

Rose Letter



Heritage Roses Groups, February, 2010



Miriam Wilkins

Miriam C. (Walsh) Wilkins, d. November 6, 2009, at 91 years.

Two sentences changed the rose world – hard to believe but it is true.

In January, 1974, a short ad in the American Rose Society magazine started a movement that is still gaining speed today.

“Those who love old roses are asked to write to M. Wilkins, 925 Galvin Drive, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Objective: share information, unobtainable varieties, and enthusiasm.”

She had grown tired of reading of nothing but the new roses, especially those without any fragrance or individual grace.

The lady who wrote these lines was Miriam Wilkins, until her death in November, still a resident at that address, and still promoting the cause of old

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The Rose Letter

The Heritage Roses Group

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Editor: Jeri Jennings: heritageroses@gmail.com

22 Gypsy Lane, Camarillo, CA 93010-1320

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Inside Cover Photo (Left) Miriam Wilkins Photo Courtesy of Bill Grant

MY MONDAY WITH MIRIAM

— Darrell g.h. Schramm

I first met Miriam Wilkins eight or nine years ago at the annual Celebration of Old Roses in El Cerrito. We didn't converse much or long because others demanding her attention repeatedly interrupted us. To compensate for that distraction and limited acquaintance, my mate began a correspondence with her, one that lasted all too briefly because of his own death.

Miriam was renowned in the world of Old Garden Roses. It was she who, at age 56, had advertised nationally to connect with other lovers of antique roses. Out of her connections, she formed in 1975 the Heritage Roses Group, which soon spawned other organizations of Old Rose lovers. Her own organization was known for not only the annual rose celebration but also for its biannual *Old Roser's Digest* and the quarterly *Rose Letter*.



One October Saturday shortly before Miriam died, I arrived at the meeting of the Old Roses Group in Albany. It was sparsely attended, but Barbara Worl and Kristina Osborne's presence enlivened the little group. The presentation focused on attracting butterflies to the garden. Before and after, Miriam and I spoke at some length. When she learned of my interest in researching and writing historic roses, she invited me to her home to view her library.

Two days later, on Monday, October 12, 2009, I presented myself at her door. In a blue sweat suit, supported by a metal walker, she greeted me warmly. Almost immediately the subject, of course, turned to roses. She then asked me to follow her into the library. "***It's the only room I feel safe in,***" she declared. "***I have so many books in there, I can't even fall.***" I saw what she meant. Not only did books cram the shelves in exuberant abundance, but they also rose in high piles on the floor, leaving a mere narrow aisle. Indeed, if one fell, the stacks of books would likely cushion a sharp or hard fall.

I perused the book titles enviously. No doubt Miriam soon realized I could be mesmerized for hours, so she offered generously for me to visit her garden.

"It's an attack garden," she said. ***"I have to warn you."***

“An attack garden?”

“You’ll see what I mean.” And she directed my little hegira through the back door, through gates and down paths of her rosarian jungle.

This was the un-secret garden. Mary Lennox of Misselthwaite Manor would have been overjoyed to weed, deadhead, prune, water, and create more breathing space for the plants, all the while “speaking to the trees and the rose-bushes as if they heard her.” Miriam’s garden had become a tangle of tendrils, of climbers and ramblers and shrubs, many of the latter still growing in the five-gallon tubs they’d arrived in from the nursery. Some were labeled; many were not. I was enchanted. And attacked—prickles on all sides of me, over my head, at my feet, at my sleeves.

At one point I encountered a lovely mauve rose in full bloom, perhaps a hybrid perpetual, on a somewhat spindly bush. Clearly these roses needed help. But I understood that at 91 Miriam was not the one to provide it. She’d told me a gardener usually worked there two hours a week. Obviously the roses were overwhelming him as well as the garden. How does one keep back the jungle for two hours a week when it continues to grow for an additional 166 hours?

Inside, I asked Miriam about the rose that had enamored me. “I can’t think which,” she said. She lifted herself from the armchair and propelled herself into the kitchen at the helm of her walker to fetch me a clippers. “Here. Bring it in.”

Outside, I cut a long stem of the purplish bloom as well as another without a flower.

“Is that all you cut?” she asked as I walked into the living room with the blooming stem in front of me.

“Oh, no. Here’s another stem.”

“Good. You take that home and make cuttings. And the rose too. Now, was there a tag on the bush?”

“Yes. Spy Rock Rose.”

“What? You mean ‘Skyrocket’.”

“No,” and I repeated the name.

“I don’t remember that. Wait a minute.” She picked up her phone and spoke to someone called Jay, repeating the name I had given her and describing the rose.

“Oh, yes,” she concluded, then thanked the man and hung up. ***“If anyone would know, Jay would. It’s a found rose,”*** Miriam announced. ***“Joyce Demitts brought it to me. See what you can do with it. Now, would you like to borrow a volume of my Genus Rosa for your research?”***

Knowing the rarity and value of this two-volume set by Ellen Willmott, I declined.

“I tried to get Bill Grant—you know him?—to borrow it, too, but he wouldn’t either. What’s a book for if no one will open it?”

