives were donated by the creators or their heirs. The department works with groups interested in donating their materials to an archive, whether it be at Cal Poly SLO or another repository.

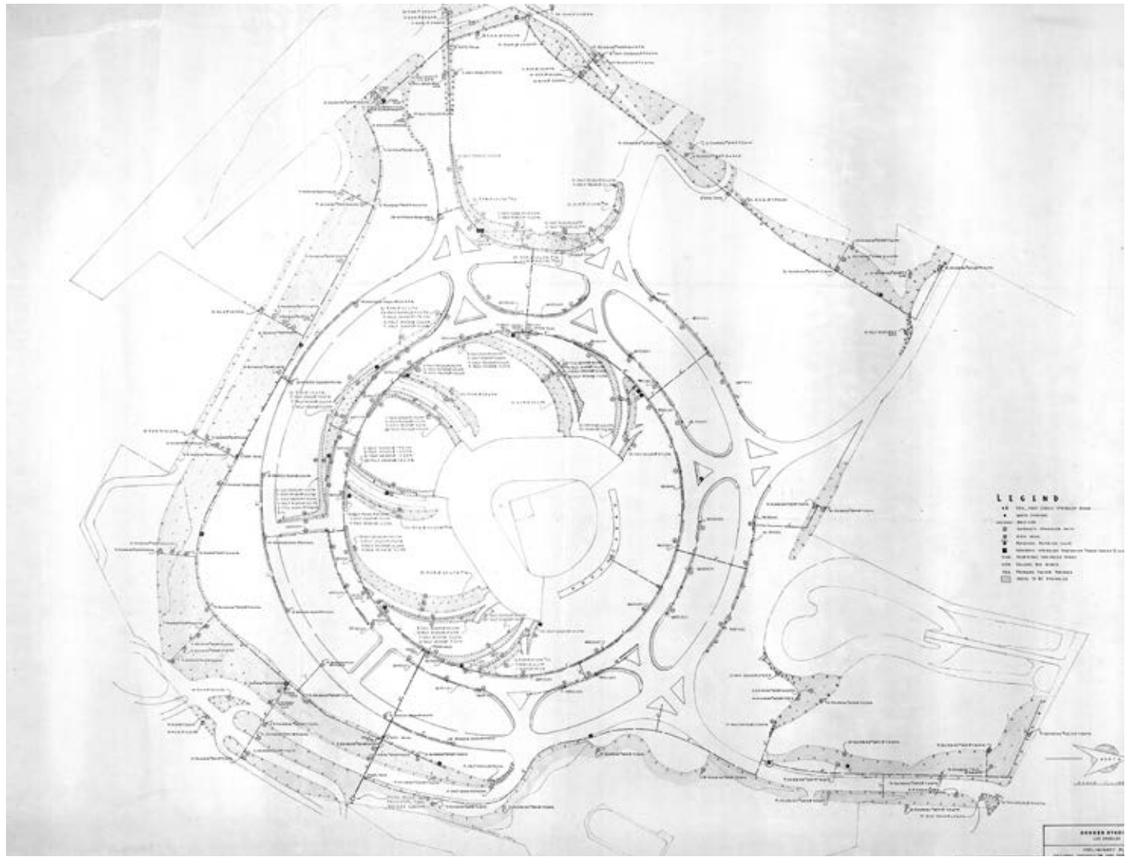
To help researchers access the archives' collections, staff process the collection, which includes creating an inventory to the collection and addressing any preservation needs of the materials. The Barton Papers are considered a "partially processed" collection. There is currently an inventory to Barton's drawings, and a general inventory to the forty-two boxes of additional materials, such as correspondence and photographs. A future project will be to create a folder-level inventory of the boxes of materials. Processing archivist Berlin Loa created an inventory of all the available drawings, which I was able to access while developing the project.

The department's oversized materials, which include architectural plans, currently cannot be digitized using in-house scanning equipment, so Special Collections works with a local photographer to make high-resolution scans of each document. Scans can be made at the request of researchers who wish to obtain a copy of the work. Other times, library funds allow the archives staff to select materials to digitize, which was the case with the Barton Papers.



Below: The isometric sketch of Space Technology Laboratories shows an interface of landscape and building design. Arthur G. Barton and Jerrod R. Mitchell worked on the project as landscape architects. Albert C. Martin & Associates were the architects and engineers of the project.

Opposite: Dodger Stadium color-coding, grounds irrigation and sprinkler system: This series of drawings of Dodger Stadium represents the robust framework of irrigation, sprinkler systems, and master planting plans. Plans were developed while Barton worked on the project, between 1961 and 1962.



THE IDEA

Despite being an influential landscape architect in Southern California and proponent of the landscape architect licensure process in California, relatively little is known about Arthur G. Barton. I came across his work while organizing flat files in the archives and was struck by how fervently he must have been working during the height of his career. My estimate is that Barton designed landscapes for approximately twenty churches, twenty-four parks, ninety-five schools, 110 commercial buildings, and over 400 residences. I even saw a preliminary design of Dodger Stadium. Yet he had virtually no online record—no newspaper clippings, no announcements, no notice of awards, not even an obituary. I did not find a single photograph of him until a month later when I looked through several boxes in his collection.

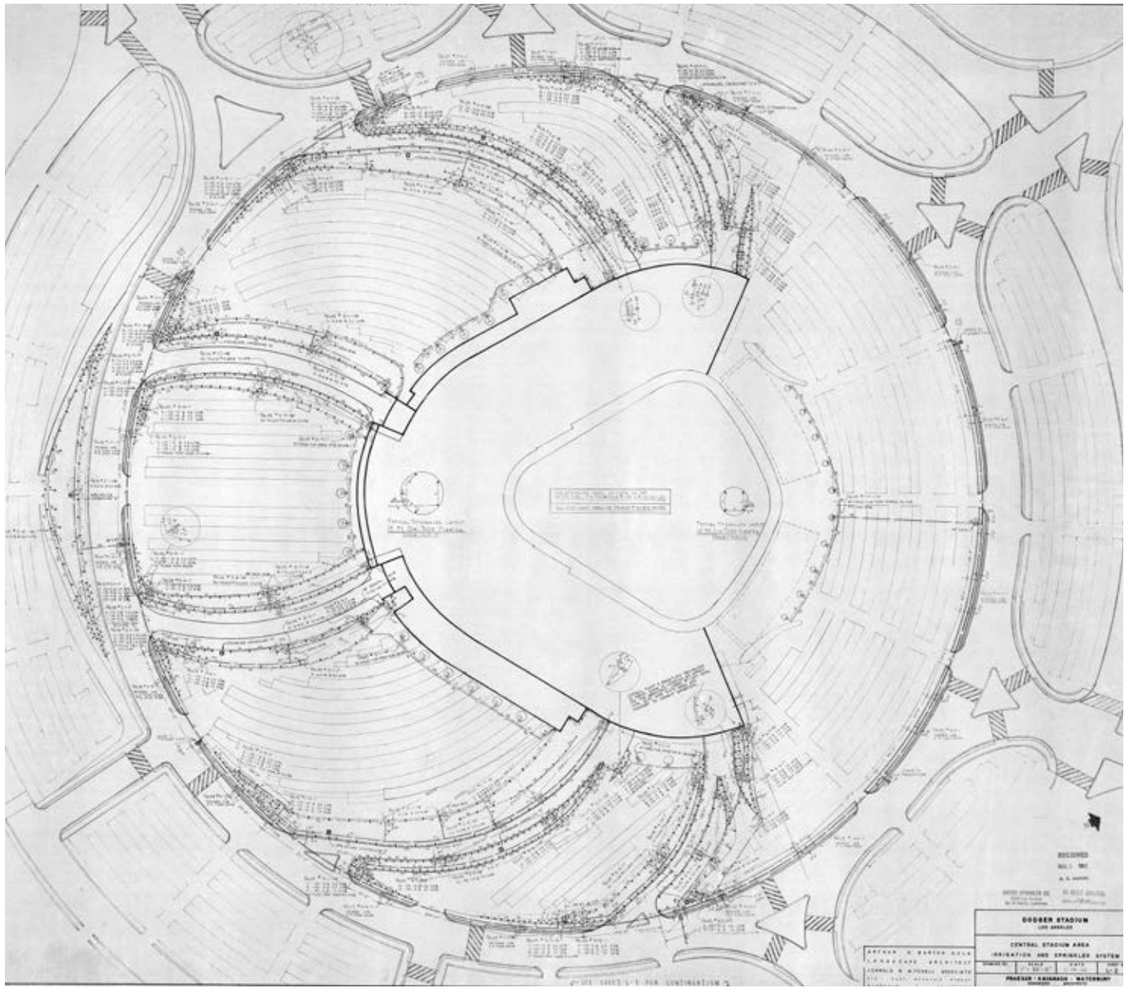
However, seeing Barton's work convinced me that his was a story worth telling. By creating a digital map and story using geographic information systems (GIS) to visually represent Barton's body of work, I have made it more accessible to students and researchers who may also be curious about his designs and their scope. I color-coded each project to represent his work on schools, parks, commercial buildings, churches, and residences. When viewing the map, it's easy to see that a majority of Barton's projects are concentrated in Los Angeles County, which isn't surprising (his office was located in Glendale); what is notable is the proximity of each project to the other. Many are within a block of each other, and there are a handful of streets with multiple Barton designs. Arthur Barton designed the landscapes for eleven residences along West Kenneth Road in Glendale between 1940 and 1977. One may speculate that it was Barton's reputation that earned him business in the area.[2]

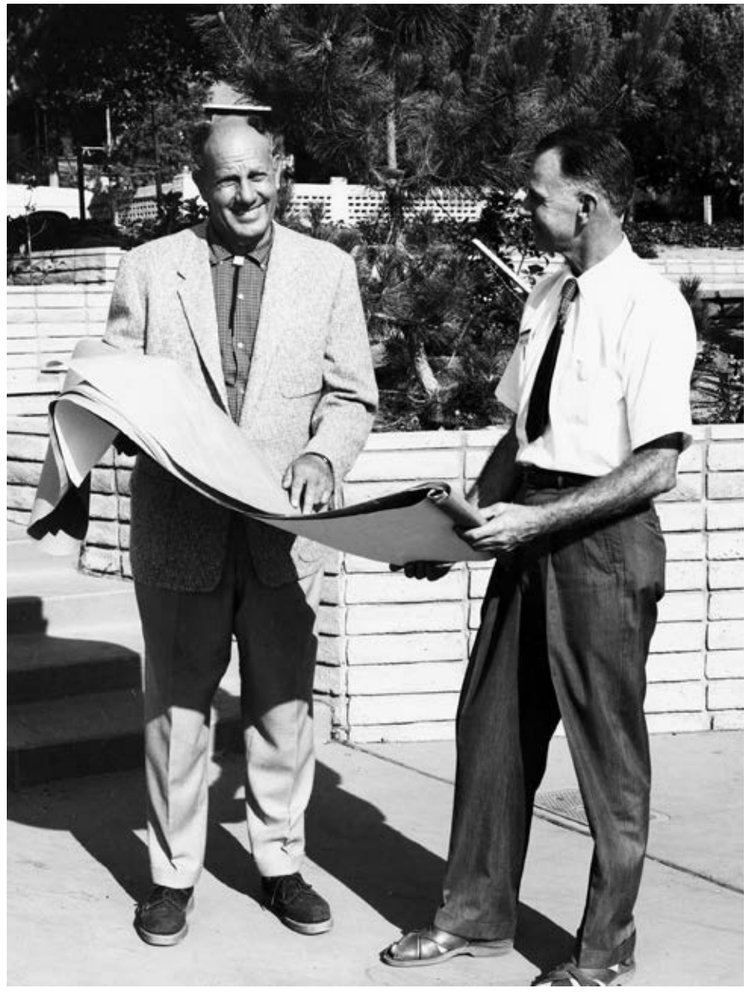
A few months after the digital story map was published, I was contacted by Steven Keylon, editor of *Eden*, and asked if I would be interested in expanding the article for *Eden*. Steven had written about the construction of Dodger Stadium in a 2014 edition of *Eden*, which discussed Barton and his relatively short-lived role as landscape architect for the design team. Steven's article gave me insight into the trajectory of Barton's career in the 1960s and helped with identifying key features of his design style. Heavily influenced by an early experience with a California nursery, Barton used primarily native and drought-resistant vegetation in his designs.

EARLY LIFE AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Arthur Gipson Barton was born on October 2, 1907, in Denver, Colorado. He studied at UC Davis from 1925-1927, before transferring to UC Berkeley to study landscape architecture. Barton graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture in 1929. One year later, he married Lucile Beach, and soon after, the couple moved to Los Angeles.

Early in his career, Barton worked for Theodore Payne, a native plants specialist in California. Widely considered to be the father of the native plant movement in California,





Opposite: Dodger Stadium color-coding, grounds irrigation and sprinkler system. This series of drawings of Dodger Stadium represents the robust framework of irrigation, sprinkler systems, and master planting plans. Plans were developed while Barton worked on the project, between 1961 and 1962.

Left: Photo of Arthur G. Barton, [left] at project site, holding one edge of a set of large drawings.

Payne was among the first horticulturalists to develop private, native plant gardens in southern California.

During the Great Depression, Barton worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps as an environmental planner for the National Park Service at the San Francisco office. He later served as Assistant Superintendent of Parks for Los Angeles County. Besides Dodger Stadium, Barton's most famous projects include the East Wing of the California State Capitol, Camp Pendleton, and the campus at the University of Southern California [USC]. Throughout his career, he was known as a versatile and respected member of the profession.

Barton opened a private practice in Glendale in 1940, but was forced to put the company on hold two years later to serve in World War II, first, in the Camouflage Division of the War Department (1942) and later as a Farm Advisor for the County of Los Angeles (1943-46). He resumed the practice in 1946, designing landscapes for residences, parks, public buildings, libraries, schools, and corporate campuses, primarily in the greater Los Angeles area.

