THE *Vintage rose*

Fall 2023, Issue 32

THE FRIENDS OF VINTAGE ROSES

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NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF VINTAGE ROSES
Fall 2023, Issue 32

IN THIS ISSUE:

Featured Rose

'Mme de Sancy de Parabère', one of the few Boursault roses still available, is usually assigned the date 1874, . . . *see page 3*

A Hillside Garden

I first started planting old roses here in 1985, and I planted lots of them. . . . *see page 5*

Carolyn Sanders—Rose Hero Unsung

We lovingly referred to her as Col. Sanders. A former probation officer, . . . *see page 9*

Three Perspectives on the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden

"There's no water." I first heard about this sometime last winter, when we were getting record amounts of rain. . . . *see page 11*

Earthquake! Fire! Roses!

When the earthquake of 1906 jolted San Francisco into a devastation of rubble and flame, the home, orchard, and gardens of former Mayor James D. Phelan . . . *see page 14*

On the cover: 'Soleil d'Or' (photo by Susan Walker)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Featured Rose: 'Mme de Sancy de Parabère' 3
A Hillside Garden 5
Carolyn Sanders—Rose Hero Unsung 9
Three Perspectives on the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden 11
Earthquake! Fire! Roses! 14
Curator's Report: The Trip Not Taken 19
In Memory 22

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *The Vintage Rose* is suggestive of devotion. In 1874 a rose, lost or overlooked around 1845 or earlier, was found; devotion to a search for its provenance led to its circulation in commerce where it still exists today. (See our featured rose.) Susan Walker, in her contemporary hillside garden, began with a number of modern roses, but, discovering antiques, replaced those with the stunning jungle of roses she grows today. So devoted is she to her garden that she continues to add more—after nearly 40 years! Our former board member, Carolyn Sanders, was devoted to all things roses: The American Rose Society, the East Bay Rose Society, TFoVR where she also participated in Dirt Days, not to mention her own garden and other venues. In short, Carolyn's devotion to roses was such that she never gave up. The world famous San Jose Heritage Rose Garden has had its share of losses and problems, but its manager has not quit and it retains a small cadre of devoted volunteers. (It could use more.) Historically, the earthquake and fire in 1906 of San Francisco slammed the city with loss of buildings, nurseries and gardens, and a few lives, but the determined devotion of its citizens made it the memorable city it is today. We hope these examples of devotion will be inspirational.

'Mme de Sancy de Parabère' (photo by Urszula Tretowska)

'Mme de Sancy de Parabère'

Darrell g.h. Schramm

'Mme de Sancy de Parabère', one of the few Boursault roses still available, is usually assigned the date 1874, the year after the horticulturist Monsieur Bonnet of the nursery firm Bonnet & Fils responded to the rose on his property. The first record of this rose seems to be that in *Journal des Roses* of August 1885. According to

Illustration from Journal des Roses 1885

this reference, nurseryman Ferdinand Jamain had seen the rose growing in Bonnet's garden in 1873. Bonnet did not know what it was and gave the rosebush to Jamain who, at the suggestion of Madame Bonnet, named the rose 'Mme de Sancy de Parabère'.

Subsequently, Jamain presented a bouquet of the flowers to the Central Society of Horticulture of France for identification, but none there recognized the rose. Later a Monsieur Bachoux observed that this was a rose cultivated for forty years on the property of a Mons. de Boismilon. Jamain concurred that this was an old variety, "without doubt some very old rose," he wrote, "which could have been neglected and which would have been lost from sight." The date of the rose, then, could be as early as 1845. In fact, as E. F. Allen wrote in the *Rose Annual* of 1973, "Until more evidence comes to light, the date of introduction must be altered to 'before 1845'." A Sleeping Beauty of a rose, now awakened.

This climbing rose produces the largest flowers of the Boursault class, in clear, cerise pink, very floriferous. The reverse side of the petals shows a silvery pink. Within the circumference of the quite large, outer petals is nestled a ruffle of small petals. The flowers do emit a fragrance. The plant is vigorous, very cold hardy, virtually without prickles, and an exceptionally early bloomer. It grows eight to fifteen feet. To root it from cuttings is easy.

Of note is the name: Although the caption under the chromolithograph omits the first de in the rose's name, the name throughout the article in *Journal des Roses* is 'Madame de Sancy de Parabère'. The woman seems to have been Charlotte Lavinie Lefèbvre, née Desouettes, de Sancy de Parabère (1815–1884). She had been a Dame of Honor in Empress Eugenie's court. Mme Bonnet, who suggested the name for the rose, must have been an admirer or friend. ■

A Hillside Garden

Susan Walker

above:'Veilchenblau'

right: 'Baronne Prevost'
(all photos by Susan Walker)

I first started planting old roses here in 1985, and I planted lots of them. I purchased and rustled and pored over catalogs, a real "rosomane!" The Celebration of Old Roses held in El Cerrito, California was a great (and dangerous!) source of inspiration.

But time passed. The garden evolved. I gradually replaced many roses with interesting plants that require less care and, recently, less water. The result now is not so much a rose garden as an environment with roses. There is a small fountain which the birds like for bathing and drinking. Also a very green (in both senses) fish pond used by the bigger creatures. The non-rose plants provide food for bees and humming-birds and flowers for times when the roses are not in bloom. About half of these companion plants are drought tolerant perennials that are planted on the downhill side of roses bushes to take advantage of leftover water. Of course a few additional "irresistible" roses did creep in!

