
*Cambridge
Plant &
Garden Club*

*Centennial
Time Line*

1889–1989

*A Centennial Time Line History
of the Plant Club, the Cambridge Garden Club,
and the Cambridge Plant & Garden Club*

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Digital Publication Note

Thirty-three years after compiling the club's centennial time line with Liz Goodfellow (Zagoroff), we are both still club members and I am still the club historian. In 1989, the time line was printed and distributed to all members with some extras reserved for future new members. We did not foresee a future in which members and others would expect to access documents on a club website. This year, the club's communications team, led by Jan Ferrara, has been moving to add more material to the club's website.

We decided that it was time to make the centennial time line available online, but the original was designed in software that is now obsolete. What to do? We are grateful that Joe Moore, who designed the original in 1989, scanned a paper copy using optical character recognition software. I corrected the inevitable garbles that come with OCR scanning, and also corrected a small number of errors in the original. I resisted the temptation to add entries, but in a few places, I have added information for context. Joe tweaked the design. Now the centennial time line can be viewed online.

A.L.

June 2022

Introduction

We have compiled this time line history for the club's centennial celebration as a way of sharing some of the treasures that exist in the club's archives in the Schlesinger Library. The finished product is much longer than we anticipated when we began the project. Indeed, it would be even longer had we not restrained ourselves from including every wonderful item that we uncovered in the archives.

The entries in the time line are drawn largely from the minutes of meetings. Sometimes we liked what we read so much that we have quoted directly; in all cases, we have tried to convey the feelings and words of the writer as closely as possible. While our time line is necessarily selective, we have chosen items which, taken together, draw a portrait of the club – of what has changed and of what has remained constant – since 1889. The club may have fewer botanists among its members today, but it has no shortage of members who are passionate about horticulture and gardening. Early members were not faced with the environmental challenges that involve us, but from the beginning, club members were in the vanguard in responding to issues as they came into perspective – from wildflower preservation to protection of public green spaces, from the hazards of household waste to the prevention of nuclear war. The focus of the club's collective energies has shifted over the years – from the study of botany to exhibitions created for Spring Flower Shows to planting at the Fresh Pond Reservation and the world beyond, but one thing has not changed – the club's wonderful teas. The teas, which are noted with pleasure over and over in the minutes of the club, have nourished and sustained many a friendship, and undoubtedly will continue to do so for as long as the club goes on.

We have learned many things about the club – the separate histories of the Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club and how the two came to join. We have come to know past members such as Mrs. J. Lowell Moore, Mrs. S.M. de Gozzaldi and Miss Dorothy Bartol, whose vivid personalities leap off the pages of the club's minutes. We hope that we have succeeded in sharing not only the anecdotes and achievements of the club but also in capturing the spirit of the club and the women who have belonged through these one hundred years.

A.L. & L.Z.

Centennial Time Line

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1889

On January 28, the first meeting of a new club takes place. The club, by vote named the Floricultural Society, is a group of 20 women who agree to meet fortnightly on alternate Mondays. Meetings are to begin at 3 o'clock at the house of one of the members and to close at half past four. The annual assessment is \$1.00, the money to be spent for periodicals, seeds, and postal cards. It is agreed to take the *English Garden*, *American Garden*, and *Garden and Forest*.

On February 11, the name of the club is changed from "Floricultural Society" to "Plant Club." During its first year, the club's program includes lectures on soil, insects, begonias, seed planting, and plants for winter bloom.

1890

Mrs. Ole Bull invites the ladies to take a cup of tea with her – the precedent for the social hour.

Mr. Walter Deane, a distinguished botanist, gives a talk on native ferns – the beginning of a series of lectures given by eminent authorities.

1891

An article on the Plant Club appears in the *Boston Advertiser*, the most prominent daily paper. Soon similar clubs are founded in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and South Berwick, Maine.

1892

Miss Elizabeth Bond, a member and teacher of botany, lectures on "Evidence of Organic Life as Found in Fossils."

Professor George Goodale speaks on "Principles Which Underlie Improvements in Native Plants."

1893

Miss Bond lectures on "The Life of the Plant – Its Work for Itself and for Us."

Mr. Pierce lectures on "Sensitiveness of Plants."

Mr. Greenman gives a talk on "Insectivorous Plants."

1894

Miss Bond lectures on "The Coal, Iron, and Petroleum Beds of America" and gives instruction on "Systematic Botany" and "The Classification of Plants."

1895

The club's secretary reports that "attendance has been very small and there has been a marked falling off in interest, possibly owing to the fact that we have had no President." At the end of the year, a former president, Mrs. Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, comes to the rescue and calls an executive meeting where it is decided to propose a slate of officers at the next annual meeting in January.

1896

After a winter's gathering devoted to an exchange of seedlings and interesting newspaper cuttings, the meeting becomes "informal over the tea cups." Since then, a "cup that cheers but does not inebriate" has been a regular part of the club's meetings.

The club holds two meetings on "Columbine – Our National Flower?" – a discussion begun four years earlier when Charles Sprague Sargent addressed the question at a club meeting.

1897

Plant Club members vote to donate their used horticulture magazines to the Cambridge Public Library – their first civic act as a club?

Miss Prince speaks on "Winter Aspects of Trees," "Water Plants," "Ferns," and "Catkins." At year's end, it is reported that Miss Prince has agreed to give an additional five talks for \$20.

1898

Mrs. J. Lowell Moore, a member and a botanist of distinction, gives five lectures on "The Purpose of the Flower."

The club holds an informal fall meeting on the subject of bulbs.

1899

The executive committee of the Plant Club is requested to look out for three kinds of members: "There is first the young and serious party who want to be improved even to the extent of listening to cuttings from newspapers. Then there is the grey headed and frivolous set who want to be amused, and the rank and file who submit to being improved if they are only also amused."

The club holds a tenth anniversary celebration on January 23, which five of the club's original members attend.

The Plant Club makes its first outside effort – helping a crippled boy in North Carolina who is much interested in plants. The club sends him books on botany and buys specimens of his pressed flowers.

