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JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY is a semiannual publication of the New Bern Historical Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the rich heritage of New Bern. Articles, letters, photographs, and memorabilia relevant to the history of New Bern and Craven County may be submitted to the editor for review. (Post Office Box 119, New Bern, North Carolina 28563)

NEW BERN'S CLAIM TO HORTICULTURAL FAME: THE RED SPIDER LILY (LYCORIS RADIATA)

DeWitt Tillery

My fascination with red spider lilies (Lycoris radiata) began in 1961 when I visited Magnolia Plantation in mid-September. Earlier that year I had read Peter Coats's book GREAT GARDENS OF THE WESTERN WORLD. He includes both Middleton Plantation and Magnolia Gardens among the great gardens. I have gone out of my way to visit hundreds of gardens but had never seen these two which are in the south-eastern United States and not some far-flung place.

Most people associate Charleston with beautiful gardens filled with azaleas in spring. It had never occurred to me that Charleston had beautiful gardens before I read GREAT GARDENS OF THE WESTERN WORLD. I had been in Charleston only in August. My family, for no good reason that I can remember, had made some one-day trips to Charleston in the stifling heat and humidity of August. These forays into Charleston were as close to hell as my childhood ever brought me, although I have been a lot closer since. In the sticky, oppressive heat everyone was viciously foul tempered though no one was murdered; if any one of us had been killed, no one else would have cared--at least not until they got to a nice cool place to think it over.

After reading Coats's book, the first time I had a chance to go to Charleston was not in spring when the gardens are in their glory but in mid-September. I was determined to see both gardens, so I rented a car and drove from Kiawah Island. I expected to see nothing except leafless shrubs, but both gardens were delightful in different ways. To my surprise, red spider lilies grew around the edge of the satin black

ponds at Magnolia Plantation. Their reflection shimmered in the black water, too. I think I had seen a few scraggly red spider lilies growing in Virginia but nothing like these. In A SOUTHERN GARDEN Elizabeth Lawrence writes about fall-blooming red spider lilies, "Their beauty and variety turn the last season of the year into a second and more beautiful spring". I had not missed spring after all.

At the time I was living outside Chicago where it was too cold to grow red spider lilies. I could only look at the pictures in catalogs and wish I lived where they would grow. I might have been able to grow the tall pink magic lily (Lycoris squamigera), which is hardy to Zone 4, but I have never liked it much. The only real use I ever had for it was using another of its common names and shouting out, "Look at the naked ladies on the hill" when I was a garden guide at Winterthur. The heads of the people riding the tram always snapped toward the hill.

A few years later I moved to New Bern. In my mind I was not moving to New Bern so much as to Zone 8--semitropical Zone 8 where I could grow Lycoris radiata at last. In preparation for gardening in Zone 8, while swathed in 50-degree fogs which hung over the shores of Lake Michigan and wearing a wool sweater, I pulled out my copy of A SOUTHERN GARDEN by Elizabeth Lawrence and began reading a section entitled "The Climax of Fall" which I had not read before.

> . . . the first red-spider lilies in North Carolina (and probably in this country) came directly from Japan to a garden in New Bern. They were brought to that garden nearly a hundred years ago by Captain William Roberts who was with Commodore Perry when he opened the port of Japan. The Captain brought three bulbs which were, his niece Mrs. Simmons says, in such a dry condition that they did not show signs of life until the War between the States. The original bulbs have increased and been passed on until they have spread across the state.

I would not only be able to grow red spider lilies but grow them in the first place they had flowered in this country. After getting moved in, I began asking where the garden was in which the first red spider lilies had grown. Of the first 10 or 20 people I asked nobody knew the first red spider lilies had grown in a garden in New Bern. This was not a random sampling. I asked people who were gardeners and who had been involved in horticulture in New Bern for years. Finally, when I asked 20 people at one time someone said she remembered an article about spider lilies in the New Bern newspaper about 20 years before. Well, anyway she thought between 10 and 20 years ago.

I finally decided that I was asking the wrong people and needed to figure out who would know. I decided Jane Baskervill, who lived around the corner, would come nearer knowing than anybody else. She did know about the garden. It had been torn out to make way for a new building on the corner of Pollock and Metcalf streets. She confirmed the garden had belonged to the Roberts family who also had a rhododendron garden at their summer home in Black Mountain. She said, "The owner of the garden let a Lady Bank's rose grow over the arbor at the entrance so anyone passing by could cut a little bouquet".

Jane's description of the garden as it had been was as eloquent a way to preserve an art form so ephemeral as gardens as there is. Often gardens are preserved only in books, old photographs, and the mind's eye of those who loved them. Miss Lawrence has written:

> Gardens are so perishable, they live only in books and letters; but what has gone before is not lost: the future is the past entered by another door.

