AMERICAN CAMELLIA YEARBOOK 1957

Edited for
The American Camellia Society
by
ARTHUR C. BROWN

AMERICAN CAMELLIA SOCIETY
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA
beautiful buds. Among them are at least twenty full grown trees, ten to thirty years old. It is well known that the former possessor of this superb collection of Camellias, Marshall P. Wilder, of Dorchester, spared neither pains nor expense to procure the finest plants from the justly celebrated nurseries in Europe, and that the most recent and most highly estimated seedling varieties are comprised in it. But it is not too well known that one of his motives for disposing of this collection to the society, at a great pecuniary sacrifice to himself, was the desire that his fellow-citizens might conveniently and frequently enjoy the pleasure of viewing it. It is calculated that during the next five or six weeks, several thousand Camellia blossoms will expand, hundreds are now in full bloom, and contrast beautifully with the dark glossy foliage.

\textit{The Horticulture of Boston and Vicinity—Marshall P. Wilder, Tolman & White Printers—1881 (privately printed)}

Roxbury, from the early part of this century, was distinguished for its greenhouses. We have alluded to the Lowells and others reaching back to that time. Among those of the present century was that of John Lemist, who was lost on the ill-fated steamboat Lexington, on the route from Boston to Providence in 1840. This place was formerly the residence of Judge Auchmuty. He being a Tory his property was confiscated. Gov. Increase Sumner was afterwards the owner, then Beza Tucker, and in 1824 it passed to Mr. Lemist. His greenhouses and grapery, under the care of a Scotch gardener, John R. Russell, became quite noted. His collection of plants, especially camellias, gardenias and roses, was considered as remarkable, and he often obtained one dollar or more for a cut flower of the Double White Camellia.

\textbf{CAMELLIA PAGEANT AND SHOW}

\textbf{SOUTHWESTERN LOUISIANA INSTITUTE}

\textbf{LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA}

\textbf{CORINNE G. JUDICE, New Orleans, Louisiana}

\textbf{A SILVER JUBILEE} celebration will give added luster to the annual Southwestern Louisiana Institute Camellia Pageant which will be held at Lafayette, Louisiana, on January 9 and 10, 1958. Always an outstanding event, the Pageant has attracted nationwide and even international recognition for its performances. Plans for the 25th festivity give promise of the most magnificent pageant in its long history.

What began as a simple ceremony on the steps of historic Martin Hall on the campus at the Southwestern Louisiana Institute on a January day in 1934 has assumed proportions of grandeur since its nascence. On that day a small audience circled the front entrance of Martin Hall and witnessed the crowning of the Camellia Queen.

In 1957, it was necessary to turn many would-be spectators away from Southwestern's huge Blackham Coliseum, which seats approximately 8,500 persons, in spite of the fact that two performances were given in the building.

Joel L. Fletcher, now President of Southwestern Louisiana Institute, was Dean of the College of Agriculture when he founded the Camellia Pageant. Dr. Fletcher had organized the first Mid-Winter Fair at the campus in 1927, and, several years later, he conceived the idea of using the camellia as an added feature of the exposition. To honor the winter blossom, it was decided that a campus beauty should be named Camellia Queen, and that a court should also be chosen.

Today, the Camellia Pageant and the Camellia Show which follows are stellar attractions, and the Mid-Winter Fair, which consists of agriculture and livestock expositions, has been taken over by the South Louisiana Mid-Winter Fair Association.

During the years that the crowning of the queen was performed on the Martin Hall steps, a program of folk dancing was given in the auditorium as an added attraction to the ceremonies.
By 1938, the pageant had gained such impetus that it was staged in the girls' gymnasium. The audiences continued to grow in size, and the following year the pageant was presented in the newly constructed men's gymnasium.

Each year, the pageant took on larger scope. In 1941 the college's symphony orchestra and the mixed chorus were added to the spectacle, which had originally featured only folk dancing.

Until 1941 the pageant was held in day-time ceremonies, and by 1950 the event had become well-established at Southwestern as a traditional part of the college year. It was at this time that the spectacle moved to the Blackham Coliseum where it has been playing to capacity crowds every year since the move.

Perhaps one of the most outstanding features of the pageant is the enthusiasm that prevails in the student body during its planning and execution. Representatives from all departments enter into the preparations, and the complexities that attend preliminaries of such a gigantic performance are smoothed out in a gratifying show of esprit de corps among the student planners and performers.

Themes that surround the pageant are always exciting ones... and only students perform in the festivities, with months of rehearsal giving the performances flowing continuity, without subtracting from the natural appeal of amateur effervescence.

Merriment that prevailed in the "Olde England" of Dickens' pen rang out in the 1940 event, with the saucy dancing and group harmony peculiar to that period, surrounding the pageant with authenticity. The embroidered satins and restrained movements of a Chinese court of nobility in the middle ages brought the scent of incense to the audiences in the 1942 pageant.

