

# ROSE LETTER



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# ROSE LETTER

of

The Heritage Roses Groups

©

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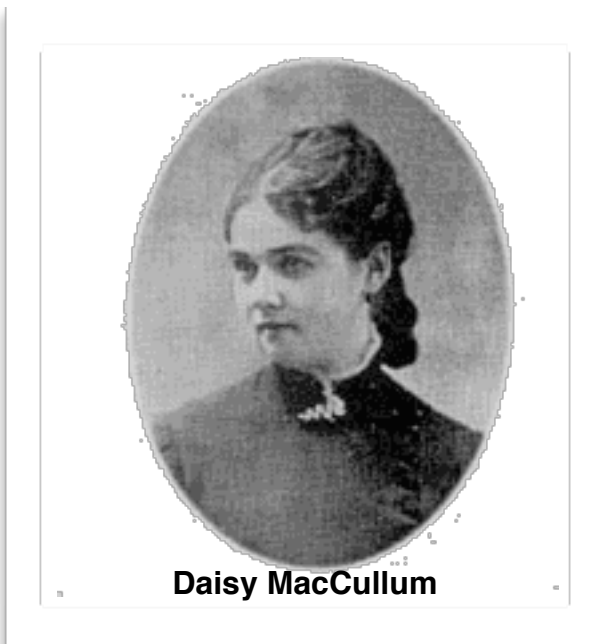
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**Daisy MacCullum**

## **Daisy MacCallum, Part II**

### **Alice Flores**

Daisy returned to relatively permanent residence in Mendocino as she approached her sixties, around 1920. She had spent long periods in Europe and more exotic locations (there is a story that she was present at the opening of King Tut's tomb in Egypt) in the years after her husband's death. But she was always drawn back to her Mendocino home and, when she was there, she planned and developed a large and interesting garden filled with the roses she loved.

Daisy was wealthy enough to hire gardeners to maintain her elaborate designs, and during the Depression she provided employment for several people. One man, Clarence Simpson, is quoted in a local oral history:

One old lady in Mendocino – Mrs. MacCallum – she said, “I’ll give you a dollar apiece if you catch them gophers out of my rose garden”; she had all roses. So I’d go down there on Saturday and catch gophers. I’d

get four or five gophers so that'd be enough spending money so I could take my wife to the show.

In the 1930s a dollar per head was a princely sum for a gopher! Another local man, now deceased, enjoyed gleefully relating how, when he was a boy in the 30s, he and his friends would be paid 15 cents for gophers from Mrs. MacCallum. His glee derived from the fact that, often, the boys would trap the gophers a couple of blocks away from the MacCallum garden, down on the headlands where the gopher population was enormous and it was easy to catch a lot of them. I wonder if Daisy knew?

Daisy began gardening in Mendocino in earnest in the late 1920s, ordering freely all the roses, perennials, and annuals that caught her fancy. Though Daisy was reserved when it came to forming intimate social connections, she was reputed to be generous in sharing the beloved garden in which she took great pride and pleasure. She left pathways through her property, between the streets that bordered it, so that people could wander through her yard as they strolled through town. She was also known for passing along “slips” or cuttings of roses that people admired and wanted in their own gardens. It makes sense that this habit would inevitably lead to many of Daisy’s prize varieties turning up in gardens throughout the town, and then (through further sharing) to those in outlying areas throughout the county. I am certain many rare and unusual cultivars were spread far and wide by gardeners who had some acquaintance with Daisy MacCallum.

Daisy grew some of the classic Old Garden Roses as well as Hybrid Perpetuals and the early Hybrid Teas that had done well in her Glen Blair landscape. Her great love (determined by her various lists and notations) was the “new” class of Pernetiana, with its brilliant hues of sunset and dawn. While that beautiful class of roses did well in her hot inland garden, the foggy summers of the Mendocino Coast were less kind, and the bushes suffered from various diseases, even while producing blooms with their exquisite color blends deepened by the cool air.

When I began documenting the old bushes growing throughout Mendocino, I could verify that only eight remained in

Daisy's garden. At one time there were hundreds, many on rootstocks (two of the eight were *R. odorata* and *R. canina*), but after Daisy's death in 1953, the property was untended for years and the roses disappeared. I continued to search the archives of the Kelley House for information about the varieties Daisy might have grown, mostly hoping for clues to some of the elegant "foundlings" that continued to turn up around the area; 'Mme. Gabriel Luizet', 'Marchesa Boccella', 'Paul Ricault', 'Souv. de Mme. Leonie Viennot' -- these refined roses naturalized in many places and piqued my curiosity as to provenance, and sometimes as to identification. And then a researcher at the Kelley House unearthed (and copied for me) a document that was the equivalent of the Rosetta Stone.

I was the delighted recipient of a several-page list in Daisy's distinctive handwriting, titled "Roses in Mendocino in 1935." There were 222 cultivars on the main list and more on some smaller notes that placed her roses on other properties, including her mother's across the street. Complete with misspellings, it was clear that the names had come straight from her memory. As I had expected, there was a good array of Pernetianas, but the lists included many older roses, a truly eclectic collection. In 1935 Daisy's garden was in its glory, and she settled into Mendocino to enjoy it. She battled the ubiquitous and destructive Pocket Gopher, foggy summers, harsh winter winds, and a climate conducive to all manner of fungi.