Becoming bolder after my sleuthing success, I buttonholed another neighbor, Frances Clement, while she was cutting up zucchini at the soup kitch-

en. She had first seen the garden in the 1940s and remembered it, too. She described it as

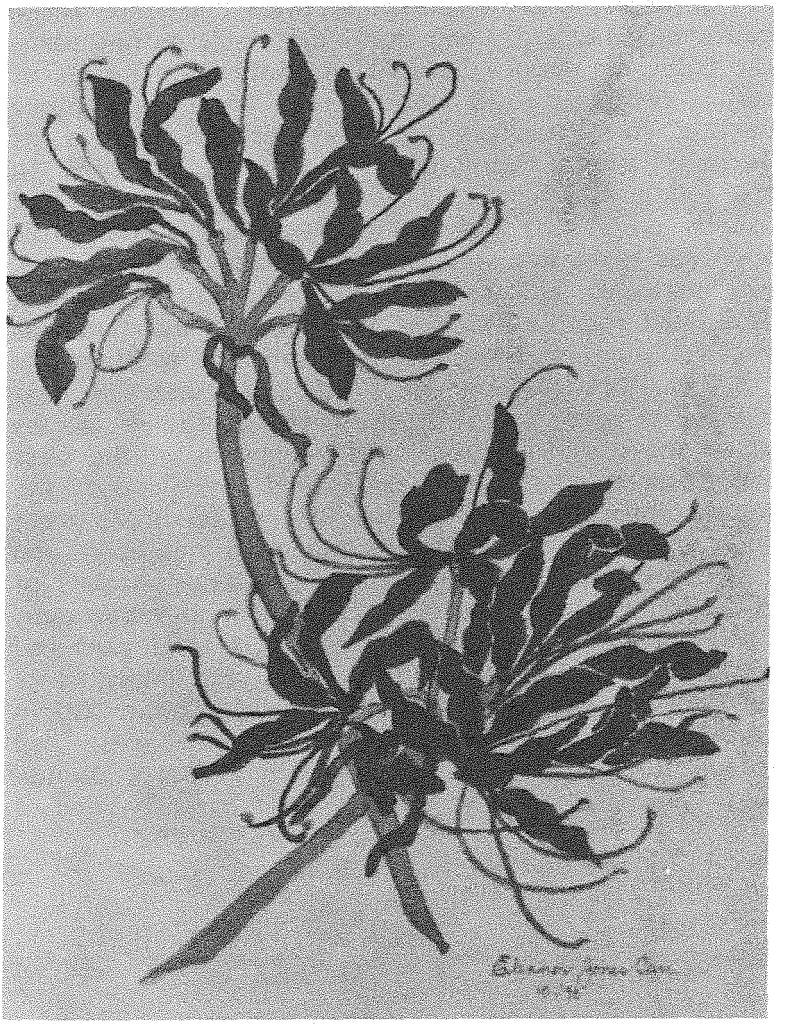
> a wonderful garden. You could see it had once been a formal garden. It was weedy. There were old roses and vines in it. The house went with the garden. It was quaint and needed paint. The house and garden just went together.

The second neighbor told a third, Bay McCotter, whose great-grandmother was Elizabeth Roberts, who had once owned the garden. She and I tried to figure out what kin she was to Captain William Roberts, but we couldn't, even with a genealogy chart. Bay wrote down her memories of the garden.

> I remember the garden, the house and the family very well. As a child I would go up there and visit. There were three sisters and their mother living at that time. A tree house was in the front of the yard. To me that was wonderful. The sisters served us lunch up there in the summer when one of their nieces was visiting them. The garden was beautiful and went way back in the yard.

Growing L. radiata is not as hard as finding the garden where the bulbs first grew in the United States. Some of the best advice on growing Lycoris comes from Louise Beebe Wilder in ADVENTURES WITH HARDY BULBS, published in 1936. She is writing specifically about the magic lily L. squamigera, but the information applies to L. radiata as well.

> The drawbacks to this lovely Lily-like plant are the period when neither leaves nor flowers are in evidence, and the rather untidy dying away of the foliage in early summer. For this reason, as well as because such a situation is ideally suited to it, it is delightful to grow in light woodland, or in borders where ferns and other lightly



WATERCOLOR OF SPIDER LILY. Reproduction by Conway.

spreading plants will hide its temporary deficiencies.

One advantage L. radiata has over L. squamigera is that its foliage is not quite so messy.

In order to grow red spider lilies there are three cautionary facts to keep in mind. First, do not plant the bulbs too deep. Cover with about four inches of soil. Second, allow the foliage to ripen before cutting it. According to commercial growers at Terra Ceia Bulb Farms near Pantego, N. C. (Zone 8), the foliage can come up as early as November but usually is present from March to early May. This time has to be adjusted according to hardiness zones. For instance, in Zone 7 the foliage lasts until June. The third recommendation is to divide the bulbs as you would daffodils so they will continue to bloom.

The Roberts garden in which L. radiata was first planted is gone, but it is preserved in the memories of all those who enjoyed it. The progeny of the first three shriveled bulbs has spread throughout the southeastern United States. Red spider lilies have been passed along from neighbor to neighbor and generation to generation. There are large patches of it blooming all around New Bern in mid-September. Every yard seems to have at least a few elegant red spider lilies which magically appear. For many years red spider lilies have bloomed in Cedar Grove Cemetery. This past September there were red spider lilies blooming fast--by the Roberts family plot.

SOURCES

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Wilder, Louise Beebe. ADVENTURES WITH HARDY BULBS. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1936; Collier Books, 1990.

Personal interviews with Jane Baskervill, Frances Clement, and Bay McCotter.

