

VANDERBILT GARDEN CLUB RECORDS

MSS # 473

**Arranged and described by Molly Dohrmann
Summer 2007**

**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
Jean and Alexander Heard Library
Vanderbilt University
419 21st. Avenue South
Nashville, Tennessee 37240
Telephone: (615) 322-2807**

Historical Note

A brief history of the Vanderbilt Garden Club for Campus Beautification comes from a welcome and introduction by then president Ida Long Rogers on the occasion of a meeting hosted by Mrs. Constance Gee at the Chancellor's residence *Braeburn* on May 6, 2002:

Back in 1927 Mary Henderson Kirkland, wife of the then Chancellor called together a small group of faculty wives and wives of members of the Board of Trust and asked their help with the beautification of the campus. What developed was a loosely knit group who literally did do the ground work. It was not until 1935 that a formal charter was drawn up and the Vanderbilt Garden Club became a reality. The charter limited the membership to 25, by invitation only, with annual dues set at \$1.00.

Times have changed and over the years there was discussion of the importance of not losing sight of the history of those early days.

A history became a reality in *The Real Dirt: A History of the Vanderbilt Garden Club for Campus Beautification*, compiled and edited by Sharon Hogge and members of the Vanderbilt Garden Club and published in 1998.

The VGC has traditionally communicated with the Chancellors about the ongoing work of the club, and the Chancellors in turn have supported in different ways the club's work.

The Vanderbilt Garden Club has taken on a number of important projects to beautify the campus over the years. The Iris Project of the late 1990's was one of them, identifying, purchasing, and planting old varieties of irises

The Iris Project was of especial interest because of the number of people associated with Vanderbilt and Peabody who achieved important recognition and distinction for their growing and hybridization of irises. This list includes Clarence Connell (*Dauntless*, 1929); T. Alibone Washington and Mary Geddes Stahlman (*Mary Geddes*, 1931); Chancellor James Kirkland (*Copper Lustre* and *Junaluska*, 1934); Jesse Wills, (*Chivalry*, 1944; *Natchez Trace*, 1964; *Starshine*, *Rose Garland*, *Russet Wings*, *Glacier Gold*). Roy Appleton, L.C. Glenn, Ruth Hall, Bruce Payne, Mrs. James Reed, and Hilda Willems, also iris growers of note, made important contributions to the plantings for the Vanderbilt and Peabody campuses.

Many of the magnolia trees that encircle the campus were grown from seed propagated and planted under the direction of Jack Lynn who worked for 27 years for the Building and Grounds Department . It was Margaret Branscomb (1896-1992), a long time VGC member and wife of Chancellor Harvie Branscomb, who put forward this idea of the circle of magnolias during her time as President of the VGC in 1954. Other trees were grown in nurseries and were gifts from individuals. These magnolias, which were planted in the late 1950's, have reached maturity and stand as one of the most significant accomplishments of the Vanderbilt Garden Club and certainly as Margaret Branscomb's and Jack Lynn's enduring gift to Vanderbilt University.

The records of this organization reflect the planning and work of the club's members over the nearly eight decades of the existence of the Vanderbilt Garden Club. Founded in 1927, the VGC was an active organization for the beautification of the Vanderbilt Campus until the fall of 2006, when the decision was made to disband, as the work of the club is now being done by professional landscaping crews.

Scope and Content Note

This collection of 2.5 linear feet comprising six boxes contains all materials and records that have been generated and kept by the Vanderbilt Garden Club and includes history essays, minutes, photographs, audio tapes of meetings, programs, a scrapbook, and other items.

BOX 1

Correspondence

1. History of the VGC, 1931 - 1941
2. 1953 - 1957
3. 1962 - 1971
4. 1969 - 1982
5. April 5, 1982; April 7, 1982
6. July 2, 1997 - Ava Sellers to Judson Newbern re: McTyeire Hall

