



MARJEM WARD JACKSON

Historic Arkansas Gardens



The gardens at the Little Rock Visitor Information Center at Historic Curran Hall are designed specifically to showcase ante-bellum garden style and plants. The design intent was not to restore the original garden, nor to create a period landscape with a working kitchen garden and orchard. Instead, the intent was to use plants that were growing in this area when the house was constructed in 1842-1843 in order to create a landscape that would be attractive to Little Rock's present day visitors at all times of the year. This fits the description of a historic garden: some plants original to the site; all of the plants representative of the period – in this case mid-nineteenth century Little Rock; and the layout typical of gardens of the era. The horticulture includes a wide variety of native species with interesting stories, like the Cherokee rose, Count Pulaski viburnum, and the Arkansas Black apple.

The Marjem Ward Jackson Historic Arkansas Gardens honors a dedicated gardener and civic leader. Mrs. Jackson was born in England, Arkansas, in 1912 and was raised with an appreciation of flowers and trees, which lasted throughout her lifetime. She was a past-president of the Little Rock Garden Club and worked tirelessly in her own garden as long as she was able. She served her city and state in many ways, including

being a long-time member of the Junior League of Little Rock and serving as president of three other civic organizations: the Colonial Dames of



America in the State of Arkansas, the Aesthetic Club, and the Edelweiss Study Club.

These historic gardens, given to the City of Little Rock by Mrs. Jackson's family, comprise three areas. In the front lawn, a clipped boxwood *parterre* lines the front walk. Mixed flowering shrubs define the outer boundaries of the front lawn and echo the symmetry of the Greek Revival house. Bulbs and colorful seasonal flowers are added beneath the shrubs and inside the *parterre*. Camellias mark the outside corners, with one being original to the site. (Foundation plantings did not become widely used until the twentieth century.) Crepe myrtle *allees* define the east and west sides of the house and usher visitors to the rear area, defined by a white picket fence.

Historic crepe myrtles, original to the site, were moved to the rear near the original office building. The playhouse is surrounded by an extensive border garden, containing flowers for cutting as well as a variety of fragrant herbs and other plants that attract butterflies and bees. The antique roses, salvaged from the original plantings, are arranged on the east fence. Some heirloom roses are located in the playhouse garden. Others line the brick walk along the side of the new two-story brick building that is constructed on the footprint of the original kitchen. Both brick and flagstone continue to be used for paths, some edged with boxwood. Flowering vines accent the picket fence. Flowers fill the oval bed in the visitor parking area, echoing the historic circular carriage drive, and flowering shrubs, including Vitex and butterfly bush, line both sides of the lot.

Many old-fashioned flowers brighten Curran Hall's gardens: ageratum, amaranthus, asters, bush morning glory, columbine, coneflower, coreopsis, cornflower, cosmos, daisies, dianthus, foxgloves, hollyhocks, lily of the valley, pansies, plumbago, Queen Anne's lace, salvias, scented geraniums, snapdragons, tuberose, verbena, and violas.

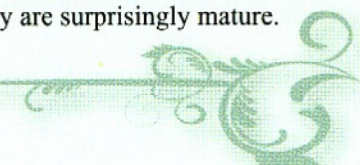
Gardening has long been popular with Little Rock residents. As early as 1849, visitors commented on roses, native flowers, boxwoods clipped in ornamental shapes, and arbors with vines, fruits and berries. Travelers brought plants back with them and nurseries shipped dry-root plants in until local nurseries were



established in the 1850s. The sharing of cuttings and seeds was popular at this early time, and still is. Fragrance and utility seem to have guided choices of plants, but all owners loved roses – so much so that in the nineteenth century Little Rock was known as the “City of Roses”.

Curran Hall's landscape has been documented several times. Before the restoration of Curran Hall began, Pulaski County Master Gardeners helped survey the overgrown site, identifying plants worthy of saving and even taking home roses and iris to keep them in “foster care” during construction. Master Gardeners also researched plantings that would be appropriate to the period and provided the designer with a list of these plants and those that were originally on the site. In developing a landscape plan to fit both the antebellum house and its twenty-first century adaptive use as Little Rock's Visitor Information Center, the designer, Becky Thompson, included styles and plant stock which were appropriate to Little Rock in the 1840s.

Today, members of the Pulaski County Master Gardeners maintain the restored gardens and add seasonal color, retaining the spirit of a historic garden in a public setting. Although the gardens were just established in 2002, they are surprisingly mature.





Little Rock's award winning Marjem Ward Jackson Historic Arkansas Gardens are located on the grounds of the Little Rock Visitor Information Center at Historic Curran Hall, one of the city's oldest homes built in 1842. The center has a wide variety of information on city hotels, restaurants, and local and statewide attractions.