A WRITER'S MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

Emily Herring Wilson

When I try to tell you my memories of writing this book, I am as unclear about dates as some of you were when you tried to remember the year the river froze. And yet I say as one of you said in your interview, "I can remember and know personally what I'm talking about!" I also identify with the New Bernian who declared, "I could tell you just as good today how the little house was built, all about the yard, everything about it. I remember the whole thing." For though I cannot remember the exact date when I received in the mail a letter from Joseph Patterson, Jr., M. D., asking if I had any interest in writing your MEMORIES OF NEW BERN, I do remember the whole thing.

Several years ago--I forget when--I went to see Miss Gertrude Carraway to interview her for a book on North Carolina women's history.[1] She had given me her address, and I had driven slowly down Broad Street until I found the house, almost at the bridge, and parked, and went up on the porch and rang the bell. Miss Rose came to the door, and she invited me into the front room to meet Miss Gertrude. And for the next several hours I asked Miss Gertrude questions about Tryon Palace. When she couldn't remember, she asked Miss Rose. Finally, Miss Gertrude clapped her hands and said it was time to have drinks, and Miss Rose went to make them. I remember the taste of the Tom Collins and two old sisters sitting side by side on the sofa, and how they contradicted each other, or helped each other, and how generous and good I felt their life had been in New Bern, North Carolina. Later, I toured Tryon Palace and saw how the governor lived in the eighteenth

century, but I went because Miss Gertrude told me to go and also because my mother and her best friend Mrs. Turnipseed had gone and said it was beautiful. It was that, but I prefer my history as plain as two old ladies on a faded sofa.

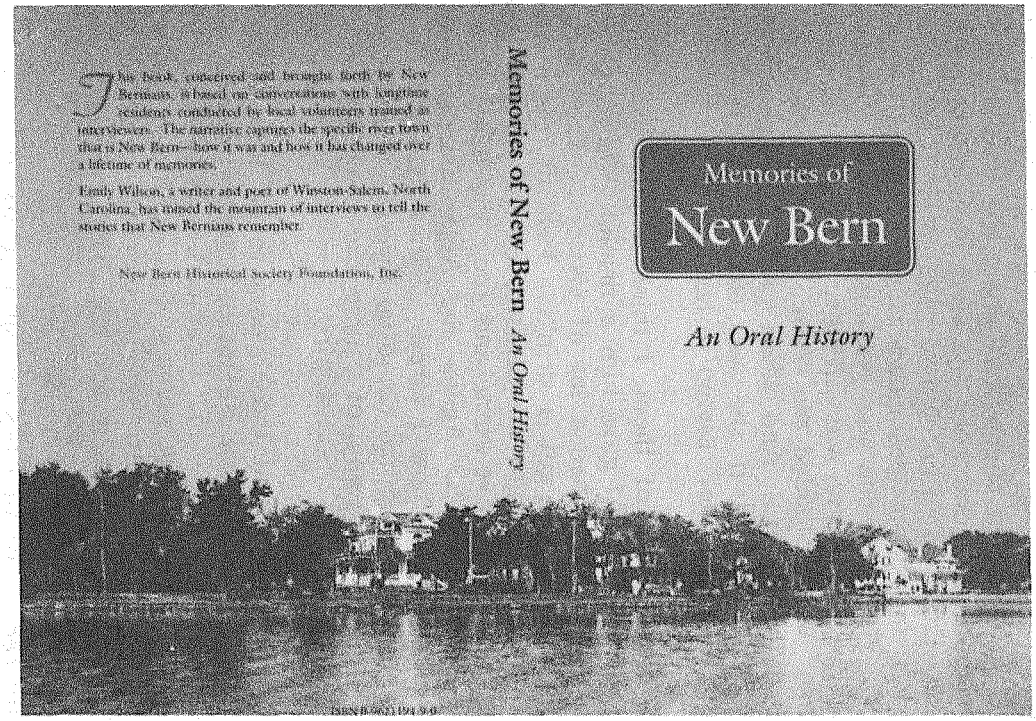
Until I came to Alice and Joe Patterson's house on East Front Street to meet with members of the Memories of New Bern Committee, I had not been in New Bern again. And yet I had answered Joe's letter the very next day after receiving it to say that Yes, I would be interested in writing your MEMORIES OF NEW BERN. Many letters followed--as you know if you know Joe Patterson--until finally I met Alice and Joe in their new place in Chapel Hill and loaded boxes of interviews into the trunk of my car and drove home. I was nervous all the way, afraid that I might have a wreck and all those papers would go flying out the window. When I had stacked the boxes in my office, I felt a sudden sense of anxiety: What had I got myself into? Then for the next several weeks, around-the-clock I think, I read folder after folder, until finally, I had read 155 interviews by 136 New Bernians in over 7,000 pages.