Mrs. Moore resumes her talks on "The Function of the Flower."

Professor Goodale speaks on "The Water-Hyacinth Menace."

1900

The Plant Club greets the new century with a series of lectures by Miss Prince on "The Flora of the South Pacific."

At a member's meeting, the ladies agree "informal meetings are the most helpful and agreeable" in their pursuit of knowledge.

1901

Miss Prince lectures on “The Vegetable Caterpillar” and “Trees in Our Own Neighborhood.”

Professor Fernald speaks on “Adaptation of New England Flowers in Their Surroundings.”

Miss Cummings gives a talk on “Forestry in America.”

1902

Members hear a lecture on “herbs for the service of man and plants as food and ornament as well as those for medicine.” It is suggested by a member that “in the vegetative kingdom there are antidotes for all diseases if only we know them.”

Miss Cummings lectures on “The Brown Tail Moth.”

1903

Closer to home, the club begins to talk about the preservation of wildflowers, and all members enroll their names as members of the Society for the Protection of Native Plants – re-organized two decades later as the New England Wild Flower Preservation Society.

In the spring, the Plant Club gives seeds to the children of the East End Union, who do so well with their gardens that in the fall the club sends 26 geranium plants to them as prizes.

Professor Jackson speaks on “Protection of Our Native Plants.”

Miss Day, librarian of the Harvard Herbarium, speaks on “Some Old Botanists Beginning with the Garden of Eden.”

1904

Plant Club members discuss a question that goes to the heart of the club’s purpose – “How can the Club be made more practical, first for others, second for ourselves, or do we exist only for pleasure?”

Professor Goodale, head of the Harvard Botanic Garden, gives a lecture on “The New Science of Oecology – The Relation of Plants to Their Environment.” (Oecology, it is noted, is a word so new that it is not yet in the dictionary.)

Mrs. Sarah Warner Brooks, an early member, publishes a book – at the age of 83 – entitled *A Garden with House Attached* in which she relates her experiences with plants, indoors and out. It is voted to buy one copy for the club.

1905

Subjects addressed at a members’ meeting include the possible extinction of the mountain laurel in the Berkshires and the flourishing status of the mayflower in Plymouth.

Mr. Jackson Dawson, Superintendent of Grounds at the Arnold Arboretum, speaks on “Soil and Cold Frames.”

1906

Club members and guests undertake a spring excursion to the Hunnewell Estate in Wellesley – a “pleasure and success from beginning to end, the weather everything that could be desired for the day.”

Professor Bailey speaks on “The Establishment of the Observatory at Arequipa, Peru.”

1907

Professor Manning gives a talk illustrated with lantern slides on landscape design showing “how the most hopelessly unattractive house may be much improved” by planting the right kind of trees to insure an air of seclusion.

The Annual Meeting of the club is held at Mrs. Moore’s farm in Wayland on a “glorious” summer day.

Members urge greater simplicity in refreshments: “Two beverages and two solids – frills to be eliminated.”

1908

Mr. Walter Deane lectures on “Characteristic Flowering Plants of Our Sandy Beaches” and on “Beach and Marsh Plants.”

Mr. Cameron, Superintendent of the Harvard Botanic Garden, speaks on “Hints for Spring Planting.” Many copies are requested of his “most interesting and useful” paper.

1909

The Plant Club holds its first “large” effort for charity – a sale of “Seeds, Plants, Jellies, Candies and Cake” at the Misses Houghton’s, 58 Garden Street, to aid the Cambridge Hospital League (now Mount Auburn Hospital). Tea and Frappe are served, and the total sum raised, after expenses, is \$83.60.

1910

Professor Fernald speaks on “Edible Wild Plants” – or “weeds as we call them.”

The Plant Club begins to help the Margaret Fuller House by purchasing garden seeds for children – \$5 is voted, and annual donations continued for many years.

1911

Professor Jack of the Arnold Arboretum, gives a talk on “Studying Trees in Winter.”

Miss Cross, garden director of the Boston Social Union [a federation that included the Neighborhood House of Cambridge] speaks on “Children’s Gardens.” The club gives \$15 toward the installation of a children’s garden at the Neighborhood House.

1912

The club votes “that the passion flower be engraved on club stationery and that Mrs. Lee’s daughter be requested to make a design for engraver.” (However, it is not made until 51 years later.)

At a members’ meeting, the secretary of the club reads a news article lamenting the heavy losses of chestnuts and oaks and calling for the United States to shut its gates against foreign importations to protect American trees from disease.

1913

Mr. Sinnott of Harvard talks to the club about botanical investigations in Australia and New Zealand.

1914

Mrs. Strong gives a paper on trees as a crop which focuses on tree planting systems in the New Forest and Sherwood Forest in England. She notes that in America, trees cut by settlers had not been replanted and recommends that it is time to begin to do so.

1915

At the first fall meeting, before the nominating committee presented its list and after certain officers had attempted to resign, “an impromptu and lively vaudeville performance on the part of the ladies of the Club” occurs, just to let the “old staff” know in the kindest way that they are “as welcome as the babbling brook to go on and on forever.”

Plant Club members vote to bring war work to meetings. “From this time, fingers were busy.”

1916

Elizabeth Lidstone Bond writes “The Marriage of Flowers: A Fantasy for Botanists,” dedicated to children of all ages who love Old Fashioned Flowers and Flower Gardens.

1917

Professor Harris speaks to the club about world food shortages due to the war. He recommends planting “children’s gardens” and more food storage in the home (e.g., canning, eggs in water, iceless refrigeration). Tea follows and a walk in Mrs. Harris’s garden.

1918

Mrs. Herron [of the Cambridge Committee on Food Conservation] speaks on “Food Conservation.” She asks each woman to be “a committee of one to help in this way to win the war...We must stand guard until the next crop in order to feed both the armies abroad and ourselves at home...We should see to it that our maids work with us.”