Records of the Presidents

7. Ava Sellers - 1974 - 1976
8. Ann Tarbell - 1976 - 1978
9. Mary Cannon - 1978 - 1980
10. Jean Wright - 1980 - 1982
11. Robbie Shackelford remembers - Records 1982 - 1984
12. Elva Darby - 1984 - 1986 (includes landscaping of the Hobbs Sculpture area)
13. Virginia Holladay - 1986 - 1988
14. Ida Long Rogers - 1988 - 1990
15. Mary Roberts - 1990 - 1992; Dorothy Jean Wright, Vice-President; Fran Glidewell, recording secretary
16. Frances Hardie - 1992 - 1994
17. Marie Wasson - 1994 - 1996
18. Sharon Hogge - Spring 1996 - Spring 1998
19. Fran Glidewell - 1998 - 2000
20. Ida Long Rogers - 2000 - 2002
21. Kay Hall - 2002 - 2004
22. Jean Wright - 2004 - 2006

BOX 2

Constitution and By-Laws

1. Constitution and By-Laws
2. Constitution and By-Laws of the VGC, adopted Spring 1946
3. Constitution and By-Laws, adopted 1946, amended 1968, 1987, 1996
4. Constitution and By-Laws, adopted 1946; amended 1948, 1949, 1953, 1957, 1964, 1968, 1987, 1996
5. Constitution and By-Laws Revisions 2004

Histories of the VGC

6. History, minutes, other notes
7. 1965 History of the the VGC by Aileen Bishop
8. Historical notes about the VGC

Notices of Meetings

9. November 9, 1970 - April, 1979
10. April 14, 1980 - October 28, 1991
11. 1992 - Fall 1995
12. 1996 - 1999
13. Spring 2000 - 2004

Minutes of Meetings

14. 1948 - 1952
15. 1953 - 1954
16. 1955 - 1956
17. 1957 - 1959
18. 1960 - 1964
19. 1965 - 1966
20. 1967 - 1970
21. 1970 - 1972
22. 1973 - 1977
23. 1980 - 1981
24. 1982 - 1984
25. 2002 - 2004
26. Ideas for Meetings

BOX 3

Other Records

1. Margaret Branscomb - Recollections by members of the VGC; *Tennessean* article by Louise Davis, Oct. 4, 1987; Letter from Margaret Branscomb, May 13, 1987; Margaret Branscomb's statement of appreciation of Mr. Jack Lynn, April 14, 1975
2. Margaret V. Branscomb and Chancellor Harvie Branscomb
3. Margaret V. Branscomb and Chancellor Harvie Branscomb

4. Mrs. George Mayfield's notes for a meeting
5. Minutes, correspondence, and other - 1990's
6. Officers VGC - 1998 - 2006

Membership and Dues Lists

7. February 1, 1954
8. 1957 - 1977
9. Dues and membership notebooks - 1951 - 1958
10. 1976 - 1978
11. 1978
12. 1979 - 1982
13. 1979 - 1983
14. 1979 - 1983
15. 1982 - 1986
16. 1983 - 1987
17. 1984 - 1988
18. 1974 - 1996
19. 1995 - 1998
20. 1990 - 1996 - updates and changes
21. March 2001
22. 2002 - 2004
23. Undated

Financial Records

24. Statements, cancelled checks, deposit slips
25. Accounts, bills, notes, and receipts
26. Bank records - 1998; 1999; 2000
27. Accounts Ledger - 1995 - 2001 - membership dues; contributions
28. Landscaping expenses - 1982

BOX 4

1. Records of Pam Sevy, VU Landscape Architect, Dept. of Campus Planning, 1990 - 1993
2. Records of Pam Sevy, VU Landscape Architect, Dept. of Campus Planning, 1994 - 1996

The Iris Project

3. Records of the Iris Project - 1986 - 1988 including membership list Spring 1987
4. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (1)
5. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (2)
6. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (3)
7. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (4)
8. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (5)
Roots - Journal of the Historic Iris Preservation Society; Spring 1996;