One night I stayed up late to finish Bill Edwards's dramatic account of the hurricanes of 1955, and when I went to sleep I dreamed that it was my house that was in the path of the storm and all the lights were out and the wind was rising. You won't find a better story-teller than Shoot Hall and from his description I could see how thousands of logs were chained together and rafted down the rivers. And didn't I see the women put "their buckets of shelled butter beans on their head and leave James City and walk across that bridge and never touch it. Just both hands swinging"? I wished that I could meet Crabby and every one of the South Front boys. And didn't I know exactly where the PAMLICO docked on the Trent? When Dr. Hand died and Dr. Kafer died, I felt as if I had lost my friends; and when the fire of 1922 swept down Kilmarnock Street and Dr. Bryan's grandparents' chimney was on fire, and Dorcas Carter and her little brother sat on

Mrs. Jemma Whitley's steps and watched people come up George Street with their trunks and household furniture--well, it was a tragedy. And when St. Peter's Church caught on fire, I could have cried myself. I know what got you through many of the hard times. Faith, hard work, neighbors. You said, "People got along. Nobody was considered poor. We had a collective way of doing things." During the Depression everybody had a little garden and chickens in the back yard. When Joe Louis won the boxing title, everybody was happy. Good Shepherd Hospital grew out of the ashes of the terrible fire. During World War II everybody who had a room to spare rented it to a soldier's wife trying to be near her husband before he shipped out. And after the race conflicts of the 1960s Barbara Lee reminds us of prayer and singing. "It was a beautiful time." In the sunrise service at Union Point or the river baptisms or the hallowed ground of National Cemetery or the outreach of the Religious Community Services, faith sustained you.

I know some of your secrets--one of you did not like Miss Molly Heath, though everyone else certainly did. I know that once Miss Molly and Miss Mary Oliver had an argument. Gene McSorley and his friends jumped from the crow's nest on the menhaden boats, and sometimes the Coast Guardsmen had to come after the Union Point wharf rats. Bay McCotter and her friends pulled the chain so that the light would go out on the corner of East Front until the family across the street called the police. It is no secret that most of you think that changing Broad Street was a terrible mistake.

You have done a rare and wonderful thing in persisting over so many years to record your stories and to see that they are left for others to read. For only in them will we ever hear again the song of Martha Royal--"Nice veg-e-tables, string beans, cabbage, turnips." Only here in the pages of this book will we see Eleanor Carr ride her bicycle around the town. Or see again Ghent Casino, the old Neuse River bridge, the circus come to town, the Athens



RIVER VIEW COVERS MEMORIES OF NEW BERN BOOK. Reproduction by Conway.

and hear Mary Whitehurst play the organ; small clothes washing in the pot outdoors when the water is boiling hot.

But why was it, you may wonder, that I had accepted so readily Joe Patterson's inquiry about my interest in writing your MEMORIES OF NEW BERN? I guess it all had begun that year, the date I cannot remember but remember the visit with Gertrude and Rose. Of course I hurried to read Miss Rose's interview. In it she described Hurricane Ione--it was 1955. Aggie Barden was getting married. Rose was giving a party and was all set, when the hurricane came. Water flooded the house. Rose mopped up in her bathing suit. And when civil defense workers came to find out if she was okay, she said everything was just fine. Listen to her tell it.

> Finally, one of them, I think it was Ben Hurst, came in, and I gave him a drink. When he left, after that, I had a lot of visitors. They would come in and get a drink. Two of them tied their rowboat to the banister on the porch. And then a big wave came and took the banister and their boat off. Agnes and Aggie Barden came down to see how I fared. Agnes said she could just cry. Mud had come up through vents in the furnace. Anyway, of course the next day was a beautiful day. Sun shining.

I had waited all those years to be invited back to New Bern, and Joe Patterson's letter was all the encouragement I needed. I came, I read your stories, and now they are my stories, too. I thank you for the honor, myself a stranger so recently come to the confluence of the Neuse and the Trent rivers.[2]

Address
Delivered at MEMORIES OF NEW BERN Program
New Bern/Craven County Public Library
September 19, 1995

NOTES

[1] Margaret Supplee Smith and I were gathering materials to write NORTH CAROLINA WOMEN MAKING HISTORY, the state's first women's history, sponsored by the North Carolina Division of Archives and History and scheduled for publication by the University of North Carolina Press.

[2] I especially would like to thank the North Carolina Humanities Council, the state-based agency of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Kellenberger Foundation, whose financial support made this publication possible. In an era marked by cuts in funding for the humanities, I applaud the generosity and spirit of these two community-minded organizations.

NOTICE

Copies of MEMORIES OF NEW BERN may be purchased from the office of the New Bern Historical Society, 510 Pollock Street, for $14.95 plus tax.

THE PARSON AND HIS SCHOOL

C. Edward Sharp

The Reverend James Reed--from the time he arrived in New Bern from England in 1753 to become the first rector of Christ Church--had been deeply troubled about the lack of educational opportunity for youth in New Bern and the province. Schools of any kind in the colony were few and far between, and the few existing schools struggled to gather students around teachers who were often poorly educated themselves. The children of wealthy and well-to-do parents were sometimes taught by private tutors or they might be sent to schools in the northern provinces or to England for their education.

Parson Reed, as he was often called by the local citizens, was keenly aware that a promising future for the colony was dependent upon schools and an educated citizenry; and the outlook in North Carolina was bleak. He served several times as chaplain of the House of Commons in the Provincial Assembly, and in 1762 he addressed the Assembly on a subject dear to his heart: "Recommending the Establishing Public Schools for the Education of Youth". Colonial Governor Arthur Dobbs and the members of the Assembly were impressed by the appeal of the minister, but they failed to provide funds for establishing a school.

