

CHAPTER VIII

SNA's Triple Crown Winners

Compiled by David Byers

(1999)

Only nine southern nurserymen have served their industry at the three highest levels, as presidents of their state association, the Southern Nurserymen's Association and the American Association of Nurserymen. This enormous gift of time to their fellow nurserymen by each of these is near 15 years of extra-curricular activity. Hours which might have been spent on their own business or with their family were used to attend meetings and think on matters of interest to the entire nursery world.

To be chosen to serve as an officer of any of the nursery organizations is a splendid honor. Issues of the day, all extremely important no matter the era, require political and business skills of the highest order. Those selected by their peers to serve in these high offices display a personality defined by civic -minded energy, honesty, experience and a giving spirit.

The nine nurserymen who served in this manner include three from Tennessee, Nathan Wesley Hale, Richard Henry Jones, and Hoskins A. Shadow; three from Virginia, Owen Gray Wood, Allwin S. "Ollie" Gresham and Carl Fletcher Flemer III; from Kentucky, Walter W. Hillenmeyer; Georgia's John Byron Wight, Jr. and Dennis Vincent McCloskey of Louisiana.

SNA would like to recognize these nine men for their accomplishments, their dedication and their leadership.

Nathan Wesley Hale - 1899 & 1900

Nathan Wesley Hale served as president of the Southern Nurserymen's Association for the first two years of its formation, 1899 and 1900. The meetings were held in Chattanooga, Tennessee and Lithia Springs, Georgia (just west of Atlanta) in these organizational years. His brother, J.C. Hale, a Winchester, Tennessee nurseryman, was also a charter member of the SNA.

Hale was born near Gate City in Scott County, Virginia (just north of Kingsport, Tennessee) on February 11, 1860. An earlier member of his family had served in the Revolutionary War between the States. He attended the schools of Nicholasville, Virginia and Kingsley Academy near Kingsport, Tennessee. This very limited formal education consisted of only eighteen months, yet was sufficient for him to have much success in his life.

In 1882 and 1883 he sold dry goods around his home, then taught school at Hale's Mill in 1884. Late that year he moved to Knox County, Tennessee where he sold nursery stock for the Bird and Dew-Knoxville Nursery. A man of many interests, Hale also engaged in the wholesale dry goods business, banking, and farming. He bought a half interest in the Knoxville Nursery and became its president and general manager. In 1900 he was part-owner and president of the Southern Nursery of Winchester, Tennessee.

Hale was president of the American Association of Nurserymen in 1903-1904 and served as president of the Tennessee Nursery Association in 1907-1908. He married Laura Sebastian, the daughter of a prominent Kentucky lawyer. He was known as a "ready speaker".

His political career is of interest. In Tennessee, he was a member of the State House of Representatives in 1890-1891 and served in the State Senate in 1892-1893. Hale was defeated as Republican candidate for the U.S. Congress in 1902, then elected into the fifty-ninth and sixtieth congresses, 1905-1909. In 1908, he was a member of the Republican National Committee, 1908-1912.

Hale moved to Los Angeles, California in 1909 where he engaged in oil and real estate businesses until his death in Alabama on September 16, 1941. He is buried in Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, California.

John Byron Wight, Jr. - 1931

John B. Wight of Wight Nurseries, Cairo, Georgia was the 41st president of the Southern Nurserymen's Association. He presided at Charlotte, North Carolina, the site of the 1940 convention.

Wight was the president of the Georgia State Nurseryman's Association in 1939-1940 and president of the American Association of Nurserymen in 1951-1952. He also served as president of several other organizations, the All-American Camellia Selection Committee, the American Tung Oil Association, Southeastern Pecan Growers Association and the Cairo Kiwanis Club. He was chairman of the local American Cancer Society Crusade and a member of Rotary. His son, John III, was also president of the AAN.

Wight Nurseries was established in 1887 as one of the pioneer pecan nurseries, Wight Pecan Grove Farm. Later it became The Wight Nursery & Orchard Company, then in 1936, Wight Nurseries. This nursery is today one of the largest and most respected nurseries in the South.

John Wight was born February 2, 1905, at Cairo, Georgia. His father, John Byron Wight, was the founder of the original pecan business and nursery. Wight graduated from Emory University with a degree in mathematics. He was married to Elizabeth Allen in Little Rock, Arkansas on May 24, 1927, and the marriage produced two children, John Byron Wight, III and Elizabeth Allen Wight. He stated his hobby was "talking about fishing, I seldom get to do more than talk."

Realizing the strength and accomplishments that came from cooperation of all through associations, he chose to reward and recognize that service with an annual award. In 1956, he established the Slater Wight Memorial Award to honor his brother and those to whom it was given. This is the highest award for service given by the Southern Nurserymen's Association.

John Wight died on May 16, 1969, and is buried in Cairo, Georgia.

Owen Gray Wood - 1933

In 1933 Owen G. Wood served the Southern Nurserymen's Association as its 34th president during the meeting held at Jacksonville Beach, Florida. In that same year he was president of the Virginia Nurserymen's Association. He was president of the American Association of Nurserymen in 1939-1940.

A true association man, he was involved in committees for nursery associations during his entire career, such as Nursery Cost Finding, Reorganization and Revitalization and the committee on Federal and State Nurseries. In 1940, Wood designed the official corporate seal for the AAN. He presented a proposal to the Southern Nurserymen's Association in his presidential address suggesting reorganization of the national association as a federation of local, state and regional groups to overcome "disunity" in the industry. After his presidential activities, he was the national councilor to the Chamber of Commerce of the United States for the AAN for six years.