**Mme Gabriel Luizet**



**Souvenir de Mme Leonie  
Viennot**



**Paul Neyron**



**Gloire de Dijon**



**Magna Charta**



**Agrippina aka  
Cramoisi Superieure**

Daisy's determined spirit wouldn't be thwarted by something like a gopher, and her precious roses thrived as long as she did.

A small and random sampling of the varieties represented on Daisy's list reflects her wide-ranging interests. There are seven of Pedro Dot's

introductions as well as cultivars such as 'Hadley', 'Souv. de la Malmaison', 'Celine Forestier', 'Cecile Brunner' (she spelled Cecile as "Cecille," indicating that she knew it wasn't "Cecil"), 'Radiance', 'Paul

Neyron', 'Duchesse de Brabant' (still growing in her mother's garden at the Kelley House), 'Marie van Houtte', 'Gloire de Dijon', 'Kitty Kininmonth', 'Autumn Damask', 'Mermaid', 'Etoile de Hollande', 'Harison's Yellow', 'Eugene Marlitt', 'Ophelia', 'Mrs. Arthur Robert Waddell' (a tough survivor in other old gardens in the area), 'Magna Charta', 'General MacArthur', 'Rainbow', 'Hermosa', and what she called 'Gold of Ophir' and 'Agrippina'.

It is a real sadness to me that I never had the opportunity to visit this garden in its heyday.

Now, when a "Mystery Rose" comes to my attention, I turn to Daisy MacCallum's list to see if anything she grew might be a

match. It has been an invaluable tool in beginning searches to identify a Found Rose. As the roses of Mendocino County continue to baffle and delight us, we continue to become more aware of the role this one woman played in preserving them for us. Thank you, Daisy MacCallum.

\*

**PHOTO CREDITS**

Page 2	MacCallum House Archives
Pages 4 & 5	Darrell Schramm
Pages 7, 9, & 10	Ron Robertson
Page 13	Bill Grant
Page 16	top to bottom: Darrell Schramm, Robert Cromey, Bill Grant
Page 17	top: Bill Grant bottom: Darrell Schramm
Page 19	Darrell Schramm
Page 20	Anita Clevenger
Page 21	Courtesy of Karl King
Page 22	Jeri Jennings
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Page 24	Courtesy of Jean Oliva
Pages 25 & 26	Archives and Special Collections, Santa Clara University Library

**HERITAGE ROSE GROUPS**

**California:** Bay Area Group, San Diego Group, South Bay Group, Central Coast Group, Yolo and Beyond Group, Bidwell Heritage Rose Group, North Central Coast Group, Arcata Group, San Juan Bautista Heritage Rose Group, Gold Coast Group, Central-Sierra Group

**Pacific Northwest:** Cascadia Heritage Group

**Washington, Idaho, Canada, Oregon:** Heritage Roses Northwest

**Florida:** North Central Florida Group

**Virginia & adjacent area:** Old Dominion Group



**Souvenir de la Malmaison**

## **The Many Faces of Souvenir de la Malmaison**

**Ron Robertson**

My first heritage rose was ‘Veilchenblau’, a rose my maternal grandfather had somehow acquired and planted at his home near Conroe, Texas. He had wonderful taste in flowers, and that home had garden beds filled with his finds from everywhere. Unfortunately I have no idea where he found that rose, and as a child it never occurred to me to ask where he came by his many finds. Later, when my family moved into that home, I grew that same ‘Veilchenblau’ on the fence of a chicken pen, and was fascinated by its truly purple flowers each Spring, and wondered why it bloomed only then, not continually like the other roses I was used to seeing.

Fast forward 15 years, and my next experience with an old rose was a ‘Cramoisi Supérieure’ (known locally as ‘Louis Philippe’, in actuality a different rose), and though I noted the oddness of that rose compared to the Floribundas and Hybrid Teas I was

familiar with, I didn't think much about it. The rose that finally caused me to consciously take note of non-modern roses was in an old nursery just east of Tampa, Florida. Sitting alone—looking lost in a one-gallon pot—grew a scraggly rose with an exquisite flower that I just had to have, which turned out to be 'Clothilde Soupert'. It had the quartered form I now associate with old roses, but at the time had only seen on old images. 'Clothilde' primed me for a rose that is my all-time favorite, 'Souvenir de la Malmaison'. When I first saw that name, I had learned just enough French to be dangerous, and thought to myself, "Memory of a bad house? What a name!" All concerns about the name—however badly interpreted—were quickly dismissed when I saw a photo of the rose itself. I made it my mission to find one, and finally was able to grow it in my own Orlando, Florida, garden.

Eventually I was able to find it on Fortuniana rootstock (a necessity in the rootknot nematode-plagued Central Florida), as well as talking a gardener friend into growing one. The lightly spicy fragrance and soft pink flowers underlain with flesh tones were a hit with everyone who saw them. For mild-winter gardeners, particularly in the south, this is a wonderful choice that looks wonderful in almost any style of garden. Blooming singly or in clusters throughout the growing season, with decent disease resistance, moderate growth rate to between two to four feet at maturity (or if you're doing especially well, I've heard of specimens up to seven feet high!), this rose has earned its popularity and place in our gardens.

But what is 'Souvenir de la Malmaison'? It is most commonly known as a Bourbon, released by Beluze in 1843. Bourbons are supposed to be a cross between a China and 'Autumn Damask'. However, if we accept the parentage of SDLM, that it is a cross between an unknown Tea rose and 'Mme. Desprez' (which is definitely plausible), then it is actually closer to being a Hybrid Tea. The foliage is certainly reminiscent of an early Hybrid Tea, bringing the formation of this class far earlier in time than the "first" Hybrid Tea, 'La France', which was released in 1867 by Jean-Baptiste André Guillot.