LICENSURE PROCESS

Barton worked hard to establish a licensure process for landscape architects in California. In the early 1950s Barton, along with fellow landscape architects Raymond Page, Harry Shepard, Lynn Harris, and George Huntington raised money to begin the licensure process. At this time, few took the practice of landscape architecture seriously. In 1960, he penned an article for *Landscape Architecture* Magazine with the help of fellow architect M.C. Branch. On the topic of landscape architecture being viewed by the public, they wrote "(t)he industrial client in particular often pays lip service to landscape architecture, but reveals in his attitudes and actions a lack of understanding of its function in project planning and design, and of the requirements for efficient realization."

An article in *Landscape Architecture* Magazine (October, 1963) noted that even the legislators in charge of the bill found it difficult "[to] admit that there is a status above man who mows the lawn or rakes the leaves." However, Barton and his associates persisted, and in 1953 the Bill for Professional Registration of Landscape Architects was enacted. Barton himself earned license number #362 one year later.

Barton continued to have strong professional and civic engagement even after the licensure process was complete. He was an active member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), serving as the president of the Southern California Chapter of ASLA as well as a Trustee and Vice President for the National ASLA from 1955 to 1959. During his term, he met Gilmore D. Clarke, a fellow landscape architect who would one day recommend Barton for one of the most prestigious projects of his career.

DODGER STADIUM

In 1959, he was offered the job of landscape architect for Dodger Stadium. His original vision for the stadium was soon extended into a 5-year general plan, following the changes of the seasons. Drawing from his experience with Theodore Payne, Barton was determined to incorporate various native and non-native plants into his design. He envisioned something that was not only an icon of Los Angeles but also an homage to the natural landscape of California. His work stalled, however, due to poor weather conditions, and Barton and his team still were still feverishly planting trees in the days leading up to the grand opening of the stadium. Walter O'Malley soon grew impatient with Barton's progress, and after two years, Barton was fired from the project.

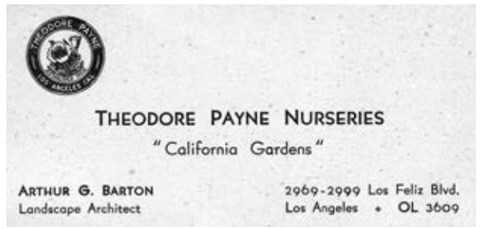
LATER YEARS

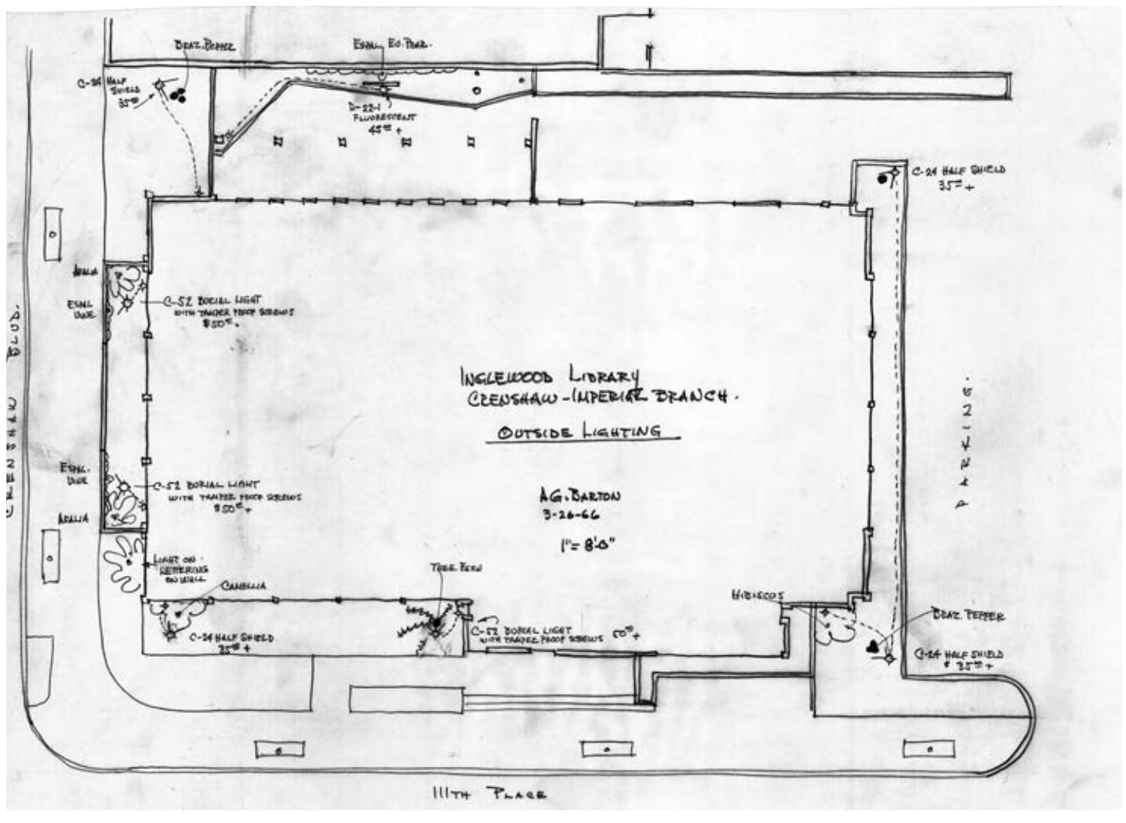
Later in his career, Arthur Barton was honored with the fellowship award by the

Below: Arthur G. Barton's business card at Theodore Payne Nurseries

Bottom: A preliminary landscape development plan for the Crenshaw – Imperial Branch Library.

Opposite: Photograph of Pasadena High School in Pasadena, California. Zimmerman, Howell, Georgi, Kline, architects. Photo courtesy © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10).





American Society of Landscape Architects in three categories - "excellence in executed works of Landscape Architecture," "direct Service to the Society," and "contributions in the field of education."

In 1956, Barton designed the landscape for the Glendale Municipal County building along with renowned architect Arthur Wolfe. The pair would continue to work on municipal projects together, including the Superior Court of Los Angeles in 1959, and the redesign of Maple Park in 1967.

He founded Arthur G. Barton & Associates in Glendale in 1963. His primary partners were Tracy Abell (F.A.S.L.A., Harvard, License #7) and Peter Weisbrod (Cal Poly, License #1252). Their work included projects in Arizona, New Mexico, and Nevada.

Barton worked on projects for notable clientele, which included composer Henry Mancini, the Ambassador Hotel, Boys Scouts and Girls Scouts of America, and the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission in Los Alamos, New Mexico. He designed for over eighty schools in the Greater Los Angeles area, including Pasadena high school, as well as sixteen parks, and twelve churches.

He wrote several pieces for *Landscape Architecture* Magazine that focused on development in residential and industrial settings. Barton emphasized inclusion of the landscape design in master site plans from the beginning of any design and vouched for the necessity of landscaping budgets to be protected independently of general project funds.

Arthur Gibson Barton died January 28, 1980, in Los Angeles, after almost 50 years of work. A prolific and respected member of the profession, his contributions helped shape and define the role of the landscape architect in California.

The archivists and I in Special Collections have started to process through the rest of his collection. When researchers request access to the collection, our archivists work with them to identify a selection of boxes, folders, or drawings to examine during their visit. I hope that this project illustrates his story and allows his work to be accessible to those interested in learning more about his life and achievements.

Barton's story may change as we uncover more about his life and achievements, but no longer is he a long lost landscape architect.

About the author:

Ella is currently a senior at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, earning a bachelors of science in environmental management and protection with a minor in ethics and public policy. She has worked with Cal Poly's Special Collections for over a year and is passionate about writing and conducting research in architecture, planning, and policy design.

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End Notes

[1] Interview with Laura Sorvetti, e-mail - April 29, 2020
[2] There is an abbreviated version of this story on the StoryMap ArcGIS website, which includes an interactive map feature that allows researchers to review Barton's work holistically. The map contains over 2,000 data points. For privacy purposes, the exact address of the clients have been hidden.

THE ELUSIVE MABEL SYMMES

JANET GRACYK

Mabel Symmes is in the back row, second from the right and in the same row her sister, Anita, second from the left. Julia Morgan is in the lower right corner. Morgan's sister, Emma, is the woman gazing away, furthest to the left near the top row. Julia Morgan and Emma Morgan with Kappa Alpha Theta sorority sisters" circa 1894, photographer F. A. Webster. Courtesy Julia Morgan Papers, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

INTRODUCTION

Landscape architect Mabel Symmes (1875-1962) was forty-seven years old when she prepared her first known design in 1922. The project was for the adjoining Blake estates in Kensington, California, and covered twenty-two difficult acres. Although she had taken classes at the University of California in 1914, our knowledge of her design training is thin.[1] Professional designers rarely emerge so rapidly, with so little preparation. How was she able to suddenly prepare plans for this hilly and complex property?

Symmes was also a rare female landscape architect practicing in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1920s and 1930s. Consistent with many other women designers of the period, Symmes did not promote her work. She was described as a modest and quiet person by various people in the *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, as well as in condolence notes her sister Anita Blake received after Symmes' death in 1962.[2] Women landscape architects and designers often practiced without much notice, and this would have been particularly true for self-effacing women like Mabel.

She went on to work with prominent San Francisco Bay Area architects, but details of her life and work have remained obscure, and she has been underestimated for decades. Only a handful of her gardens have come to light, and all are residential. Most of her papers and drawings were destroyed after her death[3], but last year blueprints with construction details came to light, opening new insights into Symmes' skills.

Symmes employed landscape design ideas of the time, but also created a new expression for the California garden, exploring ways to incorporate native plants and other plants appropriate to the Bay Area. She and her sister were influential in the introduction, use, and study of new plants for California. Symmes designed landscapes for residential properties of varying sizes, effectively manipulating scale and topography. Formal spaces were located near houses with informal gardens beyond. She often employed features to draw one through a progression of spaces and garden types. During her life, three of her gardens were used as teaching environments, and one continues to be used as a teaching site, carrying her legacy forward.

EARLY HISTORY

Mabel Symmes was born in San Francisco to Frank Jameson Symmes and Anna Day Symmes. There were four boys and two girls. (The youngest boy, Stanley, died at the age of 23 while still in college.) The Symmes were a wealthy family, and Mabel remained financially comfortable throughout her life[4]. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California in 1896.[5] Both Mabel and her older sister, Anita, were members of Kappa Alpha Theta. In her sorority photo, a pretty and slight young Mabel directly faces the camera while a young Julia Morgan sits below. (To date, no evidence has surfaced about an ongoing relationship between Symmes and Morgan.) The Symmes sisters were members of the Cicada Club while in college, with Mabel strumming on the mandolin and Anita playing guitar.[6] Music remained an interest, and Symmes played in concerts in the 1910s.[7]

Following her undergraduate career, Symmes' name appeared regularly in the society pages, which reported on the various events and activities one would expect involving a young lady in society. Anita married Anson Blake in 1894, and Mabel maintained a close relationship with both of them throughout their lives. Symmes and her mother were members of the Century Club, a private San Francisco women's literary club formed in 1888 with Phoebe Apperson Hearst, its first president. Many Century Club members were wealthy and well-educated.[8]

Symmes traveled, spending time at warm-weather resorts. Restful stays in warm climates were advised for those who had the financial means; she and her brother, Harold, may have had tuberculosis. In a letter to a friend in 1896, Symmes wrote about her poor health and wondered if she would ever feel energetic again.[9] Anita wrote in 1914 that Mabel was suffering from health issues, expressing great concern over her sister's ongoing exhaustion.[10] Condolence letters to Anita after Symmes' death often refer to Mabel as gentle, and one letter described her bravery as inspirational. These few references suggest that Symmes was perceived as fragile and may have spent time over the years in a state of quiet recuperation.

Harold was a published poet who had studied at the Sorbonne and taught at Columbia University. Perhaps Harold encouraged Mabel to try her hand at writing during their extended stays in Redlands.[11] A search revealed a short story written by Mabel Symmes in 1908, titled *A Mystery of Faith*. The tale is a sly study of trust and charlatans, set in Redlands, and was published in a periodical called *The Scrap Book*.[12] In what must have been a crushing blow to the family, Harold died in Redlands in 1910.[13] Harold and Mabel seem to have been close, and she held copyrights to his poetry collections.[14]

In 1911, Symmes and her sister added their names to a plea against women's suffrage, with Symmes serving on the executive committee of the *Northern California Association Opposed*

Symmes would have been in her 80s when this 1958 photo was taken. (Based on my reading of the few examples of her writing, I like to think I can detect her bemusement.) Photo courtesy Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

would have studied the landscapes she saw with great attention. Symmes lived with her mother until 1922. Around the time of her mother's death that year, Mabel moved to the new home of Anita and Anson Blake, in Kensington. Symmes continued to live at the house until her death. She died at age 86 after a fall that resulted in a broken hip.

WOMEN IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

One has to wonder at Symmes' decision to pursue a profession at the age of nearly forty years old. Various accounts in the *Blake Estate Oral History Project* indicate that Symmes had a comfortable income from her investments. Still, in 1914, without the traditional financial support of a husband, she may have had a concern about her ongoing ability to provide for herself, presenting the argument for necessity. Many women with her social standing devoted their lives to family and volunteerism. But Mabel also had the example of other women she knew, fellow sorority sisters who had gone on to successful careers. These included the architect Julia Morgan, Morgan's sister, Emma Morgan North, a lawyer, and Mary McLean Olney, who was an educator and also served as president of the YWCA. Her own sister operated a ranch in Napa County, raising hay, chickens, and swine. (The ranch had been a gift from her husband.)[21]

Symmes had been a supporter of the anti-*to Woman Suffrage*.[15] Mabel's brother-in-law, Anson, donated money to the Anti-Suffrage movement.[16] Interestingly, members of the Century Club, including Phoebe Hearst, were strong advocates for women's suffrage.[17]

Symmes returned to the University of California at Berkeley in 1914, at 39 years old, to take classes in "Landscape Gardening."[18] Established by Professor John W. Gregg the prior year, the "Division of Landscape Gardening and Floriculture" was the precursor to the Landscape Architecture program under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture. Although she was among the first women in the landscape design program, Mabel was not the first woman to take classes in the Agriculture school at Berkeley since the university began admitting women in 1871.[19]

Symmes did not complete a Bachelor of Science degree, and this may have been due to her health, to the uncertainty and reduction in classes during WWI, the death of her father in 1916, or other matters.