I chuckled and relented. ***“All right. But I’ll return it to you before Christmas.”***



I wouldn’t have the opportunity to return that huge book with its

— *Cont. on Pg. 3*

**ALL OF THE ROSES
IN MIRIAM'S GARDEN
ARE FOR SALE!!**

(In Pots, In The Ground . . . Cuttings)

Saturday, March 6, 2010

1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

925 Galvin St., El Cerrito, CA

BRING YOUR OWN: POTS, SOIL, SHOVEL, PRUNERS, ETC

The Roses Have all been labeled, but you are on your own for hauling, digging up, taking cuttings, etc.

QUESTIONS??? Contact **KRISTINA OSBORN**
510-527-3815

"My Monday With Miriam," Cont. from Pg. 2

valuable colored plates. That Monday was the last time I saw Miriam Wilkins. She died on November 6th. Waiting two weeks out of respect, I drove to El Cerrito and delivered the book to her daughter Lynn.

I remember, near the end of my morning visit with Miriam, the phone rang, and I heard her speak briefly of last things. When she hung up, she said, "***That was my son. I'm trying to get everything ready for when I'm gone.***" Her gift of the found rose cuttings was, in her typical generosity, a way of doing just that. Of my three cuttings, two have already sprouted some green growth. In them, her life goes on.

***Please do not reprint without specific written permission of the author,
Darrell Schramm.
schrammd@att.net***

Darrell Schramm was born in North Dakota. He has lived in Colombia, Portugal, Spain, and California, and is a Master Gardener in love with old roses. Darrell says that he is teaching his last year at the University of San Francisco, looking forward to retirement in order to pursue his research and writing on old roses. He lives in Vallejo, CA

A Rosy Hillside

Down the hill in El Cerrito, a little family – husband, wife, two toddler daughters – rented a small white cottage surrounded by an enchanting garden. The wife loved the roses in the garden. Until then, she knew almost nothing about roses. Up the same hill, Miriam Wilkins' rose passion, expertise, and love had just found a voice in the first Rose Letter. That was in 1975.

Then in 1989, the housewife, who by then had moved to a different town, and had become a few other things, including a rose enthusiast, found out about the Celebration of Old Roses. When she arrived at the event, to her surprise, the El Cerrito Community Center was on the same street as the white cottage she used to live in. She was never the same after her first Celebration– roses became her everything. That woman was yours truly.

Fourteen years later, I sat with Miriam in her living room for an interview. I was writing my second rose book. As I look back, it dawns on me, even more, how Miriam paved the way for my rose learning during those fourteen years. Her infectious enthusiasm, her intrepid rose searches, her championing of expert rose contributors, her support of rose growers, her cheery thoughts and written words, her brilliant networking and determination, her profound generosity, her perpetual welcome, her eagerness to educate and supply connections, her vision for the future of roses, all had a way of bringing the rose world together in unexpected and rewarding ways.

Miriam also wanted us to learn from what she thought were her errant gardening ways, “I encourage you to be more sensible than I have been– an overgrown garden is a burden.” However, outside her dining room window – a place where she found much healing solace – the soaring canes in her back garden formed an otherworldly blanket of bloom. She'd be there now, as I write on January 16, because the yellow Banksia buds are showing color, and they're even blooming!

Miriam will probably be watching over us as we glean the treasures from the hillside jungle of roses she left us.

— *Carolyn Parker, Rosenotes.com*

‘WILLIAM ALLEN RICHARDSON’ *MYSTERY SOLVED!*

— Darrell g.h. Schramm

In the June 4th, 1910 issue of *The Outlook*, vol 95, a weekly U.S. magazine, appeared an article by Edward Verrall Lucas entitled “*An American Hero.*” The article begins with a long quotation from his previous article (re-published in the August 2009 of the *Rose Letter*).

It then goes on to reveal that Lucas, because of that piece he had written in 1909, had been contacted by the nephew of William Allen Richardson who had read the article and accordingly informed him of the namesake of the rose, his uncle.

William Allen Richardson was born in New Orleans in February of 1819. At age two, he moved to Lexington, Kentucky, with his family, where he lived until his death in October 1892. He married the daughter of a botanist, Charles Wilkins Short of Louisville, KY. With his wife Mary, he moved to a country place they called Ivywood where they cultivated and propagated roses.

Richardson also imported many roses, not least from the Widow Ducher in France. When he sent her a pale yellow rose, they struck up a correspondence. In a letter to him, she mentioned that she had a sport from the same rose in her garden, and if that sport propagated successfully, she would name it after him. It thrived. Hence, the name of this copper-yellow rose: ‘*William Allen Richardson*’.