No matters its classification, my fascination for this rose has led me to grow every form of it I've been able to acquire. If I had

to choose a favorite amongst the *Souvenir's* sports, though it would be a difficult choice, I think I'd go with 'Kronprinzessin Viktoria', introduced in Germany in 1888 by Späth. Similar in all respects to the original, the difference lies in the color of the flowers. One often sees white flowers described as "creamy," but I think none surpass the rich cream color of the 'Kronprinzessin'. If you could somehow form the finest cream into a loosely quartered rose, and hold it up to the light, you would come close to this rose's luminescent color, complete with the tinge of lemon one would see



**Kronprinzessin Viktoria**

in a very fine cream. Though I've never seen one composed of this rose, I've always imagined a hedge of this would be the perfect complement to any garden: at once simple and sensual, elegant, graceful, and drawing the

eye, then furthering the feast for the senses by its fragrance. I have enjoyed this rose in climates ranging from Florida's heat and humidity, to the very unpredictable growing seasons in Texas (my location had damaging late frosts and early autumn frosts to bookend a humid, drought-prone summer), on to many microclimates in California; it has always earned its place.

A close second favorite sport has to be the climbing form, known appropriately enough as 'Climbing Souvenir de la Malmaison'. This was discovered in the UK in 1892 by Charles Bennett. It can take the path many climbing plants take, following the old adage of "first year it sleeps, second year it creeps, and third year it leaps." Once established, I've found that it is a reliable bloomer throughout the growing season. Some reports say it tends to bloom little or not at all in summer, but that has not been my experience anywhere I've grown it. Aside from the obvious difference of being a climber, I've found this sport nearly always to

have substantially larger flowers than the original, as big as 4½ inches across. This climber benefits from training its long canes horizontally at the height you wish to keep it. It does very well allowing it to grow between four or five feet high, and spreading the branches horizontally after that point. An ideal treatment is to train it on an open fencing that enables light and air throughout rather than a solid wall or fence (this is actually true of most climbers), where I've had it spread to about twelve or more feet wide by five or six feet tall. It can easily grow both taller and wider than this. Or alternately, if you have a post or column, curve it around the post rather than have it grow vertically. This will look better, as well as provide far more flowers. This climber provides another opportunity not many other roses offer, that of growing the shrub form at the base of the climber, which solves the typical problem most climbers have of being sparse at the base.

The two final sports are 'Souvenir de St. Anne's', and 'Mme Cornelissen', also known as 'Edith de Murat'. The former is a semi-double sport, found by an unknown discoverer before 1916. Its main difference from the sport parent is the number of petals, being semi-double with a dozen petals. I've found that the color is enhanced by the smaller number of petals, which have always given the impression of being of thicker substance than those of its parent. In areas where the parent might ball up due to rain or humidity, this sport might be a better choice, as it is less likely to suffer from that problem and will enable the gardener to

experience the not-to-be-missed distinct and spicy fragrance in this group of roses. Other than flower form, I've found the rose identical in all other respects to the original 'Souvenir'.

The final



**Mme Cornelissen**

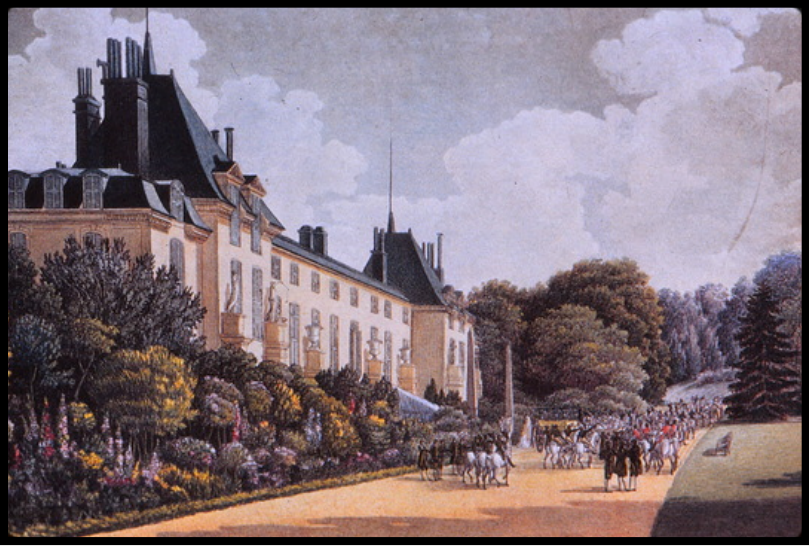
sport I've grown, 'Mme Cornelissen', is like a more vigorous form of the original (mine reached five feet in only two years from an own-root band), yet here again the flower form differs as well. It is slightly more muddled in its quartering, and has noticeable horizontal bands of cream on all the petals. In my imagination, a grouping of all of the pink versions of 'Souvenir' would be beautiful together, with a grouping of the original and 'St. Anne's' in front of a few 'Mme Cornelissen', then all backed by a wall of the climber. The colors would harmonize perfectly, yet the flower forms would provide variety.

I hope I have inspired you to try these wonderful roses in your own garden. Or, if you've only tried one or two, to make the effort to try the others, and experience for yourself the joy and satisfaction of this amazing group of roses.