In 1921 she and her mother traveled for several months in Europe, visiting the British Isles, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, and Italy.[20] Poised to begin design work for the Blake estates, Symmes suffragist movement. A belief that the vote should be limited to men suggests but does not necessarily require a view that women should be restricted to the domestic sphere. Anti-suffragists could and did enter the business world, but views expressed in 1916 by an anti-suffragist named Edith Melvin, who worked as an aid to a judge, are telling. She wrote that some became businesswomen out of necessity (as she did) and others as an "incidental" experience. She believed that this activity was unfortunate since women lacked the power of consecutive thought and that their capabilities were naturally constrained by instability and "sweet unreasonableness."[22]

Did Symmes' view on suffrage change or affect her decision to pursue a career? If so, how difficult was it to overcome the anti-suffragist opinions of her mother and her sister? Maybe her creative spirit overcame all concerns, or she simply decided to accommodate the "incidental" experience of working as a landscape architect.

Landscape architecture was a recent and still unfolding profession when Mabel Symmes determined that she would be a designer of landscapes. It is generally understood that the profession in the United States started with Andrew Jackson Downing and his 1841 book about landscape gardening – as the profession was known.[23] Then, as now, landscape architecture was a combination of craft, art, and science. Training in architecture, horticulture, topographic manipulation, engineering, and the arts were all needed. There was no commonly accepted route into the profession, and the possibilities included a formal education, perhaps in one of the few professional programs of the time, followed by an internship, an apprenticeship, a willing mentor, or a combination thereof.

Women were thought wholly unsuited to the work of a professional designer. Maintaining a home garden was acceptable, it being in the domestic sphere. Interestingly, the few women who made a breakthrough in the early years were often from privileged backgrounds. They had interest and skill, but they also had the support and encouragement of male mentors who were established professionals. These women augmented their mentors' training with classwork or with private tutoring. A tour of Europe was considered an essential part of the training for men or women.[24]

Cornell University began admitting women in 1872 and began creating its landscape design program in 1904. Some contemporaneous accounts contradict its reputation for making women feel welcome.[25] Harvard established the first academic program in 1900 but did not admit women until 1942. MIT had a short-lived program that admitted women (1900 to 1904). As noted, Berkeley's design program, admitting women, was begun in 1913. At a handful of colleges and universities, women were granted permission to attend lectures, without enrolling or gaining credit. Two schools, both in the eastern United States, were established specifically to teach landscape architecture to women. Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture, Gardening and Horticulture for Women was established in 1901 in Massachusetts, and a School of Horticulture was established in 1911 in Pennsylvania.[26]

Consider Beatrix Farrand, a trailblazing landscape architect who began her profession in 1895 under the guidance of tutors and mentors. She worked on the East Coast and later in California in the San Marino area. She designed estates for wealthy patrons such as the Rockefellers, Pierpont Morgan, and others, and she prepared plans for the National Cathedral in 1899; she designed parts of the landscape at the White House, Yale, the University of Chicago, and Arnold Arboretum at Harvard. Even so, she was dismissed by a male colleague as being a "bedroom designer" – a society woman who might do a little garden design between having tea and hosting parties, thereby belittling her and her work. Farrand was a prolific and talented designer, as well as a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

By the early 1920s, there were still limited numbers of women in the profession, but attitudes were changing. New generations of

An extensive rose garden outside the Edwin and Harriet Blake house. Undated photo courtesy Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

Below: Symmes' 1922 plan for the adjoining Blake estates shows the complexity of both the topography and the Symmes design. "Quinta de las Lilas," on the left, was for Edwin and Harriet Blake. Anson and Anita Blake's property, and the home of Mabel for most of her adult life, was called "La Casa Adelante." Note the reflecting pool and the use of forced perspective in the paired lines of retreating trees behind the pool. Anson and Anita Blake's property is now the UC Berkeley-owned Blake Garden and is open to the public on most weekdays. Courtesy Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

Opposite: A group of undated photos was kindly loaned by the current owner of the Unna house. The composer and pianist Sarah Unna is seen standing next to the fountain in what was once a thickly planted strolling garden. The use of salvaged stone for the stairway is unusual for Symmes and may have been a result of a plentiful supply of concrete pieces following the devastating 1923 fires in the Berkeley hills.

women who completed their training during that era were opening offices. Florence Yoch started her career with classes at UC Berkeley in 1910, transferring to Cornell, then to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1915, where she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Landscape Gardening. She opened an office in Southern California in 1917.

There were only a handful of women in the profession in California and even fewer in the Bay Area. Willa Clair Cloys Carmack was one of the first women to complete the University of California Bachelor of Science degree in landscape gardening, in 1916. She began practicing professionally in 1917.[27] Cloys prepared plans for several properties, including estates, but her career remains largely undocumented. Women horticulturists, such as Isabella Worn from Marin County, were preparing planting plans and performing garden maintenance. Worn worked on the planting plan for Filoli, but did not develop master plans, grading plans, and construction details, as did Symmes. There were other female designers, such as Adeline Frederick and Cicely Christie, mentioned in the *Blake Estate Oral History Project* about whom even less is known.[28]

As noted by scholar Thaïsa Way, in the early years of landscape design, it was gauche for women to openly seek work, meaning that social connections played an especially important role in attaining design opportunities. Home offices were most common, and sometimes, although rarely, women operated offices with staff.[29] Symmes worked from her bedroom at the Blake home in Kensington. Her social connections seem to have been the source of her work - Symmes' first known commission was for family. Both the Symmes and Blake families were deeply engaged in the local University all their lives, and Mabel's clients often had associations with it. Others came from her family's extensive connections to the mining industry.[30]

THE GARDENS OF MABEL SYMMES

Until recently, it was not understood that Mabel Symmes' body of work extended much beyond the Blake Estates or that she had prepared detailed plans. She had been described as little more than a dabbler in landscape design. Noted landscape architect Mai Arbergast, who surveyed and inventoried the garden between 1958 and 1961, encountered Mabel and Anita in their last years. In the *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, Arbergast made more observations of Anita than Mabel. She believed that Symmes didn't earn money as a designer and worked only on a minimal basis for friends.

Geraldine Knight Scott, a landscape architect teaching at UC Berkeley and representing the Blake garden between 1958 and 1969, also believed that Symmes was able to "lay out" a garden but did not practice as a landscape architect.[31] Scott did not meet Symmes and based her impressions on whatever information she gathered from others. Scott's view may have been a commonly accepted assessment of that time; unfortunately, this interpretation and others in the *Blake Estate Oral History Project* have colored contemporary impressions of Symmes. Perhaps the few known works were her only projects; however, more landscapes may come to light. Whether Symmes accepted payment for her work or not, she described herself as a landscape architect, and her professional standing should not be questioned. What is clear is that Symmes' talents and experience received little attention in the final years of her life, and for some decades afterward.

Historic European styles heavily influenced garden designs of the 1920s. In particular, Italian Garden styles were in vogue, in which symmetry and restraint were prized. Symmes had an exceptional understanding of the style, and she also explored Spanish garden styles. From what I can gather, a Symmes design displayed a sophisticated sense of scale and composition. She addressed grade changes with confidence. Garden areas near the house were formal and designed to complement and reflect the structure's architectural form, becoming less formal and more pastoral and naturalistic at a distance from the house.[32] Symmes incorporated native and climate-appropriate plants into her gardens.

ANSON AND ANITA DAY BLAKE GARDEN
RINCON RD, KENSINGTON. WALTER BLISS, ARCHITECT, 1922

In 1922 Symmes had prepared a master plan for the Blake brothers and their two adjoining estates on land acquired from their mother. One property was owned by Anson S. Blake and Mabel's sister, Anita D. Blake; Edwin T. and Harriet W. Blake owned the adjoining property. Walter Bliss designed the Anson and Anita Blake home (built between 1922 and 1924). From the beginning, the house was intended to accommodate both Mabel and mother Anna. The plans for the two estates appear to have been Symmes' first commission; the success of the design led to several more commissions.[33]

The undated photo on this page shows a young garden. Today ivy and shrubs cloak the wide stucco wall with the arched opening at the end of the garden. The urn in the fountain was added a few years ago. Photo on this page is undated and is courtesy of the owner of the property. Photo on opposite page by Janet Gracyk, July 12, 2020.

The Blake Garden is Symmes' most extensive and best-known work. (Meghan Ray's article on the Blake Garden in *Eden*, Spring 2019, provides more information.) The landscape design was a sophisticated solution to a challenging site that contains sharp slopes, rock outcroppings, and streams.[34] The property's natural features were preserved and used to enhance the garden experience. Formal landscape elements were positioned nearest the house and responded to the architecture. Forced perspective techniques were employed as part of the backdrop to a classical reflecting pool. As one moved away from the house, the landscape became less formal. Symmes created several different garden areas of various scales and appearances over the then 22-acre property and connected the different gardens with a series of paths. Some areas were devoted to California native plants, and there were several generously-planted gardens. Roads and pathways took advantage of the property's topography and views.

In the *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, horticulturist Linda Haymaker noted that Symmes exercised authority over the Blake designs, creating a landscape that was scaled to the site. Construction details were carefully worked out. The Italian stonemasons on the project may have influenced the quality of the work, but Haymaker makes it clear that Symmes deserves recognition for her technical and design abilities.[35]

Mabel Symmes was an accomplished horticulturist and her sister, Anita, was passionate about collecting novel plants. The Blake estate was important both for its design as well as the pioneering use of, and experimentation with, a variety of plants.[36] At least one observer thought that it was Symmes' hand at work in balancing the aesthetic quality of the landscape with an extensive and ever-changing collection of plants.[37]

Symmes was described as an eager and patient teacher by those who worked with her at the Blake Estate but was restrained by her more dominant sister.[38] Walter Vodden was hired as the head gardener during the period when the Blakes deeded the property to UC Berkeley in the 1950s. The Blakes and Mabel were still living at the house (Anson Blake died in 1959). Vodden said that the elderly sisters would have vigorous arguments over the proper pruning of shrubs on the property. On rainy days, Symmes took the opportunity to teach Vodden about plants. When Anita learned of this activity, she became angry and jealous, stopping further lessons. Arbergast said she learned a lot about plants from Symmes, that Symmes was a frustrated teacher, but it was impossible to talk to Mabel if Anita was there.[39] The nurseryman Toichi Domoto described Symmes as being passive in the presence of her sister.[40] We'll likely never know if Symmes was typically submissive to her older sister in private, or whether Anita was always competitive and argumentative in their younger days.

Symmes became closely associated with the Anson and Anita Blake property, living at the house and working in the garden over the second half of her adult life. She maintained her own personal wealth and contributed monthly funds towards the upkeep of the property.[41] The Edwin and Harriet Blake garden was split from the Anson and Anita Blake garden late in Symmes' lifetime, and a fence paid for by Symmes, was installed between the properties, cutting off paths and views. The results of the division of the landscape were not satisfactory and caused the sister's consternation.

Today, the Blake Garden is open to the public and is used as a learning and teaching environment. A Symmes plan drawing of the landscape is in the possession of UC Berkeley.

EDWIN T. AND HARRIET WHITNEY CARSON BLAKE GARDEN RINCON RD, KENSINGTON. WALTER BLISS, ARCHITECT, 1922

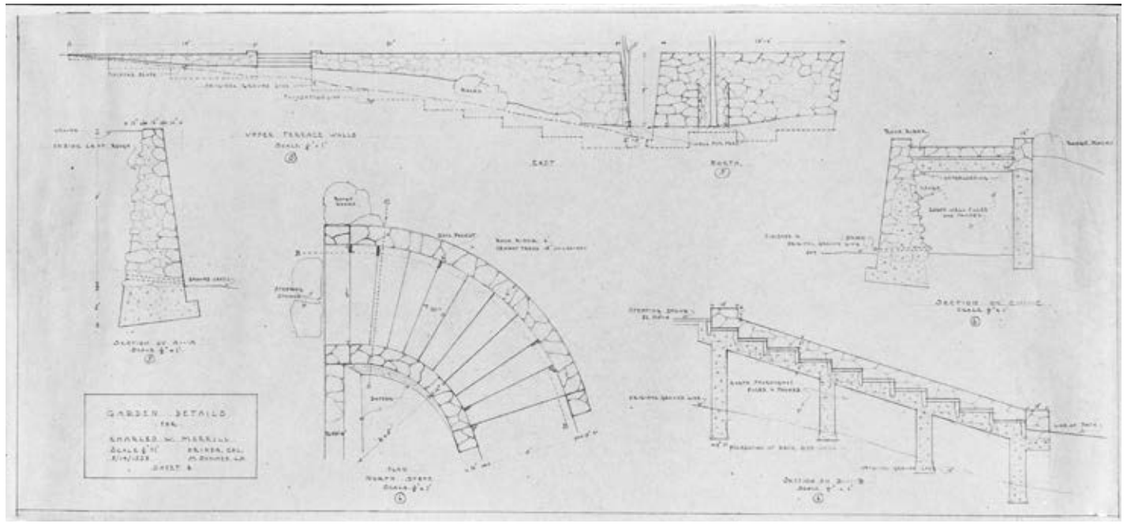
Originally designed in combination with the Anson and Anita Day Blake garden, the properties shared the entry road and a pathway system through the informal parts of the property, including a "Ceanothus Woods" and a walk along a creek. Symmes designed formal garden areas with axial arrangements in close proximity to the house. These were generously proportioned but slightly less extensive than those on the adjoining property. There is a reference to the Edwin and Harriet Blake garden having a very different feel from the Anson and Anita Blake garden. Edwin and Harriet's relatives described them as less formal than Anita and Anson, and the character of the planting design may also have been less formal.[42] (In 1923, a visit to this garden was part of the UC Berkeley curriculum of Katherine D. Jones' "Landscape Gardening" class.)[43]

The paired landscapes were severed after Edwin's death in 1949 (Harriet died in 1937) when the property was purchased as a gift for Carmelite nuns and was converted to a monastery. The two landscapes had been tightly fitted in places, and the division cut through one of the creeks and its associated landscapes as well as a large rose garden. Later accounts indicated that the rose garden had been shared by the two families.[44] In the 1950s, a lower portion of the property was sold.