1919

As the club returns to its routine following the armistice, the minutes note that “War proved an interruption even to our peaceable little band.”

Professor Osterhaut speaks on “What the Botanists Did During the War.” In closing, he tells the club that the United States is far behind Japan in “appropriating” scientific research.

1920

Mrs. Moore gives a paper on “Old Cambridge Gardens” featuring trees and flowers she knew in her girlhood.

1921

Mrs. Moore gives an encore of her talk on the trees and wild flowers she knew in Cambridge as a girl.

Mrs. de Gozzaldi reads a paper on “Perfumes of Flowers.”

Miss Mary Lee Burbank talks on the work of her cousin, Luther Burbank.

1922

Dr. Jack speaks on “Oak Trees and their Insect Enemies.”

1923

Mr. George E. Clement, forester, speaks on forestry and urges that we stop reckless waste of timber and conserve.

1924

Miss Peabody and Mrs. Drinkwater are chosen as delegates to a conference organized by the Boston Horticultural Association for the purpose of considering an affiliation of small horticultural and garden clubs with the parent.

Fanny Elizabeth Corne, charter member of the Plant Club, publishes “Ferns – Facts and Fancies about Them” in *American Fern Journal*. The paper is prepared for, and read to the Plant Club and the Scituate Garden Club.

1925

Mrs. Stone reports on a meeting of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society where the topic of a proposed quarantine on Dutch bulbs had been discussed. Thirty-seven garden clubs had protested to Washington about the quarantine which was expected to raise the cost of a dozen bulbs from \$.75 to \$3.50 – an increase that would amount to profiteering by dealers.

The club votes for affiliation with the Massachusetts Federation of Garden Clubs.

1926

The Plant Club accepts an invitation by the North Shore Club to join them at the Botanic Garden for a talk on rock and bulb gardens, followed by afternoon tea.

Miss Esther Bailey speaks on “Mistakes in Gardening,” followed by a “social tea.”

1927

Mrs. Moore shares knowledge gained during a trip to the Southwest in a talk entitled "Plants of the Desert."

1928

A special meeting of the Plant Club is held in the campaign for the Bill Board Law and \$100 is raised.

Mrs. King, as a member of the Executive Committee of the New England Wild Flower Preservation Society, makes a report urging the adoption of the columbine as our national flower.

Mrs. Moore makes a motion that the club send a protest to the Highway Commission against the use of filling stations on the new Cape Cod Race Highway.

1929

The Plant Club wins a first prize for its collection of house plants at the Centennial Plant and Flower Exhibition of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. The club's exhibition – a reproduction of a window in the home of Mrs. Elmer H. Bright, Jr. at 165 Brattle Street – is designed by Mrs. Bright, Mrs. Henry S. Hall, and Mrs. Theodore L. Storer.

1930

The Plant Club plants three elm trees on the Cambridge Common, one for each 100 years of the life of the Commonwealth, in cooperation with the Tercentenary Committee of the Massachusetts Forestry Association. (During World War I, barracks had been erected on the Common and many trees had been destroyed.)

The Plant Club makes a model backyard in connection with Better Homes Week at the Children's Museum [The museum was located at 5 Jarvis Street, near the University Museum.]

Mrs. Henry Hall shows two reels of moving pictures of her summer in Montana and her trip to Algiers and across the Desert. "The audience was very enthusiastic and begged for more."

1931

The Massachusetts Horticultural Society awards a medal to the Plant Club in recognition of its status as the oldest garden club in the country.

Members from the Plant Club and later the Cambridge Garden Club – Mrs. R. Ammi Cutter, Mrs. James B. Munn, Mrs. Ludlow Griscom, Mrs. Cecil Smith, Mrs. Arthur Sutherland, Mrs. Robert L. Goodale – begin an involvement with landscaping and gardening at Christ Church Cambridge, an involvement which continued into the 1980s.

The club is represented by Mrs. Henry Tudor and Miss Stewart on a committee of prominent Cantabrigians who worked for the remainder of the decade to restore the neglected Old Burying Ground in Cambridge to its former beauty.

1932

The Plant Club becomes interested in restoring and improving the Cambridge Common. The club's Conservation Committee is concerned that cars park solidly beside the fence around the Common, giving an unattractive and commercial look to the historic spot. Conservation Committee members Mrs. John S. Penman and Mrs. L. Eugene Emerson feel that something should be done to hide the parked cars and come up with the idea of a shrubbery border – not based on any historic precedent. Though a border of shrubs inside the fence seems a very expensive proposition, it is decided to start in a very simple way and cover only a little ground every year. The total cost for the first year of work is estimated at \$60. (Realizing that shrubs with earth balled around their roots is out of the question, the club purchases dormant shrubs, not very tall, with good roots. "It is amazing how many healthy shrubs, if you pick your nursery carefully, you can get for an average of \$75 a year." In 1942, for example, the club purchases 278 shrubs for \$78, and except for the barberry, everything three to four feet high.) Plants in the border include those that "grow in Cambridge like weeds" – Japanese barberry, snowberry, bugle, myrtle, Siberian iris, weigelia, high bush cranberry, Van Houtte spirea, deutzia, philadelphus coronarius, flowering dogwood, green-stemmed forsythia, violet periwinkle, fringed bleeding heart.

The planting effort at the Common continues for 20 years despite the disadvantage of no water supply, the feet of students and others who "ignore the paths and leap over the fence and into the our shrub planting," and men employed by the city who "rake the beds and prune the shrubs a good deal too hard."

1933

The New England Wild Flower Preservation Society asks the Plant Club to hold a competition for Christmas wreaths with the only restriction that no holly, laurel or ground pine be used. Ten wreaths are dutifully produced – despite the members' lack of experience – and one – by Mrs. Goodale – is sent on to Horticultural Hall for entry in a competition with wreaths from all over the state. Mrs. Goodale's wreath receives an honorable mention.

Mrs. Hall lectures on collecting and growing orchids and shows slides and motion pictures of the regions in Mexico where she collected many of her specimens.