### FOR THE RECORD

Editors of *ROSE LETTER* from 1975-May 2014)

May 1975- Feb. 1976	Miriam Wilkins
May 1976- Feb. 1977	Lily Shohan
May 1977- Nov. 1977	Carl Cato
1978	Miriam Wilkins
1979	Edith Schurr
1980- 1981	Lily Shohan
1982- 1983	Carl Cato
May '83	Miriam Wilkins, guest editor
Aug. '83	Ruth Mason, guest editor (& printer 79-83)
1984	Pam Puryear
1985- 1988	Patricia Cole
1989- 1991	Leonie Bell
1992- Feb. 2000	Marlea Graham (with some guest editors)
May 2000- May 2003	Rae Chambers (no August 2003 issue)
Nov. 2003- Feb. 2005	Marlea Graham
May 2005- May 2011	Jeri Jennings
Aug. 2011- present	Darrell g.h. Schramm



**Chateau Malmaison  
c. 1800**

## **MALMAISON**

**Darrell g.h. Schramm**

What more can be written of Empress Josephine's famous country residence that hasn't been mentioned before? If nothing new can be written, then perhaps a different perspective might allow us to view Chateau de la Malmaison just a little differently? What follows is an attempt to meet the challenge of both questions.

Roses were named for it—at least five. And such an honor is well deserved, for it was at Malmaison that the greatest turning point in any era of rose culture occurred. The earliest rose known to have borne Malmaison in its name seems to have been 'Rosier de la Malmaison', a gallica or hybrid gallica also known as 'Quatre Saisons d'Italie'. Apparently it was imported from Italy in 1795 by Andre Dupont, who was to become one of Empress Josephine's chief rose advisors and was responsible for completing her famous Botanical Garden. The rose is a pale crimson, quite fragrant, with certain traits that suggest a Portland.

‘De la Malmaison’, also called ‘Agathe de la Malmaison’ was introduced by Pelletier around 1824, ten years after Josephine’s death. Agathes are roses of very crowded petals, quite floriferous and fragrant, of pale colors, and probably a hybrid blend of gallica, damask, and centifolia roses. The rose was pale pink.

‘Etoile de la Malmaison’ was an Alba rose, incarnadine with a white border, bred sometime later but certainly before 1844 when William Robert Prince listed it in his nursery catalogue for that year. We know nothing more of it.

‘Beauté de la Malmaison’, whose date and breeder are unknown, is recorded as a red gallica with violet stripes or splotches. The rose was still grown in some private gardens in the mid-1990s. Perhaps it still is. Given these first four roses, Josephine’s estate clearly left an agreeable impression. There was at least one more rose to come.

But the place wasn’t always so agreeable. At first it was a fortified hideout for Norman invaders—an evil dwelling, “mala domus,” mentioned in a 1244 Latin text. Then in 1390, the Goudet family acquired it and



### **Quatre Saisons d’Italie**

owned it for nearly 400 years. In 1771 the financier Jacques-Jean le Couteulx du Molay bought it from the son of Chancellor d’Aguesseau, but finding himself financially ruined by the French Revolution, Molay put the estate up for sale.

The future Empress Josephine had seen the property in 1794 and become enamored of it. When Josephine in 1798 took Napoleon to view the affluent country house on its 300 acres, he refused to buy it, saying it was too costly. Meanwhile, Napoleon’s brother had bought the 700-acre estate Mortefontaine and renovated it. According to Josephine’s way of thinking, Joseph

Bonaparte's wealth was the result of her husband's successful military campaigns. Such male chauvinism and nepotism seemed unfair. So when Napoleon left on an expedition to Egypt, she again visited Malmaison. In October of that same year, with the support of an old mayor friend, she began negotiations, and in the spring of 1799, having deposited 50,000 francs cajoled from Joseph who controlled her allowance, she became the owner of Chateau de la Malmaison. Of course she still owed another 272,000 francs, but in the end Napoleon financed what his wife could not. He, too, had come to delight in Malmaison and was especially fond of strolling under its trees. A letter he wrote to her from Vienna, dated September 21, 1805, gives Josephine a jealous scolding: "I have received no letter from you for several days. Do the pleasures of Malmaison, the beautiful hothouses, the fine gardens, cause the absent one to be forgotten?"

Malmaison became for Josephine her favorite residence, her very personal home. It was a retreat from the palace in Paris, a retreat from socio-political occasions and duties, a retreat from the lack of privacy. Here at her manor house, she acquired an art collection, a library, furnishings to her taste, and, of course, her numerous fauna and flora.

She added a pavilion that opened into the vestibule of the mansion, she added a billiard room, created a gallery for art and music, and in 1802 added a small theatre where many plays were performed, her marriageable daughter Hortense acting in several. Downstairs boasted seven huge bedroom suites, upstairs ten smaller sleeping chambers. At some point Napoleon had enormous barracks built on the property, which increased from 300 to over 700 acres. In writing of Malmaison, Napoleon's valet, Constant by name, declared that life there was "refined and unpretentious . . . as far removed from the vulgarity of the Republic as from the luxury of the Empire." Indeed it was a much-loved place.

The grounds, as Napoleon's letter attests, were especially pleasurable. Here Josephine could enjoy the large ornamental pond with its black swans, a grotto and a statue of Neptune, a decorative Temple of Love, a monument to Melancholy, the two small pyramids of red granite erected in honor of a Napoleonic victory, a hunter's pavilion, an aviary. The landscape of the acreage included

a small forest, rolling hills, and streams designed to flow into each other, crossed by bridges of wood and of stone. Not least among all this were Josephine's hothouses, sheltering exotic plants and heated by large pans of glowing charcoal.