‘William Allen Richardson’

Miriam Wilkins Garden

Or a Benediction of Rose Ramblings

— Pamela Greenewald

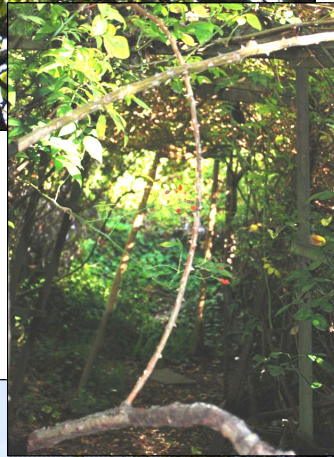
Coordinator, Southeast Heritage Roses Group

The day I arrived, she left the Earth,
 Having passed 91 years since her birth.
Except through writings, I never knew
 The Grand Rosarian, although it's true
She Loved Roses so very much,
 Dedicating her life
To their Life
 With her Special Touch.
I felt I must go to see for myself what she had left behind,
 Before it would be gone forever except saved in my mind.
To appreciate the years of her long life she had given
to her beloved Old Friends
 Knowing they would soon join her in Heaven's Garden
of Eternal Roses around the bend.
 And so I went to El Cerrito, high in the hills,
Kristina met me for a tour that brought chills
 With a view of Monterey Bay in the distance,
I saw what she saw and I could feel her existence
 Still there with her roses, it brought me to tears.
Staring in a-Maze-ment at the umpteen years
 Of roses growing every which way, over and through
Creating a Jungle of Roses, a Rose Jungle she knew.
 A place for birds and bees to thrive and rabbits to hide,
As I strolled in awe I could feel her spirit "by my side".
 Knowing this would soon be the dozer's kill,
As I gathered cuttings, it brought me a chill.
 And I knew it was the only way she could live on
Through the sweet memories of those fortunate enough to have known her
 And through her cloned roses soon to be growing in my own garden.
They gave me a plant of Harison's Yellow, one I had been searching for.
 And cuttings of Mateo's Pink Butterflies, and Great Maiden's Blush,
Spiky hips from Little Pinkie and an unknown Noisette that grew from seed.
 And I saw another Lost Rose Garden with generations of blooms
And after countless seasons of happiness unended
 How the Queen of Flowers must die along with her Mistress
Because that is the Way of Nature left unattended .



*In Miriam's
Garden*

— Winter Photos by pamela greenewald



Remembering Miriam Wilkins

by Kristina Osborn

On November 6, 2009, at the age of 91, Miriam Wilkins, our beloved friend and founder of the Heritage Roses Group, passed away in her home surrounded by her children. Miriam was adamant that she did not want a funeral service and, at her request she was cremated. Her family gathered on Christmas Eve, the anniversary of their parent's wedding anniversary, and scattered her ashes, along with wildflower seeds, in an open space above a quarry in El Cerrito, CA. Her children are planting California native roses and other California native plants in the space and will also erect a bench as a memorial to their mother.



Photo by
Kristina
Osborn

Our loss will be greatly felt, but our memories of Miriam's energy, tenacity, hard work, stubbornness and most especially her love of old garden roses will go on forever. Her children described their Mother as having a strong and forceful personality coupled with a strong moral sensibility and a lot of energy. But add that she was also kind, self-effacing, self sacrificing and exceedingly generous. *"She was a remarkable woman, who left behind her a legacy of work popularizing Old Garden Roses, as well as her family of four children, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She was also active in the Animal Rights Movement for a number of years. She was mar-*

— Continued on Pg. 15



“Benny Lopez”

Found Rose, Santa Barbara, CA, Propagated by Ingrid Wapelhorst

Best Found Rose In Show

National Rose Show, November, 2009

Exhibited by Ingrid Wapelhorst

Forgotten Roses

Collection, Preservation, Identification

A WINTER SEMINAR

Presented *by the* North Coast Heritage Roses Group

10 a.m., Sat., March 20

At Garden Valley Ranch

498 Pepper Road, Petaluma, CA 94952 (707) 795-0919

<http://www.gardenvalley.com/>

THERE WILL BE NO CHARGE
FOR THIS SEMINAR

BRING A BAG LUNCH
(Drinks, Incl. Morning Coffee Provided.)

A RAFFLE WILL HAPPEN!

(Rare Roses & Other Serendipitous Things Offered)
RAFFLE PROCEEDS AND ANY DONATIONS BENEFIT HRG

SPEAKERS:

Jeri & Clay Jennings

Rose Collection & Preservation

Cass Bernstein

Rose Identification

Late March in Northern California — The weather outside may be frightful — or wonderful. It doesn't matter.

It's "down-time" for enjoyment of the garden — HIGH time to gather together for mutual education, with a little socialization on the side.

**For Information, and To Register For The Seminar,
(FOR PURPOSES OF A HEAD COUNT)**

Contact Alice Flores via email to: aflores@mcn.org

Miriam's Garden

*Miriam made a garden
From some land that slanted down a hill.
A creek ran through.*

*Beyond the land—
A bay—a view!*

*A garden, yes, a garden
Filled with roses.
This became her passion,
And in her usual fashion
Of no plan left unfulfilled,
She planted roses*

*Down the hill—
Round the hill—*

A dozen, a hundred, a thousand!