Wood was born in Bristol, Tennessee on November 4, 1902. His father was William Martin Wood, a nurseryman, orchardist and merchant. He spent a year at Washington and Lee University where he was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon social fraternity. While in school he sold stock for the Globe Nursery of Bristol, and the Howell Nurseries of Knoxville. Nineteen twenty-two was an important year; he married Margaret Hayes of Bristol, left school and joined in a partnership called Wood-Howell Nurseries. In 1934, he purchased the Howell interests and incorporated his business. Two other nurseries, one in Leesburg, Florida, growing azaleas and camellias, and another in Poplar, North Carolina, where native plants were produced, were part of his group.

Many in his community gained from his energy. He was a Rotarian, an Elk, a member of the Washington County Development Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Retail Merchants Association of Bristol, Virginia. For sixteen years he was the chairman of the School Trustee Electoral Board of Washington County which appointed all members of the school board.

Wood listed as his hobbies fishing, hunting, camping and trailering. When he died on April 22, 1963 he was survived by his second wife, Vivian Horton Wood.

Richard Henry “Dick” Jones - 1937

Dick Jones, the 38th president of the Southern Nurserymen’s Association, managed the convention of 1937 in Nashville, Tennessee, the city where he was born on August 21, 1900. He was president of the Tennessee Nurserymen’s Association in 1935-1936 and the president of the American Association of Nurserymen in 1946-1947. He also was president of the Nashville, Tennessee Nurserymen’s Association.

His 1923 graduation at the University of Tennessee with a degree in Agriculture, where he played football and was a member the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, came about after service in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War I. Jones was with the 6th Regiment, 2nd Division in the march to the Rhine. As part of the Army of Occupation, he was stationed in several in several cities across France and Germany.

Teaching school was his first job until Howell Nurseries of Knoxville hired Jones to be the manager of their branch operation, called the Corley Island Nursery, in Leesburg, Florida. While there in 1927, he married Norma Claire Sanders. They had a son and a daughter.

He moved to Nashville in 1928 to manage a new branch of the Howell Nurseries, buying the operation in 1938. Jones operated it at the Hobbs and Estes location as Jones Ornamental Nursery until 1960 when it was sold to another Southern Nurserymen’s Association past-president, Geddes Douglas and his wife Frances.

Jones’ service to the Southern Nurserymen’s Association included concern for membership growth, incorporating the association, updating the by-laws and concern about unfair taxes imposed by states on nursery production. He was deeply interested in the quality of horticultural education offered by the universities in the South.

In 1957, Jones was awarded the coveted Slater Wight Memorial Award, the highest recognition for service given by the Southern Nurserymen’s Association. In 1960, the couple moved back to Leesburg, Florida to manage orange groves they owned there. They returned to Nashville in 1973.

Walter W. Hillenmeyer, Jr. - 1941

Walter W. Hillenmeyer, Jr. was the twenty-fifth president of the Southern Nurserymen’s Association when he served at the convention in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1924.

The Lexington, Kentucky nursery is among the oldest in America having begun in 1841. When Walter Hillenmeyer and his brother took control of the operation in 1910, they were already the third generation of that family to do so. They called it the Blue Grass Nurseries-H. F. Hillenmeyer & Sons. Soon it became Hillenmeyer Nurseries. They moved the old nursery from the production of fruit trees into the new field of landscaping that continues as the strong suit for today’s owners. Hillenmeyer spent his entire nursery career as a partner in the firm.

Born on August 27, 1890, he was educated in nearby Cincinnati, Ohio and Lebanon, Kentucky schools before graduating from the University of Kentucky with a degree in Agriculture.

His social fraternity was Pi Kappa Alpha. In 1915 he married Marie Reiling of Louisville, Kentucky. They had four sons. Hillenmeyer served his community well as president of the Board of Commerce, the Community Chest and the Lexington Kiwanis Club.

He also served his industry well. He was the first president of the Kentucky Nurserymen's Association in 1927, president of the American Association of Nurserymen in 1927-1928 and president of the Kentucky Horticultural Society. Hillenmeyer was interested in allowing the newly-developing retail nursery industry an adequate voice in association affairs and was part of an attempt to organize a national retail group. He was known as an eloquent speaker. Several other members of the Hillenmeyer family have been presidents of the SNA.

Hillenmeyer died July 15, at the 1935 convention of the AAN, while playing in a softball game pitting northern nurserymen against southern. A special train carried the entire convention to Lexington for the funeral.

Hoskins A. Shadow - 1955

Hoskins Shadow, according to a nursery friend, could serve as the model for a perfect nurseryman. "Hoss" was the 54th president of the Southern Nurserymen's Association and presided at the convention in Asheville, North Carolina in 1955. He also served as president of the Tennessee Nurserymen's Association in 1945 and the American Association of Nurserymen in 1968-1969.

The son of an early nurseryman, Joe A. Shadow, who specialized in June-budded peach trees, Shadow was born October 7, 1902 at Winchester, Tennessee. He attended schools in that city then studied horticulture at the University of Tennessee. He married Minnie Lee Odom on October 2, 1928 in Port Arthur, Texas and they had three sons, Joe, Don, and Fred. Don also was president of the SNA.