1934

The club gives a vote of thanks to Mrs. Tudor for her donation of a row of Norway maples in the Old Cambridge Cemetery in the name of the Plant Club.

The club holds an exhibition of home-grown plants which attracts 25 entries, ranging from Mrs. Hall's enormous euphorbia to Miss Chapman's tiny marigold.

1935

At a meeting entitled “What Not To Do in the Garden,” members are advised not to plant more than they can water, spray and weed, and to avoid “funny gnomes” and “workmen who don’t know weeds from flowers.”

The club endorses a bill to establish a Committee on Roadside Improvement. Mrs. Hall gives an account of her trip to Africa, illustrated with slides and motion pictures of the Victoria Falls and pygmies in the Belgian Congo.

1936

The Plant Club enjoys an informative visit to the Arnold Arboretum with Mr. Donald Wyman.

1937

The club holds an exhibition of May baskets, with 27 entries, “showing a great variety of sizes and types, and great charm.”

At the first fall meeting, members exhibit arrangements for mantelpieces. An arrangement by Mrs. Hall featuring bearberries and a model pheasant wins first place and roses and chrysanthemums in a black vase takes second.

1938

On May 20, the first meeting of the Cambridge Garden Club is held at the Cambridge Boat Club, after a very indoor garden picnic lunch given by a “self appointed executive committee.” The charter members describe themselves as mothers whose children have reached school age, and who are interested in developing whatever garden space they can command. (It seemed quite obvious that never could there possibly be room in the long established Plant Club for so many eager, but less experienced gardeners.) Several long-lived traditions begin during the club’s first year 1936 – inviting husbands to meetings from time to time, serving wonderful teas, and gathering together in December to make Christmas greens. Within months of its founding, the Cambridge Garden Club is thrown into its first conservation project – helping in the clean up and restoration after the Hurricane of 1938.

Mrs. Thorvald Ross gives a talk to the Plant Club on her trip with her family (including her daughter, future Plant Club member Pat Pratt) to Iceland, Norway, Spitzbergen, Denmark, Russia and the Baltic countries.

By the end of the decade, the Plant Club increasingly refers to itself as the Cambridge Plant Club.

1939

The Cambridge Plant Club celebrates its 50th birthday on January 20. On this occasion, memories of the past 50 years of the Plant Club and Cambridge life are read by Elizabeth Harris, Elizabeth Bond, Fanny Elizabeth Corne, and Jane Newell Moore.

The Plant Club fills in gaps in the border at the Cambridge Common caused by trees uprooted in the hurricane of 1938 and destruction caused by a truck plunging through the railing.

1940

A club member draws attention to the slaughter of owls, cormorants and bald eagles in the South due to the “present millinery mode.”

Members hear a talk about the work of the New England Wild Flower Preservation Society.

1941

The Cambridge Plant Club donates its “library” to the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture for Women (now part of the Rhode Island School of Design).

1942

The Cambridge Plant Club enjoys a visit to the Sandy Valley Daffodil Garden [in Dedham] – just before wartime gas rationing goes into effect.

Mrs. Robert Storer reads a paper on “Chemurgy” telling of the wonder science can do with waste materials.

Other talks for the year include the topics of victory gardens and food canning, followed on one occasion by “war tea” which turned out to be “delicious” cocoa.

1943

Mr. Fletcher Steele talks to the Cambridge Plant Club (along with seven other dubs) about China, its gardens and people.

1944

The Cambridge Plant Club begins a campaign to control ragweed in Cambridge – a project which includes pulling “literally hundreds of weeds” as well as sending literature to Cambridge property owners and those responsible for parks, cemeteries, playgrounds and hospital grounds.

WWII

The Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club join together often for meetings and projects. Members of both dubs are active in special war work growing war gardens; serving in hospitals, the Red Cross and mobile canteens; working at jobs in such places as a Raytheon factory and the Anti-Aircraft Control Center (“very hush hush”); and making surgical dressings. Many members give up parts of their homes and their servants to the war effort.

1945

After the war, the clubs donate seeds to foreign countries and give support to the Blue Star Memorial Highway planned to cross the United States.

Members of the Cambridge Plant Club begin work on the Garden Club Federation (GCF) horticultural guidebook for automobiles, making notes of trees and plantings by roadsides according to season.

Botanist Miss Edith Scamman talks to the Cambridge Plant Club about “Collecting in Alaska for the Gray Herbarium.”

In May a ragweed clearing week is planned with Boy and Girl Scout helpers.

1946

Professor A.S. Pease speaks on “Some Experiences with Wild Plants.”

The City takes over the Plant Club’s ragweed control project.

1947

The Cambridge Plant Club enters the Spring Flower Show for the first time since 1939 and receives an award.

Mrs. L. Eugene Emerson returns from a GCF Conservation Day with the news that there is hope for the elm tree – spray with DDT.

Katrina Moore gives a paper to the Cambridge Garden Club entitled “Fruits and Berries in Cambridge Gardens.”

1948

The Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club take on the project of planting the grounds of the Cambridge Community Center on Howard Street. (The clubs obtain much of the plant material from the Harvard Botanic Garden on Linnaean Street which was being given up to make way for a Harvard housing project.)

Plant Club President, Miss Lois Lilley Howe, brings to the attention of members an article in *Horticulture* which describes a club in Athens, Georgia as the first garden club in the country. It is decided that Miss Howe will send the Athens club a photograph of a medal given to the Cambridge Plant Club by the Massachusetts Horticulture Society to commemorate its status as the “first of its kind.”