*Roses, roses, large and small,
Short and tall—*

*Some reaching to the
Tallest tree,
Some peeping from the
Sheltered niches.*

*A plethora of riches!
No whim of nature
This creation
Each petal patterned to
Its perfect whole.*

*Roses of exquisite hue
Breathe out their lovely scents
All through
The garden.*

*A garden meant to be
A haven for the needed bee,
A sanctum for the squirrels
And birds*



— Continued, Page 12

Miriam's Garden

*With seeds and nuts
Aplenty.*

*She may sit within a
Hidden bower
Surrounded, enveloped by
Her flowers.
Does she think her loving
Toil rewarded?
In this garden she has
Singly made?
She has raised old roses
From their grave—
Their long-lost loveliness
Has shared
With everyone who
Showed they cared.*

*The roses bloom and spend
Their lives with wild abandon.
They fade too soon.
The joy—the peace
To know
The everlasting spring
Will bring
Their flawless beauty
Back again
To Miriam's garden.*

By Thelma Behrens, (Miriam's sister)

*Our thanks to Carolyn Parker, for permission to share this
poem, written by Thelma Behrens — Miriam Wilkins' sister.
Visit Carolyn's elegant website at:*

<http://www.rosesfromatoz.com/>

Or find her on Facebook



Miriam Wilkins, cont. from Inside Front Cover

roses. The city where she spent most of her life honored her recently for her dedication. Her photo and her work are now recorded in the city's Wall of Fame.

When she wrote her ad, most rose growers, nurseries, and public gardens were interested in the new roses, mostly the still popular Hybrid Teas. What she said she wanted was ***“to share with others the history, beauty, landscaping potential and low-care attributes of the roses that have survived for so many years – or even centuries – despite being ignored by the major nurseries and rosarians.”*** In addition, she missed the wonderful perfume of heirloom roses.

Those *“unobtainable varieties”* of the time are now available at many nurseries throughout the world. The gardening public for years had been sold with the idea that a rose should rebloom – and many of the heritage ones bloom only once. That is still the hardest prejudice to overcome, but Wilkins must be given credit for the success of her work.

She was born 91 years ago in El Cerrito, a city north of Berkeley, California, and where she was an elementary school teacher and raised her four children, who have been a great support in her work. Every year on the Sunday after Mother's Day she held her Celebration of Old Roses in the community center, with hundreds and sometimes thousands of rose lovers congregating to look at, smell, and buy the hundreds of plants on display.

She began her Heritage Rose Group so that others could join her in promoting them to the public; her quarterly newsletter was published for 25 years and is now edited by Joanie Helgeson.

Her ideas caught on, not only gardeners but with a few nurseries, at first, and then many joined the cause, not only in the U.S. but overseas as well.

At the close of WWII only one nursery in the world was selling the heirloom plants. Her newsletter was subscribed to by others overseas, where the movement now has organizations and publications in France, England, New Zealand, and Australia. International Heritage Rose conferences are held every other year, the last one in Paris. No date has been set for the next one.

Anyone who has met or known Wilkins over the years can tell you she was marked by her warmth, her knowledge, and her determination to spread the word.

“A landscape full of modern roses can be monotonous for their characteristics do not differ that much. However, hybridizers now are varying form and habit; perhaps we have convinced gardeners that a muddled shape can equal the modern ones if that variety is healthy and fragrant,” she says.

That *“muddled”* term refers to the large, full, graceful form of such roses as the Albas, Bourbons, Damasks, Mosses, among others. The species or wild roses are also treasured by her and others, though they are not always

— *Continued on Page 14*



R. eglantaria Hips
Sacramento City Cemetery Historic Rose Garden

Miriam Wilkins, cont. from Page 13

adaptable to smaller gardens.

In her own large garden she grew hundreds of shrubs and climbers, drawing rosarians from faraway places to enjoy the fragrance and the beauty of roses that overflow the paths and spill into neighbors' gardens. A BBC film, innumerable books and articles have told the story. Peter Beales, the eminent rose nurseryman in England, has remarked that she has made a profound impact on restoring many "*forgotten*" roses to the nursery lists here and abroad.

The official flower of the United States is the rose. When Congress passed that bill, it did not state what kind of rose it would be. The Postal Service has designed a rather generic, lifeless picture to represent the rose world. A series of stamps showing the wider and more beautiful range of roses would be wonderful; and it would be a fitting tribute as well to the work of Miriam Wilkins and others who have done so much to renew interest in the heritage roses.

Our sincere thanks to Bill Grant for this remembrance of a remarkable woman. The text was read, in tribute, at the Great Rosarians Of The World event, January 24, 2010, at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA.

ried to her husband Dick for 66 years, until his death in May of this year. They met when they were juniors at Richmond High in 1934 and married during WWII, while he was serving in the U.S. Navy. She was a native Californian and a resident of El Cerrito for almost all of her 91 years."

In 1974, at the age of 56, Miriam took up an interest in the old roses she remembered growing in her Grandmother's garden. She placed a small notice in the American Rose Society magazine inquiring about other old rose lovers and the Heritage Roses Group was born. Miriam began the quarterly "**Rose Letter**" in 1975, to promote the love of Old Garden Roses and to share information on events, nurseries and rose growers who support these lovely old roses. From that grew the bi-annual "**Old Roser's Digest**" which included her musings on roses along with valuable information on rose growing, rose events, nurseries, rose books and care of old roses. She typed out the two issues every year on her manual typewriter. People hoard their issues of the Rose Letter and the ORD for their wealth of information and we often receive requests for back issues.

Not to worry, Miriam's legacy will live on. Miriam has been slowly passing the wand to talented and energetic rose lovers have taken over all aspects of the Heritage Roses Group. The "**Rose Letter**" and the "**Old Roser's Digest**" will continue on in her memory. We will continue to provide a venue for rose lovers everywhere to gather, share information and promote those beautiful old blossoms.