Under the leadership of the town's parson, a school was opened in New Bern on January 1, 1764, Thomas Tomlinson as schoolmaster. Mr. Tomlinson had conveniently come to New Bern from England the preceding month upon the invitation of his brother John, a prominent local merchant and planter. The new schoolmaster was an experienced and well-qualified teacher who had kept a school in the

English County of Cumberland. Two months after the school opened in 1764 the General Assembly passed an act for building a schoolhouse and a schoolmaster's residence in New Bern, and trustees for the school were named. But adequate money was still not forthcoming for accomplishing the building goals.

Even without an edifice the new school soon had more students than the schoolmaster could teach alone, and he requested an assistant. In addition to local students there were also several students from Wilmington and one from the Edenton area.

Parson Reed led in seeking subscriptions for erecting a school building, and construction began in 1765 at the corner of New and Hancock streets. In 1766 the two-year-old school was incorporated by a legislative act of the General Assembly, thus becoming the first chartered school in North Carolina. An important provision of the act called for a special tax consisting of duty of one penny per gallon on "all rum or other spirituous liquors imported into the River Neuse". The tax would be used for the annual salary of the schoolmaster and to establish a fund for the education of 10 poor children each year in the school. As sufficient money for construction continued to be a problem, Mr. Reed gave one-half of his year's salary for the purchase of bricks for the chimneys. The school building was finally completed in 1768. The General Assembly met in the New Bern school that same year and also in 1769 and 1770 before the construction of Tryon Palace was completed.

The school had its ups and downs during its early years and experienced interruptions during the Revolutionary War. It was reorganized in 1784 after the war, and the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina gave it the name of the New Bern Academy by legislative act. The Academy building was destroyed by fire in 1795, and classes were then held in the Palace until a fire in 1798 destroyed the central structure of the former capitol.

Finally another building was constructed for the

Academy on the New and Hancock streets site, and it was finished in 1810--one year after Thomas Jefferson retired as President of the United States. The new New Bern Academy building, restored in recent years to its original condition, served New Bern's children for 150 years.

We are indebted to the Reverend James Reed, whose vision and tenacious labors 231 years ago laid the foundation for public education in New Bern and North Carolina. In recognition of his significant leadership during New Bern's early years the City of New Bern has given the name of James Reed Lane to the new landscaped pedestrian walkway between Pollock Street (opposite Christ Church) and the parking area behind the Pollock Street buildings.

SOURCES

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Watson, Alan D. A HISTORY OF NEW BERN AND CRAVEN COUNTY. New Bern, N. C.: The Tryon Palace Commission, 1987.

BATTLE OF NEW BERN REVISITED

Jim Gunn

Interest in the Battle of New Bern, fought March 14, 1862, has been heightened with the recent publication of a paperback volume entitled THE BATTLE OF NEW BERN AND RELATED SITES IN CRAVEN COUNTY, N. C., 1861-1865. Through this short 70-page book we learn much greater detail of how the battle was fought, won by Union forces, and the aftermath.

The author is Richard Sauers, a Pennsylvanian now living in Kentucky, and the introduction and source material was added by editor Will Gorges. Will is well-known as a deeply committed Civil War museum owner and local dealer in CW memorabilia and artifacts. Richard Sauers produced a lengthy doctoral thesis a few years ago on the "Burnside Expedition", a Union campaign to disrupt communications and supply lines along the North Carolina coast. Ultimately, after a Union victory, New Bern was captured and occupied until the end of hostilities in 1865. Will Gorges has extracted the account of the New Bern battle from the Sauers manuscript and made additions. Principal contributions are photographs of New Bern in the Civil War era, with current photographs at the battle site which were not included in Sauers's thesis. Also added are copies of historic documents, army orders, print mementos, and battlefield movement diagrams along with sketches from Civil War life.

The fight for New Bern was brief; in less than a day the matter was settled; Union General Burnside had gained his prize quite cheaply. General Branch, with only a third the number of troops compared to Burnside, decided Confederate common sense and

wise discretion pointed to a hasty retreat in the direction of Kinston. While New Bern itself remained relatively peaceful during the occupation, periodic raids and sallies by both Confederate and Union forces caused some excitement around the perimeter of the fortified town and as far away as Seven Springs, even up to Goldsboro. Gorges gives us some of the flavor of these actions, adding to Sauers's account of the battle. While the book is a welcome addition of previously unpublished Civil War material, little is made known of the participants. Personalities of leaders and lesser combatants have been overlooked, apparently in the haste to publish. Typographical problems are also evident throughout; more careful editing would have improved the book to a considerable degree.

THE BATTLE OF NEW BERN . . . is reasonably priced at $10.00, available at the Historical Society office or by telephone for mailing at a slight extra charge. All proceeds from the sale go to the Historical Society; the author/editors have waived compensation; paper was donated by Weyerhaeuser; printing and binding costs were covered by a special Kellenberger Foundation grant.