Among the various animals roaming a fenced enclosure were African antelopes, emus, flying squirrels, Egyptian gazelles, kangaroos, llamas, an orangutan, ostriches, and zebras. Several songbirds were kept in the house, as were rabbits, monkeys, and pet dogs. By 1805, however, given the extravagant expense of care for the animals, most of them were conveyed to an outdoor museum or zoo.

Now the Empress could devote even more time to her passion for plants, especially flowers—not roses only. The Botanical Garden was certainly a prize, for it was one of the most diverse in all Europe. No fewer than 180 plant species were introduced and brought to fruition there between 1804 and 1814. Even the famous Joseph Banks sent Josephine seeds and plants. In this garden grew eucalyptus, cactus, dahlias, hibiscus, heather, double hyacinths, mimosa, myrtle, phlox, rhododendron, rare tulips, and certain varieties of roses. The stunning attractiveness of the chateau and grounds was reason enough to name later roses 'The Beauty of Malmaison' or 'Star of Malmaison'.

The rose beds were not begun until 1804. Those most influential in advising the Empress on roses were Andre Dupont, Philippe Vilmorin, Monsieur Descemet, Count Lelieur, and Jacques Cels. While many roses came from France (at that time only Dupont, Vilmorin, and Descemet had seedbeds for roses), others came from the Lee & Kennedy nursery in England and the Van Eeden nursery in Holland. But no authoritative list of Josephine's roses exists.

We do have a record of Aimé Bonpland, the botanist she employed to complete the Botanical Garden, sending a small white 'Lady Banks' rose from Malmaison to a public garden in Toulon. And it is probably safe to assume that Dupont, who was renowned not only for his famous nursery of roses but also for being the first Frenchman to grow rose varieties from seed *and* the first to hand-pollinate roses, had 'Rosier de la Malmaison' growing at Malmaison. When 'Portlandica' was brought to France in 1803,

Dupont named it ‘Rosier de Portland’; he also imported ‘La Belle Sultane’, so as an advisor, he likely had them growing on the grounds as well. And since Jacques Cels, known to have the most complete nursery on the continent, was, also in 1803, the first to grow *Rosa indica*, that too would likely have grown at Malmaison.

What other roses might



**Violacea aka  
La Belle Sultane**

have grown at Malmaison? About 85 years after the death of Empress Josephine, Jules Gravereaux wished to recreate her rose beds and set out to find which roses might have



**Baccante**

bloomed at the estate. After some research, he gathered a list of 197 rose species and varieties. But—and this is conveniently ignored by most writers on the topic—Gravereaux conceded that his list quite likely contained



**Belle Biblis**

inaccuracies *and* that he was uncertain about at least twenty of the roses he named on that list. That admission suggests that at least 177 roses at Malmaison were identified with some certainty, most of which were gallicas. To list those roses would be fairly pointless since most of them have vanished. But given Josephine’s dependence on the rosarian knowledge of Dupont and Descemet

who were quite productive at the time, surely most of their roses would have appeared in her rose beds.

To name just ten, (and all but one are still to be found today): ‘Baccante’, ‘Belle Biblis’, ‘Belle sans Flatterie’, ‘Chloris’, ‘Charles de Mills’, ‘Incomparable’, ‘L’Empereur’, ‘La Louise’, ‘La Maculée’, and ‘Thalie La Gentile’. ‘L’Empereure’, a long lost rose,

was supposedly named by Josephine for Napoleon.

Another rose I suspect might have been found at Malmaison is ‘Rose du Roi’. The rose would not have had that name then, however.

Count Lelieur, too, advised Josephine on roses, being also the superintendent of Napoleon’s garden at the Palace of Saint-Cloud and having introduced at least a couple of his own roses.

One of these was ‘Rose Lelieur’. Whether it was a rose found or raised by his chief gardener or himself is not clear, but it was a rose he grew at Saint-Cloud in 1812. After Napoleon’s defeat, King Louis XVIII, or one of his sycophants, insisted the rose be renamed for the king; thereafter it was called ‘Rose du Roi’.



**Chloris**



**Rose du Roi**

Josephine’s desire for roses induced many nurserymen of the time to produce more roses. It was the beginning of rose mania, which lasted almost 200 years, and Malmaison was its hub.

True, several other great French gardens were known for their roses. The nurseryman Jacques Cels attended to his enormous garden; in it grew a particularly lovely rose that the botanist Thory named 'Celsiana.' The nurseryman Monsieur Boursault, famous for his development of Boursault roses, on two acres grew a number of rare roses and other plants. It was he who imported from England in 1809 the first pink *Rosa multiflora*. At Chateau de Suisnes, Admiral Bougainville with his head gardener Christophe Cochet set out a remarkable rose garden for his wife, who would die in 1806, before seeing her illustrious husband made a Count by Napoleon. And at the Chateau de Soucelles a father and son grew a magnificent garden of roses from about 1790 to 1810; their list of roses has been preserved. But it was Josephine's passion at Malmaison that ushered the era into rose delirium.