No history on Miriam would be complete without mention of the annual Celebration of Old Roses, held in El Cerrito for over 30 years. People come from all over the world to attend this one-of-a-kind event, dedicated to promoting and understanding the beauty of old roses. For over 20 years Miriam ran this event essentially by herself with the help of her family. A group of rose lovers has been slowly taking over the responsibilities for this event, so it too will continue for as long as people are interested in learning more about the beautiful old blossoms.

Miriam visited gardens in many countries, and she was honored as a "**Great Rosarian**" in 2003, by the Great Rosarians Of The World organization. In December 2008 she was honored by the City of El Cerrito and was added to the City's Wall of Fame. Under Miriam's guidance, the Heritage Roses Group has supported the creation of the Guadalupe Old Rose Garden in San Jose, CA, the Old Roses Garden in Sacramento, CA and the Old Roses Plot in the Old Section of San Diego, CA.

Miriam's personal garden is a sight to behold. There are over a thousand roses growing in her yard and many growing so freely that they form a canopy that you could walk under. From her dining room window, most especially in the Spring, you look out over a sea of roses cascading down the hill with the San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge off in the distance. She had so many roses that they spilled into, and took over, a large section of the yard of a very kind and generous neighbor. Miriam was thrilled when anyone wanted to visit her garden and hence, people came from all over the world to visit her and walk among her roses.

With that being said, her roses now need new homes. Most especially, the kind neighbor would like their yard back. So, Miriam's family has asked members of the Heritage Roses Group to organize a way to remove the roses and to share them with other rose lovers.

We are planning an *"Open Garden"* on the weekend of March 5/6, and will invite rose lovers to take plants and/or cuttings. People will be asked to make a small donation in support of the Heritage Roses Group. We have been working diligently to label all the roses and to tidy up the yard a bit in preparation of this event. Please see the notice in this Rose Letter, for more details.

There is so much more that I would like to say about Miriam, but I have rambled on long enough. I will share more about Miriam in future issues. For now, I would like to leave you with a poem that Miriam's sister, Thelma Behrens, wrote as parting words for her sister....

*Kristina Osborn, South-West Regional Coordinator for The Heritage Roses Group,
Lives in Albany, CA*

Ode To Miriam

My Sister died today.

**She had one day at home
To look out at her beloved garden.
A thousand roses--
Gathered from gardens of the world--
And planted with such care and love;
Shared unselfishly in
her grace-filled, "It's no bother" way.
Her children near--
Loving, caring, dear to her,
To whom she gave such love & help
Through all their lives.**

She did not linger on.

**As was her way, she gave as little trouble
As she could.
The gap she leaves
is far beyond mere words to tell.
One less person on this crowded earth.
*"But, oh, the difference to me!"***

— Thelma Behrens



*Experience The Splendor Of Heritage Roses
In A Beautiful 19th-Century Setting At The*
Saturday, April 17
OPEN GARDEN
In The Historic Rose Garden
Of The Old Sacramento City Cemetery



Free Tours — Free Admission
Free Parking In The Lot Across Broadway
Fund-Raiser Sale Of Historic & Rare Roses
Enables Garden Maintenance

The Sacramento Historic Rose Garden will be in full bloom for the annual Open Garden. The historic Old Sacramento City Cemetery is located at 10th St. & Broadway, in Sacramento, California.

Contact: Barbara Oliva, (916) 443-2146,

boliva@macnexus.org www.CemeteryRose.org
www.oldcitycemetery.com

*The Heritage Roses Group, The Old City Cemetery Committee, and
The City of Sacramento Sponsor The Event.*

**OPEN GARDEN DAY
SACRAMENTO CITY CEMETERY
HISTORIC ROSE GARDEN**



**THE GLORIOUS BLAZE OF COLOR THAT IS
'GLOIRE DES ROSOMANES'**



'SAFRANO'

'SHAILER'S PROVENCE'



R. odorata



'FOREST RANCH'



R. odorata

Ralph Moore Remembered



Ralph Moore at 100 Years With Indian Hybridizer, Viru Viraraghavan

By Kim Rupert

It's tough to accept that our Miriam was not the only wonderful Rosarian lost in the last year. Hybridizer Kim Rupert remembers Ralph Moore.

I've been asked to share a little of what kind of man Ralph Moore was. I had the pleasure, the honor of knowing Ralph for 25 years. When we met, he was a strapping, vigorous, vital gentleman of about 75 years of age. I was a sedentary 30 year old who was hungry to learn anything and everything there was to know about roses.

Ralph was my friend. In many ways, he was my mentor. Most treasured to me, is when together at Sequoia Nursery, we were playmates. He walked my feet off every visit in those years. We talked, we studied, we laughed, we played. He taught me, focused me, refined my vision and gave me new eyes. Above all Ralph was...

The Perfect Planter....

Ralph was the consummate seed planter. Not only did he put pretty much put any kind of seed in soil, but he planted the seeds of his Faith, his passion for roses and other plants, gardening, keen interest in introducing children to the wonders of Nature and just the simple joy of living in everyone I ever saw him come in contact with. He had a true wonder, a very much child-like wonder about the world and everything around him. I've often said we discussed and he instilled the "*what if..*", often without even saying the words.