Articles in earlier issues of the JOURNAL have covered some aspects and personalities not covered in this book. In the November 1990 issue Fred Sloatman ably summarized the battle action. In the same issue is a biographical sketch of Union General Ambrose Burnside, "Old Sideburns", by Jim Gunn. The short life of General Lawrence O'Bryan Branch, defender of New Bern, ". . . A Political General" may be found in the May 1992 issue. Back issues of the JOURNAL are obtainable at the Historical Society office for $2.00 per copy.

Two recently published hardcover books may also be of interest: THE CIVIL WAR DAY BY DAY (1992) by Robert E. Denny has extracts from the diary of Private Day, a Union soldier who fought at the Battle of New Bern. ATLAS OF THE CIVIL WAR (1994) by James MacPherson contains maps and descriptions of major battles and campaigns. The

illustration of the Burnside Expedition is particularly good, showing the sea and land movements of a combined Union Army and Navy force. After embarking at Annapolis, Maryland, the 15,000-man expedition invaded and captured Confederate cities, towns, and military installations along the coast and sounds of North Carolina, New Bern included. Strangely, this otherwise well-produced volume is also flawed by incredible numbers of typographical and grammatical errors.

TRYON PALACE BUILDS ON RECENT RESEARCH DISCOVERIES

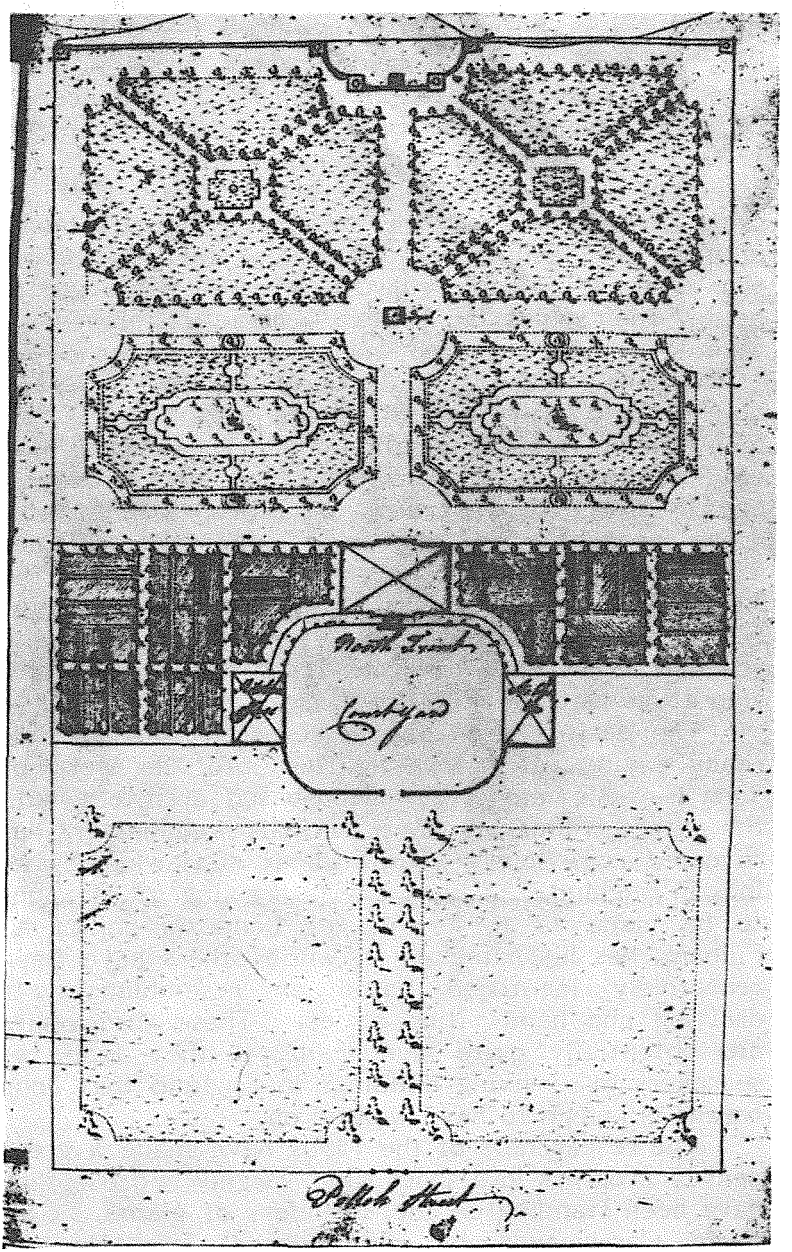
John Barden

Editor's note: John Barden was formerly Research Historian at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens.

Based on serendipitous finds in a Venezuela library in 1991-1992, Tryon Palace staff members are now engaged in the most arduous effort in more than 35 years to update our conception of what Governor Tryon's mansion and gardens actually looked like in the eighteenth century.

The discovery came about when then horticulturist Tony Dove asked research staff members to pursue a reference in the diary of South American traveler Francisco de Miranda. Miranda, who visited New Bern in 1783, received at that time from Palace architect John Hawks "an exact plan of said edifice and gardens which gives a clear idea of the whole". Researchers tracked Miranda's papers, lost for most of the nineteenth century, to the Biblioteca Nacional de la Historia in Caracas, where librarians pulled and photocopied a previously unknown sketch of the gardens surrounding the Palace as well as a four-page manuscript description of the building's interiors by John Hawks himself.