When Napoleon was voted Consul for Life of the French Republic in 1802, he decided that Malmaison was not grand enough as a second residence and in its place chose the Palace of Saint-Cloud. For Josephine it was a disconcerting decision, since it meant she would have to spend less time at Malmaison. Then in 1804, Napoleon proclaimed himself Emperor. From that spring to 1809, Josephine spent only a total of eight months at Malmaison. Being an empress was a taxing, emotional price to pay. But in December of 1809, Napoleon divorced her. She had been unable to provide him with an heir.

Deeming Malmaison too close to Saint-Cloud and Paris, Napoleon sent Josephine to reside at his chateau in Navarre. When she wrote to complain of its dampness, ugliness, and gloom, he agreed to renovate the place and to allow her to stay at Malmaison until the renovations were done. As fortune would have it, Malmaison was to remain Josephine's home until she died on 29 May 1814.

Josephine lay in state for three days within the pavilion foyer of her chateau. About 20,000 people filed through the gardens and into the pavilion to view her within a lead and mahogany coffin. Though no longer Empress, she had continued to be much admired and loved.

Later, when Napoleon tried to reclaim his empire during the Hundred Days, Malmaison was to know his footsteps again for

four or five days as he meandered through the enormous house, park, and gardens, speaking to all those who had seen his beloved Josephine during her final days. Shortly thereafter, he met his Waterloo.

Though Josephine's daughter Hortense lived in the chateau for a while, the house and grounds devolved to her son Prince Eugene. But according to Claude Antoine Thory, by 1817 most of the roses had disappeared. When Eugene died in 1824, his wife sold Malmaison in 1828 to Jonas Hagerman, a Swedish banker. He in turn sold it in 1842 to Queen Marie Christine of Spain. In 1861 Napoleon III bought it, returning it to the family, where it became the favorite residence of Empress Eugenie. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, however, the gardens were utterly destroyed and the chateau left in ruins. For a time it became a barracks. The State sold it to a merchant in 1877. Finally, in 1896 Daniel Iffla, known as Osiris, purchased the building and the few acres that had not been gradually sold, then in 1904 donated it to the State. Jules Gravereaux somewhat restored the rose beds in 1910. With time they again deteriorated. Today, 200 years after Empress Josephine's death, the gardens have just recently once more been restored.

One final rose deserves a mention. In 1843 a little-known breeder Jean Beluze introduced a bourbon rose named 'Souvenir de la Malmaison'. A lovely, pale pink, fragrant rose, it has remained popular for over 170 years. Its one flaw is its stubborn resentment of damp weather. A dozen or even twenty buds may be about to open, but come the fog, the mist, or the rain, they will adamantly insist on remaining curled into a ball like an unsightly dumpling. But give the rose warm or even dry weather, it will decorate the plant profusely, every blossom open and enticing. It blooms throughout the year—even during a dry California winter—but its creamy pink, thick petals with the wink of a button eye show themselves off most to glorious perfection in the fall. Like Chateau de la Malmaison, it experiences the fluctuations and fancies of time, but it survives.





## **Barbara Oliva: How the Garden and Curator Grew**

**Anita Clevenger**

When Barbara Oliva came to help plant one hundred roses in the Sacramento Historic City Cemetery in 1992, she had no idea that this new garden would grow into an internationally-recognized collection of over five hundred historic roses from California's Mother Lode, and that she would become its curator. She simply came to help. Everything grew from that.

Barbara has spent her life helping things grow. "I simply grew up with gardening being an important part of my life," she says. She was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister who was reassigned from town to town. "Ministers can't put roots down or get partial to people. They have to move." The family went from Northern California's Mendocino to Sterling City to Nevada's

Tonopah. They may not have put roots down into these communities, but Barbara's mother put them into the ground by creating a flower garden at each new location. Barbara remembers a "big old shrubby rose plant" in Sterling City. "My mother would send me out to prune it, so I went out and did it. I guess that I did ok." In Tonopah, the family had a swamp (evaporative) cooler. Her mother found a moist area under the cooler and planted flower seeds there. In the high desert, the "preacher's garden" was a "90-day wonder," filled with cosmos and French marigolds. Barbara weeded that garden and did a good deal of the work, and learned that "it doesn't take much to buy a packet of seeds, water them, and watch them grow."

Barbara's grandmother Agatha had a terraced hillside garden in Mill Valley, with her house "clear up at the very top of the plot." Her grandfather would meet the family at the bottom of the hill, and they would walk up through the garden. She still dreams of that garden today. "I wish that I had pictures of my grandma's garden. It was where I was first taken with roses, which were allowed to grow tall and turn into great big bushy tree-like plants."

Barbara came to Sacramento to teach and became rooted in the community. She has lived in the same South Land Park house for nearly 60 years, and gradually transformed her new home's standard landscaping into a plant collector's delight. One of the first roses that she planted was 'Helen Traubel,' a 1951 Herbert Swim Hybrid Tea which stands eight feet tall in her garden today, still producing beautiful yellow-pink blend flowers. Unlike her grandmother, Barbara didn't have a hillside to plant, but she filled every inch of ground with plants.

Barbara's love of plants and people led her to



Helen Traubel  
*Montgomery Ward catalog*  
1954

the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club. One of its founders, Jean Travis, was interested in old roses and Barbara joined the Yolo and Beyond Heritage Roses Group, too. She heard former Huntington Gardens botanist and rosarian Fred Boutin speak to the group in Davis. When he and Jean founded the Sacramento Historic Rose Garden and put out a call for volunteers to plant, Barbara was there.