He worked at Griffing Nurseries in Beaumont, Texas in 1926-1928, then for Fraser Nurseries of Birmingham, Alabama in 1929-1932. Shadow was employed by the National Park Service until 1937. He next worked with the United States Housing Authority as an inspector then with Jones Ornamental Nursery of Nashville. He returned to Winchester to start his own nursery in 1941. The Tennessee Valley Nursery Company specialized in flowering dogwood liners and featured his insistence on very high quality. Today the nursery is operated by his son, Fred Shadow.

In addition to industry tasks, he was deeply involved in his community. He was president of Rotary, where he was a Paul Harris fellow. He helped found and was chairman of the Franklin County Hospital and Nursing Home board. He served two terms as a director of the Federal Reserve Bank, Sixth District, Atlanta, Georgia. Shadow was given the highest awards of two associations, the Slater Wight Memorial Award by the SNA in 1963 and the Nurseryman's Hall of Fame by the AAN in 1990. He always said, "If you work for free you'll always have plenty of jobs."

In May 1998, Hoskins Shadow died and is buried in his native city, Winchester, Tennessee.

Allwin S. “Ollie” Gresham, Jr. - 1957

Ollie Gresham was the 51st president of the Southern Nurserymen’s Association. He presided at the 1952 convention which was held in Mobile, Alabama. He was the first recipient of the Slater Wight Memorial Award, given for service to the Association and the industry. This was a deserved award; his years as secretary of the Association, legislative work for the industry, sponsorship and promotion of the “Buyers Guide,” and accomplishing the incorporation of the Association, done in Virginia, all are examples of his dedication and leadership. He was a member of the committee which recommended the formation of the Horticultural Research Institute.

Other nursery groups benefited from his work—he was president of the Virginia Nurserymen’s Association in 1940-1941, the Richmond Nurserymen’s Association in 1947, and the American Association of Nurserymen in 1962-1963. He was the second recipient of the annual Nurseryman of the Year award given by the Virginia association in 1949.

Gresham was born August 22, 1906 in Richmond Virginia. he was educated in the schools of that city, then attended Richmond Professional Institute, a branch of William and Mary in 1928. He established Gresham’s Nursery in 1933 as a retail landscape company and it became a large growing nursery, supplying liners, finished stock and groundcovers to the Eastern market.

He and his wife Ruby, were married March 15, 1928 and had one daughter. He died on February 2, 1969.

Dennis Vincent McCloskey - 1980

Dennis McCloskey was the 79th president of the Southern Nurserymen’s Association. He presided at the 1990 convention and trade show in Atlanta, Georgia.

His outstanding record of service to the industry includes being a founding member of the Southeast Louisiana Nursery Association, President of the Louisiana Nurserymen’s Association in 1974 and president of the American Association of Nurserymen in 1992-1993. He served on the Louisiana Horticulture Commission for eight years, chaired several trade shows, conventions and tours, spent ten years as a member of the AAN Horticultural Standards Committee, served on the AAN public relations committee and was a board member of the Wholesale Nursery Growers of America.

Just as active in his community, he is a working member of St. John’s Catholic Church, commissioner of the Franklinton Airport Authority, and served as member of U.S. Congressman Henson Moore’s advisory committee. He served in the Louisiana National Guard, 1960-1967.

McCloskey was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on November 26, 1936. His father was the dean of the School of Pharmacy at Loyola University. He attended New Orleans schools then graduated from Louisiana State University with a degree in Animal Industry in 1960. His social fraternity is Delta Kappa Epsilon. On November 25, 1960 he married Blanche

Edge of Houston, Texas. They have three daughters. His hobbies include fishing, hunting, flying, and boating.

In 1963 McCloskey established Windmill Nurseries on an old tung oil plantation in Franklinton, Louisiana as a 120 acre field and container nursery. It has grown to be the largest in the state with over 1000 acres in production. He operates two related companies, Louisiana Horticultural Transportation, a trucking firm and Louisiana Irrigation and Supply.

In 1994, he was given the Slater Wight Memorial award by the Southern Nurserymen's Association, its highest honor. He also has received the James A. Foret award from his state association.

Carl Fletcher “Fletch” Flemer, III - 1989

Fletch Flemer was the president of the Southern Nurserymen's Association in 1988-1989, the 88th nurseryman to be so honored. The 1989 convention and trade show was held in Atlanta, Georgia.

Flemer is president of the Ingleside Plantation Nurseries, Inc., a large field and container operation established in 1948. He joined the firm in 1971, became vice-president and nursery manager in 1972, and was promoted to president in 1985.

A recipient of the David E. Laird, Sr. Memorial Award and the Slater Wight Memorial Award from the Southern Nurserymen's Association, Flemer has long been active in industry affairs. He was president of the Virginia Nurserymen's Association in 1978 and the American Association of Nurserymen in 1994-1995. A member of the Wholesale Nursery Growers of America, he has served on the Automated Information Committee and the Membership Development Committee of the AAN.

He was born January 16, 1946 in Richmond, Virginia, the son of Carl F. Flemer, Jr. a nurseryman. In 1969, he received a BS in ornamental Horticulture from North Carolina State University, where he was a member of the social fraternity Alpha Gamma Rho, and of the Alpha Zeta honorary fraternity. Flemer is married to Darlene Warren of Robersonville, North Carolina. He is an active member of the Episcopal Church, the Virginia Farm Bureau, a school board, and a bank board. He has served as a volunteer fireman and a member of the County Wetlands board.

Flemer is certainly the most decorated war hero among the southern nurserymen. From 1969 to 1972, he served with the U.S. Army as a Commissioned Rotary Wing Aviator. He flew his helicopter on more than 1000 hours of missions in Vietnam. For this service he received the Army Commendation Award, the Bronze Star, twenty-two Air Medals and a Silver Star.