1949

The Cambridge Plant Club celebrates its 60th birthday in January with a program prepared by members. Mrs. L. Eugene Emerson speaks of members who had died since the birthday celebration of 1939 and Mrs. Herbert G. Magoun lights a candle as Mrs. Emerson reads a quotation from Shakespeare characterizing each member. Miss Lois Lilley Howe reads a “brief informative, and witty history” of the Club. Mrs. Edward S. King gives “memory flashes” of several members, and speaks of two important projects, the planting on the Common and exhibits in the Spring Flower Shows of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. The members then enjoy a charade in three scenes, with Mrs. Thomas Evans Baxter and Mrs. A. Lawrence Hopkins in the first as two ladies of Athens, Georgia in 1891; Mrs. Cecil H. Smith and Mrs. Cutter as the Misses Hayes and Mrs. Goodale as Mrs. Hayes in

Cambridge in 1889; and Mrs. John Brooks for the third scene as Dr. Weed of the Department of the Exterior, greeting us on our 60th anniversary. The ladies then enjoy tea, which is “truly a party tea with ice cream in flower shapes, and a beautiful tiered cake decorated with passion flowers surrounded by 60 candles.”

A Garden Club Federation meeting is held in Cambridge to honor the Cambridge Plant Club’s 60th birthday with a buffet luncheon at the Cambridge Boat Club and lecture entitled “Geraniums” by Miss Dorcas Brigham, of the Village Hill Nurseries, Williamsburg, a “nationally known authority on house plants, specializing in geraniums.” The meeting is planned so that the afternoon would be “free for attendance” at the spring flower show.

The Cambridge Plant Club receives an “A” Women’s Committee Award at the Spring Flower Show for a bee garden inspired by talks by and with Mrs. Hollis Webster of Lexington.

1950

Mrs. Emerson reports to the Cambridge Plant Club that “the new gas in our homes is said to be much better for people but more destructive to plant life.” She urges that we “open our windows and give plants more fresh air.”

1951

The Mrs. John S. Ames Cup is awarded to the Cambridge Plant Club for the greatest horticultural excellence in the Garden Club section of the Spring Flower Show for a terrace garden featuring Oregon alpine brought east by Jessie Eastham.

1952

The Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts presents a certificate to the Cambridge Plant Club in recognition of “sound and attractive plantings by the club and its members for the greater beauty of public lands and church properties.”

1953

Lois Lilley Howe reads her “History of the Plant Club” to the Cambridge Historical Society.

1954

The Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club begin talks about joining the Garden Club of America (GCA). Since it is considered unlikely that the GCA would admit two clubs from Cambridge in a short space of time, the Garden Club deferred to the Plant Club the option of joining the GCA with the Garden Club or on its own. Only if the Plant Club does not want to join the GCA would the Garden Club pursue admission itself. Although the Plant Club initially votes not to join the GCA, discussions on the issue continue through the 1950s.

The Plant Club’s planting program on the Cambridge Common ends, the club having planted over 3,500 shrubs in a border that extended all around the Common except on Waterhouse Street.

1955

At a joint meeting of the Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club, members hear a talk on native plants for the garden, including a recommendation that young leaves be dusted with DDT to control pests.

Mrs. Ross speaks on her “Around the World Trip.”

1956

The Cambridge Plant Club hears a talk on Urban Renewal – a term coined only two years before.

The Plant Club is asked by the City of Cambridge to help with plantings at schools, the Library, and the American Red Cross [then at 9 Waterhouse Street].

1957

Mrs. George W. Cottrell, Jr., supported by the Cambridge Plant Club, begins a fight to preserve a mile long stretch of wilderness from the Eliot Bridge to the Watertown Arsenal – a 36-acre parcel known as Hell’s Half Acre – as the site for a wildlife sanctuary, a “buffer of silence” in the city. The battle pits “nature lovers” against highway planners.

Mrs. Edwin T. Green wins first prize in the “display of camellias” category at the Spring Flower Show.

1958

The wildlife sanctuary proposed by Mrs. Cottrell for Hell’s Half Acre is voted down by the state senate.

The Cambridge Plant Club decides to assemble the possessions and important documents of the club and deposit them in the Houghton Library at Harvard.

1959

The Cambridge Plant Club wins the Ames Cup for horticultural excellence for a Spring Flower Show exhibit featuring a slatted porch housing a collection of shade-loving plants.

Mayor McNamara endorses the Anti-Litterbug Campaign of the Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club and proclaims April 19–25 as Clean-Up Week in Cambridge.

1960

The Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club award prizes for the cleanest yard and the best flower garden to two Western Avenue residents.

1961

The Cambridge Plant Club wins the Mrs. Edwin Sibley Webster Cup at the Spring Flower Show for an exhibit of a secluded area where the city dweller may relax and indulge his hobby of horticulture for most of the year. The garden features a

crabapple tree [later planted in Martha Lawrence's garden on Willard Street] in blossom, with a ground cover of European ginger (then a little-known perennial) and bulbs that can be replaced by summer flowers or salad vegetables, as fancy dictates.

1962

The Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club set up a joint committee to reclaim Blacks Nook in the Fresh Pond Reservation – a civic project that is too ambitious for either club to undertake on its own. (Blacks Nook is a small pond that was once connected to Fresh Pond, but had been completely closed off, and then came to be used for dumping, city and unofficial.) The two clubs feel that the reclamation of Blacks Nook would give the city a naturalistic area of native trees and plants, involving minimum maintenance and suitable for informal recreation. The committee consists of Ruth Birkhoff, Barbara Paine, and Pat Pratt from the Plant Club and Lizanne Chapin, Ruth Cutter, and Ledlie Woolsey from the Garden Club. [Mrs. Cutter was also a member of the Plant Club.]

1963

During April, the City of Cambridge Department of Public Works takes 93 truckloads of debris (including refrigerators, sofas, old cars, and tires) from Blacks Nook and plants 40 pines and swamp maples contributed by the Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club.

The Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club set up a special account – the Plant and Garden Clubs Tree Fund – to be held by the City of Cambridge for the continuation of tree planting, gifts to which would be tax deductible.

The Cambridge Plant Club designs a garden showing a wild area on the Oregon coast for its exhibit at the Spring Flower Show. Plant material is imported from Oregon under the guidance of Jessie Eastham.

Catherine Hammond, a member of the Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club, draws the passion flower for the Plant Club seal and the camellia for the Garden Club – drawings later combined for the seal of the merged clubs.