I don't know how many times over the course of the years I'd asked him why he even considered this or that cross, or this or that method of propagation, planting, etc., and his honest, immediate reply was most often that he wanted to see if it worked. I seriously doubt there were any horticultural obstacles his mind didn't figure out a way around. He often said, "*the rose will find the way*", or, "*why not? Roses can't read*". To him, rules were merely suggestions to explain something we didn't understand. He loved stating that "*as soon as you learn the rules, the rose changes them*". I remember asking him what he thought of using colchicine, a substance derived from the Autumn Crocus, to increase the chromosome count of a rose. He considered the thought for only a moment before asking me why I'd even



Ralph Moore's 'STARDUST'

— Cont. on Pg. 21

May 2 through 8, 2010 Antique Rose Festival Week In The Gravegarden



*The Carl Cato Collection
In Lynchburg's Old City Cemetery*

Lynchburg, VA Old City Cemetery

Join the celebration of the 15th Anniversary of Lynchburg's Antique Rose Festival.

A week-long schedule of workshops, lectures, and walking tours crowned on the Saturday before Mother's Day by the Festival itself:

**Saturday, May 8th,
9 a.m.-2 p.m.**

Lynchburg's Old City Cemetery had fallen on hard times. Four struggling Old Roses which had survived here became the foundation of a still-growing collection of 200 or more — selected, and in some cases donated by the late Carl Cato — a founding member of the Heritage Rose Foundation.

To preview the delights of this garden, rich in both beauty and history, visit these two websites:

<http://woodlandrosegarden.com/american%20gardens/lynchburg%20cemetery%202003/lynchburg%20cemetery%202003.html>

and

http://www.bsweethouse.com/galleries/garden/lynch_cemetery_may_05/new_dawn.jpg.html

The Lynchburg, VA, Old City Cemetery is located at 401 Taylor Street, Lynchburg, VA 24501 For more information, visit the Cemetery's Website:

Website: www.gravegarden.org

Phone: (434) 847-1465 or E-mail: occ@gravegarden.org

— RALPH MOORE, *Cont. From Page 18*

mess with such an expensive, dangerous substance when the rose would figure it out without the effort. If the cross didn't work in one direction, it surely would in the other or in another season, if you didn't give up. He never considered chromosome counts. He didn't need to. Our "rules" concerning them didn't apply to him. Triploids, roses with uneven numbers of chromosomes, are known to be infertile, except in his hands. He didn't bother himself with such man made, artificial explanations. In his mind, all "what ifs" were absolute possibilities. If it didn't work in that direction, like water, electricity and gophers, he just changed direction until it did. That was the fun of it. Sharing the search with others who would not only listen, but engage in the "what ifs" was fuel for his fire.

Many times over the years, he handed me a plant or a bloom and seriously asked if I thought anyone would pay money for it. Much more often than not, my response was I was ready to if he had plants available. Nope, but he did have one to share if I'd follow him here or there.

I followed him mile after mile within those six acres! When Ralph shared something, it was always with the provision that you "**don't let this get away from you**". The pot was handed, but with his huge hand firmly holding it until he'd admonished you not to let it out of your possession. Many strange and wonderful things, as well as some which turned out to be not quite as 'wonderful', were generously shared with that lingering hand. He had a vision, a goal, and anything which didn't fit squarely within his clearly defined parameters was a complete puzzlement to him. He not only delighted in carefully, and usually unbeknown to you, retraining your eyes, but delighted in seeing through other's eyes too. He honestly didn't know if something other than his miniatures would sell.



'Sharon's Delight'

Moore; (Sheri Ann or Golden Angel x Safrano)



'Sweet Chariot'

Moore; (Little Chief x Violette)

Fortunately, he would seek that confirmation from others whom he respected, then introduce some pretty wonderful creations. Most were already tested in other gardens because of his delight in planting the seed of sharing, of enjoying growing something, seeing something out of your usual area of interest.

A wander through my garden brings back many memories of past visits, past discussions, as I'm sure many others share. A cousin of his had a hunting cabin in the Sierras. Not far from that cabin, he found

— *Cont. on Pg. 21*



'Precious Dream'
A Ralph Moore Bracteata Hybrid

parents, Queen Elizabeth and Crested Moss. Once blooming, intensely fragrant with pink, papery petals and scented new growth. I loved the feathery sepals and he surprised me with a small plant of it. As with many of his surprises, it turned fortunate for him as I was able to supply him with cuttings when his final, remaining plant of it suddenly died. He had shared his often used breeder, Wichuraiana X Floradora, 0-47-19, with Paul Barden and with me, probably a few others, too. We both had the honor of replacing it for him when he lost it a few times.

He showed me a mossed, double, pink Hybrid Tea many years ago. It was code named 7-58-10. He had used it to create *'Dresden Doll'* and said he had the paperwork all ready to patent it many years before, but never got around to it. The rose repeats its bloom all season as any HT is expected, but is mossed and predated any other modern moss by decades. His coding system indicates it first bloomed in 1958. I asked why he'd never gone forward with it and he asked, *"how many balls can YOU juggle at once?"* He shared this, and six more roses The Huntington, to be propagated and used as exclusives for fund raising.