CHAPTER IX

THE SOUTHERN NURSERYMEN'S ASSOCIATION PAST PRESIDENTS' CLUB

At its spring meeting in 1973, the Board of Directors of the Southern Nurserymen's Association decided to invite all past presidents and their wives who planned to come to the 1973 Convention and Trade Show, to attend a dinner in their honor. This dinner was to be held at the Marriott Motor Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia on the Saturday evening preceding the opening of the convention.

Executive Secretary Thomas L. Henegar communicated with all living past presidents and advised them of the Board's action. The dinner was held the evening of August 4, 1973 and those in attendance were:

1944-45	Mr. & Mrs. M. L. Harkey
1946	Mr. & Mrs. Henry Boyd
1947	Mr. & Mrs. H. H. Chase
1948	Mr. & Mrs. Don Hastings, Sr.
1951	Mr. & Mrs. Elwood Stephens
1954	Mr. & Mrs Arthur Watson
1955	Mr. Hoskins Shadow
1957	Mr. F. J. Aichele
1958	Mr. & Mrs. Dan Reynolds
1959	Mr. & Mrs. Hubert Nicholson
1961	Mr. & Mrs. George Coulter
1962	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Boyd
1964	Mr. Ray Bass
1967	Mr. & Mrs. Dwight Cain
1968	Mr. & Mrs. Sidney Meadows
1969	Mr. & Mrs. Art Lancaster, Jr.
1970	Mr. Geddes Douglas, Sr.
1971	Mr. Cecil F. Hill

Later in the evening, the group was joined by Mr. & Mrs. Porter Henegar and Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Henegar. This was the initial meeting of the group and all present were in favor of continuing such a meeting as a yearly affair. It was felt that through an organized group, each member could be of more service to SNA. Announcement was made that in the future SNA would sponsor this dinner meeting.

Sidney Meadows was selected as chairman of the 1973 meeting, and was elected by acclamation to be chairman of the 1974 meeting. Bob Boyd moved that a permanent history of SNA and its past presidents be compiled. Henry Boyd moved that this history be compiled in booklet form so that members of the organization could have a copy for their files. The motion was seconded by Ray Bass.

Following the suggestion by Mr. Hastings, a motion was made by Henry Homer Chase, seconded by Ray Bass, that Porter Henegar be elected to lifetime honorary membership of the group, and be named as Secretary.

Art Lancaster moved that a suggestion be made to the SNA Board that an appropriate plaque be given to each past president, commemorating his term of office. This motion was seconded by Henry Boyd.

All of these motions received unanimous approval. Remarks were made by both Porter Henegar and Tommy Henegar in regard to SNA, both past and future.

Hubert Nicholson and Hoskins Shadow gave remarks regarding the relationship of SNA and AAN.

Special recognition was made of the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Harkey, who had not been present at a SNA meeting for several years.

Accordingly, the several suggestions made in these motions were received and acted upon in the affirmative by the board at its meeting on Wednesday, August 8th.

At a later meeting, and referring to the publication of a history of SNA, the board authorized President Richard Ammon to appoint a special publication committee composed of Geddes Douglas, Sr., Richard H. Jones and D. Porter Henegar, empowered to assemble available historical information, solicit pertinent articles of historical value, and to receive bids for the publication of the desired volume in time for distribution as part of the Diamond Jubilee Celebration of the Association.

The above mentioned committee found its work to be a monumental challenge. Old records were meager or non-existent. Articles and reports contained in old issues of the American Nurseryman, the Southern Florist and Nurseryman, The Southeastern Nurseryman, and the Nursery Review, proved invaluable. Dr. Richard White of AAN provided valuable material and SNA members contributed to the limit of their knowledge.

Many gaps exist in our records which concern the historical sequence of the events in our past. This committee deplores its inability to fill in these gaps, but we believe that we have recorded the main events in the history of the association, the problems, the changes and to some extent, the accomplishments of the concerted efforts of its members and its leaders. We are deeply indebted to all those who cooperated so unselfishly in obtaining and furnishing information which might otherwise have been omitted.

Epilogue:

Tommy Henegar, retired SNA Executive Vice President, now acts as the Secretary of the SNA Past Presidents' Club following in the footsteps of his father, D. Porter Henegar.



The SNA Past Presidents' Club Dinner
The Atlanta Marriott, Motor Hotel, Atlanta, GA
August, 1974

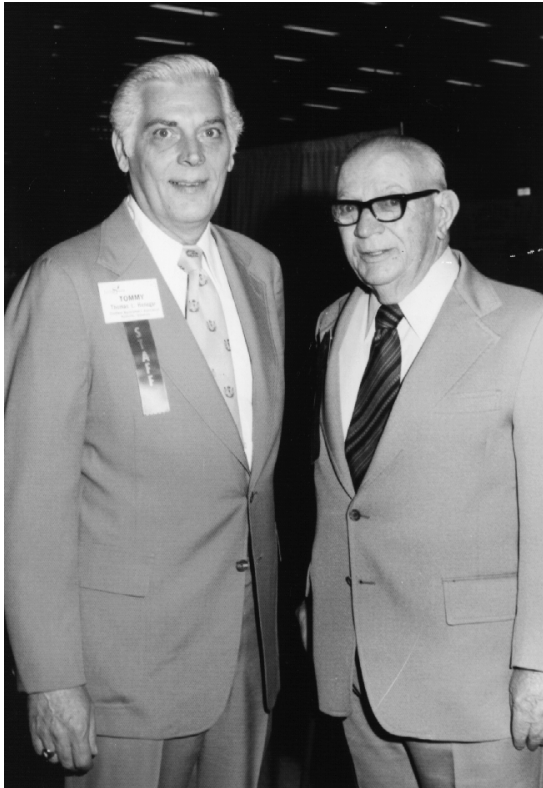


The SNA Past Presidents' Club Dinner
The Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Atlanta, GA
August, 1998