The Cambridge Garden Club, under the “guiding spirit” of Ruth Cutter, begins a four-year project aimed at restoring the garden at the Lee-Nichols House.

1964

The Cambridge Plant Club celebrates its 75th birthday on January 28 with a party tea. Mrs. Andrew Leighton, Mrs. Herbert Pratt and Mrs. Ammi Cutter – dressed in appropriate costumes – gave a simulated meeting of the club in the 1890s.

Souvenirs and awards are displayed together with books written by members and a scrapbook of clippings and photographs. After the meeting, members return home through a “fierce” snowstorm to dress for dinner at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thorvald Ross.

The Cambridge Garden Club hears Miss Esther L. Lovejoy lecture on “Ferns as a Hobby.”

The Cambridge Plant Club joins resistance to an MDC project to build underpasses on Memorial Drive at Western Avenue, River Street and Boylston Street where the Anderson Memorial Bridge crosses the Charles River – a project which threatens removal of more than 70 of the sixty-year-old sycamore trees at Boylston Street, a loss of recreational area and the isolation of the city from the river by turning Memorial Drive into a highway.

1965

On January 4, the Cambridge Plant Club votes unanimously to apply for membership in The Garden Club of America and to invite the Cambridge Garden Club to join with them in doing so – the conclusion of a lengthy decision process skillfully guided by Ruth Birkhoff.

The Cambridge Garden Club votes in March to accept the invitation of the Cambridge Plant Club to join with them in applying to the GCA. Although the Plant Club and the Garden Club thus determine to become one club, they plan to operate as two divisions – the “Planters” and the “Gardeners.” Members who belong to both clubs are faced with a potentially difficult choice, but fortunately the Planters and the Gardeners share many meetings and activities, including the Garden Club’s “nicest” meeting, the annual Christmas Greensmaking and Tea held at The Cambridge Homes on Mount Auburn Street.

1966

The Cambridge Plant Club and the Cambridge Garden Club formally merge as the Cambridge Plant & Garden Club (CP&GC) with the following purpose: “...to increase knowledge and to stimulate interest in all elements of horticulture, botany and design, and to support conservation and community improvement.”

Dr. I.M. Lamb lectures on “Scuba Diving for Sea Plants in Antarctica” at an evening meeting with husbands.

Dr. Revelle lectures on the exploding world population – not a problem he concluded since we will soon colonize the moon. Recording Secretary Dorothy Bartol comments in her minutes on the meeting that nevertheless “it is wise to consider our natural resources, cherish and protect them for they won’t be able to do it for themselves.”

1967

The CP&GC hosts a garden tour and luncheon in the fall for the admissions committee of the GCA. The “awaited day came, formidable in anticipation and delightful in the event...in every sense a Red Letter Day.” One month later, “Nothing from the GCA alas.”

The club designs a garden for a backdoor utility and work area for the Spring Flower Show.

The CP&GC, with the help of the City of Cambridge and the Boy and Girl Scouts, wins a \$200 Civic Beautification Award from the Sears Roebuck Foundation for its work at Blacks Nook in the Fresh Pond Reservation.

At the urging of Pat Pratt, a committee is appointed to investigate the restoration of the gardens at Longfellow House, and Diane Kostial McGuire, a noted landscape architect, is hired to research the history of the gardens and to prepare a restoration plan.

1968

The CP&GC receives a letter of acceptance from the GCA in January.

The club's change in status receives no comment at Husbands' Night in February. "The most remarkable thing about the whole evening was the unruffled calm that gripped us all...No whisper of GCA approval caused pulses to quicken or hearts to pound apparently. It is a good and worthy tradition not to gloat, but it is so nice to be wanted."

The club begins work on a "researched" restoration at the Longfellow Garden. The effort involves some \$8,000 – a sum required for pruning and feeding of trees, removing weed trees, planting an oval rose garden with the roses of Longfellow's time, rebuilding trellises and arbors, grading and installation of a lawn, re-delineating paths, and restoring Longfellow's boxwood garden.

The Gardeners have their last Annual Meeting in March. "We could have gone on listening and asking questions all day, but our appetites, so whetted by the mention of dandelion dainties, impelled us to the tea table, where watercress sandwiches and other sophisticated delicacies subdued our hunger. And now my last minutes have been scribbled, as always, with love and respect, Dorothy Bartol." However, Gardener and Planter meetings continue into the 1970s, and fortunately, Dorothy Bartol continues to write minutes.

The club presents to the businessmen of Harvard Square area a 23-foot Austrian pine planted in Brattle Square. The City installs piping which will keep the tree's roots watered and its needles clean – Cambridge's first example of "advanced maintenance horticulture."

1969

CP&GC proposal for the restoration of Longfellow House Gardens is chosen as one of three to be presented for the Founders Fund Award of The Garden Club of America.

1970

CP&GC's exhibit of a culinary garden at the Spring Flower Show wins an A+ and a Pennsylvania Horticultural Society medal.

Separate Gardeners and Planters meetings continue, but the 1970–1971 season "finds us welcomed invaders of each others sections."

Pat Pratt and her brother John H. Ross give the City of Cambridge a small green park with a fountain at the corner of Craigie Street and Brattle Street – a joint project in which the City provided labor and some materials and the donors provided the land, the design, the fountain, and plant material.

1971

During the year, the club hears talks on the Sierra Club, the future of the Charles River, and a members' panel on "Ancient Cambridge Rivulets."

In her notes for the Annual Meeting, Dorothy Bartol comments, "We are of course a garden club and the achievements of our working committee in advancing our knowledge of horticulture and civic responsibilities and the content of the lectures are of greatest importance, but we do enjoy all those exquisite and delicious teas."

1972

Preparations begin for the GCA Zone Meeting to be hosted by the CP&GC in 1973. "We stand in our sneakers on an exciting launching pad, gung-ho for next spring's Zone I meeting and assured of a place in the stars with Jean Green on Mission Control."