My garden is located on a hillside in a town overlooking the Napa river and San Pablo Bay. It slopes southwest; it gets afternoon sun and almost constant onshore wind. It occupies two adjoining lots, one with the house and one with just garden. In summer the

mornings are often cool due to cloud cover, but afternoons are warm to hot, sometimes reaching 100 degrees F, but not lingering there. We get no rain between May and October. We get occasional frost in winter but almost never a freeze. In the past we received plentiful winter rain (and did again in the winter of 2022–2023). But except for that season, we have been in a drought for six years or so. I do have an automatic irrigation system. The native soil is heavy clay requiring serious digging and amending, New holes for roses are 2'x2'. I have been fortunate in having good hired assistants for the big tasks.

Most of the current 40 roses are durable individuals that have lived and bloomed here for years. They are all on their own roots. Many of the varieties are "found roses" that had proved their toughness long before they came to me. I think of them as "old" roses, but a surprising number of them were introduced after 1900.

Starting at the top (street end) of the garden are climbing roses on the fence, including 'Madame Alfred Carriere' (Tea-Noisette 1879) over the gate. The area you then enter contains bush roses and small climbers around the edge. These include 1.) "Grandmother's Hat" (a study name as its origin is unknown), a lovely, frothy, light-medium pink Hybrid Perpetual. My plant was started from a rustled cutting 34 years ago. 2.) 'Variegata di Bologna' (Hybrid Bourbon 1909), crimson and white, to my mind the best striped rose. Sometimes it sports back to 'Beauty of Reigate' as solid rich crimson, and also has a delicious color. 3.) *Rosa glauca*, a species rose with wonderful lavender-gray foliage and tiny pink star-like flowers, my newest acquisition.

top to bottom: 'Soleil d'Or', "Grandmother's Hat", 'Duc d'Angouleme'

Other plants here include Mexican Sage (*Salvia leucantha*), tall with purple flowers; catnip, low growing with lavender flowers; lambs'ears (*Stachys lanata*), low growing furry gray leaves, pale lavender flowers (incidently, I have never found lambs'ears reluctant to grow near roses); native California buckwheat (*Eriogonum* sp), the narrow leaved variety with delicate white flowers and the giant one St Catherine's Lace, four to six feet tall with huge flat umbels of white flowers; and, just to go with 'Variegata di Bologna', red and white striped Martha Washington geraniums.

A bed in the center of this area contains most of the purple and the gold flowering roses. Included here: 'Soleil d'Or' (Hybrid Tea/Hybrid Foetida 1900) with strange, stiff, upright, very prickly canes and flowers truly sun-gold orange. Some people think its fragrance is like orange juice. I bought this from the Canadian nursery Pickering as

a budded plant. But eventually it colonized above the bud union, so I threw away the middle and kept the colonies! 'Duc d'Angouleme' (Hybrid China 1835), which has fine canes in a thicket and small neat flowers in very clear colors of red-violet becoming blue-violet; 'Veilchenblau' (Rambler 1909) has long somewhat flexible canes and small violet flowers. I removed this rose once, but it surfaced in another part of the bed. We declared it to be a "victorious gladiator," and built it a cabana on which to climb.

Companion plants to go with these colors include the purples again, Mexican sage and lavenders. Also Mexican marigold mint, (a Tagetes) with gold flowers, yellow freesias, and Zauschneria, a California native, low growing with red-orange flowers.

Going slightly down-hill you will find 'Baronne Prevost' (1842), a more formal-shaped, medium pink Hybrid Perpetual. This is one of the first roses I planted. I received it from Joyce Demits' found rose collection, with the melodious study name of "Marjorie Angelo's Hybrid Perpetual."

An accompanying plant here (and elsewhere as it is a very prolific seeder) is *Centranthus,* "Jupiter's Beard" with lacy white or pink flowers. Who knew the king of the gods had/has a pink beard!

top to bottom: 'Belle of Portugal', "Secret Garden Musk Climber", 'Variegata di Bologna'

Across the garden to the north is another of Joyce Demits' foundlings. She called it "Secret Garden Musk Climber". I don't know if it has another name. It makes a big pile of a bush and dense climber. It has large clusters of single white, nicely clove-scented flowers over a long blooming season. Accompanying it is a mass of matilija poppies, a California native, tall with very large ruffled white blooms and bright yellow centers. It is inclined to travel (to places where it senses water?).

Farther down the hill is our biggest climbing rose, 'Belle of Portugal' (Hybrid Tea/Hybrid Gigantea 1903). It grows in memory of one I saw when I was a child. This individual is 36 years old, has two stout trunks and has climbed into two trees and part of a fence. It blooms with big, floppy, fragrant, translucent pink flowers. Rather lingerie looking!

South from here is the red and white garden, the red being mostly roses, the white being mostly other plants. Included here: 1.) A big aggressive 'Scharlachglut' (Modern Shrub Rose 1952) with gorgeous, big, fire-engine-red, single flowers and big thorns. It is supported on its own frame plus a quince tree and is busily invading its neighbors. I call it the pirate king! 2.) "Old Red Runaround" (Hybrid China), that ubiquitous feral rose, with thicket growth and small, very double, rich red-purple blooms. I dug up this one at the intersection of highway 29 and American

Canyon Road around 1990. There used to be several different roses growing there next to the railroad track. 3.) 'Gloire des Rosomanes' (Bourbon or maybe China 1825), a vigorous, virtually thornless bush covered with clusters of cherry red almost single flowers. I started this one from a hardwood cutting rustled (in 2019) from a cemetery where it was a rootstock happily outliving its graftee! It took me three years of attempts. The trick is to not cover the potted cutting, (hardwood cuttings, started in winter), which is not necessary in our climate. Covering the cuttings encourages mildew because the modern environmentally-responsible rooting powder does not contain a fungicide!

Companion plants here are Star Jasmine, white *centranthus,* more of the narrow-leaved buckwheat, pineapple sage, (red flowering), *lychnis,* (crimson), and oak leaf hydrangea with beautiful big toothed leaves and loose clusters of white flowers.

top to bottom: 'Scharlachglut', 'Old Red Runaround', 'Gloire des Rosomanes'

opposite, top to bottom: 'Gold of Ophir', 'Jaune Desprez'

At the very bottom of the garden on the back fence is a big old 'Gold of Ophir'—now isn't that a more elegant name than 'Fortune's Double Yellow'? After all, it isn't yellow but every shade of gold and coral. It's considered to be a sort of China, discovered in 1845 but in cultivation before that. It is very fragrant, which seems to me unusual in a China.

We have also a small enclosed area in front of the house containing four more climbers. Included here is a big 'Jaune Desprez' (Tea Noisette 1830). According to the legend, this is the rose that first brought fame to breeder Jean Desprez. The rose is also more peach than *jaune,* (also fragrant of peaches!). Before the incorporation of foetida genes, real yellow was unknown in European roses.

A few parting thoughts/observations:

- I have found an automatic watering system to be really useful, (especially in dry summers).
- I used to do all the garden work myself, but soon learned the value of "hired muscle." They have done all kinds of heavy work from big pruning and mowing to digging the fish pond.
- A surpisingly useful tool I recently discovered is the battery powered pruning shears; a real hand-saver.
- Amid successes and failures it helps to remember that all gardening is experimental—so keep a sense of adventure! ■

Just over a year ago our dear friend Carolyn Sanders died. She had served as member of the board of directors of The Friends of Vintage Roses since its creation in 2012. Carolyn was loved by so many old rose lovers—she was everywhere giving her time to the cause of preservation. The following memory I shared with the Heritage Rose Foundation and their Autumn newsletter. Carolyn's volunteer story is the story of HRF after its rebirth in 2004. Some of you knew her well, others will know the sort of person she was and why she is missed today.

—Gregg Lowery

Carolyn Sanders—Rose Hero Unsung

We lovingly referred to her as Col. Sanders. A former probation officer, Carolyn Sanders always went by the book. She expected no less from the rest of us who care about preserving roses—we should dedicate ourselves to the mission, as though it were the most important thing we could do with our lives.

On the day thirty years ago that I opened my first retail nursery, Carolyn was there, catalogue and notebook in hand, a smiling inquisitor looking for just the right rose. It had to be right. Her small city garden near San Francisco Bay was a study—a gardener's garden filled with favorite plants, each well chosen, each complementing the next. Her tiny paradise gave room to countless roses over many years, the new, the old and especially the mysterious. Like all good gardens it changed with the seasons, and with the years. And, like all good gardeners, Carolyn never stopped thirsting for more knowledge.

She joined the American Rose Society early in her rose years. From the start she was the one who always helped out in her local group, the East Bay Rose Society. In time she came to lead the group and reprise the role of president. That dedication made a mark on the people she came to know. But something intervened in her seventies that marked a new era of service for Carolyn. She fell in love with old roses.

Carolyn was one of a core group of volunteers that began assisting me in the maintenance of a very big collection of heritage roses. Along with Paula, Jean, Carol, Luanne, Gene, Michael and Pamela Temple, who first proposed to create a 'Friends of Vintage Gardens,' Carolyn was there on day one of "Dirt Days," and she never left. Those volunteers came monthly to help stabilize the garden, and complete the planting that had been envisioned 20 years earlier.

Carolyn and the other volunteers soon became members of the Heritage Rose Foundation in the years leading up to 2005 when they assisted a huge gathering of old rose lovers in Northern California who mounted a conference in El Cerrito, home of Miriam Wilkins, founder of the Heritage Roses Group. The conference celebrated the re-start of the HRF which was just emerging from a few years of inactivity. It focused on California's rose history. And for the first time it brought together the HRF and the Heritage Roses Group at the Celebration of Old Roses, the springtime magnet for old rose lovers in the Bay Area.

Some who attended will recall that the force behind the scenes was Carolyn Sanders. She took charge of the venue, hotel

Carolyn (center) and fellow volunteers, Dirt Day, July 21, 2012

accommodations, registration, meals and much more. And thus, on her way to age 80 she took on a new role, the quiet but effective one of doing the detail work for a string of events that fundraised for the Heritage Rose Foundation for the next seven years. They included the 'Madam President' conference which featured three women, Anne Bird of England, Odile Masquelier of France, and Marilyn Wellan of the USA, each of whom had led national rose organizations and were lovers of the old roses; 'Lunch with the Louberts,' a massive picnic at Garden Valley Ranch in Petaluma to meet and hear from Therese and Raymond Loubert whose historic rose nursery on the Loire River in France remains to this day a world rose treasure trove. And, 'The Roses of Hearst Castle' in 2008 shed light on a remarkable restoration of a rose planting from the 1920s at the famous mansion built by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst.

At the same time Carolyn served with the editorial team of *Rosa Mundi* as 'Circulation Manager,' a fancy-sounding name for the one who stores all the books and mails them out to members. We're all familiar with this sturdy do-gooder; they are the gold standard of volunteerism, the sport that makes our world much more beautiful and fun.

In 2012, in her eighties, Carolyn once more took up the banner and joined the first board of directors of the non-profit The Friends of Vintage Roses, the group that had once helped weed my rose collection and was now building a force to preserve that collection for future generations. She served on our board for nearly ten more years, totting up a lifetime total of more than 40 years of volunteer service to the rose. I will measure the rest of my life by the decades that I knew Carolyn and saw her dedication. And for me, she is right—preserving the roses may be the most consequential thing we can do with our lives. Thank you, Carolyn, for leading us by your beautiful example!

—Gregg Lowery

Three Perspectives on the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden

'Aline Rozey' (photo by D. Schramm)

CURATOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Jill Perry

"There's no water." I first heard about this sometime last winter, when we were getting record amounts of rain. But the City of San Jose had a couple of broken water mains that supply the recycled water to parts of Guadalupe Park, including the Heritage Rose Garden. Winter rains had stopped well before the City repaired the mains. In the meantime, the park staff had to come out with a water tank mounted on a truck to water what they could of the smaller roses. Once the water was back on to the garden, there were the valves to be dealt with. When they don't get used regularly, they can get sticky, so the irrigation can't turn on; as a result there's no water. Where the water does come on, there are leaks and breaks in the old tubing due to both age and squirrels, so some areas flood, while others are dry, or are hand watered by hose. Our irrigation volunteer, Ken, is trying to replace the tubing and emitters with a better system using flexible PVC. This is going to take a long time—it's a three-acre garden. I recently got an email that something is going to be replaced or installed in all the valve boxes to improve them, and to make this repair, the water needs to be turned off.

And then there are the weeds. With all the rain, the grasses and other weeds grew large and lush. And also due to the rain, there were few volunteers to pull them. Most of our Saturday morning volunteers are high school students who need community service hours as a requirement of their school. It's not easy to convince teenagers to get down where they can reach under the thorny bush to pull out the grass. Many of our other volunteers are retirees, and for some of us, getting down is doable, but getting back up may be harder. So here it is, late summer, and there are still parts of the garden with roses half hidden by dried grass.

And then there are the ground squirrels…

Thank goodness for early May with its spectacular bloom! That makes all the effort worthwhile.

A VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE

Trang Bui

Despite learning early that San Jose Heritage Rose Garden stopped offering roses for sale, I continued to report to work Saturday mornings simply because I fell in love with the roses, all of them. Over time, I've come to understand just how special the collection

'Greenmantle' (photo by D. Schramm)

is; often referred to as The Sangerhausen of the West, the Heritage houses more than 3,000 varieties of roses that span centuries and geographies. It is a living museum, a sensory experience that chronicles the values, aesthetics, and innovations from another time through today.

My appreciation of the Heritage's cultural and historical significance brings with it a new sense of urgency and a vision I share with every other regular volunteer there. Volunteering is no longer simply a list of tasks to be checked off a to-do list, but an aspiration for something greater than the sum of our efforts: to preserve this special collection, many roses of which may be lost forever should the Heritage cease to exist. When I started volunteering at the rose garden in 2019, I never imagined San Jose without the Heritage Rose Garden. Today the thought is ever present in my mind that the roses at the Heritage, some which once grew in Josephine Bonaparte's garden and survived Napoleon's rise and fall, may not survive the next five years.

Preserving a rose collection of this scale has always come with challenges. Pests, diseases, and California's droughts are constant threats. However, in 2020, a worldwide pandemic and its aftermath, resulted in a major decline in volunteers. As shelter-in-place orders went into effect, the rose garden sat untended for months, and in the absence of vigilant care and expertise, weeds grew while ground squirrels multiplied. And another crisis emerged: COVID exacerbated the homeless crisis in San Jose. People sought shelter at the garden, surviving in tents, RVs, and shanties. The homeless encampments deterred volunteers and visitors alike, many feeling unsafe due to the makeshift dwellings and increase in refuse and litter.

In July 2021, the *San Jose Mercury News* published an article titled "A Tale of Two Rose Gardens," comparing the Heritage to the nearby Municipal Garden and describing the Heritage as having fallen victim to "neglect, vandalism and . . . arson over the last year" in stark contrast to the Municipal's destination for "picnics, parties and weddings."

As of this writing, the city of San Jose has removed many of the encampments that line Taylor Street, but the Heritage is far from returning to its Pre-COVID days. For that, we need more volunteers and more funding. Later in the aforementioned *Mercury News* article, the reporter contrasts the budgets of the Municipal vs. the Heritage. The Municipal Rose Garden's annual budget of $340,000 differs considerably from the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy which receives $99,000 annually from the city to help maintain the Heritage Rose Garden. To restore the Heritage, with its vast collection of rare and endangered roses, we must do more with less.

Since its inception, the Heritage has relied on a dedicated team of volunteers. In spite of the challenges faced by Jill and the Park Conservancy to maintain this historic garden, the exquisite blooms that arrive each April en masse are a living testament to the love and passion of all who care for the garden. Our volunteers, from Master Gardeners and regular rose enthusiasts to high school students seeking community service hours are stewards of history and ambassadors for the preservation of the collection.

Please join us as a donor or (if you're local) as a volunteer:

'John Hopper' (photo by D. Schramm)

heritageroses.us. As a public garden, this collection belongs to us. More importantly, it belongs as much to future generations as it did to those past. Please join us Saturdays to weed, deadhead, mulch, soak up the fragrance and beauty of the garden, and save the roses.

VISITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Joan Harland

This last Spring—May 18th, to be precise—Editor Darrell Schramm and I drove down to the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden. It had been years since either of us had visited, but we knew what a fantastic resource it was: 2,000-plus varieties of historic roses, planted in concentric circles arranged chronologically. Sadly, our first impression was colored by the homeless encampment across from the north end of the Park, where the public restrooms used to be.

The Rose Garden is still the national treasure that it has always been. Focusing on the Old Rose sections, we found rare roses in bloom: 'Aline Rozey' (1884), 'Greenmantle' (1895), and 'John Hopper' (pre-1860). For any visitor, the variety of colors and aromas eclipsed those found in a typical public rose garden.

But the survival of many of the rose plants appeared to be threatened. Many rose bushes were choked, not just by weeds, but more dangerously by oak seedlings growing in the middle of the original roses. Some were being overtaken by their rootstock: 'Dr. Huey' raised his head above several. Identification of many roses was challenging: nameplates were missing, or in a few cases, incorrect. Also, we noticed a City gardener working on one of several burst water pipes.

We were happy to meet an enthusiastic volunteer there. Still, we were distressed to see the state of this irreplaceable resource. Because it is such a bountiful resource, but gets little support from the City of San Jose, it is in desperate need of more volunteer efforts.

What can be done? Some suggestions: volunteer at the Park or donate (*heritageroses.us*), email the City of San Jose (*Park.Concerns@sanjoseca.gov*), email the *San Jose Mercury News* (*mercurynews.com/letters-to-the-editor*), possibly start a GoFundMe or organize a rose lecture series in the Park. Any action is better than none.

Contacts to advocate for support or notify of park conditions:

- Immediate park concerns: Park Concerns, *Park.Concerns@sanjoseca.gov*
- Immediate homelessness concerns: HomelessConcerns, *homelessconcerns@sanjoseca.gov*
- SJ Council Office, District 6: contact Diana Alanis, *diana.alanis@sanjoseca.gov*
- SJ Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services: Avi Yotam, *avi.yotam@sanjoseca.gov*
- SJ Mayor's Office: contact Michael Lomio, *Michael.Lomio@sanjoseca.gov* ■

Earthquake, Fire, Roses!

Darrell g.h. Schramm

When the earthquake of 1906 jolted San Francisco into a devastation of rubble and flame, the home, orchard, and gardens of former Mayor James D. Phelan on Valencia and 17th Streets were totally destroyed. According to one writer, he had been particularly proud of his lush and lovely garden, flush with Moss roses, Tea roses, 'Marechal Ney' (a lost, light pink Tea rose), the Hybrid Perpetual "Black Prince', and numerous other plants. His property was near Nurserymen's Row.

To read or hear about that earthquake and fire of 1906, one might assume the city had not been home to any nurseries or that no nurseries had been obliterated, for nurseries are virtually unmentioned regarding that catastophe. The same is true for praiseworthy gardens. And yet as early as the year of the Gold Rush, 1849, William C. Walker had opened his Golden Gate Nursery devoted to various plants and an enormous selection of roses.

left: Call Building, 1906 (courtesy National Archives);
above: 'Black Prince' (photo by D. Schramm)

Although Walker had died in 1871, the San Francisco flower and nursery business thrived. By the mid-1880s, the city was home to 67 nurseries. The competition was fierce. By the turn of the century, there were fewer. Among others, there flourished the nurseries of C.C. Morse, E.E. Moore, F. Ludemann's Pacific Nursery, John Sievers' Metropolitan Nursery, Felix Sanchez's Capitol Nursery, Sunset Seed & Plant Co., Thomas Cox's Seed and Plant Co., H.H. Berger & Co., and Charles Abraham's Western Nursery, to name but the most well known. Many of the nurseries were located along Nurserymen's Row on Folsom Street from about Fourth to Nineteenth Streets. This eastern section of the city received more warmth and sunshine than downtown and points west.

Unfortunately, the fire would consume all those nurseries located nearly as far as 15th Street. Consequently, H.H. Berger's nursery at 19th and Folsom was spared, but those of Thomas Cox and others along the row were not. Nor, of course, were the downtown shops of John Sievers and E.E. Moore, among others. Sievers was fortunate, however, to have kept his growing fields on Chestnut Street between Polk and Van Ness Avenue which the fire did not reach. George B. Jones had just sold his downtown rose shop the year before to J.F. Gulligan, who, of course, lost everything.

F. Ludemann, who had a propensity for misspelling rose names ('Reeve de Ore', 'Pearle des Jardin', etc.), was doubly fortunate, for he grew his stock in Millbrae several miles south of San Francisco and operated his Pacific Nursery at 3041 Baker Street on the corner of Lombard, an area spared the conflagraton.

above: The Mission District, 1906 (courtesy National Archives); right: 'Rainbow' (photo by D. Schramm)

Charles Abraham's Western Nursery on Greenwich Street also survived. During the upheaval, he

top: 'Mme Caroline Testout' (photo by E. Potter); above: 'Safrano' (photo by D. Schramm); right: James D. Flood mansion, 1906 (courtesy National Archives)

provided water from his private well for the victims. Like several other nurseries, Abraham ordered his roses from Edward Gill of Berkeley who owned extensive fields of roses somewhat north of Salinas. Because of Gill, those nurserymen willing to restart their businesses had an immediate and nearby source for their plants.

It was Gill who bred California's first cultivated rose, a Tea, 'Sarah Isabella Gill'. First sold in 1884, it was still listed in his catalogue of 1904 and therefore quite likely still available after the earthquake. In 1889 he had bred another rose, a red Hybrid Perpetual, 'Mrs. Cleveland', no doubt named for the President's wife. His nursery continued to list it as late as 1916. But it was John H. Sievers who marketed a rose that same year, 1889, that has become California's oldest surviving rose, 'Rainbow'. The sport of a Tea rose, it is still sold today by a few specialist rose nurseries.

'Rainbow', of palest pink, striped and splashed with darker pink, grows on a low bush. Incidentally, after the earthquake and after the renovation of the partly damaged Fremont Hotel, Sievers was commissioned to decorate the palatial building for its Grand Re-Opening.

Obviously many citizens lost their gardens along with their homes. The Talbot family at 1730 Jackson Street were more fortunate, however; their home and gardens were one block from the dynamite line that stopped the blaze before it reached them. One of their gardens displayed several Hybrid Teas of 'Mme Caroline Testout', and 'Reine Marie Henriette' and the Bourbon 'Hermosa' climbing over a fence. A second garden was richly endowed with 'La France', 'Gloire de Lyon', and the Tea roses 'Duchesse de Brabant', 'Marie van Houtte', 'Perle des Jardins', 'Rainbow', and 'Safrano'. With the exception of 'Gloire de Lyon', all those roses remain in commerce

top: 'Irish Elegance' (photo by S. Shebs); left: 'Tausendschön' (photo by Lennie Valkenberg)

today. Tea roses were quite popular; unlike Hybrid Teas, Tea roses are less thirsty and more drought tolerant.

With much of the city in ruins and ashes, what had it to look forward to? Most citizens did not know what to do. Alma soon-to-be Spreckels helped organize tent kitchens and housewives to staff them; she took charge of milk and fresh food relief trucks, directing them to the tent kitchens.

And she organized teachers to give impromptu classes in educaton to homeless children. Despite many citizens living in tents, despite long bread lines, despite irretrievable losses, San Francisco quickly shouldered the chores of rebuilding, refurbishing, replenishing, and replanting. The city constructed more than five thousand cottages, small and wooden with two or three rooms, in 26 official refugee camps for the unhoused working class. Later, if they wished, they were allowed to move them elsewhere. Gardens soon began to reappear.

Among the choices of the latest roses (those still on the market today) were two Hybrid Teas, a Rambler, a Hybrid Perpetual, and a Tea rose. 'Irish Elegance', a single Hybrid Tea of five petals in light bronze and orange, melding into apricot tones with variagated pink flushes, offers a clove scent. Though they fade in heat (not a worry in San Francisco), the colorful flowers dance in harmony with the foliage, especially in the fall.

The other Hybrid Tea, 'General MacArthur', exhibits a large, dazzling ruby red rose, full and fragrant with musk and old Damask perfume. On a compact, bushy plant with a tidy habit, the continually blooming flowers do tend to burn in heat, another problem absent in San Francisco. The rose is named for the father of General Douglas MacArthur of WWII fame.

Another choice of new roses for San Franciscans was the Rambler 'Tausendschön', meaning 1,000 beauties, a cross between a multiflora x Noisette rose and a mutiflora x Hybrid Perpetual, which explains the luxurious exuberance of this incredible rose. New buds opening among the huge older blossoms will together create multiple colors in soft shades of silvery pink, rose, cream, and white. The mature flowers show a delicate satin pink with a white center. Frilly and crinkled, the full blooms come in large corymbs on strong stems, an entire truss forming its own bouquet. Nearly without prickles, the strong plant makes an excellent pillar or wall climber

eight feet or higher. While the flowers flourish for six to eight weeks, the plant does not repeat its bloom. It's a glorious rose.

'Tausendschön' was bred by Herman Kiese in Germany. He also bred the Tea rose on this list, 'Blumenschmidt', named for the nursery of J.C Schmidt, who employed Kiese for 22 years as his head gardener. 'Blumenschmidt', a large, lemon yellow rose with a green pip center, was discovered as a sport of 'Mlle Franziska Krüger', another rose still with us today. Naked of prickles on its arching stems, 'Blumenschmidt' grows compactly, low, and disease-free. The flowers contain a pleasant fragrance and prove especially profuse in autumn.

this page, top to bottom: 'Blumenschmidt' (photo by Cass Bernstein); 'Hugh Dickson' (photo by D. Elliott); 'Maréchal Niel (photo by D. Schramm)

opposite, top to bottom: 'Maman Cochet' (photo by D. Schramm); 'Niles Cochet' (photo by Bill Grant)

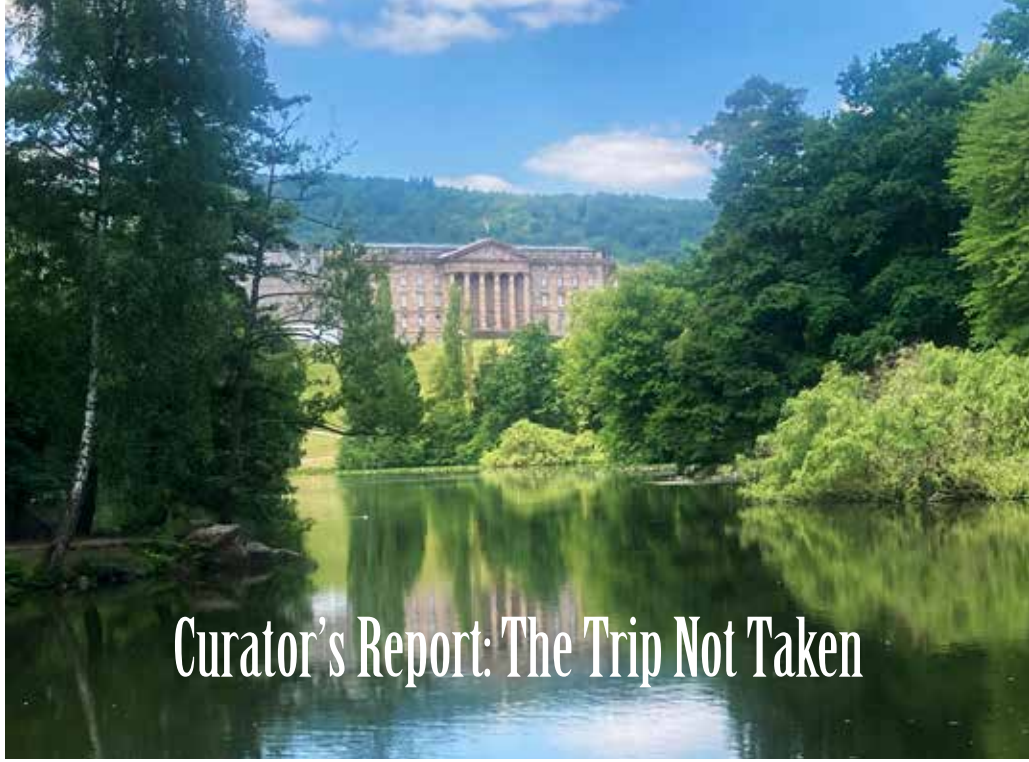
'Hugh Dickson' was also popular in 1906. Trained best as a climber, although not described as such, it is inclined to reach nine or ten feet. A brilliant scarlet-crimson, it grows with a vigor that is extraordinary. A large, double rose with broad petals, its rich red color and sweet perfume alone commend it. Hugh Dickson was the brother of George Dickson, early head of the great Dickson nursery in Ireland.

Not many roses from the years of 1905 to 1907 have survived, but these five have, deservedly so. And, of course, so have the older roses named earlier. 'Maréchal Niel' was particularly popular in San Francisco and, in fact, from Savannah, Georgia, to the Pacific and throughout the western world. A hallelujah of a rose, it was mentioned in Kipling's *The Jungle Book* and in Wilde's *The Importance of Being Ernest;* it was painted by Fantin-Latour, the California painter Edwin Deakin, and numerous others. Its soft yellow extravagance of bloom had survived the Civil War, the national and local strikes of 1877 from New Jersey to California, the Panic of 1893, and now the great earthquate and fire. It would continue to be one of the most popular of Noisettes roses far into the 21st century.

Almost as soon as the last fires were extinguished, the rebuilding of San Francisco began. More than four and a half square miles had

Breadline, San Francisco, 1906 (Courtesy National Archives); 'Belle of Portugal' (photo by D. Schramm)

been burned to the ground, more than 28,000 structures destroyed, whole neighborhoods in ruins. Two hundred fifty thousand citizens were left homeless. But houses were soon erected, yards and gardens reseeded and replanted. One example: A number of refugees from the earthquake moved to the Glen Park area of the city, about four miles southeast of downtown. There they built small cottages or relocated their earthquake shacks, and adorned them and their yards with 'Maman Cochet', 'Niles Cochet' 'Climbing Cecile Brunner,' 'Mme Caroline Testout', and 'Belle of Portugal', a rose which became a San Francisco favorite. Once again, for such gardeners as these, a number of nurseries were alive and well, offering beauty to a determined world. ■



Curator's Report: The Trip Not Taken

Roses, Gardens, & Gardeners in Belgium and Germany

Gregg Lowery

When I was asked to speak in Brussels at the WFRS rose heritage conference in June, I decided to finally make this the occasion for the my long-imagined pilgrimage to Europa-Rosarium Sangerhausen. I asked Steve if he was game and we hatched a plan. Following the conference we would travel eastward through Germany, stopping at two gardens with great collections of historic roses; the Deutsches-Rosarium at Dortmund and the great 18th century landscape garden at Kassel, Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe, where Europe's earliest collection of roses was assembled, planted and painted. From Kassel we would go south to visit Rudolf and Veronika Bergmann in the rural city of Lauterbach to see Rudolf's large collection of old European roses. I had met Rudolf

above: the lake at Wilhelmshöhe (all photos by G. Lowery)

Steve Dunatov, Ruth Weisse, and John Bagnasco at Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe

on Facebook in 2022, and explored his multi-lingual information-packed website, Rose-Biblio (*roses.shoutwiki.com*). And finally we would all spend two days together at Sangerhausen.

It was a trip that taught us unique lessons about preserving roses. I work now to understand it all and find ways that the Friends' mission can benefit from what we've seen and heard.

One final, critical element in our plan was to invite John Bagnasco to join us, to share these experiences, to help us see more and be able to digest the vast number of roses we were about to encounter. John, leader of CCRS and the Rare Rose Auction in San Diego, had been working with Sangerhausen on budwood exchanges and was eager to join us.

In order to do justice to the richness of our experiences, I have chosen to share this journey with you in a few installments that will echo our steps and discoveries. At the center of it are the people we met, little known to American rose lovers who have made great contributions to our knowledge of the rose, its history and the plants and gardeners who made them and cared for them.

You will meet Ruth Weiss of Kassel who has devoted 25 years of her life to the old rose garden at Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe, and who has studied and written about the garden maker and the painter of the roses.

left: Brussels Old City

below: 'Souvenir d'Alphonse Lavallée,' HP, in Anita Böhm-Krutzinna's garden

You'll learn about Anita Böhm-Krutzinna whose carefully researched book *Rosenzüchterinnen* tells the untold stories of women through history and around the world who bred new roses and advanced rose culture, unrecognized in most other histories.

And you'll hear more about Hella Brumme, retired, long time head of Sangerhausen who worked from gardener to the helm of the world's largest ship of roses. Hella and Eilike Vemmer have published *Historische Rosen im Europa-Rosarium Sangerhausen*, a thorough examination of more than 350 old European roses in the Sangerhausen gardens—recently translated into English, as well as

above: 'Angela S' at Dortmund;
right: Sangerhausen maiden of bricks

their latest book treating the Bourbons and Noisette roses in that great collection.

And finally, you'll get to know my friend Rudolf Bergmann who may know the roses of Sangerhausen better than anyone. He will lead us down the pathways of his own garden, and in an afternoon enlighten us about our own.

The 15th International Heritage Rose Conference was a source of celebration, having been canceled twice thanks to the Pandemic of 2019 through 2022. Henrianne de Briey and the Belgian National & Royal Rose Society worked through these obstacles and made it possible to see the roses and hear the speakers at long last.

The extensive collection of roses at Hex Castle offered a view of old European roses, a chance to compare a great collection with what we grow in the USA, and to have several spirited conversations about the identity of roses! And the rose collection at Coloma offered a series of rooms of roses representing countries around the world. Both gardens would be worthy of visits of several hours, simply to take in so many varieties that we had never seen before.

Twenty-three speakers, by my count, amply filled out the four mornings of presentations at this event. Each of them added to my understanding of the science, the history, the cultural and emotional significance of the rose.

I will share a few highlights that for me were exciting. Hella Brumme and Eilike Vemmer presented their two books on the historical roses of Sangerhausen, focusing on comparing the physical features found in different old rose classes as a learning tool for identification. Both of their books offer today's beginning rose rustler with tools I wish we had had years ago.

Pascal Heitzler, geneticist who works at Strasbourg University, took us through the recent genetic work he has done on the original Bourbon roses and comparisons with the long supposed parents and the roses of the Isle de Bourbon. For me it is astonishing to see how much our knowledge of the Bourbons has grown over the past 50 years.

Three presentations further enriched this conference by focusing on the botanists who first gave names to the roses of the wild. Ivan Hoste of Belgium spoke on François Crépin whose work on the genus Rosa in the 19th century is legend. Viru and Girija Viraraghavan shared the story of the botanists behind the discovery of *Rosa gigantea,* Henry Collett and Sir George Watt, and the finalizing of names done by Crépin in Belgium. And most enlightening and entertaining of all was the presentation by Vincent Derkenne who share the life story of the great rose collector, rose gardener,

cataloguer and influencer in 18th century France, André Dupont. Derkenne's presentation was riveting and the best fun I have had at a rose lecture in years. You'll be pleased to know that Derkenne's book on Dupont is available in a compressed version in English: *André Dupont 1742–1817: A Palace and Roses*.

Preservation was a major theme at this historic roses conference. Inez Diaz de Licandro, who has spent years working to save the great Belle Époque rose garden of Montevideo, Rosedal Juana de Ibarbourou, gave a thorough presentation of one of the world's greatest shrines to the rose, which is now crumbling into the ground, ignored by the city and by the country of Uruguay.

Charles Quest-Ritson made a bold and commanding statement about the state of rose preservation in the world and the lack of support that is coming from national rose societies everywhere. He laid out the basic needs to rectify the current state of affairs—act now to ensure that Help Me Find Roses does not disappear; work quickly to identify where historic roses exist and support their preservation; and, find the financial support to underpin the preservation of roses and the knowledge we have gained about them. "All roses are heritage roses and all need to be preserved," he shouted at the crowd.

I did my bit as well, and I spoke about how we at The Friends of Vintage Roses are working to place a collection into the hands of many, to create a fellowship of preservationists, to teach the art of propagating roses and to bind it all together in an understanding that we are stewards of these beauties, and our duty is to find the next hands to pass them to.

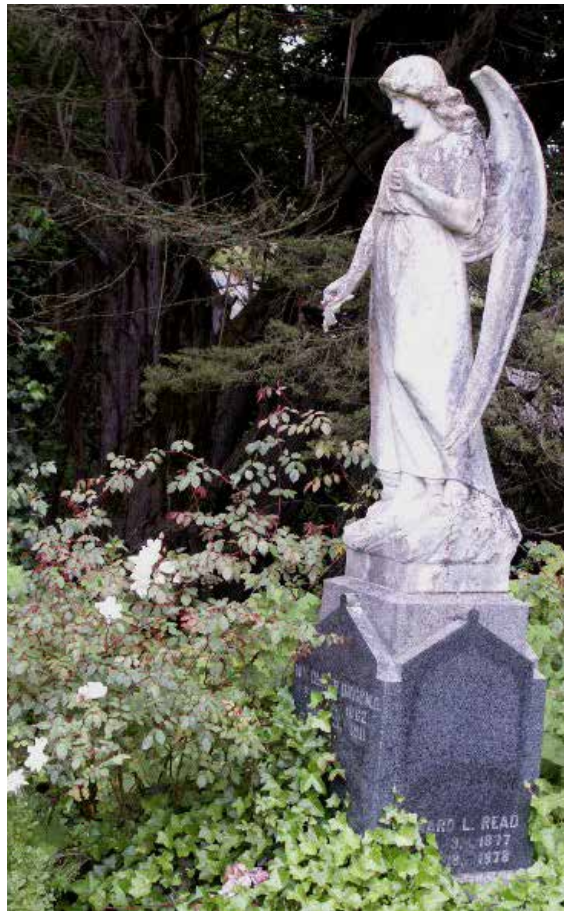
I hope you will join me for a ramble through three great and many small rose gardens in Germany, in newsletters to come. ■

In Memory

We are honored by the donations made over the past few years by J. Conrad Tips of Texas in honor of four women who were instrumental in the revival of interest in heritage roses beginning in the 1970s. Their legacies can be measured in a generation of gardeners who love old roses and want to preserve them for future generations. With Conrad we recall with fondness and gratitude Miriam Wilkins, Barbara Worl, Virginia Hopper and Joyce Demits.

Four mystery roses shared by these four women with the world continue to remind us of them:

Miriam Wilkins found this unlabeled beauty in a box of imported roses from Europe: "Miriam's Pink Powderpuff".



top left: "Miriam's Pink Powderpuff"; top right: "Grandmother's Hat"; above: "Manchester Guardian Angel" (photos by G. Lowery)

A rose that has become one of today's most popular Hybrid Perpetuals, "Grandmother's Hat" was found in a garden in Palo Alto by Barbara Worl.

Two roses found by sisters Joyce Demits and Virginia Hopper are passing through many hands now: "Manchester Guardian Angel" and "Sunshine Rambler". ■

"Sunshine Rambler" (photo by G. Lowery)

MISSION STATEMENT

The Friends of Vintage Roses exists to preserve and enhance the unique and extensive collection of historic roses developed by Gregg Lowery and Phillip Robinson, to establish the collection in a garden, and to share the collection with other public rose preservation efforts, all for the purpose of educating the public about the importance of the rose to human history, cultures, technology, and science.

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Cydney and Art Wade, FL, Chinas, Teas & Noisettes
Miles West, CA, Large-Flowered Climbers

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