The city asked volunteers to put their names on a list during the first planting day. Fred lived in Tuolumne, a couple of hours south in the Mother Lode, and Jean began spending time in Portland with her daughter. Barbara lived just down the street, so the city staff called her whenever there was a problem with the garden. “I wasn’t officially in charge for quite a while. I just did what came to mind – and plenty came to mind.”

Barbara says that she and Fred “gravitated toward one another.” She didn’t know much about old roses, but in her, Fred found fertile ground. Barbara says that he “made sure I was educated,” and encouraged her to travel and read. Barbara attended rose conferences and went with rose author and photographer Bill Grant to visit gardens in England and France, trips where she saw roses growing up trees and tumbling over structures. She worked as an usher at the Sacramento Community

Center to supplement her retirement income so that she could travel. The companionship with fellow rosarians was enjoyable and useful. “I decided that if I wanted to do all these things I’d better get contacts and knowledge.” Fred suggested, also, that Barbara look for old roses. Sherri Berglund, who was an owner of Willows’ B&B Nursery, knew the foothill area



and its gardeners, so Barbara came along with her in the search for lost treasures for the nursery and for planting in the cemetery.

Barbara isn't sure when she began calling herself the "curator," but it grew clear that somebody had to do it and she was the one. She felt Fred's "guiding hand all the way." She remembers, "Fred would drop ideas, and I was willing to be used. He and I both agreed about the way a garden should be." Fred's vision was to allow the found roses to grow to their full size where they could be observed and compared. The roses didn't get much pruning at all in the early years, which helped them get established. Fred shared the roses and data base. Barbara built a

As a rosarian and figure out more do you go about garden in a cemetery, volunteers and volunteers in cemetery, city staff Work Project? It



Barbara grew into curator, she had to than roses. How managing a rose historic, public developing coordinating with other areas of the and the Sheriff's wasn't easy.

Barbara thinks that working in the classroom and with volunteers have a lot in common. She decided to give classes in old roses, pruning, and propagation. Not only would this educate her volunteers, it would attract new ones. She also encouraged a social element with the volunteers, having meetings over dinner, going for coffee after work days and heading out on road trips together. She believes that her church background showed her the tremendous "strength of having a group of people with like interests come out and do things, socializing and getting acquainted in the process." She says, "It's a given."

Barbara served as a Board Member of the Heritage Roses Group, as a trustee of the Heritage Rose Foundation, and a board member of the Old City Cemetery Committee, the non-profit group for the cemetery volunteers. She was recognized for

her service by the Sacramento City Council, and the garden was selected for the “Rose Garden Hall of Fame” by the Great Rosarians of the World. “It’s been a wonderful activity for a retired person,” she says.

For many years, Barbara came to the cemetery every day during the summer to turn on irrigation. Year round, she worked with the volunteers two days a week and worked behind the scenes tirelessly. At age 86, she has finally decided to slow down a bit, and now serves as the garden’s curator



emeritus. Her counsel and knowledge is welcome, as is her continued presence in the garden and during fun social times. The friendships and roses still grow.

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*Anita Clevenger began volunteering with Barbara after taking her pruning class in Dec, 2001. She is now the Historic Rose Garden curator, and agrees that it is indeed a wonderful activity, especially in Barbara’s footsteps.*

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In the photo at the right, Barbara Oliva and her sisters with their grandparents. At the left, Barbara with her two sisters. Barbara, the oldest, is the tallest of the three girls.

# FATHER SCHOENER AMONG ROSES: A SUMMARY

**Darrell g.h. Schramm**

Father Georg M.A. Schoener was born in the Black Forest region of Germany in 1864. Very early he exhibited an interest in spirituality and became a student under the Benedictines, a



Father Georg Schoener, c. 1910

religious order known for its horticultural interests. Later at a Swiss university Schoener pursued his fascination with botany.

In 1890 he immigrated to the United States where he studied to become a priest. He was ordained in 1892. His first parish was in Pennsylvania for a number of years, his second for several more in Ohio. By 1910 he had arrived in Oregon and soon became the priest in the small town of Brooks. When he witnessed the Rose Festival in Portland, Schoener became so enamored of roses that

he was inspired to set up his own botanical garden in Brooks. With the outbreak of World War I, anti-German feeling became rife in various areas of the country, including where Father Schoener resided. By 1915 the mood turned ugly, one result of which was a devastating fire that destroyed not only Schoener's church, his home and extensive library, but also thousands of his rose seedlings. Only seven seedlings were saved.

Invited by a botanical society, he moved to Santa Barbara less than two years later. There he once again began his rose hybridization, working with hybrid perpetuals and hybrid teas —‘Ophelia’, ‘Belle Siebrecht,’ ‘Mme. Caroline Testout,’ ‘Mme Abel Chatenay’ and others. Believing that crossing a cultivated rose with a species of evergreen or long-lasting foliage, he now experimented with *R. acicularis*, *R. nutkana*, and other species but most often *R. gigantea* in cross-pollination. Alister Clark in Australia had sent him *R. gigantea*, with which in 1937 rose breeder J.H. Nicolas remarked Schoener had done more than the famous Nabonnand had done on the French Riviera. Newspaper and magazine articles and a Paramount film of 1936 nicknamed him “Padre of the Roses.”

About two years before his death, Father Schoener moved to the Jesuit campus of Santa Clara University. In the end, he had produced more than seventy named roses (but he is credited with far more), two of which are still known to be in existence: ‘Arrillaga’, a hybrid perpetual, and ‘Schoener’s Nukana’, a scented shrub rose that tolerates poor soil, cold, and shade. He died in 1941. This year marks his 150th anniversary.