1973

In May, the CP&GC serves as host for the Zone I Meeting of the GCA. Meetings are held at Horticultural Hall, the Cronkhite Center and Hilles Library; teas are served at Longfellow House and the Lee-Nichols House; visits are made to members' gardens, the Ware Collection of Glass Flowers, Blacks Nook and the Mount Auburn Cemetery; and GCA guests are wined and dined at members' homes and the Museum of Science.

1974

The CP&GC joins with the Chestnut Hill Garden Club and Beacon Hill Garden Club to host a well-publicized luncheon for John Sears, the MDC Director, to urge "cleaning up" the Charles River.

1975

The club begins the fall with a talk on the Cambridge Open Space Master Plan, followed by a tour of Cambridge parks and open spaces. Mary Kennedy urges the club to take on a civic project related to open spaces.

The CP&GC signs an agreement with the National Park Service which specifies that the club will undertake supervision of the care of the garden and grounds at Longfellow National Historic Site. Under this agreement, the club takes responsibility for hiring a gardener and buying plant material, which it does until 1978 when the Park Service takes over and the club assumes an advisory role.

1976

On February 2, despite a chill factor of -40 degrees Fahrenheit, thirty members gather for a talk by Phebe Leighton about vegetable gardening in the city. “The talk was followed by a fine tea, in the style to which we have become accustomed. We departed agreeing that members meetings are often the best.”

The club holds a workshop on “Ferns” with Joseph Jennings at Wellesley College. Jean Green, award-winning flower arranger, shares a secret – to keep a camellia blossom in prime condition for two weeks or more, put it in a plastic bag, blow into the bag so that the plastic doesn’t touch the petals, seal and store in the fridge.

1977

The club’s Annual Dinner departs from the traditional catered affair and takes an experimental form in which hors d’œuvres, drinks and dinner are provided by members. The experiment is pronounced a success – all expenses are covered, eliminating a “substantial burden” from the club’s budget.

CP&GC submits a proposal for the Founders Fund Award of The Garden Club of America for the preservation of the Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants at Harvard’s Botanic Museum.

1978

The Fresh Pond Committee of the CP&GC, chaired by Mary Kennedy, produces a report entitled, “Fresh Pond Reservation Horticultural Review 1978,” as a contribution to the continuing renovation of Fresh Pond. The study includes detailed recommendations for replanting and upgrading each one of the Reservation’s 14 areas as well as a list of suitable native and naturalized plant material.

The club’s second self-catered Annual Dinner realizes a profit of \$502. Jean Onesti, on behalf of the Dinner Committee, urges that this money be contributed to the CP&GC Tree Fund and that fundraising be one of the goals of future Annual Dinners. A new tradition is started, providing the Tree Fund with more than \$6,000 over the next decade.

1979

In March the CP&GC presents a proposal to the Water Board “to improve Fresh Pond by screening the Reservation from Concord Avenue as simply and naturally as possible without destroying the openness of the Pond area and to provide easy and safe pedestrian access.” The scope of the proposed work includes planting of approximately 75 trees and small shrubs (maples, ash, sourwood, sycamore, shad, juniper) similar to those already established on the Reservation, landfill to facilitate the planting of screening trees, installation of a new all-weather pedestrian path, removing excess blacktop and reseeding. The club’s proposal includes a \$5,000 gift and a matching block grant from the City of Cambridge.

The Cambridge City Council goes on record congratulating the CP&GC for its “excellent job in planting bushes and shrubs along the Fresh Pond Reservation on

the Alewife Brook Parkway which has proven to be most pleasing for pedestrians as well as vehicular traffic.”

1980

The CP&GC achieves “a triple crown”:

The Founders Fund of The Garden Club of America – \$7,500 – for the replanting of a long neglected wetland meadow area in the Fresh Pond Reservation. (The CP&GC proposal is one of 82 submitted to the GCA in 1980.) Trees and shrubs to be planted include red cedar (*juniperus virginiana*), shad blow (*amelanchier canadensis*), staghorn sumac (*rhus typhina*), sweetbay magnolia (*magnolia virginiana*), fragrant sumac (*rhus aromatica*), and winterberry (*ilex verticillata*);

The Wheatland Bowl for horticultural excellence for a window of edible plants at the Spring Flower Show;

A Certificate of Merit at the GCA plant exchange for Pixie Hsia’s *prunus tomentosa*.

The club program announced in the fall by Angie Wylie emphasizes the Cambridge scene because “there are many changes that we should be aware of.”

Recognizing that some members now work full-time, the program varies meeting times so that all members will have a chance to attend.

The club’s Annual Dinner stars a fiery dessert presentation, “Horticultural Crêpes Flambé Cantabrigia,” by Julia Child with blow torch in hand.

1981

The club introduces an annual cocktail meeting to which husbands are invited. The talk is about the new Red Line extension to Alewife.

At an executive committee meeting, it is noted that seven club members sit on city boards, including the Water Board and the Committee on Public Planting. Supported by the club, Dorothy LeMessurier launches a conservation newsletter, a summary of pressing environmental concerns, sent to members, conservation representatives of The Garden Club of America and the Massachusetts Federation of Garden Clubs, other clubs and individuals. At the same time, she urges CP&GC members to write letters to members of Congress on “heavy” paper about three urgent issues – acid rain, water pollution and clean air.

1982

In the spring, several members of the club join together to urge the CP&GC to adopt nuclear disarmament as the most important conservation issue of our times. In October, the GCA Bulletin publishes an article in which the CP&GC urges other clubs to inform themselves on the consequences of nuclear war.

The club prints Pat Pratt’s painting of the *magnolia virginiana* on postcards to memorialize CP&GC’s chosen endangered species.

The CP&GC participates in the City's tree planting program by voting to buy 12 lindens to be planted on Mount Auburn Street and a *sophora* for the lawn of The Cambridge Homes.

1983

Dorothy LeMessurier is awarded the GCA Zone I Conservation Award for her newsletter as well as the GCF of Massachusetts Conservation Education Award.