Formal elements near the house appear to persist in views on Google Maps.

MARSH-SPERRY GARDENS HAWTHORNE TERRACE, BERKELEY. HENRY H. GUTTERSON, ARCHITECT, 1925

James Sperry, a wealthy man who developed the property as residences for his immediate and extended family, could have chosen any designer, and he chose Symmes. The architect, Henry H. Gutterson, was a highly regarded and prolific architect. Like the Blake Garden, the single parcel had two



Above: This simple elevation drawing for the Merrill garden (Orinda, 1938) shows the entry stairs and walls at the front of the house. These features are among the few that are extant. A note shows the location of the road to the garage meaning the drawing precedes revisions to driveway approach and the path to the front door. Merrill Garden Details, Sheet 4. Drawings courtesy the owner of the property.

Opposite: One of five sheets with construction details for the Merrill Garden, this one features stone and concrete construction. It is not known if there were additional, written, specifications. Garden Details, Sheet 6

homes, each with its own small private garden as well as a larger shared garden space. This Mabel Symmes design came to my attention in 2018. The current owner of one of the properties has a single-sheet blueprint of the original garden design plan, dated 1925. If there were any construction details or planting plans, they have been lost.

The adjoining Blake properties and the Marsh-Sperry property contained separate and shared garden areas for each of the families while maintaining a cohesive and interconnected design. The Marsh-Sperry landscape provided two private family gardens, with a shared garden space between them. The properties were subsequently split into two, cutting through the center of the shared garden. The central area has been the source of dispute between the two homeowners. The garden retains several characteristics and features, including the topographic changes and the general layout.[45] See the accompanying article on this garden.

THE HARRY UNNA GARDEN TAMALPAIS ROAD, BERKELEY. WALTER H. RATCLIFF, ARCHITECT, 1927

CGLHS member Marlea Graham first alerted me to the existence of a Symmes garden at this house via a small article she discovered in the April 1927 issue of *Architect and Engineer* magazine. The article reported on the development of the home for Harry Unna in a Spanish-California style, with a landscape by Miss Mabel Symmes, landscape architect of Berkeley.[46] The house was designed by Walter H. Ratcliff, another prolific architect with several well-known projects in Berkeley.[47] Ratcliff designed a long reflecting pool for this garden, as seen on the original blueprints; instead, it appears that the Symmes plans were realized.

Harry Unna owned a furniture and manufacturing business.[38] His wife, Carrie, died when their only child, Sarah, was quite young. Sarah graduated from the University of California in 1918. She went on to become a composer and concert pianist who often lived in New York. She remained single and lived in the Berkeley house when she was not in New York or abroad.[49] She lived at the house full time in her later years. She died in 1942.

While Sarah and Mabel may have known each other via a shared interest in music, a likelier connection would have been Harry's sister, Lillie, who graduated from the University of California with Mabel in 1896, a class of just fifteen students.[50]

The current owner of the property allowed me to visit the property in July of this year.[51]

The landscape has been changed significantly since the original design was installed 93 years ago. The current owners purchased the property around 30 years ago. The garden was in an unkempt state, and several features were already gone by that time.

Historic photos of the front yard have not been found, but the garden layout may be original. The space is long and narrow. Tall shrubs line the sidewalk behind a low concrete retaining wall. A wide concrete walk, lined with brick, leads straight to the front door, with the front garden just to the left of the walkway. Parallel to the house is a long gravel pathway lined on both sides with boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), interrupted by two circular gravel areas, each about ten feet in diameter. The first one is on axis with French doors on the front of the house and contains a niche, also of boxwood. (A second circular area has no corresponding architectural feature.) The homeowner says they have done little to this garden. A couple of carob trees (*Ceratonia siliqua*) are attempting to grow through the front yard abelia shrubs. Two such trees were cut down some years ago, and the homeowner reported that these had been old (but unhealthy) trees. These trees are likely remnants from the original garden.

In the backyard, a charming Spanish-style fountain with inset tiles was placed on axis with French doors, and it remains. The fountain is now set in a square composed of brick, and the brick patio and path is edged with a wide panel of lawn. Historic photos show the fountain had been surrounded by large, irregular stepping stones. The garden area around it, in fact, the entire back yard, was an exuberant collection of many plant varieties. In recent times, the landscape designer Keeyla Meadows added shapely urns to and around the fountain and placed an intimate arbor opposite the fountain.

The passage down a slope to a tucked-away back garden is a stairway made of salvaged concrete. This stairway appears in a historic photo and was associated with two arched arbors. The arbors were no longer on the property thirty years ago.

At one end of the garden, a wide stucco-faced wall with an arched opening still exists from the original house and garden. A simple seating area is located further along that wall and occupies the same spot as the original one, but now there is no simple overhead trellis. Plans for this garden have not been located, but these features are visible in a collection of old photographs of the garden and were likely designed by Symmes. At this end of the garden, an immense cedar remains from the original design.

This intensively planted garden featured a wide variety of plants that required significant upkeep. It was designed when Sarah was 26 years old. Sarah posed for a photo in the garden, with a happy smile on her face. It is impossible to know how much influence she or her father had over the design that resulted in this garden.

THE CHARLES W. MERRILL GARDEN CAMINO SOBRANTE, ORINDA. WALTER RATCLIFF, ARCHITECT, 1939

The Charles W. Merrill garden, in Orinda, is the latest known work by Symmes and dates to 1939. Symmes produced detailed drawings for this property. The house was also designed by Walter H. Ratcliff. Charles Merrill and Edwin Blake had been friends since college.[52]

The 2005 National Register nomination for the Merrill Garden includes the statement that "Ratcliff worked closely with landscape architect Mabel Symmes to fashion a setting that joined the residence with its rustic hillside setting. In this way, house and grounds were designed from the beginning to complement one another."[53] The current owners graciously shared blueprints for this garden. It was exciting to see the extensive drawings, as I am not aware of other plans by Symmes that show the same level of detail. The ten sheets of blueprints are not complete but are the most thorough known record of Symmes' abilities. There is a planting plan, but no key and some pages are numbered, but some numbered pages are missing.

The hilly and wooded property is narrow and roughly trapezoidal, covering a little more than three-quarters of an acre. The house is located near the street, with the rear landscape sloping away from the house. The Merrills purchased part of an adjacent lot late in the design process, bringing the property to 1.27 acres. The additional land accommodated a driveway and parking area, the rest of the property was planted as an orchard for which Symmes provided a plan. (In 1958, a section of land containing the orchard was sold.)

Simple rock-lined paths and stairs wound through oaks, giving access to the front entries. A pair of large metal and glass French doors at the back of the house opened onto a level terrace and lawn that featured a circular ornamental pond. Beyond the lawn, on axis with the wall of French doors, a path and stairway descended into the lower garden, passing through a flower garden.

East of the kitchen and cook's quarters was a service yard. Adjacent to it and opening from the dining room was a thyme-lined cutting garden, also laid out on axis with a doorway. Symmes maximized these adjoining garden spaces in a small area to maximum effect.

A series of paths connected garden areas with the orchard. The National Register nomination described the orchard:

By July 1939 Symmes had developed a similarly detailed proposal for the orchard that envisioned a grove of almost fifty trees, selected for the color of their flowers or the edibility of their fruit, surrounded by a hedge of olive trees.

The orchard was to include nine varieties of crabapple, seven of peach, six of apple, five of apricot, four of pear, three of cherry, and single varieties of persimmon and pineapple quince. Lilacs and coral trees were included for their color and fragrance.

The "Garden Plan" dated 6/7/1928 shows topographic manipulation around the house, indicating that Symmes could prepare grading plans. Other drawings detail stone tree wells and walls as well as more complex retaining walls that were a combination of concrete and stone. Symmes also detailed stone-faced stairs, abutted with stone walls.

Today only small portions of the original garden are extant - what remains are parts of the original topographical design and some stone steps and retaining walls.

OTHER SYMMES GARDENS

Little is known about other Symmes gardens:

•Harold Spens-Black Garden, Alvarado Road, Berkeley. The house was originally designed in 1909 (then the Boardman house) and later by Clarence A. Tantau in 1927.[54] This garden was visited by students of the California School of Gardening for Women at Hayward.[55] The property was featured on a home tour in 2013. Much of the garden has been changed. The entry and courtyards may contain original elements. The brick entry path, bordered by a low boxwood hedge, is consistent with the Mediterranean style of the house. There are two wall fountains. (Water features appeared in every Symmes design.) It is not known if the wall fountains were the work of Symmes, the architect, or later additions.

•Frances D. Olney Garden, Claremont Blvd, Berkeley.[56] 1928. Online photos for a real estate listing from a few years ago indicate that the original garden has been lost.

•An additional garden may have been designed for Mary McLean Olney (1873-1965) on Belrose Avenue, in Berkeley.[57] On Symmes' death, Olney sent a condolence letter to Mabel's sister, Anita Blake, writing, "I bless Mabel always, surrounded as I am by her beautiful work."[58] Nothing is currently known about this landscape.

CONCLUSION

At the age of 70, Symmes authored a six-part series of articles describing the Blake estate landscape and its plants for the *Journal of the California Horticultural Society.*[59] The series of articles, appearing from 1945 through 1947, was titled "Adelante" and revealed Symmes to be a lively and informed author, with a subtle sense of humor.

In addition to her design work, Symmes wrote articles and made presentations about plants from the 1920s through the 40s. She was involved in the Rose Society, the California Garden Club, and the California Horticultural Society.[60] She was a friend of James West of the UC Botanical Gardens, as well as of influential Berkeley professor Katherine D. Jones, among other botanists, horticulturists, and landscape professionals.

We are still discovering the full story of Mabel Symmes - her training, her influences, and the entire breadth of her work. She found her vocation later than most, meaning she had a short career, and she adhered to the mores of her time, working from her bedroom and not promoting her work. Until recently, because only one garden was known, she was dismissed as a hobbyist. The sophistication of her work suggests that the few known gardens are not her only examples. We now have enough information to understand her importance. First, she pursued a career that was quite uncommon in her place and time. Second, she was an assured and accomplished designer who was highly regarded within the circle of clients and friends who came to know this modest and elusive woman.

About the author:

Janet Gracyk is a recently retired landscape architect living in the Bay Area. She grew up in Ogden, Utah, and came to California in 1976, quickly falling in love with California's landscape and history. After receiving an undergraduate degree in art, she married and raised a son and inched her way into garden design. In 2001 Janet received a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of California, Berkeley. While at Cal, she became intrigued by cultural resources studies for landscapes and pursued that career, in addition to continuing to do residential design work. In the last ten years, she has authored reports and studies on several historic landscapes.

Janet prepared a report for Carolyn McNiven for a landscape on Hawthorne Terrace, in Berkeley, when a Symmes-designed garden was threatened. Only bits of information had emerged about Symmes, and much of that was due to the dedicated efforts of CGLHS member and dedicated sleuth Marlea Graham, who generously shared her research results. Seeing that Symmes had been underestimated, Janet determined to learn more about her, then to write this biography. She hopes the article will spur more revelations about Symmes' life and accomplishments.