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE

It is hard to think about past leadership without including two past leaders - D. Porter Henegar and his son, Thomas L. Henegar. Without their dedication and leadership the Southern Nursery Association would certainly not be where it is today. Although an association belongs to its members, the responsibility of day-to-day operations rests on the shoulders of the executive who is hired by the board. While these two gentlemen held paid positions with the association, their efforts went far beyond the call of duty. The extent of their efforts is a reflection of their love for the industry which they served. We would like to recognize their outstanding efforts.

Porter Henegar served as Executive Secretary from 1959 - 1972 when he retired. It was at that time that his son, Tommy Henegar, stepped in to fill his shoes as Executive Vice President. Tommy held this position from 1972 - 1988 when he was forced to retire due to health reasons. Tommy and his wife, Mary, continue to show their dedication and support for the association today.



Thomas L. Henegar, SNA Executive Vice President
and his father, Retired SNA Executive Secretary, D. Porter Henegar
August 1978

CHAPTER X

THE ERA OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

by Geddes Douglas

(1974)

The historian who seeks to focus upon any period in the affairs of man seldom can find a definite starting point which marks the beginning of any particular trend. Usually, the events of any given period gradually blend into those of a different period, a process which may consume many decades or even centuries. This is not so in the case of the fourteen states which comprise the territory served by SNA. There was a beginning, and that beginning dates back over a hundred years to the end of the Civil War.

At that moment in history the south lay prostrate, its cities ravaged by the invader, its economy ruined, its material resources dissipated. Government was in the hands of those ill prepared to govern. Public education was non-existent. Transportation was limited to a very few railroads spared by the opposing armies and roads were little more than trails through neglected fields and virgin forests.

The other side of the picture was hard to see, but nevertheless, it was there. The land was rich, and the climate varied, admirably suited to a variety of crops. Vast deposits of coal, iron and limestone lay undiscovered beneath the ridges of the Appalachians and the hills of western Kentucky. Vast forests of pine, cypress and hardwood covered thousands of square miles. Again, the population was industrious and intelligent. Lastly, many of the institutions of higher learning survived and their numbers grew as state and private colleges and universities fitted themselves into an emerging economy. These then, were the ingredients that chance threw into the cauldron of time which produced the magic brew of prosperity and peace to come in the years ahead.

Richardson Wright, in his great treatise on the history of ornamental gardening, wrote that flower gardening and ornamental landscaping belonged to the Arts and only became a part of a culture that accompanied prosperity. So it was in the south. The beautiful gardens of the plantation mansions were gradually restored to their former beauty. Many of these gardens became public attractions in another fifty years. By 1900 the south was on the verge of a great change.

EARLY EMPHASIS ON FRUIT TREE PRODUCTION

Since the population was largely rural, horticultural interest was mainly in the fruit trees and a few flowering shrubs. For instance, in 1907 the catalog of the Chase Nursery Company lists the following: apple, pear, plum, peach, cherry, quince, mulberry, Japanese persimmon, apricot, and figs in variety. The nut trees, pecan, walnut, chestnut, were listed as well as strawberries and various small fruits. Roses were carried in great variety as were several of the varieties of clematis that are used today, nearly seventy years later. But the astounding fact is that there were only ten species of flowering shrubs listed, only two broadleaf evergreens and only seven species of coniferous evergreens.

In a few years the south became landscape conscious. Twenty-five years later this same company listed forty-one species of flowering shrubs and small trees and nine species of coniferous evergreens representing forty-seven separate varieties. Broadleaf evergreens increased from two varieties in 1907 to fifteen varieties in 1932. This growing awareness was accompanied by a steady migration from the rural areas to the urban areas. Cities began to grow. With this growth there emerged a prosperous middle class demanding new homes and a new way of life. The architecture of the day varied greatly in style. Wooden construction was popular, featuring gingerbread external ornamentation. There were replicas of Colonial types, stone and brick mansions with high ceilings and slate roofs - all of them had one common denominator - a high foundation which permitted an indoor coal cellar. In the past much of our population had depended upon wood as a source of heat. The new source of energy had turned to coal. Nurserymen responded with a variety of new plants, most of them coniferous evergreens. The high, ugly foundations had to be hidden. Arborvitae, junipers, and to some extent taxus, joined the traditional boxwood, camellias and deciduous flowering shrubs. Yards were large; formal gardens imitated Williamsburg and were largely English in character. Every porch had its hanging basket of fern and wandering Jew, which was wintered over in a "pit" on the side of the house.

FOUR MAJOR CHANGES

All in all there have been four major changes in our way of life, especially in the central south where the winters can be very cold and the summers very hot. The second of these changes began in the late 1920's and reached its peak about 1950. Oil and natural gas became available in unlimited amounts. As the south emerged from the Great Depression of the early 1930's, the TVA and private companies harnessed the streams and rivers of the south, creating cheap electricity which heated homes with smokeless energy and drew to its territorial confines new industries in great numbers.

There was migration to the urban areas. Architecture changed to the low ranch type home, and the so-called "contemporary type" of home made its appearance. High foundations became a thing of the past and planting changed in concept from hide to enhance. Rock gardens featuring native wild flowers were popular.