The roses in the photo are of Fr. Schoener’s rose ‘Perle of the Pacific’, a pernetiana now lost. On the reverse Fr. Schoener wrote, “Perle of the Pacific after 5 days in the vase.”

**Father George Schoener's 150th Birthday  
Celebration  
Brooks, Oregon, Monument Dedication**

**Laura King & Michael Dalton**

Friday, March 21, 2014 was a perfect spring day for the celebration of Rev. Fr. George Schoener's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday and the dedication of a monument engraved with his name and that of Brooks Catholic Church of Assumption on the site where that church stood from 1875 to 1915. The event was held at the Brooks Regional Training Center of Chemeketa Community College and organized with the combined efforts of Brooks Historical Society and Northwest Rose Historians.

The program of four featured speakers began with a welcoming by Louis Sowa, the president of Brooks Historical Society. Laura King of Northwest Rose Historians led off with the story of Fr. Schoener and what brought him to Brooks in 1911 and his rise to prominence in the world of rose growing and breeding.

Laura then read a note from Deborah Wasserbach of Maryland, whose great-great-Aunt Anna C. Schmitt was Fr. Schoener's first cousin, his housekeeper and able assistant in his rose hybridizing research: "On behalf of the descendents of the Schoener and Schmitt families, we are gratified to see the Padre recognized and celebrated on his 150th birthday...It was at Brooks where his love of roses first led to personal celebrity and serious admiration for his work. On October 9, 1915, a devastating fire burned the church, the rectory and the Padres roses to the ground. ...He and Anna continued in Santa Barbara where they are now buried side by side. This monument appropriately reflects the Padre's lifelong love of learning, matched only by his drive to promote the rose wherever he went. His visions were spectacular; his hopes persevered, despite adversity or opposition. ...Thank you

for recognizing the uniqueness of the Padre's character and spirit, and his special fondness for Brooks. Our family is deeply grateful to the many individuals who worked together to recognize the Padre and his contribution to Oregon history."

Next on the program was Rob McCorkle, the Dean of Life Safety Sciences of Chemeketa Community College. Training courses on the former church site are conducted for Police, Fire and Medical Emergency personnel. Rob said that for first responders it is all about community service and added, "Had we been here in 1915, the church would not have burned down."

Dorene Standish of Brooks Historical Society then outlined the history of the Town of Brooks and its railway station. She mentioned that 100 years ago "the scent of roses" brought passengers two blocks away from the railway station to admire the Padre's roses filling the garden and covering the walls of the church and rectory.

Fr. Jeff Eirvin of the nearby Parish of Sacred Heart-St. Louis in Gervais said that Fr. Schoener was a great man whose "gentle care and touch brought people and roses closer to God." The program continued with a gathering outside at the monument with a formal dedication and blessing conducted by Fr. Jeff Eirvin. He concluded by placing a bouquet of red roses at the base of the monument.

### **The Rose on our Cover**

*Rosa fedtschenkoana* was discovered in Turkestan in 1875 by botanist Olga Fedtschenko and taken to the Botanical Garden of St. Petersburg. It grows at least seven feet high. The white flowers with pale yellow stamens generally open as singles, occasionally as small clusters, emitting a scent many people find unpleasant. Its seven—but sometimes five or nine—leaflets are deeply serrate and carry a grey cast. It is a rarity among wild roses in that it blooms recurrently in summer and fall. In the year 2000, DNA revealed it to be part of a *ménage à trois*, (*R. gallica* x *R. moschata*) x *R. fedtschenkoana* as parents of 'Autumn Damask.'

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## **ROSE LETTER ONLINE**

Did you know that you can read your Heritage Roses Group *ROSE LETTER* online, in digital (pdf) format? And, did you know that, sometimes, you will find additional content in that version? Or that many back issues, loaded with content, are available at the Heritage Roses Group website?

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At the **top** of the page, in small letters, find “**Member login**”. Click on that line. Then, in the next screen, under **Member Login**, click on **Enter the member's only area**.

There you will be prompted for a user name and password. Enter the “**user name**” **Rosa**; then enter the “**password**” **chinensis**.

**(NOTE: The user name and password are case-sensitive, so be sure to capitalize the “R” in Rosa!)**

The user name and password are changed from time to time. Digital-only subscribers are notified of the change, but print users are not. If the user name and password cease working, contact Jeri Jennings via email for an update: [heritageroses@gmail.com](mailto:heritageroses@gmail.com).

We regret that space in this issue of *Rose Letter* has prevented us from including information on the fifteen chapters of Heritage Roses Groups listed on page 6. For information, contact the editor or Jeri Jennings (see page 1).

A decorative archway made of white pillars and a vine with leaves and roses. Several butterflies are scattered throughout the scene.

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# Celebration of Old Roses!!

Sunday, May 18, 2014 from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Over 100' of beautiful roses! Purchase heirloom and hard-to-find roses from specialty nurseries. **Rose experts will be available to answer questions.** Vendors will be selling rare perennials, crafts, china, books, greeting cards, calendars, honey, jam, jewelry, and clothing all inspired by roses. Tool sharpening on site.

**Talks and demonstrations are scheduled.**

### Activities for children.

**Children will receive a FREE rose plant  
(While supplies last!)**

**Admission is FREE! Food and Soft Drinks.**

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