Both of these documents contribute dramatically to a better understanding of the building and its environs. The sketch reveals that large parterre gardens were planned (and perhaps even installed) all across the area that is now the south lawn, a fitting entrance for visitors who may have arrived at the boat landing shown along the Trent River. The description gives architectural details of interiors--chimney pieces, architraves, cornices--which would



HAWKS DRAWING SHOWS PARTERRE. Tryon Palace photo.

have significantly altered the way the Palace was reconstructed in the 1950s, if this document had surfaced at that time.

The discovery of these documents has stimulated much discussion about what other facts are needed to complete our picture of life in the Palace in the 1770s. To assist in this discussion Tryon Palace researchers convened a meeting in May 1992 of professional scholars in the areas of colonial history, architecture, landscape architecture, and the decorative arts. After conferring for three days the group, calling themselves the "Miranda Society", pinpointed several areas of research where further work needed to be done. In August of that year the research staff refined their proposals into a 10-phase research plan running five-and-a-half years. The phases, several of which run concurrently, range from archaeology in the Palace gardens in search of features shown on the Miranda plan to an examination of New York colonial records which might shed light on the households and furnishings of William Tryon and/or his successor Josiah Martin. This research plan and schedule was adopted by the Tryon Palace Commission at its October 1992 meeting.

The early phases of the research plan are already paying off. Investigation into the work of John Hawks's master, an Eton-based architect with the rather whimsical name of Stiff Leadbetter, has revealed a previously unknown body of Hawks's drawings in England. At least one, a drawing of revisions to be made to the Bishop of London's palace at Fulham, has his name on it, while others have been tentatively identified based on resemblances in drafting and handwriting styles. These discoveries are potentially quite significant, if they lead researchers to surviving buildings in England that John Hawks is known to have worked on.

The researchers of the 1990s have made a great deal of progress in a short time, largely because they have been standing on the shoulders of giants. Gertrude Carraway, who rediscovered John Hawks's original plans in the 1930s, and Alonzo T. Dill, Jr.,

who in the 1950s compiled the 400-page research report which still forms the basis for Tryon Palace's interpretation, both expressed amazement and enthusiasm for the new finds before their deaths. The new information which is arising from the current effort is largely a tribute to their perseverance and to the high standards of accuracy that they set early on in the reconstruction effort.

BOOK REVIEW

SHERMAN: SOLDIER, REALIST, AMERICAN, by B. H. Liddell Hart. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993. First edition 1929. Maps, sources and notes, and index. 456 pp. Paper $15.95.)

Occasionally a dilemma is faced when selecting a book for review. SHERMAN interested me because of both subject AND author. The dilemma was in determining which of these two personalities would stand out most prominently. I'm still uncertain. Both men brought outstanding talents to their profession, were extremely influential in military circles at the time, and remain influential to this day.

William Tecumseh Sherman was nineteenth-century, 1820-1891; Basil Henry Liddell Hart, twentieth century, 1895-1970. Nevertheless both men were dependent for ultimate success on army careers, Sherman in the Civil War, Liddell Hart in World War I. Both were capable writers. Sherman wrote informative personal letters to relatives and other contemporaries; Liddell Hart became an important author of military treatises, biographies and histories. They were oddly brought together by similarity of concepts in waging decisive warfare. Differences existed, too. Sherman was totally American; his family came from seventeenth-century English immigrant Puritan stock. Liddell Hart was English, born in France. Liddell Hart sought out information about Sherman to confirm strong beliefs he had about the conduct of warfare.

Sherman's career from West Point to retirement as General of the Army covered a period of forty-three years. First assigned to Florida, he participated in the desultory Seminole Wars. Equally uninteresting transfers and postings followed: South

Carolina, Texas, Georgia, then to Pittsburgh as a recruiter. In 1847, posted to California, he sailed to the west coast the long hard way around Cape Horn! Dulled by peacetime army life, he submitted his resignation, but instead was sent to New York with army dispatches and granted a six-month leave of absence. He went on to Washington, where Thomas Ewing had become Secretary of the Interior. He married Ewing's daughter Ellen there, fulfilling a longtime romance. President Zachary Taylor and his Cabinet attended the wedding.

The young Lieutenant with the independent frontier spirit had entered the world of Washington elite. Sherman's future was, in part, set in motion by this very convenient marriage arrangement. Between Ewing and his brother John, William Sherman had access to the high points of power if he needed them. He rarely did; Washington was not his forte.

Promoted to Captain in 1851, Sherman was assigned to commissary work in St. Louis. Finally resigning from the Army, he returned to California in search of a business career. Success did not bless the adventure, and he applied for a position as Superintendent of the new "Louisiana Seminary of Learning, and Military Academy", receiving the appointment in 1859. Army and political connections had helped. While in the deep South he came to know something of North-South differences and Southern ambitions. His position as a quasi-military northerner in the South became more tenuous as relations with northern states became more heated. He resigned in the face of irreconcilable political problems and went back to St. Louis as manager of the streetcar system.