With the end of World War II came the first of new materials tinted glass, aluminum, stainless steel, prefabricated concrete, fiberglass and plastics. These replaced to a considerable extent the wood, brick and stone of the previous decades. It was during this period between 1930 and 1950 that the south experienced a veritable broadleaf revolution. Long grown in the warmer parts of the Gulf and middle-Atlantic states, public demand forced the nurseryman to change from the usual needle evergreen to broadleaf of every species and variety. Hollies, cherry laurel, ligustrum, photinia, mahonia, euonymus, eleagnus, and azaleas became the rule rather than the exception. Ilex rotundifolia became the bread and butter plant for the nurseryman in place of the pfitzer juniper. All of these changes were reflected in the catalogs of the wholesale growers.

LABOR SHORTAGE TRIGGERS CHANGE

In the period between 1950 and 1960, another change was felt but this time it had no relation to a change of energy sources but rather was due to a new economic factor. Prosperity created a labor shortage accentuated by new labor laws. Urban yards became smaller, houses became larger, patios and terraces became outdoor living areas, only to be used less and less at the end of this decade due to the widespread use of air conditioning. Apartment living experienced a sharp increase. Public buildings, factories and office buildings changed to artistic creations set in veritable parks, and planting these became a new art.

In the last decade - between 1960 and 1970 - the labor shortage became critical. Householders were forced to do their own work and as a result, manufacturers of kitchen aids and of mechanical lawn and garden tools turned this era into the day of the mechanized gadget.

After ten years of air conditioning, people or homeowners again turned to the out-of-doors as swimming pools became a popular feature of the private home.

Apartment living became more and more widespread and the new element of condominium living was introduced. Landscaping embraced a relatively new idea, that of low maintenance cost. The 1960's became the day of groundcovers, mulches, herbicides, pesticides and fungicides. As for the plants, the public accepted the same species but demanded the dwarf varieties of these species, and in ever increasing quantities.

There were two significant discoveries which made possible the ability of the nursery business to keep pace with the great building boom of the 1960's and the early 1970's. The first was the development of a rooting hormone which lessened the rooting period of a cutting from a year's time more or less to a matter of days. Studies of this new rooting aid were described in a paper by a Dr. Blakeslee in 1933. The first commercial product, Hormodin, was offered to southern nurserymen at the SNA meeting in Nashville in 1937, by Rudolph Hach & Company, as previously reported in this volume.

The second was the plastic greenhouse. British scientists first made polyethylene as a film in 1938. The first plastic greenhouse was reported in 1954 by E. M. Emmert in a paper entitled "University of Kentucky Builds a Greenhouse Covered With Polyethylene." A comprehensive series of experiments were conducted by the Departments of Horticulture and Agricultural Engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute at Blacksburg, Virginia. The results of these experiments, begun in 1957, were soon publicized to the nursery industry, and the value of this new greenhouse was soon apparent. The combination of the new greenhouse and the hormone rooting stimulant enabled the nurseryman to mass produce the rooted cuttings needed for the millions of soon-to-be container-grown plants. Further, the plastic greenhouse is used as a growing area for container plants and for protection of semi-tender stock in the winter.

The 1970's have brought a new challenge. The quick acceptance of the condominium idea by the public has led the landscape architect to embrace and broaden the idea of community planning where many people live in a limited space. They own their apartment-like homes and have a financial interest in the whole project, which may include spacious grounds, parking areas, swimming pools, golf courses, community centers, and even restaurants and hospital facilities in certain instances.

What type of planting will this new complexity of life call for? Happily for the nurserymen, many of the very same plants that he is using today will be valuable in the new scheme of tomorrow, for tomorrow's need will be in two parts. Spacious grounds, golf courses, children's play areas and community centers will require the normal landscape treatment of screening and planting that one would naturally expect of these familiar areas, with a bit more color perhaps, to fill a psychological need engendered by semicomunal living. But what of the condominium with its several separate homes owned by separate families with different tastes and different desires, all living under one roof. These new conditions certainly pose new problems.

The architect who designs the complex frequently complicates the landscape requirements by using atriums and "Florida rooms" which call for semi-tropical plants. The front door of the unit in some instances may only be seen through an open garage on one side and an enclosure for garbage cans on the other.

Patios and terraces are usually enclosed with some type of wall for privacy and perforated for air circulation, with narrow planting beds demanding very expert treatment. In the so called "high rise" type of building the terrace may be ten stories in the air where the wind will literally defoliate the plants and where everything must be grown in some type of container or planter box.

AWARENESS OF NEEDS IMPERATIVE

We cite these problems merely to create and emphasize an awareness of the need for a new approach to landscaping and also the need for new plants with which we hope to grace and beautify the home of tomorrow. These homes will certainly satisfy the functional needs of man. Some of them will be of great architectural beauty, but judging by the trend of today, some of them will be monstrosities of steel and stone.

Where do we get new plants? In the first half of the nineteenth century, botanist from many countries roamed the face of the earth in search of new plants which, when found, were named, described and classified. Seeds and plants were sent to the botanical gardens and arboreums of Britain and the countries of western Europe. Gradually these things were disseminated on a world wide basis to nurserymen who in turn made them available to the public.