Within the border of a huge picture frame, the students acted out the nostalgic story of their Alma Mater in 1950, as they unfolded the history of Southwestern Louisiana Institute.

Perhaps the theme that proved nearest to the hearts of the students at Southwestern, and the people of the area which surrounds the college, was that used in 1955, and which told in music and in dance the history of the Acadians.

The pageant that year marked the official opening of the year-long Acadian bicentennial celebration in Louisiana, and the event held international import in Lafayette.

An official delegation of some 200 Canadians from the Maritime Provinces and the Province of Quebec joined with the people of the area, the majority of whom count in their lineage Acadian ancestors who were expelled from Grand Pre in 1755.

In January 1957, "A Salute to the Showboat States" mirrored the scintillating period when crowds waited on the quays for the glittering boats to round the river bend (Fig. 57).

Touching off the exuberant mood of the thousands who view the annual event is the crowning with a circlet of camellias of the year's Camellia Queen, chosen from social sororities on the campus.

Interwoven throughout the lavish dancing and singing spectacles are thousands of camellias. The stage settings are festooned with blossoms, and, not only the Camellia queen and her court, but performers are bedecked with the honored flowers.

One of the most outstanding results of the Camellia Pageant has been that, during its history, the assembling of camellia lovers resulted in the organization of the Louisiana Camellia Society.

The Camellia Show, which is sponsored by the Louisiana Society, is always planned to follow the Pageant. Stage settings for the
The Louisiana Camellia Society is domiciled at Southwestern Louisiana Institute, and the alliance is a happy one for both the College and the Society. Southwestern's College of Agriculture was the original sponsor of the Camellia Show, and the means for exciting interest in the organization of a state camellia show came to full fruition soon after its inception in 1945.

Wise planning of dates for performances of the pageant with the Camellia Show following has proven of inestimable value in assembling camellia lovers at a time when Camellia Society members may attend their annual meeting, and also witness a performance of the Pageant.

Internationally known experts in their fields have addressed the Saturday night banquets of the Louisiana Camellia Society meetings. Among them have been Judge Arthur W. Solomon of Savannah, Georgia, Past President of the American Camellia Society. Judge Solomon was in Lafayette during the American Camellia Society meeting which was held in Lafayette in 1950, and which brought hundreds of prominent camellia fanciers to the Southwestern campus. He placed the queen's crown during the pageantry that preceded the meeting.

H. Harold Hume, at that time Dean of the College of Agriculture, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, one of the founders and the first President of the American Camellia Society, spoke before a banquet of the Louisiana Camellia Society, and also crowned the queen.

During the 1957 banquet, F. P. Cullinan, Chief of the Horticultural Crops Branch, U. S. Department of Agriculture, crowned the 1957 Camellia Queen at the Coliseum and later addressed the Camellia Society gathering.

On the agenda of the annual state meeting is a traditional Shrimp Boil held on the Friday night preceding a performance of the Camellia Pageant.

Members attend a business meeting and clinic on Saturday afternoon and the meeting closes at the banquet Saturday evening.

The 1957 Camellia Show was dedicated to the memory of Dr Paul King Rand of Alexandria, Louisiana, one of the founders of the Louisiana Society, the Society's first president and a member of the organizing committee of the Society during its first year. Dr. Rand was also one of the founders of the American Camellia Society, and the first State Director for Louisiana.

Awarded at the show was a Paul Rand Memorial trophy, which went to the plate of five best flowers on exhibit during the camellia showings.

HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENTO CAMELLIA SOCIETY

ERNEST L. STEVENS, Sacramento, California

The Sacramento Camellia Society was organized November 17, 1943. Before relating some of the accomplishments and achievements of the Society, it may be of interest to discuss some of the events that led up to its founding.

There are camellia plants in Sacramento and vicinity that date back one hundred years or more. A Bostonian, James L. L. F. Warren, who, incidently, had purchased the two Wilder camellias, Wilderi and Mrs. Abby Wilder, came to Sacramento to establish a mercantile business at 15 J Street. His interest in camellias prevailed and on February 3, 1853, he received a stock of plants and seed from the East. They had moved by ship to the Isthmus of Panama, overland to the Pacific Ocean, and then on to San Francisco by the steamer Panama, and finally arrived at Sacramento by river boat. It is believed that these were the first camellias to come to California. They struck the fancy of gardeners and interest in the genus spread throughout the Sacramento area and into other parts of the West. Camellias were exhibited at the first State Fair in San Francisco in October 1854. However, Sacramento did not escape the world-wide decline of interest in camellias that started about 1860 and for years specimen plants grew unnoticed and neglected until about the turn of the present century when interest quickened.

1 Historian, Sacramento Camellia Society.