Depressed by the North-South contretemps, he was uncertain about the future as war seemed inevitable, and he pondered returning to the Army. An offer from Washington to be Assistant Secretary of War was declined, because he wished to stay in St. Louis. By 1861, however, he knew a return to the Army in the face of impending war was inevitable. For some 250 pages the author examines Sherman's

Civil War career in great detail. The author's remarkable research is an outstanding feature.

From Bull Run, July 1861, to Bentonville, March 19, 1865, the exceptional General perfected the "indirect approach" in the tradition of the great Roman General Scipio Africanus. The forces he commanded were taught to be lean, hard, travel lightly and be prepared for any eventuality at a moment's notice. His armies moved quickly and lived off the land; they were loyal to him and he to them. Appropriately many pages are devoted to Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas, for it was here, from September 1864 to April 1865, that Sherman's forces reached the pinnacle of war-making perfection in the "March to the Sea" and later through the Carolinas.

Those in the southern states with long memories may not feel free to admire a man who wounded the Confederate cause mortally; but his swift, sure actions brought a conclusive final chapter to the Civil War very rapidly. Many other generals, on both sides, wished to continue the fight in old ways and by old means, with no ending in sight. Finally at Bentonville, 130 years ago last spring, on North Carolina soil Sherman led one of his several detached armies to strike a glancing but telling blow at General Joe Johnson's tattered army. The Confederacy was finally sent reeling from the battlefield, and Sherman hardly paused in his march. A surrender document was signed between Sherman and Johnson, last of the Confederacy to give in, at Durham, April 26, 1865.

Liddell Hart was born in Paris, France, to English parents. Sent to England for education he attended the renowned St. Paul's School and then Christ College, Cambridge. His studies in history were interrupted by World War I; he was commissioned into a prominent British Army regiment and sent to France. Wounded in September 1915 and gassed after his return to the fighting front, he was no longer capable of active service and became an Army Training Officer. He began to write on mili-

tary subjects, achieving some reputation, and continued after the was until 1921, when he was sent to the Education Corps. His views were unpopular with higher-ups, but he continued through his writing to advocate reform of theories and tactics of the British Army.

Suffering ill health and, one suspects, the wrath of his superiors, he left the army in 1924 but took up writing on military subjects full-time. His first biography, SCIPIO AFRICANUS, THE OUTSTANDING ROMAN GENERAL, was published in 1926 and met with popular success. It was with this in hand that he began the Sherman biography, which appeared in the United States in 1929. At the same time he started a widely-read newspaper column on military subjects, unlike any written before.

Liddell Hart used the two major biographies, SCIPIO AFRICANUS and SHERMAN, to further advance the military theories of indirect approach. Between World Wars I and II he pressed the point forcefully and became extremely unpopular with the British Army and with his newspaper, THE TIMES of London. Excluded from positions of influence and let go by THE TIMES at the outset of World War II, he was later vindicated on his views of battle strategy when it was practiced by armies of Nazi Germany. Post World War II he concentrated on the history of German armies and generals, mainly ignoring other armies and commanders.

Subsequent to World War II around the world there have been textbook and practical examples of Liddell Hart's advanced theories. The 1967 Israeli triumph over Arab states is a consummate tribute to the "indirect approach" he advocated. Ygal Allon, the Israeli general, praised Liddell Hart as the "Captain who teaches Generals". He was finally recognized in his homeland, Britain, by knighthood in 1966. His death occurred in 1970, just 25 years ago.

Sherman, prime practical exponent of Liddell Hart's indirect approach, stayed in the U. S. Army after the Civil War, went west where the most exciting developments were taking place and became

involved with planning and overseeing of transcontinental railways. He was offered top command as General of the Army several times, but declined again and again, until finally prevailed upon by Washington friends and odd circumstances. Washington with its intrigues was not really the place for him, and he sought relief by travel to far-flung army posts and visits to the armed forces of European nations. He remained in the army until 1883, and his retirement was filled with attendance at social and military functions. Sherman was a popular hero and received invitations far more numerous than he could ever hope to fill. His death in 1891 was a sombre occasion, and his former foe, General Joe Johnson, the old soldier, was pallbearer to Sherman, five weeks before his own death.

If the Sherman biography can be critized, it concerns the more human side of the General. Seldom does the author give even a hint of the human frailties of which we all have some measure, more or less. One unsavory aspect of the Civil War, for example, is the use of strong alcoholic stimulation by all ranks. Some generals were the worst offenders, and there are suspicions that certain battles would have seen different outcomes had high level participants been sober at the time. Let us consider that Sherman, in the absence of any indication to the contrary, was one of the more abstemious. Seldom, throughout the entire book, is there a hint of criticism, and Liddell Hart writes laudatory phrases on every action Sherman undertakes, which seems a little less than objective. This is, given these few minor caveats, a very well researched and carefully written biography of an extremely competent military commander by an extremely well developed military analyst.

In summary, Liddell Hart probably heaped a little more effusive praise than necessary on Sherman (who probably would have resented it), but then his objective in writing about Sherman was to educate others in the military. In this regard most military historians of recent years will agree that he

apparently succeeded. Norman Schwarzkopf gave "indirect approach" a try in the Gulf War, and he succeeded too!

Jim Gunn