- Fall 1996; Spring 1997
9. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (6)
Historic Iris Preservation Society
 10. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (7)
“Nashville’s Iris Season” by Jesse E. Wills - July 3, 1943
 11. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (8)
 12. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (9)
 13. 1996 - 1997 Bicentennial Iris Project by Sharon Hogge (10)
 14. The Iris Project - 1997
 15. Invitation for the Bicentennial Dedication of Historic Iris - April 21, 1997
 16. Articles and other writings on Chancellor James Kirkland and growing Irises
 17. Clarence P. Connell - VU Engineering Class of 1906 - biographical
information and correspondence
 18. Clarence P. Connell - VU Engineering Class of 1906 - biographical
information and other; *Volunteer Gardener*, Spring 1945; “Treasure Chest” in
the *Tennessean*, May 18, 1958; garden photograph
 19. The Iris at Peabody College – articles - Roy Appleton, 1894 - 1965 (1)
 20. The Iris at Peabody College - articles and speeches (2)
 21. “Iris Time in Tennessee” by Millie Wilder in *The Tennessee Conservationist* -
March/April 1986
 22. Articles on Sam Caldwell, Iris grower
 23. Vanderbilt Garden Club Projects - 1950 - 1988
 24. Projects - 1951 - 1979; 1950 - 1954; History of projects 1989 - 1995; other
projects and photographs
 25. Planting plan for the Vanderbilt Campus by Ronald J. Sias, Landscape
Architect
 26. Lists of plantings and projects since 1970 and other historical information
 27. Notes on the boxwoods at Sarratt Center, 1974 - 1980
 28. List of trees(dated 1954) on the Vanderbilt University Campus
 29. Trees of Vanderbilt (Arboretum) and history of VGC projects 1989 - 1995;
other items concerning VU trees
 30. Catalogue of the Species and Varieties of plants in the Vanderbilt Arboretum
 31. Artwork designs for VGC programs and article “Creating your own new Iris”

BOX 5

Publications

1. *The Real Dirt: A History of the Vanderbilt Garden Club for Campus
Beautification*, compiled and edited by Sharon Hogge and Members of the
Vanderbilt Garden Club, 1998
2. *The Real Dirt* - proof copy, 1998, acknowledgements, Chapter 5
3. *The Real Dirt* - proof copy, 1998, chapters 6 – 8
4. *The Real Dirt* - proof copy, 1998, Appendices
5. *The Real Dirt* - papers from the time of its publication in 1998
6. *The Real Dirt* - Information pertaining to its publication

7. VGC Invitation - poem by Virginia Holladay (1997?)
8. "Rare Gardens at Vanderbilt" in *Vanderbilt Alumnus*, v. 7 n.7, p. 150 (May 1922)
9. "Magnolia Shelter" article from *The Tennessean*, Jan. 7, 1958
10. "Historical Paragraphs" George Peabody College for Teachers, 13 pages (2 copies), October 1975
11. "In Memoriam" Mrs. Hugh Morgan (Bobby) - remarks by Elva Darby, April 13, 1981
12. "Oaks and Magnolias, Ginkoes and Silver Bells" by Naomi Klein in *Vanderbilt Alumnus*, vol. 67, No. 4, Summer 1982
13. Articles from the *Vanderbilt Register*, Sept. 11, 1980; June 15, 1982; June 26, 1987
14. "Magnolia News" newsletter of Vanderbilt Woman's Club - September 2002 - April 2004
15. "Here We Grow Again: In Quarter Century, University Almost Triples in Size" - April 2005 (Campus Planning and Construction)

Other

16. Bronze Plaque - "Under the parent of this tree at Cambridge, Massachusetts, George Washington first took command of the American Army, July 3, 1775. Planted by the Vanderbilt Garden Club in Commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of his birth." 12" x 4 1/2"
17. "Washington Elm Plaque" - Information - Memo from Robert A. McGaw to Chancellor Alexander Heard
18. Memorandum on symbols used to represent Vanderbilt University's Mace, November 16, 1966
19. "Mims" from the 1973 Centennial Commodore (VU Yearbook) and "Rotier"
20. Gardening with Books
21. Peabody Tour Information
22. Miscellaneous

BOX 6

Audio Tapes

1. Audio tapes: 1) Ava Sellers, Mrs. Branscomb, Japanese "Gardens," 1975.
2) Tribute to Mrs. Branscomb by Blanche Henry Weaver and Faye Wyatt
2. Audio tapes : 1) VGC - Jane Auerbach, 90 years old, reminisces, undated.
2) Jean Wright's meeting, some reminiscences, Nov. 10, 1980
3. Audio tapes: 1) Mary Wade, 1996.
2) VGC for Campus Beautification, April 21, 1997.

Scrapbook

4. Scrapbook - includes photographs and articles about the VGC