End Notes

[1] The school was known simply as the University of California, there being only one campus at that time, in Berkeley.
[2] The papers of Anita and Anson Blake are in The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley. Anita received several letters of condolence on her sister's death.
[3] Haymaker, Linda A., *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987,* edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 356. The document suggests that Symmes' papers are at Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park but were not found in a 2019 visit.
[4] Riess, Suzanne B., ed. *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987,* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), p 280. The oral history is a good resource but is occasionally contradicted by other sources.
[5] University of California, Berkeley, Associated Students, *The Blue and Gold '96*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1896), 39.
[6] University of California, Berkeley, Associated Students, *The Blue and Gold '96*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1895), 84.
[7] Symmes' musical talents on the violin were on display in two 1913 events, both at Cloyne Court in Berkeley. One concert was in honor of the retiring consul of France. Symmes conducted a subsequent concert, as well as playing violin. (The diverse group of musicians included architect Ernest Coxhead on bells, and his older brother, Almeric, played the drum.) "Musicale at Cloyne Court," Berkeley Daily Gazette, Feb. 3, 1913, NewspaperArchive.com, accessed May 1, 2020.
[8] California Federation of Women's Clubs, *Club Women of California*, (n.p. 1907), 47.
[9] Symmes, Mabel, Mabel Symmes *Letter to Elsie Burr, July 9, 1896.* Record is at the California Historical Society.
[10] Blake, Anita D., *Anita Day Blake Letter to Anson Blake, May 14, 1914.* Record is at The Bancroft Library.
[11] Redlands, with its warm and dry climate, featured hotels and resorts for those suffering from tuberculosis.
[12] Symmes, Mabel, "The Mystery of Faith," *The Scrap Book*," v5 #1, (New York: Frank A. Munsey Co., 1908), 72-77. Google books; accessed Mar 1, 2020.
[13] "Harold S. Symmes," *The Pacific Unitarian*, Mar. 1910, 141.
[14] "Catalog of Copyright Entries: Books." Vol. 1, Issue 1, 1911. Google Books, accessed Mr. 28, 2020.
[15] "Womans [sic] Suffrage," *Pacific Medical Journal,* Vol LIV, No. 10, (San Francisco, 1911), 580-2, Google Books, accessed Apr. 3, 2020.
[16] Bancroft Library, *A Centennial Celebration: California Women and the Vote*, bancroft.berkeley.edu, accessed Apr. 28, 2020.
[17] Nickliss, Alexandra M., *Phoebe Apperson Hearst: A Life of Power and Politics,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 143.
[18] Riess, Suzanne, ed., *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987,* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 273.
[19] In 1875, Rosa L. Scrivner became the first female graduate, with a Ph.B. in agriculture. *Blue and Gold*, the school yearbook, is the only accessible record of students at that time and does not list students who did not finish degrees, making it challenging to understand who may have taken classes, and when.
[20] "U.S. Passport Application," Jan. 28, 1921. Ancestry.com, accessed 2018.
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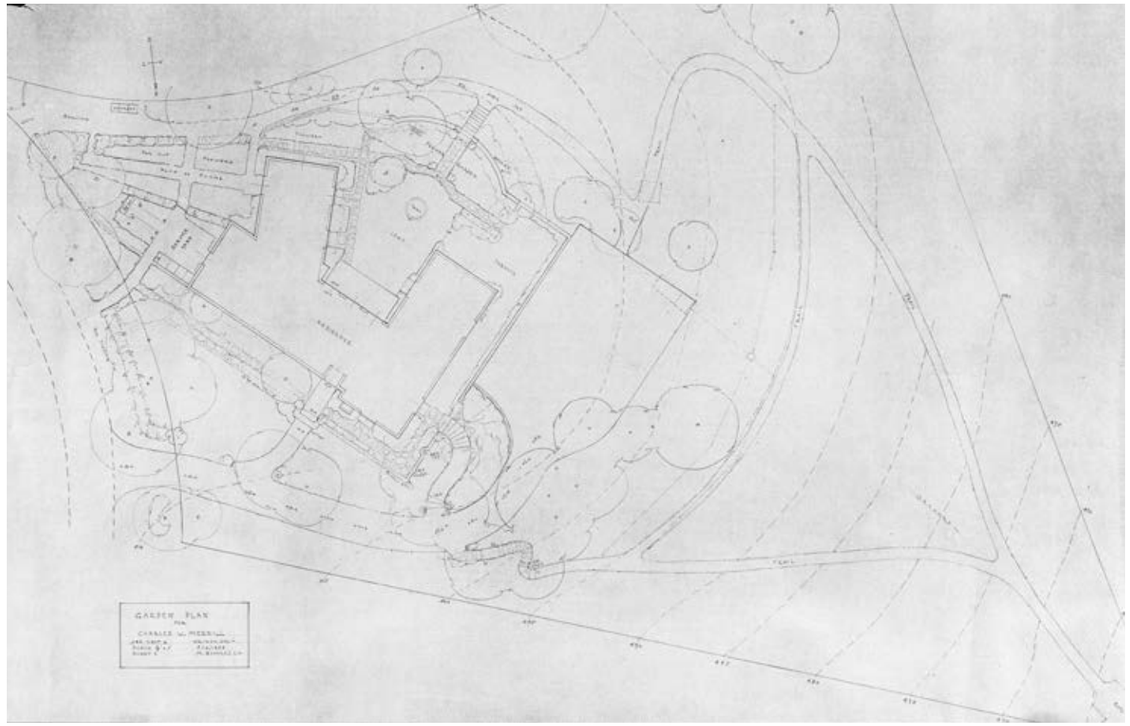
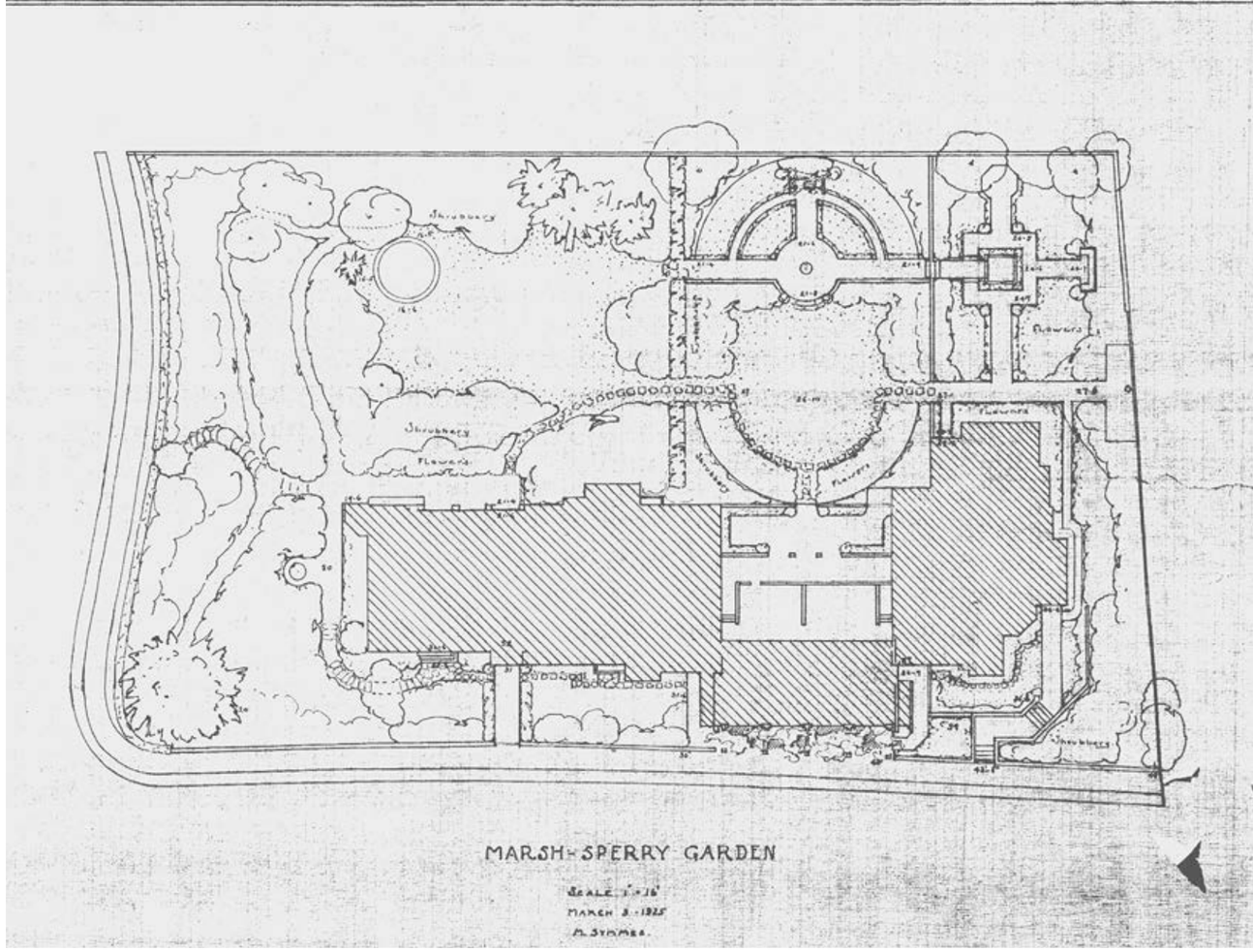
[22] Melvin, Edith, "A Business Woman's View of Suffrage, *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women: with an Introduction by Ernest Bernbaum, Ph.D.*, (Boston: Forum Publications of Boston, 1916), 38-42.
[23] The American Society of Landscape Architects settled on the use of "Landscape Architect" in 1899. Beatrix Farrand, among others, preferred the term "Landscape Gardener."
[24] See *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the early Twentieth Century,* by Thaïsa Way for more information on this subject. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).
[25] Zaitzevsky, Cynthia, *Long Island Landscapes and the Women who Designed Them.* (New York: Norton Architecture, 2009), 12-13.
[26] For additional information, see "Expanding 'Women's Work,' The California School of Gardening for Women Graduates of the California School of Gardening," by Marlea Graham, in *Eden*, Winter 2014.
[27] "Willa Cloys Carmack Collection Update," Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley. Accessed Mar. 14, 2020, http://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/blog/willa-cloys-carmack-collection-update.
[28] Arbegast, Mai, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 281.
[29] Way, Thaïsa. *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the early Twentieth Century.* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).
[30] Mabel's brother Whitman was a mining engineer and taught at the University of California. Anson Blake and his brother, Edwin, owned the San Pablo Quarry, near Pt. Richmond. Anson also managed a quarry in Oakland. Hamilton, Fletch, *Report XVII of the State Mineralogist: Mining in California During 1920*, (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1921), 63-4, Google Books, accessed Apr. 28, 2020.
[31] Scott, Geraldine Knight, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 309.
[32] These concepts are all consistent with The Italian Landscape Style, as described by Nancy Carol Carter in *Eden*, Spring 2020.
[33] As noted in "Blake Garden History: 1922 to 1970," Anita and Mabel collaborated on the three adjoining parcels on which the Blakes lived during the late 1890s, suggesting that Mabel had an opportunity to consider the problem of designing multiple adjoining gardens at an early age; these properties were razed in the 1920s.
[34] "Blake Garden Geology and Hydrology," UC Regents 2015, virtualcollections.ced.berkeley.edu, accessed Dec. 20, 2018.
[35] Haymaker, Linda A., *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 353-365.
[36] For more information on the Blake gardens, see two articles: Ray, Meghan, "Blake Garden History: 1922 to 1970," *Eden*, Spring 2019, 4-11; and Haymaker, Linda, "The Historical Validity of Blake Garden," *Pacific Horticulture* Spring 1987, 8-13.
[37] Arbegast, Mai, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 284.
[38] Vodden, Walter, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 234; 246-247.
[39] Arbegast, Mai, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 285.
[40] Domoto, Toichi, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 215.
[41] Symmes was also a businesswoman who managed her own stocks, regularly attending shareholder meetings. Thacher, George and Helen, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 66-67.
[42] Thacher, George Blake, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 62-68.
[43] Jones, Katherine D., *Landscape Gardening 113 B, Friday, April 16/26. Trip to Mrs. Ed. Blakes, Berkeley.* Records at The Bancroft Library.
[44] Thacher, George Blake, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 68.
[45] Among the more uncommon plants that persists is a small stand of soap bark trees (*Quillaja Saponaria*). Native to Chili, a soap bark tree in Geelong Botanic Garden, in Australia, is listed as being 145 years old.
[46] Architect and Engineer, June 1927, (San Francisco: The Architect and Engineer, Inc.), 108.
[47] A home designed by famed Berkeley architect Bernard Maybeck previously occupied the site. It burned to the ground in the ferocious Berkeley fire of 1923.
[48] Harry invented a washing machine he sold that was called the "Western Gem." *Oakland Tribune, May 7, 1957, 16. The current owner of the house is fascinated by this tidbit – maybe others would be, too? Or this may be deleted.*
[49] Sarah Unna was briefly trothed to a Rabbi Newman in 1921. The end of the engagement warranted a five-paragraph column in the San Francisco Examiner. *I used "trothed" since it was in some of the announcements.*
[50] *Annual Report of the Secretary to the Board of Regents of the University of California for the Year Ending June 30, 1896,* (Sacramento: Superintendent State Printing), 50, HathiTrust.org.
[51] He also gave permission to print historic photographs a descendant of the Unnas gave him.
[52] Wyeneth, Dr. Robert R., "National Register of Historic Places, Charles W. Merrill House, Contra Costa," 2005.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA), "Claremont Hills: Historic Homes Above the Claremont Hotel." Sept. 2013, berkeleyheritage.com/gallery/claremont_hills_tour2013.houses.html, accessed Apr. 3, 2020.
[55] Smith, Laura Mercado, "The California School of Gardening for Women: A History," *California Horticultural Journal,* Oct. 1970, 132-4.
[56] Blake, Igor, *Blake Estate Oral History Project: Oral History Transcript, 1986-1987*, edited by Suzanne Riess, (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 12.
[57] The house was built in 1919 and designed by J. Martin Haenke. Mary Olney was living in the house by 1922, according to the *Who's Who Among the Women of California,* (San Francisco: Security Publishing Company, 1922), 249, Google Books, accessed May 1, 2020.
[58] Olney, Mary McLean, *Mary McLean Olney letter to Anita Blake*, Feb. 5, 1962. Record at The Bancroft Library.
[59] The journal's name evolved to *Pacific Horticulture*.
[60] Early records for the California Horticultural Society are in the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture at the San Francisco Botanical Garden. The organization was founded in 1932. Members were not listed in available documents until 1940. Both Mabel Symmes and her sister, Anita Blake, are listed.



For the Merrill project, Symmes used the configuration of the home and the topography to create several garden areas. Dated 5/16/1938, this plan shows an informal approach to the house through existing oaks. The backyard garden is on axis with a pair of French doors and featured a progression across a lawn, through a flower garden, then on to a path winding through the lower property. Left of the house is the thyme-bordered flower garden with a service yard tucked closer to the road. The Symmes-designed orchard was located to the west of the parking area. (Symmes made slight revisions to the entry paths and drive a short time later.)

SAVING A Mabel Symmes Garden IN BERKELEY

CAROLYN FITZHUGH MCNIVEN



Mabel Symmes' landscape plan, dated March 3, 1925, for 1450 and 1440 Hawthorne Terrace, created for James Sperry. McNiven Family Collection.

For the last sixty years, my family has had the pleasure of enjoying a garden designed by Mabel Symmes in Berkeley. Symmes' unique way of combining formal landscapes modeled on Italianate designs with more wild California nature-scapes is apparent in the Berkeley garden that she designed for our house's prior owners. We, together with our longtime neighbors Donald and Sylvia McLaughlin, have shared a magical wisteria-covered patio and central lawn area with sweeping views of the San Francisco Bay for many years. Indeed, it is said that the view from this garden of the Bay being filled in inspired Sylvia McLaughlin to establish "Save the Bay" with two of her dear friends. This article describes the design of the garden and our efforts to preserve it in the face of recent development efforts.