I had always thought it odd that when he shared a plant, he stood cutting off the open flowers and any hips before releasing it. It was some time later I learned he had shared a plant with another commercial breeder who had asked for the variety. A seed in a hip which Sequoia had created on that plant went on to become a popular commercial success. Ralph had contacted the other breeder about it and the response he got was very much, *"too bad for you"*. From then on, plants he shared were sheared of their blooms.

He loved telling the story of Sam McGredy wanting plants of *'Pinstripe'*. Ralph hadn't finished using *'Pinstripe'* for breeding and wasn't ready to release it yet, but he did give Mr. McGredy plants of *'Stars'n Stripes'*. He said he suggested that if he crossed it with itself it once, he could easily fix the dwarf plant with stripes. From the looks of the striped minis released from McGredy's breeding on *'Stars'n Stripes'*, Ralph's suggestion wasn't taken.

Ralph respected and liked Jack Harkness. He and Mrs. Moore had been guests of the Harkness' when visiting England. The two men shared a fascination with Hulthemia, a dis-

what he called **R. Californica nana**, a more dwarf form of one of California's species roses. He put pollen from its flowers on *'Golden Angel'*, one of his wonderful yellow miniature roses, and kept two seedlings from the cross. The one he found most interesting was, to me, a fairly typical pink, double miniature. He felt it should be a hybrid due to the rounded, bluish foliage. The one which fascinated me, which he generously shared with me, in fact, giving me the only plant of it he had, looks like California, but blooms any time you should expect a miniature rose to flower.

His fascination with crested sepals is well known. What isn't as well known are the many routes he took to get where he wanted to go. One, which still grows in my garden, is what he called MORqueencrest. It's an odd plant, rather leggy and rangy, but definitely a cross of its

tant cousin of what we think of as roses. Ralph said he asked Jack Harkness why he chose to breed Hulthemia with the types of roses he used instead of miniatures. Ralph had discovered using miniatures provided the bridge needed to introduce not only dwarf, repeat blooming plants but increased vigor, vitality, ease of rooting and often fertility and health. Many times, he found only minis would accept some of the strange pollens he tried. He delighted in reporting Mr. Harkness hadn't thought of it but allowed that had he to do it again, he surely would use minis. The year Ralph succeeded in creating a bright yellow Hulthemia hybrid with large, bright red petal blotch, he asked me for copies of the photos I took of the flowers to send to Mrs. Harkness. He said she had written him to see if he'd gotten another generation from Tigris. He delighted in sending her the photos and reporting he had several further generations. His delight was in sharing with her that her husband's work had been well used. He had been a good steward of it.

Ralph had a life-long respect and admiration for Dr. Walter Lammerts. He considered Dr. Lammerts his rose mentor. He kept in touch with him, then Mrs. Lammerts and finally their daughter after they had passed away. History and loyalty were important to him. Memories as well as roses provide immortality and he honored that. I remember his telling the story of Dr. Lammerts standing under the eaves of the office at Sequoia and telling Ralph, *"the day a customer can't walk in here and get two good rose plants for \$5, and get change back, we're in trouble"*. How times change.... I also remember Ralph sharing that Dr. Lammerts proclaimed Griffith Buck's *"Maytime"* as *"immune to powdery mildew"*. Perhaps information for us to make greater use of? He frequently advised to *"create a good plant first. It's always easy to hang a pretty flower on it later"*.



Early in our friendship, I made the comment that the weeds sure loved to grow in and around his tables because of the constant water from his irrigation system. He chuckled and responded *"if you don't plant something, God will"*. He had a drive to plant roses everywhere they could be grown. His aim was beauty any and everywhere it could be sustained. To him, the world was beautiful. *"Creation"* and its inhabitants were perfect and perfectly beautiful. It wasn't that he didn't know ugly or evil, he simply didn't allow them places in his realm. He gave beauty. He gave *"perfection"* and he quietly demanded them in return. I can honestly say I never heard him speak ill of any other person. Reminiscing about Roy Hennessy, who was surely not one of the easiest people to know or be around, he laughed and recounted how his letters would be *"smoldering"* from the language Hennessy used. Ralph just had a gentleness of spirit which insulated him from other's *"flames"*. He could remember perhaps less than complimentary details about people and situations,

but they were never recounted as being derogatory or judgmental toward anyone. He was as generous with his grace as he was with his time, knowledge and plants.

Perhaps due to his lack of an heir apparent, nothing was proprietary in Ralph Moore's

world. He planted the seeds of knowledge in any and all who would listen. There were no lectures, and it was never dry nor boring, but always full of life, joy and wonderment. He never seemed to tire of repeating a story, discovery or piece of knowledge. He planted them every chance he received, even making opportunities if they didn't present themselves. I am not able to determine if it was really conscious or not, but it was definitely one of his "*prime directives*". Keeping that light under a bushel was absolutely sinful in his spirit. It is unfortunate so many breeders choose not to publish the parentage of their roses. Perhaps, they honestly don't know them. Perhaps, they feel the information proprietary, as though sharing it would give the competition a leg up on them. Ralph never treated any information, knowledge or discoveries as proprietary. If he knew it, he would make sure he shared it as far and wide as possible for fear of it not only being lost, but for fear someone else wouldn't benefit from it. He hated the thought that he might have saved someone time or energy and didn't. He knew sharing his knowledge wouldn't put him at a disadvantage. And, he knew sharing that knowledge would improve the lot of the whole. His was a true generosity of spirit.