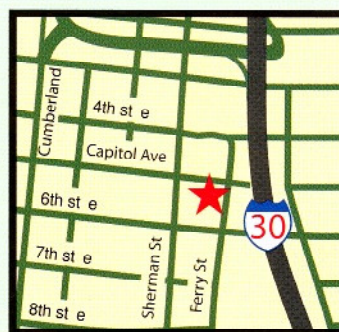
Hours:

Monday – Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Closed:

New Year's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day

Location:



615 East Capitol Avenue

I-30 West, Exit 140B, Right on 6th Street
I-30 East, Exit 140 to 6th Street, Left on 6th Street

***The Little Rock Visitor Information Center
at Historic Curran Hall***

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Pulaski County Master Gardeners at **Curran Hall**

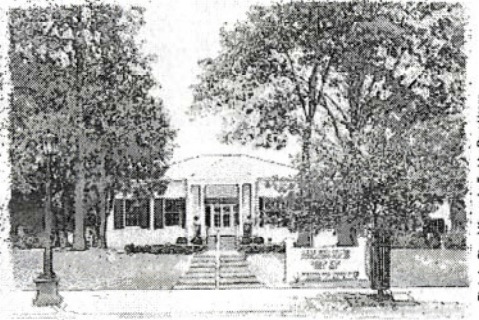


Photo by Cheryl Kennedy, text by Rose Higgin

Curran Hall has been renovated and adapted as the City of Little Rock Visitor Information Center. In the early 1980s, a local horticulturist surveyed the property, producing a list of nearly 300 plantings of about 70 different flowers, shrubs and trees, along with the history of their origins.

Today's landscape is designated the Marjem Ward Jackson Historic Garden. In developing a landscape plan to fit both the antebellum house and its 21st century adaptive use, the designer included styles and plant stock appropriate to Little Rock in the 1840s but which are also hardy and easy to maintain in this public setting. The variety of plants provides color all year with evergreens, flowering shrubs, and bulbs.

Pulaski County Master Gardeners plant and tend the annuals, perennials, and shrubs. They propagate most annuals in the State Hospital Greenhouse. Many plants went into Master Gardener "foster care" in 1996 when renovation began, and they are now included in the landscape. Also, many individuals contributed spring and summer bulbs, as well as typing up plant markers and labels.

THE FRONT LAWN

The front walk is lined on each side by a clipped boxwood parterre, a garden arranged in diamond-shaped patterns accented by white flowers. Seasonal flowers, begonias or pansies, are planted inside the diamonds. The outer borders feature native, hardy, old-fashioned shrubs, flowering in white, yellow, or pink. Many have colorful fall foliage; others are evergreen. Among the native shrubs is *Viburnum* 'Count Pulaski'. Both the parterre and shrub borders are underplanted with spring and fall bulbs. There are no foundation plantings, as they were not generally used until many years later.

At the foot of the front steps, a flagstone path leads around the east side of the building through an allée of large white crape myrtle. William Woodruff, founder of the *Arkansas Gazette*, introduced crape myrtle to the town. Historic watermelon-pink crape myrtle accent the rear of the house.

THE BACK GARDENS

A white picket fence surrounds the back lawn, originally a service area. The restored original office building sits on the east side. Flowering white dogwood, 'Arkansas Black' apple, magnolia, and hydrangea dot this part of the lawn. Irises and roses line the east fence. Across the brick walk is a large garden with flowers. The color scheme continues to be primarily white, pink, and blue with an occasional dash of yellow. Flowering cherry trees, heritage roses, and numerous old-fashioned perennials grow around the playhouse.

William Woodruff, his wife, and other early pioneers brought cuttings of a variety of old roses to the city. Indeed, roses were once so abundant in Little Rock that it was known as "The City of Roses".

PARKING LOT

An oval bed in the middle of the lot includes a number of antique flowers such as white and yellow daffodils, white pansies, and violas. Pink, white, magenta, and blue double cornflowers are used, as well as Queen Anne's lace, multi-color cosmos, blue plumbago, and white and blue bush morning glory. Master Gardeners plant summer annuals that tolerate full sun in this area. Flowering shrubs including butterfly bushes, Foster hollies, and *Vitex* line the sides of the lot.

May 30, 2003



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Plants at Curran Hall



Trees

Apple	<i>Malus pumila</i> Arkansas Black
Apple	<i>Malus pumila</i> Red Delicious
Bodark/ Bois d'Arc/Osage Orange	<i>Maclura pomifera</i>
Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>
Chaste Tree	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>
Elm	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i> Dynasty/King's Choice
Flowering Cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata</i> Shogetus
Flowering Dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>
Hackberry	<i>Celtis laevigata</i>
Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>
Royal Paulownia	<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>
Southern Magnolia	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> Little Gem
White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>

Shrubs

Abelia Prostrate	<i>Abelia grandiflora</i> Prostrata
Abelia Glossy	<i>Abelia grandiflora</i>
American Beautyberry	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>
Baby' Breath Spiraea	<i>Spiraea thunbergii</i>
Boxwood (Edging)	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> Vadar Valley
Burning Bush	<i>Euonymus alata</i>
Butterfly Bush	<i>Buddleia davidii</i>
Camellia Japonica	<i>Camellia japonica</i> Kramer's Surprise
Camellia Sasanqua	<i>Camellia sasanqua</i>
Confederate Rose	<i>Hibiscus mutabilis</i>
Crepe Myrtle	<i>Lagerstromelia indica</i> , original to site
Crepe Myrtle White	<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> Natchez
Forsythia	<i>Forsythia intermedia</i>
Gardenia	<i>Gardenia</i>
Holly American	<i>Ilex opaca</i>
Holly Foster	<i>Ilex attenuata fosterii</i>
Holly Osmanthus	<i>Osmanthus heterophyllus</i>
Holly Winterberry	<i>Ilex verticillata</i> Winter Red
Holly Youpon	<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>
Hydrangea Bigleaf	<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i> Nikko Blue
Hydrangea Peegee	<i>Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora</i> Tardiva
Hydrangea Smooth	<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i> Annabelle
Kerria	<i>Kerria japonica</i>
Loropetalum	Hamamelidaceae
Mock Orange	<i>Philadelphus</i>
Nandina	<i>Nandina domestica</i> Harbor Dwarf
Quince Flowering (Japonica)	<i>Chaenomeles</i>
Quince White	<i>Chaenomeles x superba</i>
Red Buckeye	<i>Aesculus pavia</i>
Summer Sweet	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>
Vernal Witch Hazel	<i>Hamamelis vernalis</i> Arnold's Promise
Viburnum Doublefile	<i>Viburnum plicatum tomentosum</i>
Viburnum Count Pulaski	<i>Viburnum nudum</i> Count Pulaski
Virginia Sweet Spire	<i>Itea virginica</i>
Wax Myrtle	<i>Myrica cerifera</i>
Winter Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>

Roses	
Archduke Charles	China 1840
Belle de Crecy	Gallica, original to site 1829
Cherokee Rose	Rosa laevigata 1759
Duchesse de Brabant	Tea 1857
Gilbert Nabonnand	Tea 1897
Marie Pavie	Polyantha 1888
Mutabilis	China 1894
Old Blush	China, original to site 1759
Reine des Violettes	Hybrid Perpetual 1860
Seven Sisters	Rambler, original to site 1817
Silver Moon	Rambler, original to site 1910

Vines	
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera</i>
Hyacinth Bean	<i>Dolichos lablab purpureus</i>

Flowers	
Ageratum	<i>Ageratum houstonianum</i>
Anise Hyssop	<i>Agastache foeniculum</i>
Basil	<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>
Bee Balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i>
Begonia	<i>Begoniaceae</i>
Coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis grandiflora</i>
Cornflower / Bachelor's Button	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>
Cosmos	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>
Cottage Pink	<i>Dianthus plumarius</i>
Daffodil	<i>Narcissus</i>
Daisy	<i>Bellus perennis</i> Shasta Daisy
Dusty Miller	<i>Artemisia stellerana</i>
Dwarf Morning Glory	<i>Convolvulus (Ipomoea) tri-color</i>
Dwarf Plumbago	<i>Ceratostigma plumbaginoides</i>
Dwarf Zinnia	<i>Zinnia elegans</i> White Star
Flowering Tobacco	<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
Giant Snowflake	<i>Leucorum aestivum</i>
Globe Amaranth	<i>Gomphrena globosa</i>
Hollyhock	<i>Alcea</i>
Hyacinth	<i>Hyacinthus</i>
Iris Louisiana	<i>Iris fulva Louisiana</i>
Iris Siberian	<i>Iris sibirica</i>
Lantana	<i>Lantana camara</i>
Lemon Daylily	<i>Hemerocallis lilioasphodelus</i>
Lily Formosa	<i>Lilium formosanum</i>
Lily Spider	<i>Lycoris radiata</i>
Lily Surprise	<i>Lycoris squamigera</i>
Lobelia Blue Cardinal Flower	<i>Lobelia syphilitica</i>
Love Lies Bleeding	<i>Amaranthus caudatus</i>
Love-in-a-Mist	<i>Nigella</i>
Mountain Bluet	<i>Centaurea montana</i>
Native Columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>
Oregano	<i>Origanum</i>
Peony	<i>Paeonia lactiflora</i> Festiva Maxima
Petunia	<i>Petunia</i>
Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>
Queen Anne's Lace	<i>Daucus carota</i>
Rose Campion	<i>Lychnis coronaria</i>
Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>
Russian Sage	<i>Perovskia</i>
Salvia, Scarlet Sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>
Scented Geranium	<i>Pelargonium odoratissimum</i>
Snapdragon	<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>
Snow on the Mountain	<i>Euphorbia marginata</i>
Spiderwort	<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i>
Tall Verbena	<i>Verbena bonariensis</i>
Tuberose	<i>Polanthes tuberosa</i>
Violet/Pansy/Johnny-jump-up	<i>Viola</i>



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