THE GARDEN COMES INTO BEING

On September 17, 1923, fire tore through the Berkeley Hills to the north of the University of California campus. This primarily residential area consisted mostly of wood-frame houses covered in wood shakes set amongst the typical California coastal forests and meadows. As may be expected, the houses were hardly fireproof. Once the fires were put out, almost nothing but the chimneys and a few hardy redwoods remained in the area.

Elinor Carlisle, a staunch suffragist and Berkeley's first elected female school board member, owned a house and cottage at the corner of Hawthorne Terrace and Vine Lane. After the fire, all that was left was the original Berkeley rhyolite stone perimeter wall facing Vine and groves of redwoods. The now-empty lot featured a gently downward sloping hill with a magnificent view of San Francisco Bay. Carlisle, who had lost a priceless collection of Oriental artifacts in the fire in addition to her house, sold her Berkeley property and decamped to San Francisco.

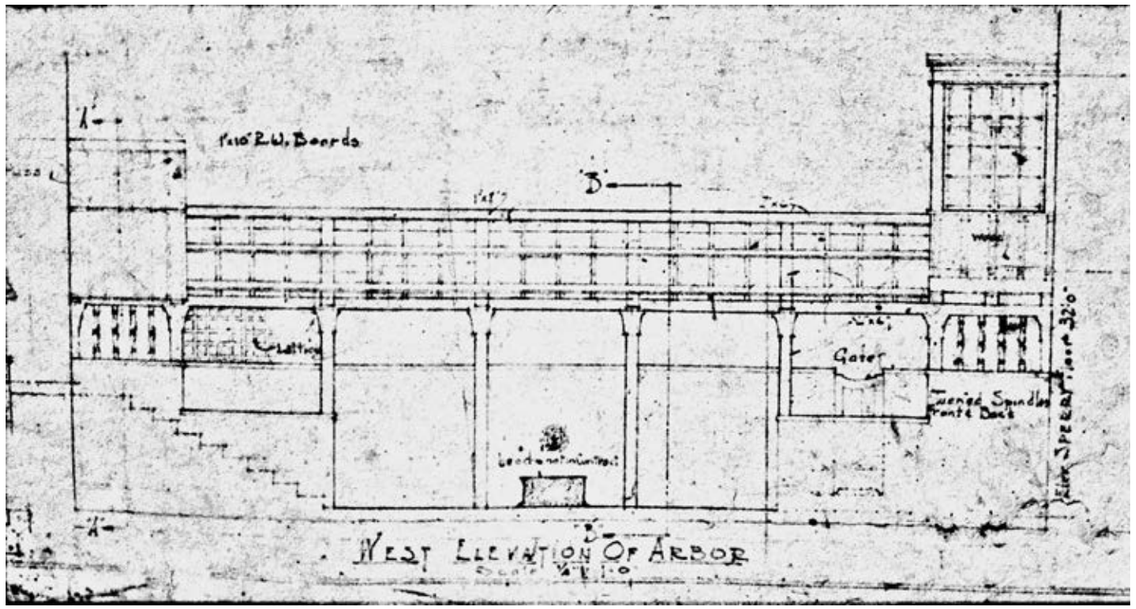
The property was quickly snapped up by James C. Sperry, a Magnavox executive, who, with his family, was displaced when the University announced its plans to raze houses in Berkeley's Strawberry Creek area to make way for a new stadium. Sperry's roots in California were deep. He was born and raised amongst the "Big Trees" (Sequoiadendron giganteum) in Calaveras County, where his father owned acres of land and operated the renowned Sperry and Perry Hotel in Murphys. Sperry moved to Berkeley to attend University and never left. He had a large extended family and planned to construct a family compound where he could live with his wife and children in one house and dedicate the other for his widowed sister, Marion Marsh, and other relatives.

Sperry hired well-known Berkeley architect Henry H. Gutterson to design the family compound. As conceived by Sperry and drawn by Gutterson, the design featured two fraternal twin houses with a shared arbor-covered patio with a fountain and a garden between the two houses that could accommodate large family get-togethers. The materials were fire-resistant tile and stucco—a departure from the then typical Berkeley shingle-style house. Sperry's plans to build the compound were reported in the local newspaper as evidence of large-scale residential rebuilding efforts after the devastating fire.

Sperry hired local landscape architect (and fellow U.C. alum) Mabel Symmes to design the compound's shared gardens. Sperry likely met Symmes through her sister and brother-in-law, Anita and Anson Blake, who had lived near Sperry and his family in the Strawberry Creek area. The Blakes, incidentally, were also displaced by the stadium, and ultimately moved to Kensington to build the fabled Blake Estate, for which Symmes also designed the gardens.

Gutterson, a protégé of Berkeley architect Bernard Maybeck, was particularly well-suited to the task. A graduate of Berkeley High School and U.C. Berkeley, Gutterson had studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Upon returning to the San Francisco Bay Area, he was associated with several City Beautiful Movement projects, among them St. Francis Woods in San Francisco. He became known for skillfully integrating his houses into their natural surroundings, for carefully placing windows to maximize views, and for integrating hardscaping to create easy indoor-outdoor access.

Gutterson applied these skills in his design for the Sperry houses. He sited the two houses



Gutterson's plan for the arbor for the shared central garden between the 1440 and 1450 Hawthorne Terrace Houses features a fountain and pergola that the dining rooms of both houses access via French doors. H.H. Gutterson Plans for 1440 Hawthorne Terrace, McNiven Family Collection.

along a north-south axis, parallel to the Bay, and "uphill" on the property so that their primary rooms faced the magnificent bay view. He carefully preserved the existing redwood groves along the southern edge of the property. This was no doubt at the insistence of Sperry, who not only grew up amongst redwoods but also became an essential member of the fledgling Save the Redwoods League. Sperry is also credited with saving the famous Bull Creek-Dyerville old-growth groves in what became Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

Both houses feature large French doors and windows that open onto a shared concrete patio. This rectangular patio is enclosed on its north and south sides by the walls of the Marsh and Sperry houses, respectively. Its eastern side is enclosed by a stucco retaining wall, which features a fountain designed by Gutterson as its focal point. The "spout" of the fountain is a Chinese roof tile in the shape of a fish (likely a carp). A large wooden pergola extends over this shared space, covered by the original (now over 90-year-old) wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*), reminiscent of the wisteria that so famously covers the Maybeck-designed First Unitarian Church in Berkeley (for which Gutterson contributed some design work). Gutterson concealed the utilitarian laundry yards to the east behind a wooden lattice atop the stucco wall. In this way, the shared center area is entirely private, and the eye is directed west towards the San Francisco Bay. The shared patio extends westward beyond the pergola toward the Bay, so that while sitting on the patio, it is possible to see the Bay beyond the gently sloping shared central garden area. Two steps lead down from the patio to a lawn which is bordered by an aromatic myrtle hedge (*Myrtus communis* 'Compacta'). By delineating the patio with hardscaping and hedging, Gutterson created an outdoor dining "room."

The garage structure for both houses fronts the street (Hawthorne Terrace) and sits directly behind the shared garden and laundry areas, separating them from public view. Running as it does along the eastern-most edge of the property, the garage structure could have seemed massive. To visually diminish its size, Gutterson designed a front arbor covered by a trumpet vine (*Distictis buccinatoria*, syn. *Bignonia cherere*, or *Phaedranthus buccinatoria*) and planted areas in each driveway, to add greenery. Thus, Gutterson beautified even the most utilitarian structures with landscape.

SYMMES' LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Although Gutterson's plans for the Sperry houses included a proposed landscape scheme, only the hardscape features were constructed. Instead, Sperry hired Mabel Symmes to create a detailed landscape plan, which the two houses would share. Symmes' design solution addressed the difficulties of the sloping parcel, while also accounting for the individual needs of each family. Her elegant plan created three unique, distinct garden spaces, which worked together to form a cohesive whole. Each family would have a private space behind their house for interaction with the landscape. The key features of each semi-private area would be visible down common paths connecting the three areas – north, center, and south. These view corridors served to link the distinct sections, which were bordered by low rhyolite walls. The most crucial feature of Symmes's tripartite plan is the center area, a beautifully designed formal garden and a shared space with a "four-way-crossing" that connected the two more private gardens to the north and south.

The house located at the highest point on the slope at the North-Eastern portion of the lot was occupied by James Sperry's widowed sister Marion Marsh and, eventually, other family members. Large bay windows along the house's Western façade looked directly towards the Bay and down into the rear yard a level below the home's first floor. The house's vantage point above this area of the landscape made it the perfect place for a formal garden, which is what Symmes created. The formal garden that she designed is organized around a central focal point, a square within a square. From this central point, pathways defined geometric beds of flowering color, enclosed by clipped boxwood hedges. Viewed from the house one level above, the rectilinear arrangement below had great charm.

All contemporary photography courtesy Carolyn McNiven, unless otherwise noted.

Below: A view of the shared patio and wisteria arbor from above.

Bottom right: Gutterson's fountain as it was built features a Chinese roof tile as a spout.

Left: The sunken parterre garden from above looking west.

Bottom left: The central shared yard looking east from the sunken parterre area.

Above: The view of San Francisco Bay from the central shared garden (which inspired Sylvia McLaughlin to establish Save The Bay with her friends).

Below: Central lawn seen from above, with remnants of formal garden.

retaining walls along the southwest and west edge, Symmes was able to achieve a flat plane within the north-sector upon which to place her formal design. A path from the area's square-within-a-square focal point ran to the south, creating a visual corridor from the formal north garden into the adjacent central area and beyond it the southern section. This shared central area best exemplifies the formal Italianate aspect. A second path along the "top" of the northern area also served to link the Marsh garden to the central shared area.

It was this shared central area that best exemplifies the melding of Gutterson and Symmes' designs. Gutterson, as noted above, had designed the key hardscape features: a patio partially covered by an arbor with a fountain, all facing the Bay. To the west of the wisteria-covered shared patio, Symmes designed a shared garden with upper and lower levels. Essentially a large rectangle, this formal, axially symmetric garden featured an inset oval form. Closest to the patio, stone steps lead to a large U-shaped panel of turf, enclosed by holly (Ilex sp.) hedges matching the hedges that demarcate the north and south areas), with symmetrical planting beds for flowering color. Adjacent to the lawn, and completing the oval was another formal space, a sunken parterre garden, enclosed by rhyolite retaining walls. From this annular space, three pathways defined boxwood-lined planting beds (Buxus sempervirens), filled with roses. The roses were planted in quarter circles radiating out from the central circle.

Gutterson designed a Japanese tea house to act as the focal point of this shared area along its western edge; however, it was either never built or had been demolished before the 1950s when the Sperry family sold both properties. Nevertheless, a focal point structure of some kind has always been present. Since the 1960s, that focal point has been a simple wisteria arbor over a bench.

From the central circular feature of the sunken parterre garden, two paths linked the central shared area with the more formal Marsh private garden to the north and the landscaping of the Sperry house towards the south. Thus, from the shared central yard, it was possible not only to view the Bay to the west, but also the gardens to the north and south. When viewed from the shared patio, the sunken parterre garden, in particular, serves to draw the eye westward towards the magnificent view of the Golden Gate, which, according to Sperry family legend, Mrs. Marsh claimed was spoiled when that "awful orange bridge was built."

The southern sector of the site plan was the private garden behind and west of the James Sperry residence. The western elevation of the Sperry house featured a large bay window overlooking an informal open lawn surrounded by irregular mass plantings of shrubbery. Symmes, who was fond of water features, placed a round pond surrounded by rhyolite rocks at the southernmost edge of this lawn. The pond was filled for years with water lilies and, when the raccoons did not get them, turtles and frogs. Agapanthus (*Agapanthus africanus*, syn. *A. umbellatus*), a favorite plant at the time, was planted along the lawn's western edge. Along the southern slope of the parcel, which had a rhyolite retaining wall, Symmes preserved an existing grove of redwood trees, underplanting them with a woodland wilderness and rock paths, reminiscent of the so-called Redwood Canyon area of the Blake Gardens. The gate and stairs to the old Carlisle house remain, a poignant reminder of what was lost in the famous Berkeley Fire.

As noted, a low stone wall separated this semi-private space from the center garden. Symmes added a holly hedge along the demarcation wall running east-west between the properties for an added level of separation and definition. A specimen cedar (*Cedrus deodara*, now sadly removed due to disease and decay) was planted to the north, while Brazilian soap bark trees (*Quillanja saponaria*) defined the western edge.

Symmes handled the slope in this north garden area by effectively flattening it. Using

Above left: View of rear (western) elevation of 1450 Hawthorne Terrace before recent demolition and construction.

Below left: The central shared yard looking west towards the Bay.

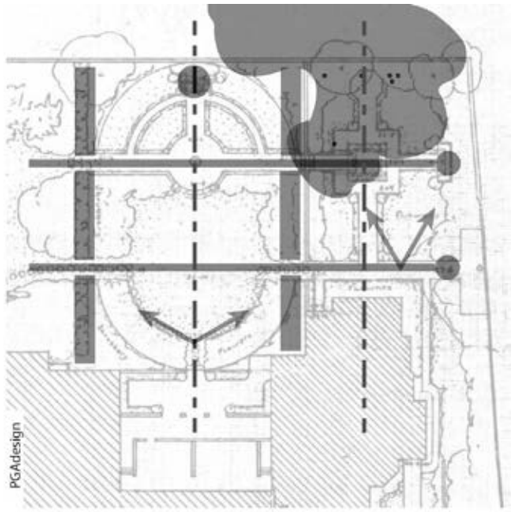
Right: The original path in the Wilderness Area designed by Symmes for 1450 Hawthorne Terrace. Photo, Berkeley Architectural Historical Association (BAHA).

EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THE GARDEN

The second owners of the Sperry House were Donald and Sylvia McLaughlin. Donald McLaughlin, a Berkeley native, returned to Berkeley after graduating from Harvard. A mining engineer involved in a variety of mining ventures, McLaughlin was the youngest Dean of Mining at U.C. Berkeley and eventually became a prominent chair of the U.C. Board of Regents, helping to establish both U.C. Santa Cruz and U.C. Irvine.

A protegé of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, McLaughlin was an avid outdoorsman who had explored much of South America and California on horseback in his younger years. Possessed of a keen appreciation for California's unique qualities, he served on the board of the Save the Redwoods League, as had Sperry before him. Thus, it was hardly surprising that he preserved both the redwoods on his property and the overall Symmes design.

Sylvia McLaughlin is possibly even more well-known than her husband. It was she who, together with her friends Kay Kerr and Esther Gulick, founded "Save the Bay," thereby helping to initiate the nascent environmental movement in the United States. Sylvia McLaughlin was a vocal advocate for the preservation and rehabilitation of California's



SITE ANALYSIS

0 20 40 60 80 FEET

natural environment and historic structures and landscapes. She was a board member of many environmental and preservation organizations over the years, including Save the Redwoods League, the Audubon Society, the Trust for Public Lands, and Citizens for Eastshore State Parks, as well as Save the Bay. Well into her 90's, Sylvia McLaughlin and other Berkeley environmentalists staged a tree sit-in in a grove of old-growth oaks adjacent to the University's stadium that were slated for removal. Ironically, it was the construction of this very stadium that had displaced Sperry and his family and caused him to create the family compound in North Berkeley.

Given Sylvia McLaughlin's love of nature, she took great delight in the Symmes-designed garden and, together with her neighbors, Hugh and Marion McNiven (who had purchased Marsh house in 1959), worked to preserve the garden's unique features. The shared yard area was used regularly by both families, including for weddings and other receptions. The families maintained the key elements of the shared landscape and added new plantings in keeping with the original design. For example, after the original pond behind the McLaughlin-Sperry House had sprung a leak that was difficult to cure, Sylvia McLaughlin directed that it be filled in with dirt and planted with compatible flowering shrubs rather than destroy it. She kept the original *agapanthus* surrounding the western edge of the pond and ensured the pond's rhyolite walls remained.

Both Sylvia McLaughlin and Marion McNiven gardened regularly. Marion McNiven, who graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in architecture, was there virtually every day, weeding, watering and attending to gardening chores. Sylvia McLaughlin loved tending to her roses. As they aged, Sylvia and Marion made provisions to preserve the unique shared central yard area with its 90-year-old wisteria arbor. In 2015 they executed a Declaration of Restrictive Covenants aimed at preserving the extant character-defining features of Symmes' and Gutterson's designs for the shared gardens. Individual distinctive features such as the wisteria were called out specifically for preservation.

Since Sylvia McLaughlin's death in 2016 and the subsequent sale of the McLaughlin-Sperry House, the status of the preservation of the Symmes-designed garden has been uncertain. The new owners obtained permits in 2018 to demolish features of the shared garden and to construct a sizable exterior terrace partially within it. They also announced their desire to remove the arbor and wisteria and build a wall or fence along the property line, both of which are prohibited by the Restrictive Covenants, which they sought to nullify in a court proceeding. In public hearings, their legal representative raised the possibility that they would subdivide their large lot.

When these plans to destroy the Symmes garden and alter Gutterson's plan for the property were exposed, the reaction was swift. The chair of Berkeley's Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) initiated an action to declare the McLaughlin-Sperry property a landmark pursuant to the City's landmarks ordinance. Neighbors, joined by over 60 Berkeley residents and over 200 non-Berkeley residents, signed a petition to preserve the house and landscape. Marion McNiven voluntarily submitted her property (Marsh House and Gardens) for landmarking as well. The public hearings were numerous and lengthy. Unfortunately, Symmes' contribution to the original design was rejected for landmarking due to the current owners' insistence that she was only a minor figure. They, together with their paid consultant, asserted that because there was no proof that Symmes had ever been paid for her work designing the garden, she did not qualify as a landscape professional (although, of course, no similar evidence was required for Gutterson, a male). This line of argument, while ostensibly rejected by individual Commission members, was effectively adopted by the Commission when it excluded mention of Symmes in the statement supporting landmark designation. This dismissal of a female landscape architect's significance is reminiscent of the early scholarship that dismissed another pioneering female landscape architect, Beatrix Ferrand, on the grounds that she was an unpaid amateur.

Because the building permit had been issued on the same day as the initiation of the landmarking, the owners' position was that their permitted work could proceed. However, an Alameda Superior Court judge entered a preliminary injunction halting their plans to destroy the central yard area on the basis that to do so was inconsistent with the Declaration of Restrictive Covenants, which they admittedly knew about before purchasing the house.

The lengthy and expensive efforts to preserve the entirety of Symmes' garden are on-going, and the legal wrangling is not yet over. However, key features of the garden have been landmarked, which should effectively preclude the planned subdivision of the McLaughlin-Sperry property. The McNivens remain committed to preserving and restoring the Symmes design on their property.

The struggle to preserve the Symmes garden is a sobering reminder of the danger modern development poses to the preservation of important historic landscapes as well as the urgent need to acknowledge and honor the work of early female landscape practitioners. E

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Carolyn Fitzhugh McNiven is an attorney in San Francisco and lives with her mother Marion (86) and her family in the home she grew up in on Hawthorne Terrace in Berkeley. She and her mother love to garden and are in the process of restoring their garden so that it reflects more closely Symmes' original design.

End Notes

[1] *California Women and Politics: From the Gold Rush to the Great Depression*, Cherny, R. ed, University of Nebraska Press, 2011, at 187; https://www.newspapers.com/clip/15319213/mrs-eleanor-carlisle-runs-for-school/; https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1008342608

[2] "Former Berkeley Woman Passes Away," *Berkeley Daily Gazette* (Berkeley, CA), Friday, November 25, 1932.

[3] A more developed history, with citations, regarding Gutterson is supplied in the application materials submitted to the City of Berkeley, referenced in note 9.

[4] "Redwoods Perpetuate Memory of Noted Californian," *Oakland Tribune*, August 25, 1924; "Move to Save California's Redwoods Making Progress that Cheers League," *San Francisco Examiner*, January 31, 1926. For more about the park and its establishment, see https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=425 and https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8g73kcc/entire_text/

[5] Symmes strongly favored climbing vines of all kinds and wrote about them. See, e.g., Symmes, M., "Rare Plants and Trees in Berkeley Gardens," *Berkeley Gazette*, June 30, 1931; Perkins, M., "Back to School for the Home Gardener," *The San Francisco Examiner,* Sept. 26, 1965.

[6] 'Four-way crossing' gardens grew out of Near Eastern and Medieval European traditions and often are found in monastic cloister-gardens. This garden form also was incorporated within later European Renaissance gardens.

[7] Gutterson had originally conceived of a low lotus pond within that circular space, however, Symmes did not adopt that feature, choosing instead to place a pond in the south garden area.

[8] https://baha-news.blogspot.com/2007/; see also https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/photos/2008/05/heroes_slideshow200805

[9] Activist Sylvia McLaughlin Cares for Berkeley," *Cal. Neighbors*, https://www.berkeley.edu/news/berkeleyan/1998/0923/neighbors/sm.html

[10] https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Planning_and_Development/Level_3_-_LPC/2018-08-02_LPC%20MEMO_Hawthorne%20Terrace%20Initiation%20Background.pdf

Opposite left: Site Lines of Symmes' Plan from the North Garden. Graphic, PGA Design.

Opposite right: Sylvia McLaughlin (left) and Marion McNiven at a party in the shared central yard, 1993. Photo, McNiven Family Collection.

Above: Sylvia in her garden at 1450 Hawthorne Terrace. Photo, Jane Scherr.

Legacy of a Thomas Church Garden

HARLEY JESSUP

Above: "It's worth any amount of effort to be able to see your house through the arch of a tree..." Thomas Church wrote in *Gardens are for People* (1955), and that is certainly true of our simple mid-century ranch house framed by both white and live oaks.

Opposite: The egg-crate frame fence with a few panels left open adds both a sense of connection and privacy to the entry courtyard. The path around the circular planter has served as a tricycle highway for generations of children.

Our home garden, designed by Thomas Church in 1956, continues to be a living source of joy. Sheltering in place during this unbelievable spring, I've found comfort and hope while photographing our garden before work every morning. I'm astounded to see the changes that occur daily, observing the garden in all kinds of light and weather, now with a focus and appreciation I've never experienced before.

I'm a production designer at Pixar Animation Studios and, in 1992, my wife Ann and I chose our house in Kentfield because of the Thomas Church garden. Back then, the modest garden on a sloping lot looked a little forlorn, but still sculpturally beautiful with a wonderful layout and towering oaks creating the illusion that we were living in a tree house. It is a garden designed for a family with children, and our kids immediately discovered features like the circular planter in the courtyard that Church often included as an infinite path for tricycles to circumnavigate.

The first phase of restoration started 28 years ago with the expert construction work of Roger Fiske Landscaping and then more recently Bertotti Landscaping. In all we've replaced the deck, benches, and other wooden structures (the garden stairways twice), restored the exposed aggregate terraces and planted trees, all carefully following the original design.

From the beginning, we've tried to learn all we could about Thomas Church's work, and I treasure our first edition of *Gardens Are For People* that has become the guide for us. In his book Church clearly analyzes why a place is naturally attractive to people. He pays attention to the pattern of dappled light on pavement, the easy transition from garden to house, the proportions of a graceful stairway and the position of the garden in relation to the sun - all keys to creating a garden that is inviting to people. Church's thoughtful ideas about environments have helped me in my work at Pixar, where I strive to design appealing worlds for the screen. *Gardens Are For People* sums up Church's approach to landscape architecture, illustrated with photographs from over a hundred classic gardens representing a golden age of residential landscape architecture in California.

Above: The deck, designed for entertaining is completed when the guests arrive. A bench follows the diagonal layout of the deck that overlooks the hillside garden.

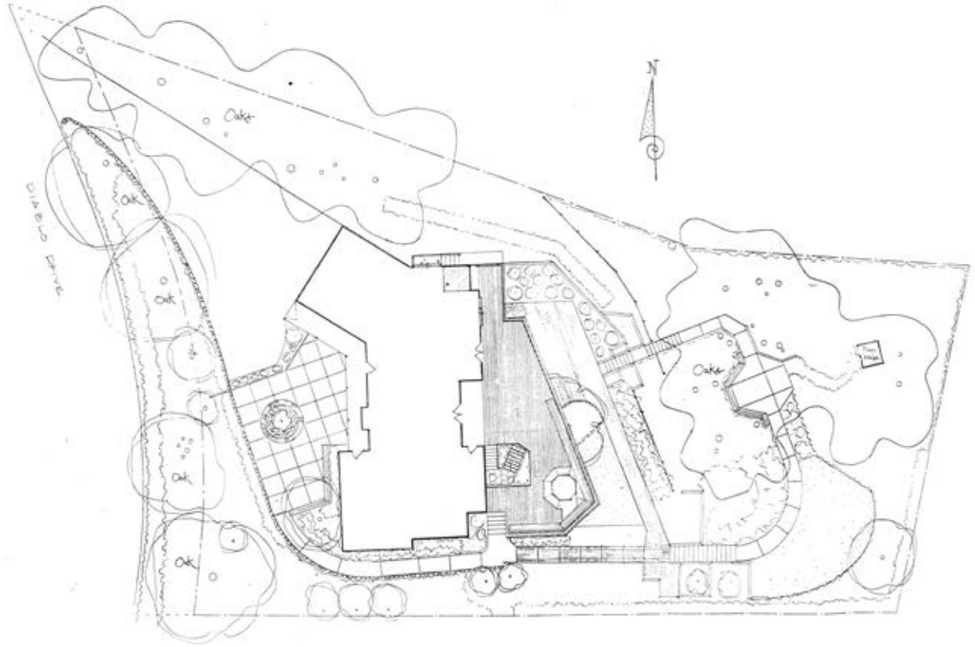
Right: The diagonal grid of exposed aggregate paving in the front courtyard corresponds with the angled deck in back. The newly planted Akebono Yoshino Cherry tree replaces one that blossomed here for 60 years.

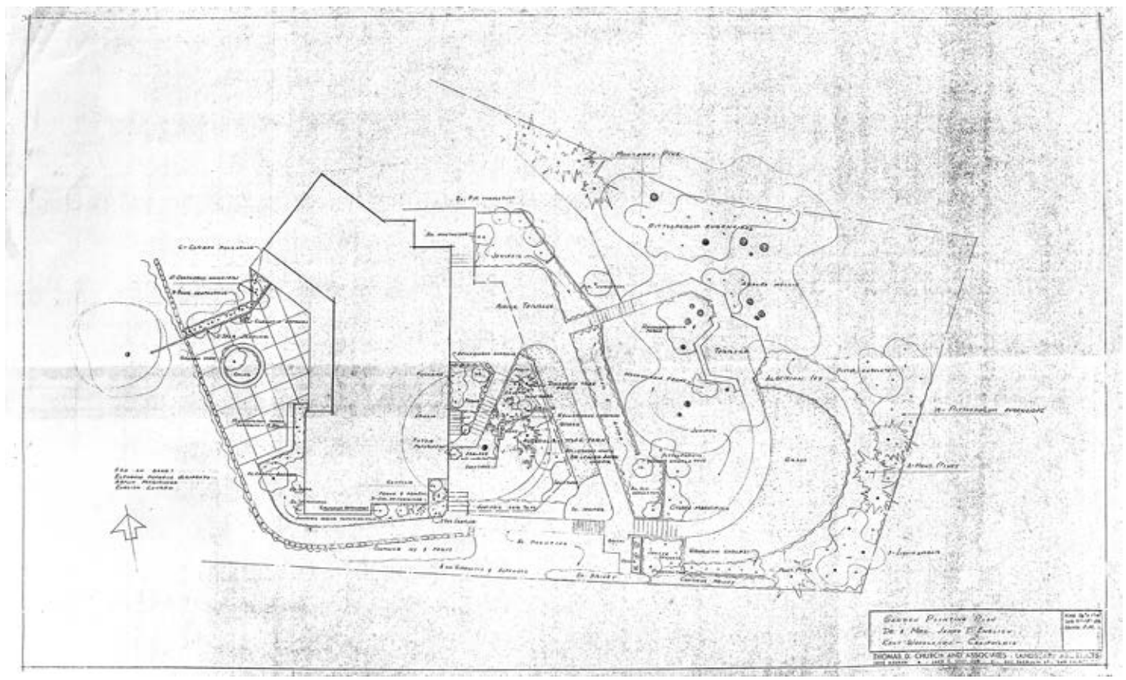
Opposite, top: This is the plan of our garden as it existed in 1994. After measuring the garden with the help of my six-year-old daughter Alice, I worked on the plan for several months. Drawing the garden was my first step in appreciating the layout and details designed by Thomas Church in 1956.