Ralph loved company. A rose lover, someone who might be developed as a rose lover, and, particularly, pretty girls, were always welcomed. His passion, his beloved obsession, was not as much fun for him unless he shared it with someone else. Life wasn't as much fun if not shared. Anything pertaining to growing something caught his attention. Yes, he obsessed over roses, particularly miniatures, but he grew everything and delighted in growing them any different way he could discover.

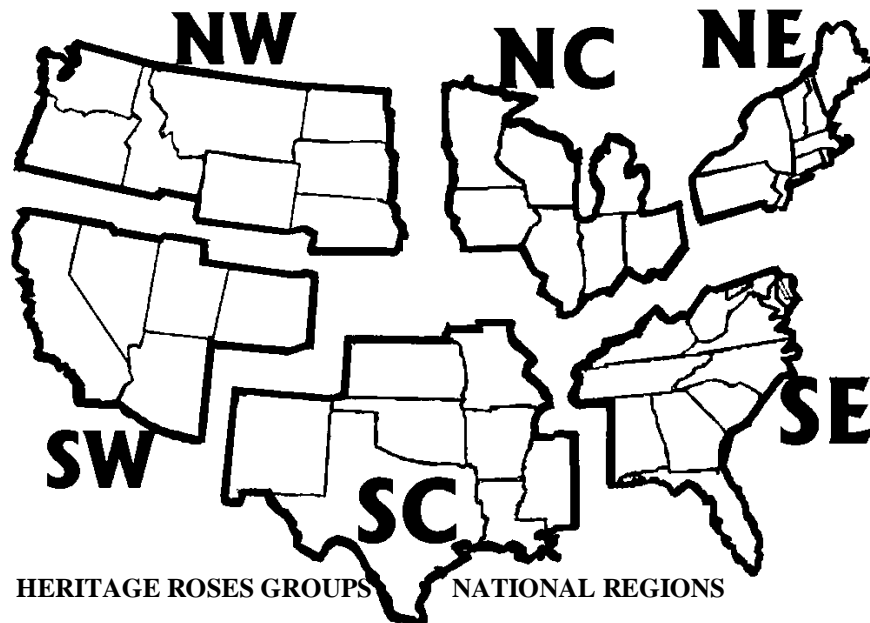
As time began showing its effects on his flexibility, he began growing some of his vegetables on the nursery tables in stacked nursery flats. I remember commenting on how clever I thought the idea. That triggered the story of how Dee Bennett used to grow her extra mini cuttings in dirt flats in the green houses. As they'd mature, if she didn't have time to individually repot them, she would stack one flat on top of a second, then third or fourth flat of dirt until she had a forest of minis growing in stacked flats. When needed, she had mature plants of the varieties all ready to be sliced out like pieces of cake, which could then be matured in a few weeks before being ready for sale, saving her at least a season. He simply expanded on the idea to make harvesting his beloved vegetables easier and keep the rabbits out of them. He continued that a man had visited the nursery some years back and taken notice of the method. He took the knowledge with him into his work in the Peace Corps. Ralph was very touched and proud of the man's letter stating people were then growing food in places they couldn't previously grow it using this stacked flat method. His generous spirit prevented him from taking credit for the idea, instead giving it to Dee Bennett where he had obtained it. Knowing people were able to not only enjoy growing things where they couldn't before, but actually be able to feed them doing it was all the "credit" he needed. The pride he took from that story was not in his part in making happen, but simply that it happened. All that mattered to him was people were better off than before.

That was Ralph Moore's focus...that his efforts in any pursuit would benefit people, make them better off than they were before. He didn't take '*credit*' for creating anything. He stated regularly that God gave him all he had. God made the roses and God gave him the inspiration to make a particular cross. Whether it was through his dreaming in color, or an inspired thought, God made it happen. His were simply the hands employed to accomplish the physical work. He was never embarrassed nor inhibited by "*failure*". He knew there was no one rose, no one method for anything, which was universally successful. If it didn't work in this place, it would somewhere else. He just kept exploring until he found the one which would work where the other one wouldn't. Just as he would keep planting all of his seeds until they found fertile ground and germinated.

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HERITAGE ROSES GROUP MEMBERSHIP



REGIONAL COORDINATORS

North-East — Michele Ebaugh 107 Redwood Lane, State College, Pa, 16801
mebaugh@mac.com

North-Central — Dr. Henry Najat, M.D. W. 6365 Wald Rd., Monroe, WI 53566
beekeeper1@cppweb.com

South-East — Pam Greenewald PO Box 1106 Alachua, Fl. 32616
ph: 352-359-1133, fax: 386-462-4377
gardenangel22@gmail.com www.angelgardens.com

South-Central — Clay Jennings 22 Gypsy Lane, Camarillo, CA 93010-1320
e.c.jennings@gmail.com

South-West — Kristina Osborn 818 Adams St., Albany, CA 94706
kmosborn@earthlink.net

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‘Burbank’? “Burbank”-NOT?
Photographed in the Sacramento City Cemetery, December, 2008

The Heritage Roses Group
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Jeri Jennings at heritageroses@gmail.com