PRESENT PLANTS PRODUCED BY NATURE

As the twentieth century came into being, we found a new source for new plants, i. e., the seed planter. About the time SNA came into being, it was common practice among most nurserymen to produce a great portion of their inventories from seed. Nurserymen with a discerning eye would spot a seedling variant which would be preserved and reproduced vegetatively. Some of these seedling variants were just that, variants within the same variety of species, such as *Photinia fraseri*. In other instances they were natural hybrids of two different species, for example, *Ilex fosteri*. These plants were chance seedlings created by nature, which also gave us many mutations, bud sports, chimeras and witches' brooms, all too often unrecognized and neglected by the nurseryman.

Granted that in the past nature has served us well, but what of the future? For instance, very soon we will be faced with a special need which nature might fill within the year or never fill in the century to come. Fortunately, man's scientific knowledge has progressed to the point where new plants may be produced with predictable characteristics. The chromosome count of an existing plant may be doubled by the use of certain chemicals such as colchicine, a derivative of the autumn flowering crocus. Again, the basic cell structure may be affected in many ways by different types of radiation.

EMBRYO CULTURE MAY BE OF VALUE

Inter-species hybrids may be created by controlled pollination and the resulting seed germinated and grown by embryo culture in a sterile medium, thus saving many hybrids that would never survive under natural growing conditions. Once a worthwhile new plant is created, it would seem highly possible that it could be mass produced by using the scientific techniques of meristem reproduction, which has been used so successfully by the orchid industry.

Such thoughts serve to point to an inescapable conclusion. The pressures of modern business have changed the nurseryman of today into a merchandiser, a businessman rather than a horticulturist. Also he has become a specialist. Some only produce liners. Other specialize in container grown stock. A few still grow plants in the ground, but all are concerned with tax problems, labor problems, sales quotas, packaging, shipping, container mixes and such problems to the exclusion of customs and practices of former times. But where in this modern scheme of things is the old seed planter? Who is to take the place of men like the early Berckmans, the Nicholsons, Bruce Howell, Ollie Fraser, Jacques Legendre, Eb Foster, Ben Morrison, and others too numerous to mention?

Fortunately, we are not without resources. We have the answer, now, ready and waiting. Within the structure of SNA there is the committee on Education and Promotion. This committee works with a group of scientists recruited from our state universities. This committee should have a new name, for its enlarged scope of work even now, far exceeds the purposes for which it was originated. Possibly it should simply be called the Scientific Committee. The research workers group could be augmented by the addition of a limited number of geneticists whose work could be reported at our Research Workers Conference. Eventually such a course would call for the creation of continuing scholarships at the graduate

student level at one or more of our participating state universities. It is not hard to envision the endowment of a chair of Creative Horticulture to be filled by a man of vision under whose direction students on scholarship would perform the various experiments designed to produce the plants we need.

NEW PLANT NEEDS

What are some of these needs? Fred C. Galle, Director of Horticulture, Callaway Gardens, outlines our needs as follows:

“Certainly utmost in all our plans for plants of the future are those which will withstand air pollution and city environmental conditions and those which will require only low maintenance.

I think we will be looking for ground covers, those which withstand sun and those surviving in shade. At the present time, we have more that are shade tolerant than are sun tolerant. Some types which will withstand traffic conditions are also needed, as well as those which are not tolerant to traffic. Flowering on ground covers is not essential but we do need drought tolerant and sun tolerant ground covers.

The next category is dwarf shrubs. By ‘dwarf’, I mean that they should be three feet or less after ten to fifteen years, both flowering and non-flowering, deciduous and evergreen, broadleaved or narrow-leaved types; sun or shade tolerance are factors as important as the plant itself.

All too often, we have plants listed as dwarf, which are really not, in a sense that we give them a height and age factor. In many cases, the ‘dwarf’ hollies and ‘dwarf’ crape myrtles and others do not fit in this category.

The second group of plants, Medium Shrubs, 5' to 6', in the same ten to fifteen year bracket could be deemed both flowering and non-flowering, deciduous, and broad-leaved or narrow-leaved evergreens. All are factors important in different parts of the country.”

With the criterion of plants for sun or shade, of the desired size, in a definite period, certain projects suggest themselves immediately. A dwarf weeping hemlock for instance, that would lend itself to easier propagation would be very valuable. Again, a dwarf, spreading, hardy pyracantha with red berries might be produced by controlled pollination. There is a glaring need for a dwarf, trailing broadleaf plant which would be hardy in the northern half of SNA territory, berry-bearing and disease resistant, a cotoneaster, perhaps.

Will John Wight’s new “Carissa” fill the need for a spineless, dwarf cornuta, or should there be other of different qualities that may or may not bear berries. Similarly, an azalea with the flower and form of Gumpo in the colors of the various Kurumes is not an impossibility, and always we will have special uses for dwarf forms of pines, junipers, arborvitae and yews. The needs are endless, the means are at hand. Controlled pollination, scientific germination, careful selection, thorough testing; this is a series of steps designed to help nature produce its very best.

Meristem reproduction? This is a scientific approach to the production of thousands of plants in the laboratory in a minimum of time.

Colchicine, radiation, these are two powerful means of changing nature's products into forms that defy the imagination. These are not new processes. Much is known about them but there is still much to learn. We are talking about scientific experiments that will require the work of trained botanists and those versed in genetics. Further, they will require time, for such things are not done in a day. They will require the cooperation of universities, botanical gardens and above all, nurserymen with patience. Should we venture into these uncharted courses on just the chance of success? The next twenty-five years will present us with the first installment of the history of tomorrow. Whether we shape its course with vision and imagination is the moot question.