Opposite, bottom: The original 1956 plans were the key to the garden restoration. I saw June Meehan Campbell's initials on these plans and that was the beginning of a wonderful friendship.

"What famous landscape architect are you bothering today, dear?" my wife would ask each weekend. In my research on Church's work and influence, I talked with Robert Royston, Lawrence Halprin and Garrett Ekbo, all of whom had worked with Church early in their careers. I was touched by how each of these great designers encouraged and supported us in our effort to bring our small garden back to life. To start, they all said that finding the original plans was essential. But we didn't have them.

Ekbo pointed out that while I might never become an expert on all gardens, I could learn to be an expert on this garden. He suggested that I take the county survey map and draw a plan of my own. With my six-year-old daughter Alice holding the end of the tape measure, we measured the garden and I drew a plan of the garden as it existed in 1994. That was the

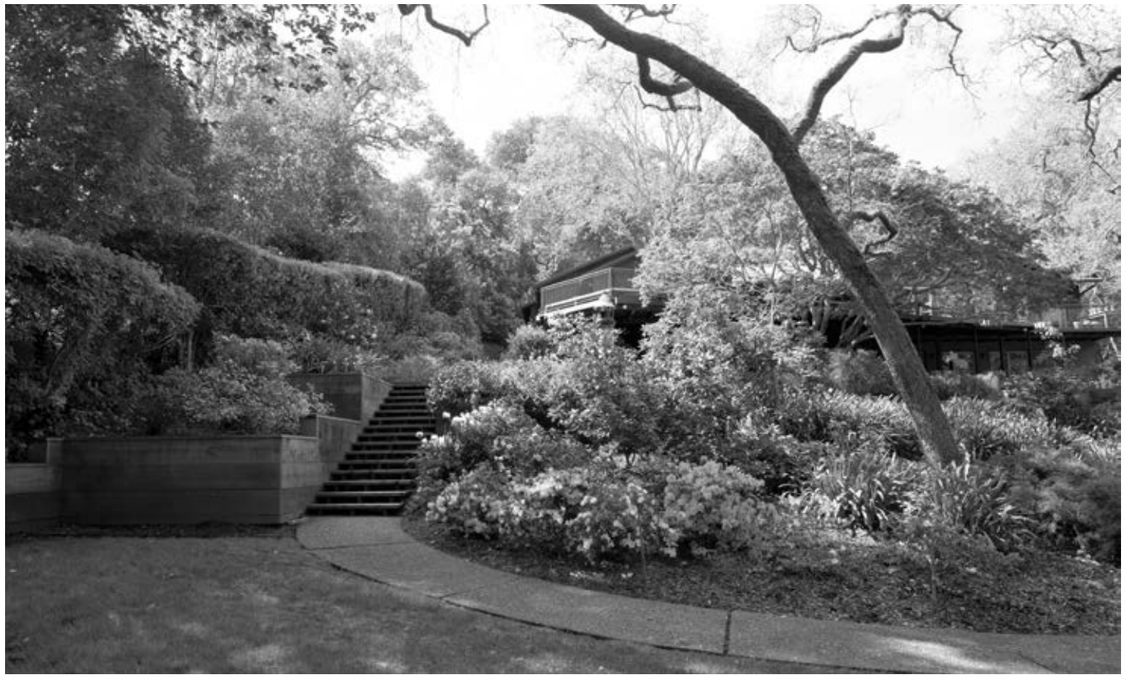




Above: June Meehan Campbell and her friend Dr. Jane Meade when they visited our garden on August 5th, 1995.

Middle: June Meehan Campbell's kind inscription on our copy of Gardens are for People and her initials on the plans she drew in 1956.

Below: Looking up from the lower garden, the steps and retaining walls add geometric contrast to soft landscape. Azaleas and agapanthus replace the original juniper. The Japanese maple puts on a brilliant red display in both the spring and the fall.



first step towards understanding the concept behind the design of our garden, for it clearly showed the diagonal grid of the paving in the front courtyard corresponds to the angle of the deck in back.

Responding to my polite but persistent requests, the family of the original owners finally sent the Thomas Church plans - sheets of beautifully drawn studies, planting plans, and detailed construction drawings. Opening that package was a revelation; when I overlaid the plan I had drawn, it was breathtaking to immediately understand how the original garden had evolved - what was intended by Church and what was not. The fiberglass '70s hot tub had to go; an oak tree that originally grew up through the deck stairwell was missing, and a Japanese maple had far outgrown its place on the middle terrace (it stayed). The nature of the garden had changed from a sunny hillside landscape, to a shady garden distinguished by the patterns of light cast through mature trees. That was an alteration we could embrace.

The original plans were initialled "J.M." and June Meehan's name was listed with Jack Stafford's in the title block. At first I couldn't locate June, but Jack Stafford was still practicing in 1994. He was very helpful and slightly amused, suggesting that we talk with June, now retired and living in Oakmont near Santa Rosa. I called June and asked if I could send her copies of the plans she had drawn 39 years earlier. Intrigued by the plans, June agreed to come to lunch with her friend Jane and see the garden. This led to a 14-year friendship that lasted until her death in 2009. At that first meeting, June admitted that she couldn't remember our garden, but she definitely recalled working on several projects here in Kent Woodlands.

As we toured the garden, she offered thoughtful suggestions and told great stories about her days working in the Church office. June spoke fondly of Church's tradition of having morning coffee at 10:00 with visiting architects and artists. She told how she and Lawrence Halprin shared the same birthday, and she would call him every year on that day. She talked about how Church helped her plan her first trip to Europe, and how he readily agreed when she asked to extend her stay. She was charming and described "Tommy" as naturally connecting with clients in a way that made them friends. June clearly admired Church's belief that "gardens are for people" and was pleased that we were the respectful stewards of one of their designs.

Above: The steps of the diagonal deck crisply connect with sloping garden below, inviting people to wander and explore. The steel railing is paneled with a delicate copper mesh allowing a clear view to the treetops. We replaced a missing white oak in the center stairwell.

Right: June Meehan Campbell remarked, "That tree doesn't belong there!" in reaction to the large Japanese maple that stretches out from under the deck. We decided to keep the very healthy tree, pruning it to accentuate its unusual shape and welcoming the color it brings in both spring and fall.

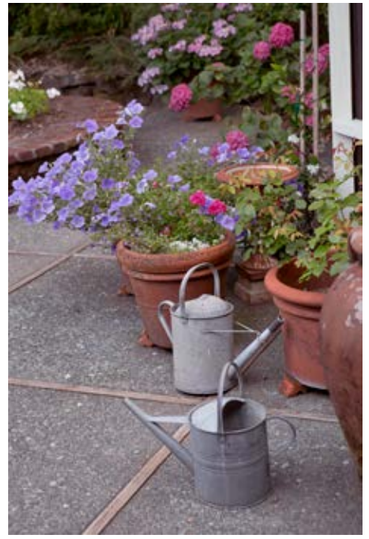
Below: The towering oak trees were here before the house was built and their sculptural shapes and leafy canopies are the most important natural element of our garden. The exposed aggregate path leads to another seating area and loops back up to a second stairway.

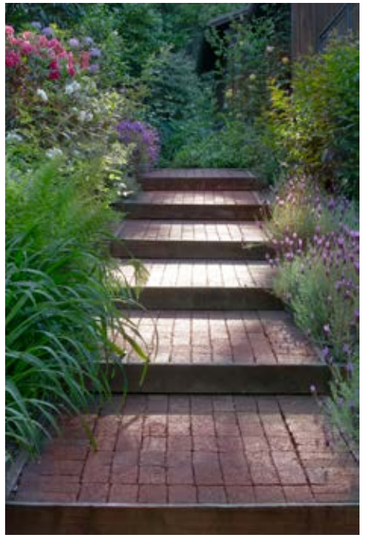
Opposite page: A collage of photos by Harley Jessup of his Thomas Church-designed garden.

Over the years I've tried to be an advocate for the mid-century houses and gardens here in Kent Woodlands. I've even given the real estate agents reprints of books and magazine articles that feature the endangered designs. It's a sad fact that we continue to lose classic gardens every year. Recalling Garrett Eckbo's suggestion to focus on our own backyard, I hope this story will inspire others to take the rewarding journey of preservation. Gardens truly are for people and, walking through our sixty-three-year-old garden today, we feel connected to Thomas Church and that remarkable period of California landscape design. We are grateful for the friendships, the hope, and the beauty that our garden continues to bring. E

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Harley Jessup is a production designer whose films at Pixar Animation Studios include Coco, Ratatouille, and Monsters, Inc. He began his career designing Sesame Street animation, followed by work as a visual effects art director at Industrial Light and Magic imagining fantasy worlds for the films Hook, Fire in the Sky, and Innerspace, for which he won an Academy Award. Harley lives with his wife Ann, in Kentfield, California.





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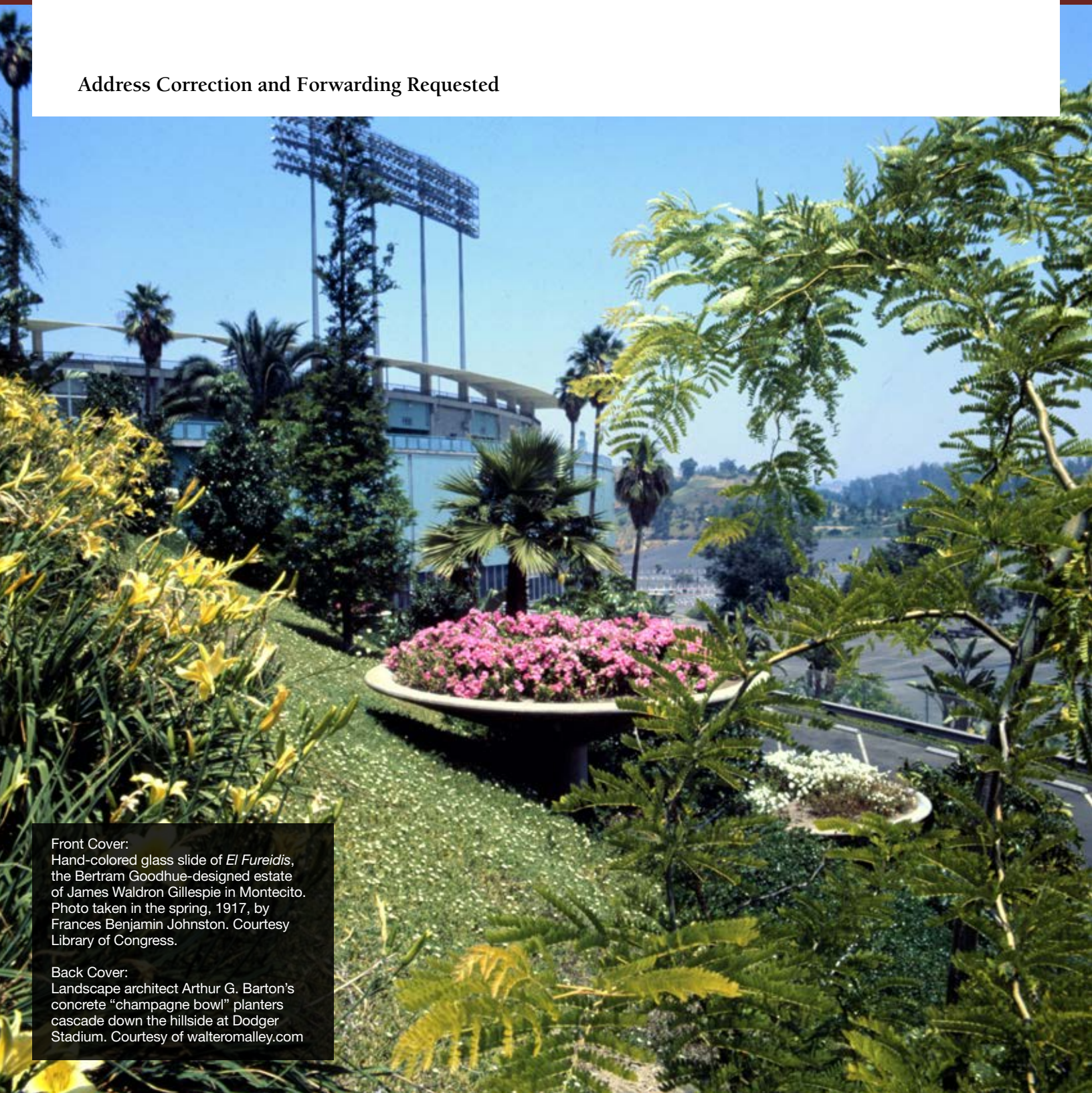

Front Cover:
Hand-colored glass slide of *El Fureidis*, the Bertram Goodhue-designed estate of James Waldron Gillespie in Montecito. Photo taken in the spring, 1917, by Frances Benjamin Johnston. Courtesy Library of Congress.

Back Cover:
Landscape architect Arthur G. Barton's concrete "champagne bowl" planters cascade down the hillside at Dodger Stadium. Courtesy of walteromalley.com