The CP&GC mails a letter to every GCA club president and conservation chairman asking that they urge the Executive Committee of the GCA to take a public stand against nuclear war.

Seven members of the CP&GC represent the club at an international conference on the long-term worldwide biological consequences of nuclear war, "The World After Nuclear War," in Washington, DC – a forum at which the concept of "nuclear winter" is first proposed.

1984

Members and guests attending the club's cocktail meeting hear a talk by Douglas Foy of the Conservation Law Foundation focusing on sewage disposal in Boston Harbor.

Members visit the Cambridge Water Department and walk around Fresh Pond to view the club's plantings.

Under the auspices of a GCA study project on water, Pat Pratt and Frances Webb design a poster to explain the concept of nuclear winter in visual terms. The poster wins a special prize in a Zone I competition and is displayed at the GCA Annual Meeting in Nashville.

The club holds a May garden tour featuring the gardens of Angie Wylie, Suzanne Dworsky, Emily McFarland, Elizabeth Almy, Rebecca Leland, Virginia Deknatel, Dorothy LeMessurier, Mimi Truslow, Esther Pullman, Olivia Constable, Nancy Aiello, Dorothy Vagts, Katharine Willey, and Frances Webb.

1985

The club raises \$1,300 for a Centennial Fund with luncheon and evening showings of a film about Monet's garden at Giverny. The day is a "bright event in a cold wet spring."

Helen Brooks is instrumental in arranging the move of the club's archives from the Houghton Library to the Schlesinger Library to facilitate producing a club history for the centennial.

The club holds a fall tour of members' gardens hosted by Ruth Birkhoff, Olivia Constable, Charlotte Sorenson, Dorothy LeMessurier, Mimi Truslow, Martha Lawrence, Rose Norton, Tacie Belle Hale, Ruth Glover, Barbara Paine and Rebecca Bradford.

1986

Esther Pullman organizes a program of regular conservation discussions and horticulture workshops, including an annual “bulb workshop.”

The CP&GC receives a contribution for a planting at the Fresh Pond Reservoir in memory of Margaret Thompson. This gift allows the club to plant two groupings of trees and shrubs, including cockspur hawthorn, American larch, red mulberry, and spicebush.

The CP&GC supports the City of Cambridge in its desire to establish a sister city relationship with a Soviet city.

The club lends its support to a “public space partnership” of public, private and nonprofit groups seeking to renovate Winthrop Park – a green space in continuous use since the 1630s when it was designated as a market square, the first in Cambridge and one of the oldest in the country. Members participate in the design review process, and the club contributes \$2,000 to the Winthrop Park Trust, an amount that is doubled by individual gifts from club members.

The Chestnut Hill Garden Club invites the CP&GC to a fall walking tour of members’ gardens.

1987

The club’s Annual Dinner recalls the Italian Renaissance with an illustrated talk by Reuben Rainey on “Villa Lante: The Garden as Myth.”

CP&GC holds a special conservation meeting at WGBH/Channel 2 with the Chestnut Hill Garden Club and other friends from the GCA and GCF on the State of the World – a ten-part TV series in development at WGBH. A “water tasting,” part of the refreshments for the evening, is the source of some amusement for club members find it difficult to discern any taste difference between city waters and more expensive bottled waters.

Club members make a two-day trip to Long Island, arranged by Anne Mazlish and Emily McFarland, where members visit Old Westbury Gardens, Planting Fields Arboretum, and other public and private gardens and enjoy warm and gracious hospitality.

The CP&GC takes action to support a household hazardous waste disposal day in Cambridge by designing a symbol and by distributing flyers.

Bobbie Norfleet speaks on “Photography and Visions of the American Landscape.” The CP&GC invites the Beacon Hill Garden Club, the Cambridge Boat Club and other friends concerned with the Charles River landscape to a talk by Cynthia Zaitzevsky, architectural and landscape historian, on the history of the Charles River Embankment in Boston and Cambridge. Cocktails and hors d’œuvres follow for over 200 guests at the Cambridge Boat Club.

1988

The CP&GC and the Cambridge Historical Society sign an agreement under which the CP&GC will provide “expertise in the research and development of a plan for the grounds” of the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House at 159 Brattle Street.

The CP&GC joins a newly-formed advisory committee on hazardous waste disposal at the invitation of the Cambridge Department of Health and Hospitals. Club members develop publicity materials for the hazardous waste disposal day and volunteer at the collection site.

The North Shore Garden Club invites the CP&GC to a private tour of three alpine and rock gardens in spring bloom, followed by tea.

In celebration of its approaching centennial, the club plants a European beech (*fagus sylvatica*) on the grounds of the Cambridge Public Library, which coincidentally is celebrating the 100th anniversary of its Central Building.

The Annual Dinner takes the club to the France of Louis XIV with a talk by Reuben Rainey on “A Promenade of Illusion: André le Nôtre’s Vaux-le-Vicomte.”

1989

The club holds a Centennial Luncheon on January 23 at Havenhurst on Coolidge Hill – the house where the first meeting of the Plant Club was held 100 years ago.

The club’s centennial gift of a European Beech at the Cambridge Public Library is dedicated on April 6 with a celebration organized by the City.

The Cambridge City Council officially commends the CP&GC for its “many contributions to the improvement of environmental quality in Cambridge during its first 100 years.”

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Senate presents the CP&GC with an Official Citation in recognition of its 100 years of working to provide green spaces in the City of Cambridge.

All six of the plants which the club sends to the Plant Exchange at the GCA Annual Meeting win an Award of Merit.

Club members devote the year to preparation of a centennial volume containing essays, photographs, a time line and a list of members going back to 1889 .

The club concludes its centennial celebration with a festive Annual Dinner on December 11.

Sources

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We would like to thank the club members who have reviewed this time line for us through its draft stages. Their comments were invaluable. We would also like to thank Joseph Moore for his help in designing and producing the finished product in time for the club's Centennial Dinner.