Epilogue:

Although the preceding article was written in 1974, and some of the information is out-of-date, much of the information is still pertinent today. In many ways our industry is still dealing with the same issues such as labor shortages and the need for mechanization, as well as new plants and new production methods. Past President Douglas obviously had a keen sense for the future.

CHAPTER XI

THE FUTURE

by **Danny Summers**
(1999)

Where will the future lead us? Does anyone really know? Our industry has come a very long way in the past 100 years, but we still have so far to go. Many changes have taken place since the original History of the Southern Nurserymen's Association was written to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the association. And, many changes are sure to take place over this next century.



The state of our economy has been kind to our industry in recent years and our industry has prospered. While there may be many obstacles ahead, I am extremely optimistic for the future, for our products are not only good for the environment, but provide a needed oasis for recreation. The positive effects of your own private garden or landscape are still being discovered and our percentage of the average household's discretionary income remains small. Thus, our opportunity is great. If your customer was buying all the plants he or she could use, we would have a mature market. As it is, we have just begun. How many homes in your neighborhood have lush gardens or landscapes? I would imagine the number is pretty low. I see that as opportunity. The old saying "the glass is half full" (instead of half empty) certainly applies here.

The opportunity that lies ahead is with the consumer and expanding their knowledge of what plants can do to help ease the hurried pace of everyday life. Our industry's products can provide relaxation and recreation as well as be a good investment. We sell a product that continues to be part of the natural balance for the world in which we live. Trees and plants help to offset man's effects on our environment.

But although our industry has many wonderful products, I see them as our second best asset. Our industry's best asset is the people who are a part of this industry. I know you will agree with me on this. The families and individuals engaged in the nursery industry are the finest you will find. They are people you can depend on. They will be there when you need them. When I look through the preceding pages of this history book, I see many of the families that have made this such a great industry of which to be a part. The members and past leadership of the SNA exemplify our industry's best asset, our people.

I have often said in my opening comments during the annual SNA Past Presidents' Awards Banquet that "The uniqueness or special quality that you see and feel in the organization has developed with the nurturing hands and hearts of all those involved in the SNA throughout the years. When you look at the organization and its growth and success, it's the people that have made SNA special." That is true with our industry as a whole.

I would like to end by posing a question to you. When an industry has a product that is essential to the environment, as well as recreational and therapeutic, and has some of the best people imaginable to produce and sell it, wouldn't you be optimistic for that industry's future? I think the answer is yes, and I think this perfectly describes the horticulture industry of the future.

I challenge each of you to take an active part in this association - you can make a difference in the future. I look forward to experiencing the future of our industry with you.

2000 AND BEYOND

Serving as SNA President in the year 2000 will be Walter M. Imahara, owner of Imahara's Landscape which specializes in design and installation of landscape and commercial maintenance in Baton Rouge, LA.

Born in Sacramento, CA in 1937, Walter is the son of James and Haruka Imahara, grape and strawberry farmers, who are second-generation Japanese Americans. Walter's family was in two relocation camps for a period of three and one half years during World War II. After the war, Walter and his family relocated to Baton Rouge.



Imahara graduated from Istrouma High School in 1955, and received his horticulture degree from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, LA in 1960. While serving in the U.S. Army in Germany, 1st Lt. Imahara met Sumi, a teacher, and they were married in 1963. Upon being released from the army in 1963, he entered the field of horticulture in Baton Rouge.

He has served on the Board of the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen for over 26 years and has been named three times as the LAN Nurseryman of the Year. In 1988, he was the recipient of the Agriculture Alumni of the Year from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, his Alma Mater. In 1999, he received the James A. Foret Award from the LAN and was named President of the National Landscape Association. Walter is currently serving on the State Horticulture Commission representing the landscape industry.

His passion for the sport of weightlifting began at an early age. As a youngster, Walter won six U.S. National Championships and in 1967, he won the gold medal for the U.S. in the Pan American Games. He retired from weightlifting in 1968, but in 1980 he entered the Master program and has since won 18 National Master, 11 Pan American Master and is a six times gold medalist in the World Master Championship. He holds numerous records in the National, Pan American and World Masters. Walter is in the USWF, Pan American Master and was inducted into the most prestigious IWF-Master Hall of Fame in 1996. He currently serves as Chairman of the International Weightlifting Federation for the Masters.

As SNA President Walter's goal will be to build a more secure financial base for the association and to assure that the association's programs and services keep pace with the changing times. It is his belief that a strong association can only function on its financial strength and well being, and therefore give deserved member services.

Serving the Southern Nursery Association for the 1998-99 year is:

President - William D. Reese
Greenbriar Nurseries, Inc., Ocala, FL

Vice President/Chapter 4 - Walter M. Imahara
Imahara's Landscape Co., Inc., Baton Rouge, LA

Director/Chapter 1 - Wilfred L. "Red" Robbins
Robbins Nursery, Willard, NC

Director/Chapter 3 - Frank M. Collier
Pleasant Cove Nursery, Inc., Rock Island, TN

Director/Chapter 2 - James A. Guy
Carolina Nurseries, Inc., Moncks Corner, SC

Immediate Past President - James M. Zangger
Greenleaf Nursery Co., Park Hill, OK

The election of officer's will take place during the 1999 Annual SNA Business Meeting which will be held during the 1999 Convention and Trade Show.



Pictured left to right: (Seated) Walter M. Imahara, William D. "Bill" Reese, James M. "Jim" Zangger. (Standing) J. Guy, Frank Collier, Wilfred L. "Red" Robbins and SNA Executive Vice President, Danny Summers.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best, knows the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt