

ROSE LETTER



The Bourbon Issue

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ROSE LETTER

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Renown vs. Obscurity: Two Bourbon Roses.....	2
Comments on Four Bourbon Roses.....	8
André Dupont, the First Rosimane.....	9
Bourbons vs. Hybrid Perpetuals.....	15
Rose Health and Pruning.....	20
Bourbon Roses I Have Known and Grown.....	24
Remembering Bill Grant.....	30
Image Credits.....	29

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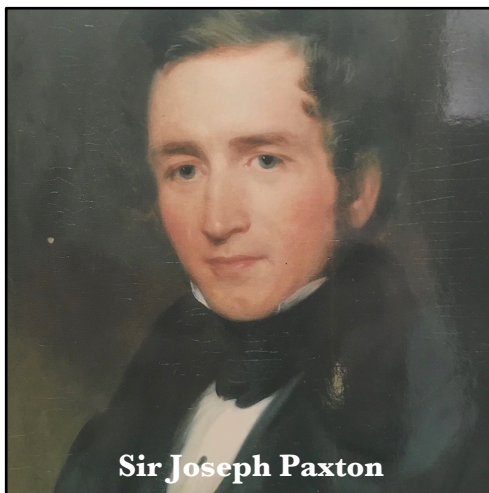
Sir Joseph Paxton

RENOWN VS. OBSCURITY: TWO BOURBON ROSES

Darrell g.h. Schramm

They both died in 1865, one in England, the other in Washington, D.C. Two Bourbon roses are named to commemorate them. Unlike the men, the roses honoring them are not well known. But they are related in class, color, and genes. They are ‘Sir Joseph Paxton’ and ‘Souvenir du Président Lincoln’.

Joseph Paxton (1803-1865) was a gardener, an architect, an editor, and, according to one historian, a “Victorian visionary” and “the busiest man in England” in his time. Growing up in poverty with a horticultural bent, he was apprenticed to the Woodhall estate in Hertfordshire near Walton for three years, then briefly at Battlesden Park until its owner was declared insane. At the age of twenty, he was hired as a laborer for the Horticultural Society’s gardens, new experimental gardens at Chatsworth that had been leased from the 6th Duke of Devonshire. Among other large plantings, these gardens contained 1200 roses. Because a horticultural library was at his disposal, Paxton was quick to educate himself.



In 1826 he was offered the position of head gardener for William Spencer Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, who owned Chatsworth, the grandest estate in England. Capability Brown had landscaped much of the estate in the mid-1770s. Early in 1827, Paxton wed Sarah Brown, a woman three and a half years his senior. Interested in greenhouses, he turned his attention in 1828 to the building and improvement of glass structures, all the while

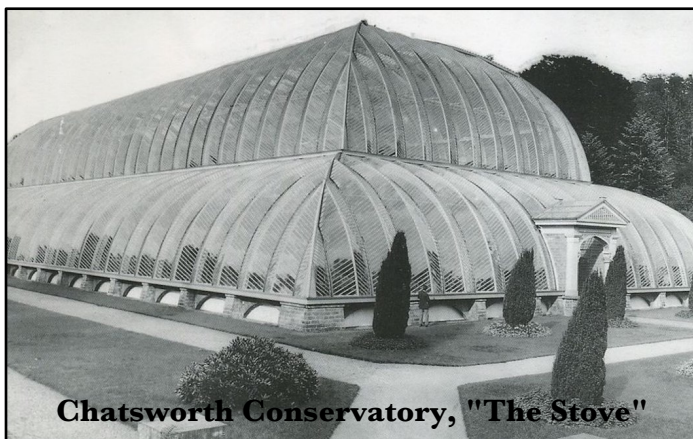
expanding the Duke's extensive gardens. In July 1831 Paxton and a Joseph Harrison published their first issue of the *Horticultural Register and General Magazine*, which thrust Paxton into the limelight, emerging unintentionally in competition with John Claudius Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine*.

By the time Paxton was thirty, he had sired four children. That year, 1834, through the valiant and persistent efforts over the decades by William Wilburforce, the 800,000 slaves of the British Empire were freed—a fact not unconnected to this article. It was then, also, that Paxton launched a monthly publication, *The Magazine of Botany and Register of Flowering Plants*. Both of his magazines avoided formality and gauged themselves to a broad readership. In 1835 he supervised the building of a huge arboretum, completed in six months, which soon contained the largest collection of herbaceous plants in Europe. Exhausted, the next year he ceased publishing the *Horticultural Register*. When he became bedridden, the Duke wrote to him, “I had rather all the plants were dead than have you ill.”

During all these years, Paxton had been cultivating huge numbers of plants, so in 1840 he began to distribute them to zealous horticulturists of the day. Shortly thereafter, he was knighted. The year 1841 marks his editorship with John Lindley of the *Gardener's Chronicle*, a weekly newspaper. It was through the efforts of Paxton, a man of

tremendous energy, and Lindley that Kew Gardens was saved from oblivion when it deteriorated after Joseph Banks' death. Paxton's project, the enormous, heated glass house he designed and had built, called The Stove, was the

marvel of England and all Europe. In 1843 even Queen Victoria visited to see it and the whole estate. The roses did not go without comment. The roses she saw were probably



species, Damasks, and Bourbons. Today the few roses grown at Chatsworth are mostly 20th century plants except for species roses and 'Polar Star' of 2006; others are 'Bobbie James', 'Buff Beauty' 'Felicia', the ubiquitous 'Iceberg', 'Savoy Hotel', and 'Sunsprite', while climbing over large shrubs or cascading from trees are *R. helenae*, *R. longicuspis*, 'La Mortola', 'Kiftgate', 'Francis E. Lester', 'Wedding Day' and several more. Paxton, who was tastefully lavish, was lionized as the greatest gardener of his time.

Yet nothing he had accomplished could compare to the Crystal Palace he designed and whose construction he supervised for the Great Exhibition of 1851. Thereafter it was added to and had a royal, second opening in 1854. The edifice was 1,848 feet long, 456 feet wide, and with three tiers 108 feet high, six times the size of St. Paul's Cathedral. It drew people from all over Europe. Considered "the first structural renaissance of architecture since the middle ages," the Crystal Palace burned down on 30 November 1936. No doubt it was this unparalleled edifice, if not also his fame in general, that inspired Jean Laffay to name a rose for this remarkable architect and gardener in 1852, 'Sir Joseph Paxton'. This was one of the last of his many famous roses before Laffay retired. And about 56 years later, H.A. Dreer, a nurseryman in Philadelphia, declared

it one of the best six re-blooming Bourbons ever.

With the death of the Duke of Devonshire in 1858, Paxton resigned his post. The greatest garden authority of his time, Sir Joseph died seven years later. In its obituary, *Gardener's Chronicle* christened him Prince of Gardeners.



Abraham Lincoln, for whom another Bourbon rose is named, died the same year as Joseph Paxton—a coincidence, even though Lincoln's death had been planned. Like Paxton, Lincoln grew up in poverty. Until nineteen, he labored on a Kentucky farm, then moving to Illinois, his father and he worked at felling trees and splitting logs for fence posts. After a second trip to New Orleans, he became, in quick succession, a store clerk, a village postmaster, and a deputy surveyor. These tasks gave him time to educate himself on grammar and law (much like Paxton educated himself in the Horticultural Society's library). From 1834 to 1842, he became the leader of

his party. In that latter year, he married Mary Todd. Elected to Congress in 1846, he served one term before he returned to his law practice which drew him away from politics.

But in 1854, Stephen Douglas reopened the slavery question by achieving a repeal of the Missouri Compromise, those allowing each state to decide for itself whether it wished to embrace slavery. Years before this time, recall, England had abolished this inhuman practice. When Lincoln debated the issue with Douglas, the public learned of his power as a political orator. In 1856 the Republican party was formed to oppose any extension of slavery (the parties switched goals and roles later) with Lincoln as its significant leader. A speech he gave in New York in 1860 testified that the Founding Fathers had aspired to the

restriction of slavery. A few months later he was nominated for the presidency

When he won, pro-slavery leaders at once executed plans to secede from the Union. South Carolina moved to do so first, with six other states quickly following to form the Confederacy, four other states soon joining them. The Civil War began when they attacked Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Although the North assumed the conflict would not last long, it endured appallingly for nearly four more years.

After the Civil War, Lincoln was nominated unanimously for a second term in June of 1864. Deciding to relax one evening the following year, he and his family attended the Ford's Theatre in Washington. Unknown to anyone in the administration, John Wilkes Booth, John Surratt, and a few others near the end of the war had planned to kidnap the President and hold him for ransom. When the Confederacy lost, the plan fell through. Consequently, while a man named Lewis Payne (aka Lewis Powell) seriously wounded Secretary of State William Seward, and a George Atzerodt with the help of David Herold failed to kill white-supremest Vice-President Andrew Johnson as planned, Booth assassinated President Lincoln.

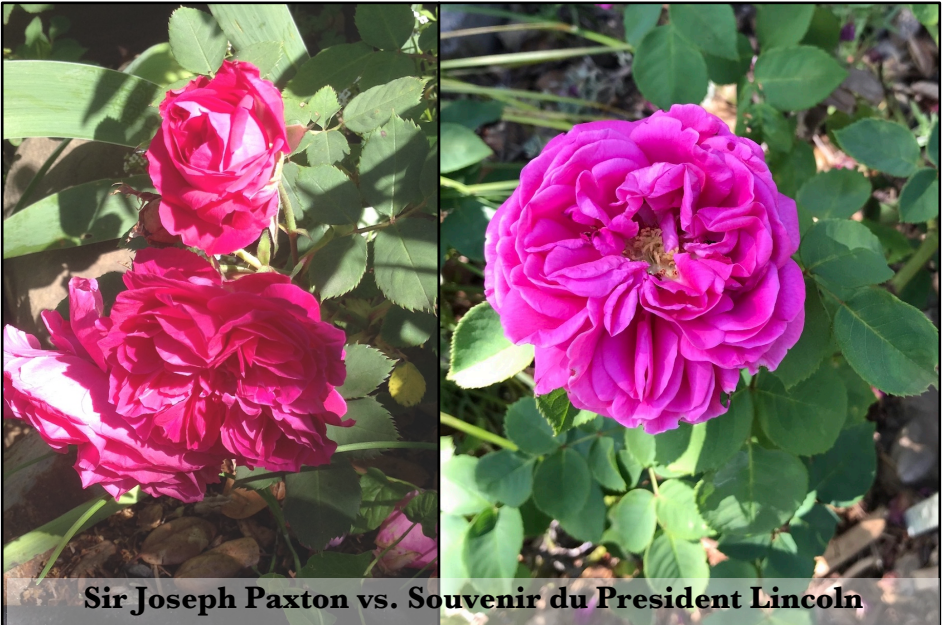
It was discovered that Mary Surratt, mother of John Surratt, was also part of the conspiracy. Although John Surratt escaped, fleeing first to Canada then to Europe, and Booth himself died while resisting capture, the other three men and Mary Surratt were brought to trial and hanged.

Lincoln's death was mourned throughout the Western world. No fewer than eight roses were named to commemorate him, four Hybrid Perpetuals, two Hybrid Teas, one Hybrid Setigera, and one Bourbon. And yet, in America scarcely a catalogue offered 'Souvenir du President Lincoln'. Perhaps that was because Hybrid Perpetuals were the popular class of roses of the era, and four in that category were available in the small space of four years. Virtually, only France and Germany made the Bourbon available. For decades the catalogue lists of Bourbons in the United States were generally meager. Even today, few books on roses mention 'Souvenir du President Lincoln'.

'Souvenir du President Lincoln' is a seedling of 'Sir Joseph Paxton'. The rose shows a somewhat expansive habit typical of many

Bourbons. Its long smooth canes bear pale prickles conveniently spaced. The ovate-acuminate, serrated leaves display a medium green with three, five, and seven leaflets to a leaf. Some maverick leaflets here and there, however, are simply rounded near and at the bottom. The pedicel is bristly or glandular, the receptacle chalice-shaped and smooth, the simple sepals equal in size and glandular. Very full, perfumed flowers show off in dark rosy red with carmine pink on the reverse of the reflexed petals. I've yet to see a nuance of black cast on the red, a descriptive color mentioned in the first twenty years or so of the flower's existence. The sometimes quartered blossoms extend themselves as solitary but occasionally in twos or threes. My plant puts forth an oddity: one or more flowers will exhibit a large notch or dimple in the face of the rose from the outer petals inward.

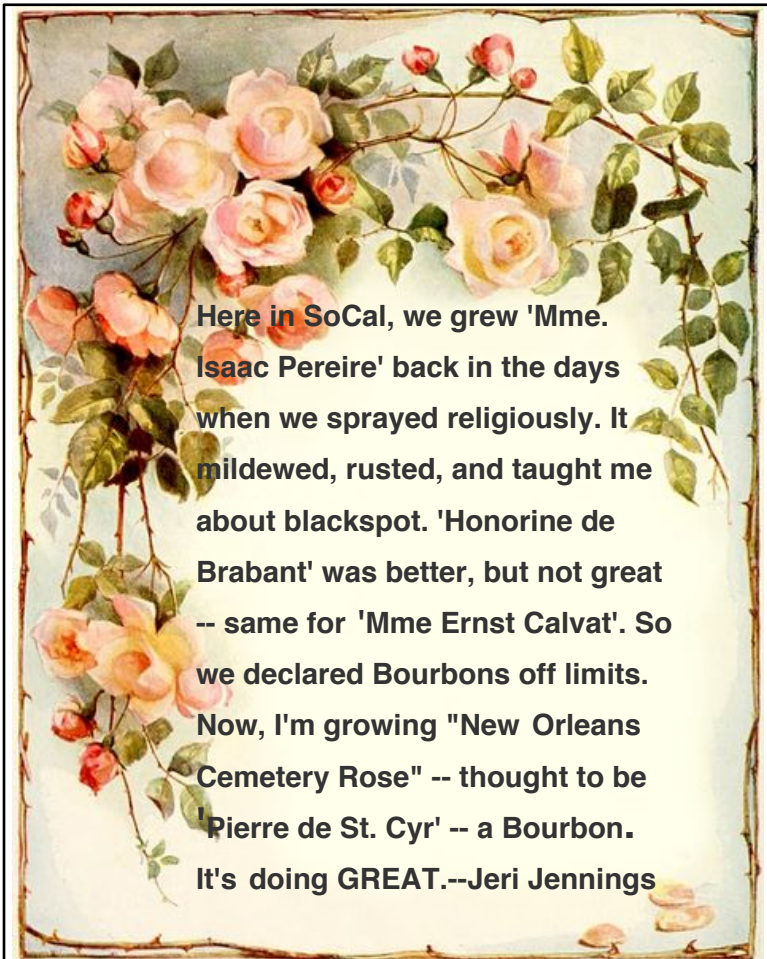
'Sir Joseph Paxton's' color is similar to its seedling, but generally a lighter red, a light bright crimson but sometimes deep red, paler at the edges, full and quartered, a showy rose. Somewhat fragrant, the rose supposedly grows to four feet, but mine in four or five years has grown no more than two. Apparently, it does well in pots, where I may transplant it. Depending on location and fertilizer, it has been known to



Sir Joseph Paxton vs. Souvenir du President Lincoln

be recurrent, especially in England. Certainly it has had more nursery advertisement in England and Australia than in the United States.

In sum, neither man for whom each rose was named was defeated by life; both confronted its challenges and both became renowned. As for the two roses, despite being essentially disregarded and virtually unknown, they were not defeated either. More than 150 years onward, for their lovely color, form, and vigor, they still survive.





André Dupont, the First *Rosimane*

Joan Harland

Nearly all rosarians have heard of the Empress Joséphine’s rose garden at Malmaison, where she collected supposedly “every known rose variety.” But we know next to nothing about André Dupont, the postman and first known rose collector (nicknamed *rosimane*—“rose maniac”—by Andre Thouin), who became Joséphine’s main French rose supplier and created the historic *Roseraie* at the Luxembourg Palace in Paris. Dupont is also often credited—over generously, it turns out—with being the first to hand-pollinate roses.

This year Vincent Derkenne, after ten arduous years of research in the French National Archives and other sources, has restored Dupont with two biographies (English and French; English title: *André Dupont (1742-1817), Rosimane: A Palace and Roses*; www.amazon.fr). Derkenne found gold: Dupont’s original letters, petitions, “autobiography,” and his long-forgotten rose herbarium, discovered after two hundred years in anonymous, dusty storage. Those discoveries overturn some of the Dupont legend.

Why do we know so little about Dupont? For one, he was a self-taught rose specialist—an “amateur” supporting himself with two other careers—and an outsider in the academic and horticultural circles of 1800’s Paris. Passionate about roses, he poured over books borrowed from the National Museum of Natural History and welcomed distinguished visitors to his garden; but he lacked credentials.

Moreover, Dupont never published on the subject of roses. He worked on a scientific nomenclature of roses but never finished it. While Claude Antoine Thory did publish Dupont’s 1813 rose catalog, it was years after Dupont died.

Still, Dupont has endured in his roses and the rose revolution he stimulated. Perhaps his most outstanding rose is the hybrid Musk *Rosa x dupontii* Déségl (aka *R. moschata nivea*, 1803), a lovely white single musk-scented

blossom that warms to blush. Two other roses have also been named after Dupont: *R. gallica Pontiana* (‘Manteau Pourpre’) and *R. orientalis* A. Dupont ex Ser, both still available.



Rosa orientalis

A Hobby in

Middle Age: Dupont was born in Paris in 1742 (not in the Palatinate in 1756, as stated by Thory). In 1755, Dupont’s father became valet to the young Comte de Provence (brother of the doomed King Louis XVI; later Louis XVIII). Hence, André grew up among nobility, and for much of his adult life received a pension from his father’s prestigious position. Also from that connection, at age 37 André was appointed caretaker of the enormous Luxembourg Palace in Paris. He and his wife Louise moved to the outbuildings of the nearby “petit-Luxembourg,” where the Duponts lived rent-free on one floor—but Dupont sometimes went unpaid for years. In 1782 he sought security by working as a postman (overseeing 12 others), continuing during the turbulent French Revolution, Consulate, and Napoleon’s First Empire.

In 1785, Dupont built a small house and his first garden on a plot of land rented from the Carthusian monks, near the fence outside the Luxembourg Gardens. There he first began to collect roses. The French Revolution hit with the decree of November 2, 1789, nationalizing the

monks' assets, eventually allowing the Duponts to buy their property (now 27,000 square feet). One of his first roses, *R. centifolia simplex* (Dupont's 'Louise' or 'Single-Flowered Centifolia'), appeared at this time (1792). But Dupont was still unpaid for his caretaker job, his royal connection a liability; riddled by debts, he sold his land in 1792, even his plants and trees.



Rosa centifolia simplex

A Second Garden:

Late in 1796, Dupont started over on the eastern edge of the Luxembourg Gardens (rue d'Enfer), a garden nearly 6600 square feet, this time collecting

roses in earnest in the first *École de Roses* ("school of roses"), arranging the roses by species. He called on botanists at the National Museum and corresponded with foreign horticulturists. Through his imports, he built a reputation as *the* source for new roses: from England (a 'Portland Rose';

'Four Seasons Variegated Rose'; *R. sempervirens latifolia*); Holland (*R. gallica Maheca* or 'La Belle Sultane'; *R. damascena Aurora*; *R. gallica Agatha*); Italy ('Quatre Saisons d'Italie'); and even Persia (*Rosa*



Quatre Saisons d'Italie

arborea, one of only two plants in Paris).

Dupont also began paying close attention to any slight variation in his roses; for example, he introduced ‘Céleste’ or ‘Bleu Céleste’ (pre-1810, now extinct), an Alba with extremely delicate, double white blossoms, in which Dupont saw shades of blue. (His ever-vigilant friend Jean Pierre Vibert wondered where Dupont had seen ‘Céleste Blanche’ with bluish shadings? Vibert thought his friend’s imagination was not always closely reined in.

By 1802, the horticultural establishment began to take notice. For example, in 1803 the *Almanach du Bon Jardinier* referred to “the beautiful and unique collection of Roses, by M. Dupont, Amateur, rue d’Enfer, in Luxembourg Gardens.”

Interaction with Joséphine: Joséphine stayed at the Luxembourg Palace with her lover Paul Barras before 1796 and may have become acquainted with the caretaker Dupont and his passion for roses. According to Antoine Laurent de Jussieu, Joséphine first turned to Dupont as her main French supplier of roses to Malmaison in 1803. Vibert wrote, “[Joséphine] carefully sought out what was rare, at home and abroad. . . . [S]he honored M. Dupont with a special kindness, and did not think that she was condescending in conversing with him.” From accounting books, Derkenne estimates that Dupont delivered 250-500 roses to Malmaison in 1806 alone. Joséphine made rose gardens fashionable, further fueling Dupont’s fame and the demand for his roses.

Third and Fourth Gardens: Even with his growing reputation, Dupont struggled to keep his rose garden. In late 1803, he was forced by the Senate to move his garden again on short notice (while bitterly complaining to the authorities), to the former convent of Sainte-Marie in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques where he already owned property. Circa 1810, he was forced to move it a third time to the other side of Paris, to the rue Fontaine-au-Roi where Dupont enlarged his rose nursery yet again. But why did Joséphine not intervene on his behalf in 1803 and 1810? A greater mystery is what roses Joséphine grew at Malmaison: its roses were never documented but estimated at about 250 varieties. So, did Dupont’s rose herbarium correspond to the roses grown at Malmaison?

Dupont’s Rose Herbarium: Dupont donated his rose herbarium



to the National Museum of Natural History on February 15, 1814; Derkenne was able to identify Dupont's handwriting on the plates. But surprisingly, the roses that Dupont preserved in 232 plates, other than a few common varieties, were primarily "*monstrosities*". That is, they were odd specimens appreciated by Dupont: somatic mutants with unusual foliage or flowers (particularly alternate, bubbled, or

variegated leaflets), many of which he "fixed" by grafting. See, for example, Redouté's *R. bifera variegata* ('Variegated Four Seasons Rose'), and *R. centifolia bipinnata* ('Celery-Leaved Rose'), a pink Centifolia with ruffled foliage. (Thory noted that the foliage of the latter often reverted to normal, requiring repeated re-grafting).

A more helpful source, then, for identifying Malmaison's roses is Dupont's 1813 catalogue, listing 218 species and varieties, in 31 sections, about half of his 1814 collection (537 species and varieties). Having that catalog, Thory referenced Dupont's roses fifty-three times in *Les Roses*.

The Roseraie at Luxembourg Gardens: In December 1814 (six months after Joséphine's death), Dupont exchanged his rose collection for a pension. That collection was installed in front of the



Luxembourg Palace and remained perhaps the greatest rose garden in the world for much of the 19th century. Essentially a rectangular garden, in traditional French garden style, it first comprised 500 roses spread over twelve flower beds (about 40 meters by 1.7 meters each), surrounded by an olive green trellis nearly one meter high. Those roses probably represented most of Dupont's 537 different rose varieties.

Dupont died in 1817, a childless widower. Julien-Alexandre Hardy then became head gardener of the Luxembourg Gardens and continued to add roses until he retired in 1859. By 1837 the garden had 1,950 different varieties of roses (more than two hundred varieties created by Hardy himself). Unfortunately, in 1866 Baron Hausmann (prompted by Napoleon III) destroyed much of the Rose Garden nursery to make room for a new avenue. Today, the Luxembourg Rose Garden is only a vestige of the original.

Significance: Was Dupont the first to hand-pollinate roses? Impossible to know, but Derkenne argues that Dupont was not. Dupont was known to obtain new varieties by sowing seeds from hips or by fixing somatic mutants by grafting. But there is no evidence that he used controlled pollination. Fourteen years after Dupont's death, his friend Vibert gave a talk to the Paris Horticultural Society on the "revolutionary" artificial pollination of roses; surely Dupont would have shared that technique with Vibert?

So how did the Dupont pollination legend begin? Derkenne meticulously traces it to Mrs. Frederick Love Keays, an American author, in 1935. But that does not diminish the very real contributions that Dupont made in supplying Joséphine with roses, observing and documenting rose mutations, compiling the first extensive rose herbarium, and establishing the first public rose collection at the Luxembourg Palace. Ambitious and persevering, he managed all that while juggling two other careers.

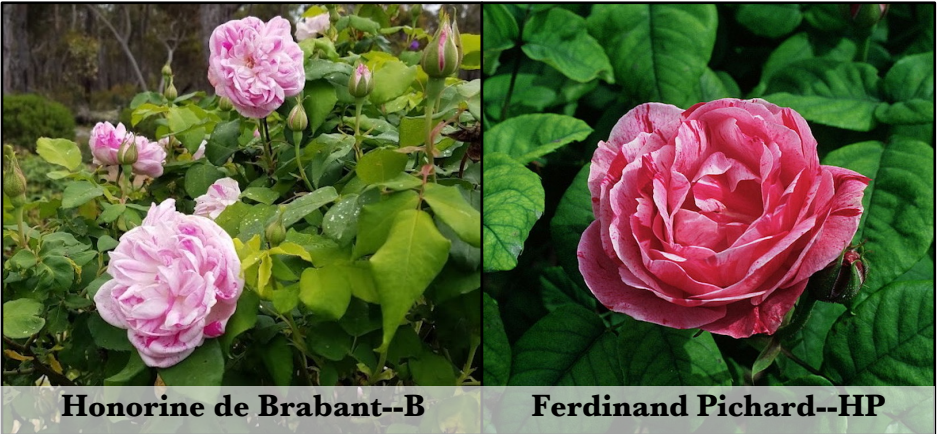
In sum, Derkenne revives Dupont, and sets a new standard for rose history by relying almost exclusively on primary sources. Derkenne shows, too, that there is still much to be learned about the history of roses.

Bourbon vs. Hybrid Perpetual

Darrell g. h. Schramm

At a rose seminar in San Juan Bautista, a knowledgeable rosarian friend turned to me in quiet frustration to ask, "How do you tell a Bourbon (B) from a Hybrid Perpetual (HP)? Are there any defining traits?"

I mumbled something about the early Hybrid Perpetuals being more easy to distinguish from Bourbon roses than the later ones, not a very helpful answer. I mentioned a couple of characteristics but, again,



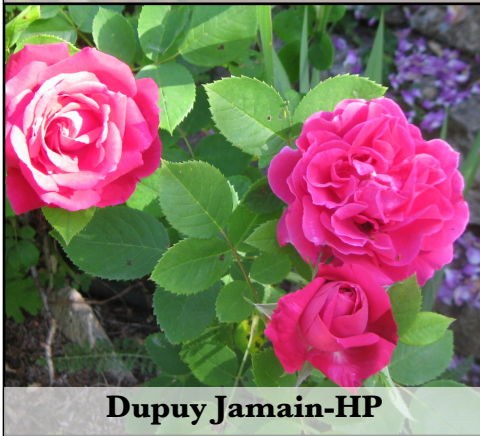
not enough to be helpful. I began to examine mentally, comparing the two types in my mind's eye. And I did some research.

Both rose types grow generally upright; both show five or seven leaflets, often rather round, on large leaves; both bear large, very full flowers; both exude fragrance. Indeed, the rather pedantic rose authority Rev. Foster-Melliar, writing in 1910, thought it "advisable" that reblooming Bourbon roses be merged with the Hybrid Perpetuals. I doubt that such a merger would have been helpful, given that he also wrote that "certain strains of almost all other cultivated Roses have now been incorporated, by accident or by design, into some members of this wide and varied class," the Hybrid Perpetuals. According to his logic, it seems we may as well merge all all hybrids into one class. If everything partakes of everything else without any distinguishing feature, does it matter what anything is called?

True, once breeders began to cross Noisettes or Tea roses with Bourbons, the traits were usually altered enough to create some



Mme Doré-B



Dupuy Jamain-HP

confusion in identity. And when the prolific breeder Jean Laffay interbred some Hybrid Perpetuals with Bourbons, he exacerbated identity problems.

Although Hybrid Perpetuals share a number of traits with Bourbons but still remain quite variable, they do not like constant hot weather—two or three days at most, preferring overall cool and/or cloudy days, or at least some shade in hot climates. Thus, a mystery rose found surviving in the open under a constant hot sun for years and years is probably not a Hybrid Perpetual. Certainly that should not be one's first conclusion.

Many Hybrid Perpetuals grow tall and erect with thick, sturdy canes. On the other hand, Hybrid Perpetuals are rarely climbers, whereas a number of Bourbons do climb or can be trained to do so. And though Bourbons may show some erect canes, they generally arch; Bourbons prefer to lounge while

Hybrid Perpetuals prefer to stand at attention.

Bourbons, however, do retain several determining features. Take certain colors. When the rose is red, dark crimson, maroon, purple or burgundy, we know the rose is *not* a Bourbon. I doubt that 'Dr. Andry', 'Dupuy Jamain', 'Reine des Violettes, or 'Souvenir du Dr. Jamain', all of which I grow, would ever be mistaken by color alone for a Bourbon. On the other hand, when the rose is of the various shades of pink,



Mons. de Morand-HP

hydrangea or carmine pink, the Bourbon may be harder to discern based on flower color alone. The Hybrid Perpetuals 'Champion of the World', 'Mrs. John Laing', 'Monsieur de Morand', or 'Marchioness of Lorne', to name a few, might be mistaken by their color for a Bourbon.

Bourbons are not found among the dark red colors.

Because Bourbon roses are considerably less interbred (I refer to those of Damask and China origin) than the later Hybrid

Perpetual roses of, say, after 1860 or so, their traits remain more consistent and therefore identifiable. Their canes, for instance, are green but often shaded purple where the sun strikes them; they are smooth with scattered straight or slightly curved prickles, strong and enlarged at the base. (Several Bourbons are virtually "thornless": 'Adam Messerich', 'Boule de Neige' (see our front cover), 'Kathleen Harrop', 'Mme Dore', 'Zepherine Drouhin'. But the same is true of a few Hybrid Perpetuals.)



Dr. Andry-HP

Nonetheless, a writer going by the name of "Z" for *The*

Gardeners' Chronicle in 1843 attempted to describe three or four types of Bourbons. One type grows to about six feet, produces "lacinated foliage" (though I think he meant sharply serrate) and semi-double to full flowers emitting a strong fragrance. 'Le Grande Capitaine' would exemplify this type. Bourbons blended with Noisettes produce blossoms



Le Grande Capitain-B



Souvenir de Mme Augusta Charles-B

in large corymbs on luxuriant shoots, many of which grow out of proportion to the plant. 'Desgaches' would be an example. Bourbons interbred with Chinas show leaves that are more pointed and flowers whose lower parts are rather compressed. He cites 'Hermosa' as an example. A remaining type, of which 'Queen of the Bourbons' is an instance, exhibits rigid stems on a dwarfish bush of uniform growth. I am not at all sure

these distinctions are helpful, given the various types interbred with Bourbons. But we can point out a few somewhat distinguishable traits.

The leaves of the Bourbon are large, thick and roundish or oval with not much point (more acute than acuminate), sometimes with a rounded but serrate tip. The serrations tend to be sharp and deep. The somewhat "waxy" leaves have a bit of sheen and are edged with red or purple when young. The leaflets are inclined to be sessile (without an

attaching stem) or some sessile and some petiolulate (having a tiny attaching stem).

The sepals of a Bourbon, which lie flat against the underside of the open flower, come with glandular hairs. As a whole, importantly enough, their most distinguishable trait may be their thick but opalescent or translucent petals. This latter characteristic can be a helpful beginning to identify the Bourbon rose.



**Fisher
Holmes
HP**



**Mme Issac
Pereire
B**

ROSE HEALTH AND PRUNING

Anita Clevenger

Old rose enthusiasts have observed many roses growing healthily and unpruned in cemeteries. As Mike Shoup of the Antique Rose Emporium says, “If dead people can grow them, so can you!” We’ve also observed roses being cut to the ground or dug up, and sending out healthy new growth from their roots. Roses are tough and can withstand a lot of neglect or abuse.

However, a lot of mystique and debate has arisen over whether it is necessary to prune roses to ensure their health, what techniques to use, and how drastically a rose can be pruned. Some people say that you can’t prune a rose too much, and that you must remove all old wood to rejuvenate plants. Others say that roses such as Teas don’t like heavy pruning, and may take years to recover, if they do at all.

The first curator of the Sacramento Historic Rose Garden, Barbara Oliva, taught that we prune roses to make them do what we want, not for their own good. We prune to reduce size, direct growth, create a beautiful shape, open them up for air circulation, and to increase flowering shoots. That mindset, along with the goal of growing roses “to their full potential” in order to let them attain their mature size, meant that the roses in the Sacramento cemetery were pruned lightly, and developed into large plants that some people considered overgrown.

This year, Sacramento city staff stopped working with the rose garden volunteer team and brought in an outside consultant to reduce the size of the roses. The roses were pruned hard in the winter, again after first bloom, again in the middle of an extreme heat wave in the summer, and yet again in the fall. Colonizing roses were repeatedly cut with weed whackers to the ground. What does the science say about such drastic pruning?



Many roses, such as Gallicas, Albas, Damasks, Noisettes, Bourbons, Hybrid Perpetuals, Hybrid Teas and Floribundas, are fully or partly deciduous. Deciduous plants pull food from their leaves and twigs into branches and roots in the fall, and go dormant in the winter. During dormancy, roots

and branches are still alive and slowly consume stored food. In the late winter/early spring, roots and shoots grow, using the stored food. In spring, the plant continues to



rely on its stores while its buds swell and develop into foliage or flowers. In the summer, most stored food is depleted, and the plant's growth and maintenance relies primarily on food produced in leaves.

Roses with Chinese heritage, however, are essentially evergreen in mild climates, continuing to store carbohydrates throughout the plant. In Sacramento, China roses, and Tea roses to a lesser extent, hold onto their leaves and continue to bloom throughout the year. Leaves often drop after first bloom.

The terms “food” and “energy” refer to carbohydrates, which

plants manufacture in their leaves through photosynthesis, using carbon dioxide, water and light. It's a misnomer to call fertilizer "plant food." Fertilizers can provide one or more essential elements, and encourage plant growth. In the cemetery, as in much of California, the main element needed is nitrogen, which helps develop lush, healthy leaves so that the plant can feed itself.



UC says to prune most deciduous plants during winter, when reserves are at their peak and the plant can best tolerate the loss of energy lost in pruned parts. They recommend waiting to prune broadleaf evergreens until late winter to early spring. For all woody plants, they advise against pruning at all during bud break in spring, and pruning only to retard, train or direct growth in the summer or to remove spent flowers to encourage repeat blooming.

In other words, the science says to do what California rose growers usually do: prune during the time of peak dormancy, and leave the leaves during the growing season so the plants can produce as much food as possible.

There are times that pruning can improve the health of roses. Canker should be cut out several inches below die-back in dry weather,

cleaning tools between each cut, to reduce its spread. Powdery mildew can be reduced by thinning a plant and cutting off badly mildewed growth. However, UC states what we have observed: succulent new growth, prompted by hard pruning and fertilizer, is much more susceptible to powdery mildew than more mature growth.

If you read the old rose books, you will sometimes find advice that seems counterintuitive: prune weak roses hard, and vigorous roses lightly. It makes sense if you remember that pruning stimulates growth.

Dead, diseased, and damaged canes should be removed during winter pruning and as needed throughout the rest of the year. UC states that landscape rose varieties may be hedged or left unpruned, although rejuvenation pruning or removal of older stems and dead wood every two to three years will renew vigor in the planting. They recommend that no more than one- to two-thirds of a plant be removed.

In the cemetery, many roses responded to the initial winter pruning well, producing new canes and heavy spring bloom. Through the season, nearly all old canes were cut out and many weak new canes took their place. Only time will tell if these repeatedly-pruned roses will remain healthy over time.

It takes energy for plants to push new growth and flowers, again and again, throughout the growing season. How much energy could they produce with a drastically-reduced number of leaves, and how much was left to store this winter?

Roses are tough, but they will be healthier and more beautiful if you rely on science for their care.

Editor's Note:— *Anita Clevenger is the former curator of the Sacramento Historic Rose Garden. She is a Platinum-Level Sacramento County UC Master Gardener and relies on University of California guidance, as well as advice from state plant pathologists and master consulting rosarians, for horticultural information. The primary source for this information is Pests of Landscape Trees and Shrubs from the statewide Integrated Pest Management Program, along with UCANR Publication 7465, Pest Notes: Roses: Cultural Practices and Weed Control.*



Bourbon Roses I Have Known and Grown

Margaret Nelson

The backstory of Bourbons appeals to me. Who cannot love thinking about rows of ‘Autumn Damask’ planted at plantations on the Ile de Bourbon in the Indian Ocean, naturally crossing with China roses traded by passing boats and resulting in the first Bourbon, ‘Rose Edouard’? It probably didn’t happen that way but may have taken place on land in India where the roses were first brought together. It still is a story of adventure and travel by the roses from East to West.

I like Bourbons because of their appearance, scent, history and ability to grow in our western Washington’s Mediterranean climate with lots of winter rain, dry summers and trees which grow large quickly and make shade where there was none when the rose was first planted! Even here, with all the rain, shade and moss, blackspot is generally not a problem on my Bourbon roses.

My favorite Bourbon rose is ‘Souvenir de St Anne’s’, a sport of ‘Souvenir de la Malmaison’. It has a lovely, pristine appearance, fragrance and willingness to bloom and bloom and bloom in our garden.

I am writing this in early January, and though flower production has slowed considerably, the rose has not yet stopped blooming! I've told my husband that when (if) we move, this is the first rose we will be taking along with us to the new home. The flower is very pale pink and looks white when fully opened or in the sun. While my sense of smell has deteriorated, I can smell this rose while many others, sadly, I can smell



Honorine de Brabant

no longer, so this is my star Bourbon.

I like striped roses so I bought 'Honorine de Brabant' early on. This rose has a white background and many dark and light pink stripes on the petals. Another rebloomer with good fragrance, this rose is successfully competing with an Atlas Cedar which used to be small but has

gotten about 50 feet tall! It would be a bigger and better bush if the tree were gone, but both remain and the rose still reblooms.



Commandante Beaurepaire

'Commandant Beaurepaire' grows near 'Honorine'. It has darker and even more stripes of dark pink and red on the lighter background.

Though it repeats, it reblooms less than ‘Honorine’; however, it puts on a wonderful show of multitudes of flowers. This rose is sometimes classified as a Bourbon, sometimes as a Hybrid Perpetual. Call it whatever you want, it is a nice rose.

Then the ultimate striped Bourbon is ‘Variegata di Bologna’ with purple-red stripes on white. The contrast is outstanding. One of our Heritage Roses Northwest members, Jeff Panciera, has a ‘Variegata’ which is over 15 feet high and growing in the



sun. The drawback to ‘Variegata’ is its propensity for blackspot. I have seen it grown in the shade in Eccelston Square, London, in the sun in our own yard and in other people’s gardens. All these plants had blackspot, so either decide that you can overlook that problem because it has those beautiful flowers or don’t plant it! This rose runs and one of my runners reverted to a solid red-toned Bourbon which could be ‘Victor Emmanuel ‘ which some think sported into ‘Variegata’. At the San Jose Rose Garden, I saw a rose labeled ‘Red Variegata di Bologna’. I prefer the romance of it being ‘Victor Emmanuel’s’ sport. It doesn’t matter; it is a beautiful and unusual rose. [**Editor’s note:** A 1909 Italian article claims the parentage to be an unnamed seedling crossed with ‘Pride of Reigate’. See page 25 in our August 2020 issue of *Rose Letter*.]

Other Bourbons I have grown in Washington are ‘Rose

Edouard' and 'Maggie'. Neither grew strong but this could be due to competition from the roots of a large Douglas fir in that part of the garden. Yet another grower in my town has its 'Maggie' growing next to the swimming pool with lots of concrete reflecting light and says it does well there.

Great Western



I have seen 'Great Western' grown at Mottisfont Abbey in England, and it was a showstopper with masses of blooms and a very pleasant purple-red color. Worth the space it took up! Another beautiful Bourbon there was 'Threave' which name may have been local as I cannot find it in rose lists except Mottisfont's. Back here in Washington State, 'Mme Pierre Oger' grows beautifully in the Heritage Garden of Soos Creek Botanical Garden. In a private Renton, Washington garden, 'Bourbon



Threave

Queen' grows, but its gardener reported that the rose was not easy to keep alive in our climate. I am happy with the Bourbons I have and hope that you too will try to grow one or more of these rewarding roses.

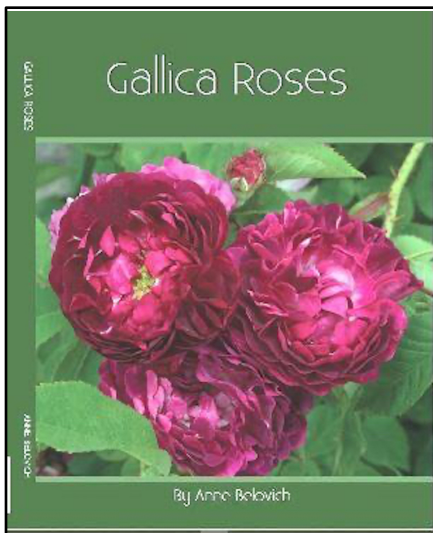


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To renew or become a Heritage Roses Group member with a subscription to the *Rose Letter*, four issues a year, send \$16 for the print format or \$10 for the online format to

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Gallica Roses by Anne Belovich

This new book contains 152 pages of one to three photos per page. With the name of each rose, Anne gives the rose's synonyms, its breeder, parentage, distinguishing traits and further descriptions. Photos were taken in Europa-Rosarium at Sangerhausen, and Roseraie du Val-de-Marne at L'Hay-les-Roses near Paris.

IMAGE CREDITS

Darrell g.h.Schramm--pages 2, 5, 7, 15 left, 16 bottom, 17, 19 top, 28, 31
 Vincent Derkenne--pages 9, 13 top
 Bernard Loubert--page 10
Les Roses--pages 11 top, 13 bottom
 Bill Grant--page 11 bottom
 A. Barra--page 15 right
 Behcet Ciragen--page 16 top
 Susan Walker--pages 18 top, 19 bottom
 Courtesy Trevor White Roses--page 18 bottom
 Jeri Jennings--page 21 top
 Anita Clevenger--pages 21 bottom, 22 bottom
 Judy Eitzen--page 22 top
 Margaret Nelson--pages 24, 25 top, 27
 Urszula Tretowska--page 25 bottom
 Allen Nelson--page 26
 Malcolm Manners--page 30
 Dan Coyro for *Santa Cruz Sentinel*--page 32



REMEMBERING BILL GRANT

Darrell g.h. Schramm

William A. Grant, under Hospice care, died peacefully in his sleep at home on the morning of December 24, 2020. He was 95.

Born August 30, 1925, Bill grew up in Los Angeles during The Great Depression, helping his mother garden her modern roses. He attended the University of San Francisco, then

worked as a sports writer in Chicago before returning to L.A. in 1949. In the 1950s he moved to the central California coast near Santa Cruz, building his own home in the wooded hills. There he gave up on modern roses which he observed as too prone to fungal diseases and requiring too much care; he quickly gravitated toward species and heritage roses and other plants.

Over the years he taught American literature at the University of York, England, and at University of Goteborg, Sweden. He was a founding member of the English Department at the new Cabrillo College in Aptos (near Santa Cruz). During his tenure he was privileged to escort Eleanor Roosevelt when she arrived for a lecture and to welcome her as an overnight guest in his home. Never idle for long, Bill maintained a long association with UC Santa Cruz Arboretum and founded the California Garden History Society. In addition, he served on the national board of the Heritage Roses Group until his death. During his academic years, he was awarded at least two Fulbrights.

For nearly forty years Bill wrote numerous articles and essays, mostly on roses, in such journals and magazines as *Hortus*, *Pacific Horticulture*, *Roses anciennes en France*, *American Rose*, *Rosa Mundi*, *Heritage Roses New Zealand*, *Heritage Roses Australia*, *Fine Gardening*, *Rose Letter*, and others.

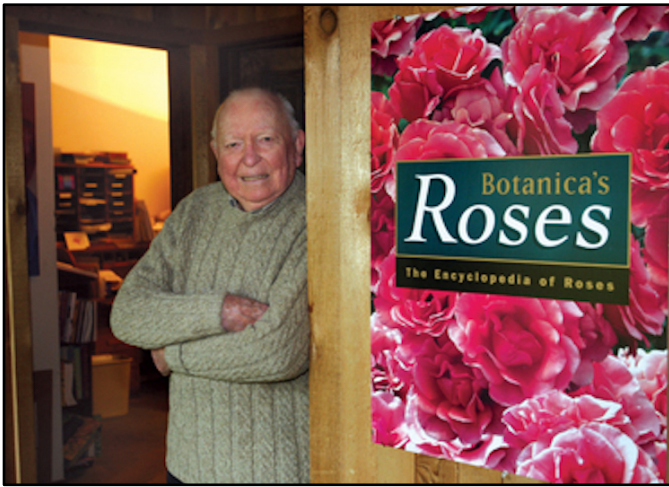
Bill was also renowned and popular for arranging and escorting groups on rose tours around the world. Over the years they visited the gardens of Baden Baden, Europa Rosarium at Sangerhausen, Cavriglia, Monza and Ninfa, Odile Masquelier's garden at Lyon and Tete d'Or, Roseraie de l'Hay, David Ruston's collection in Australia, Vrijbroek in Belgium, Mottisfont and other prominent gardens in England, including lesser known properties such as Heale House, Hodsock Priory, and West Dean Gardens—and these are but a few of the many gardens visited, many of them more than once.

In the early 1990s while on a visit to Oregon, Bill wished to visit the village of Brooks where Father Schoener had lived and bred roses between 1910 and 1915. Driven there by his friends John and Louise Clements, former owners of the nursery Heirloom Roses, they discovered a pink cultivated rose growing in a nearby field. They surmised it may have been bred by Father Schoener. From cuttings that rose is now available commercially, and grows in a small, public rose garden in



Brooks. The name of the rose is ‘William Grant’

Later in the 1990s Bill was instrumental as one of three primary consultants in the publication of the 700-page, encyclopedic tome



Botanica's Roses. It was first published and distributed by Random House to English-speaking countries only. A second, corrected, edition followed in 1999, issued also in Dutch, German, French, and Swedish. Bill had spent a year writing many of

the rose descriptions; he further had argued and won to have a bibliography included. Random House bought more than 400 of his rose photographs for the book. Its success prompted the publishers to ask him to edit a shorter paperback version. He did. Published in 2004, it contains about half the entries of the hardback edition. He was told by an editor that “*Botanica's Roses* will prove to be one of the great rose books of all time.”

One of Bill's favorite roses was ‘Souvenir de Mme Léonie Viennot’. One April when I spent the weekend with him, he asked me on Saturday morning to pick three or four ‘Léonie Viennot’ roses. When I brought them to him, he chose two and then asked me to drive him down the hill to the village of Corralitos where his rose society was about to have a exhibit. Quickly he prepared one of his roses and entered it in the show. A few hours later he was informed he had won the award for an outstanding old rose. He also favored species roses. At its height, his garden, which surrounded his house on a wooded hilltop, was a site of blissful beauty.

Less than a year before Bill died, he asked me to edit a manuscript he had compiled from his previously published articles and

essays. “I can’t afford to pay you,” he told me, “but any profit from sales will be yours.” I declined, being occupied with my own gardening, writing, and work as editor of two publications. But he called me a few weeks later, again asking me to edit his work. I reluctantly agreed but told him I wanted no compensation. After all, he had been my mentor; I had even dedicated my book *Rainbow* to him.

He sent me the manuscript. I spent quite some time editing and—as he had requested—choosing slides to illustrate each piece of his writing, then mailed the manuscript back to him. This occurred in March of 2020. To my surprise and consternation, a few weeks later he returned the manuscript to me, uncorrected, unrevised, and without any accompanying explanation. Puzzled, I wrote a letter to him, asking what he wished me to do with it. After all, three or four of the photocopied articles contained incomplete text. I had no word from him. Unknown to me he was having his third surgery within two months.

When I next heard from Bill, he sent an email encouraging me to publish all my articles in one book. “I bask in your success,” he wrote. “I just need to urge you on and on and on. I need to give you more of my books when you get time.” On September 19, he sent an email: “I’m back. Been sick too long. Hope we can have a talk. Drop by.” I replied that because of the pandemic, I was remaining cautious and isolated. Perhaps in a month to two we could visit.

That was the last I heard from him. His last words to me were “Bless you.”

THIS & THAT

*The image of 'Boule de Neige' on our cover is from *Les Roses* by Hippolyte Jamain and Eugene Forney, 1873.

*The portrait of Sir Joseph Paxton on page 3 was painted by Henry P. Briggs, 1836.

*A book devoted to Bourbons is *The Romance of the Rose: My Life with Bourbon Roses* by Victor F. Lewis, 2009. Privately published in England.

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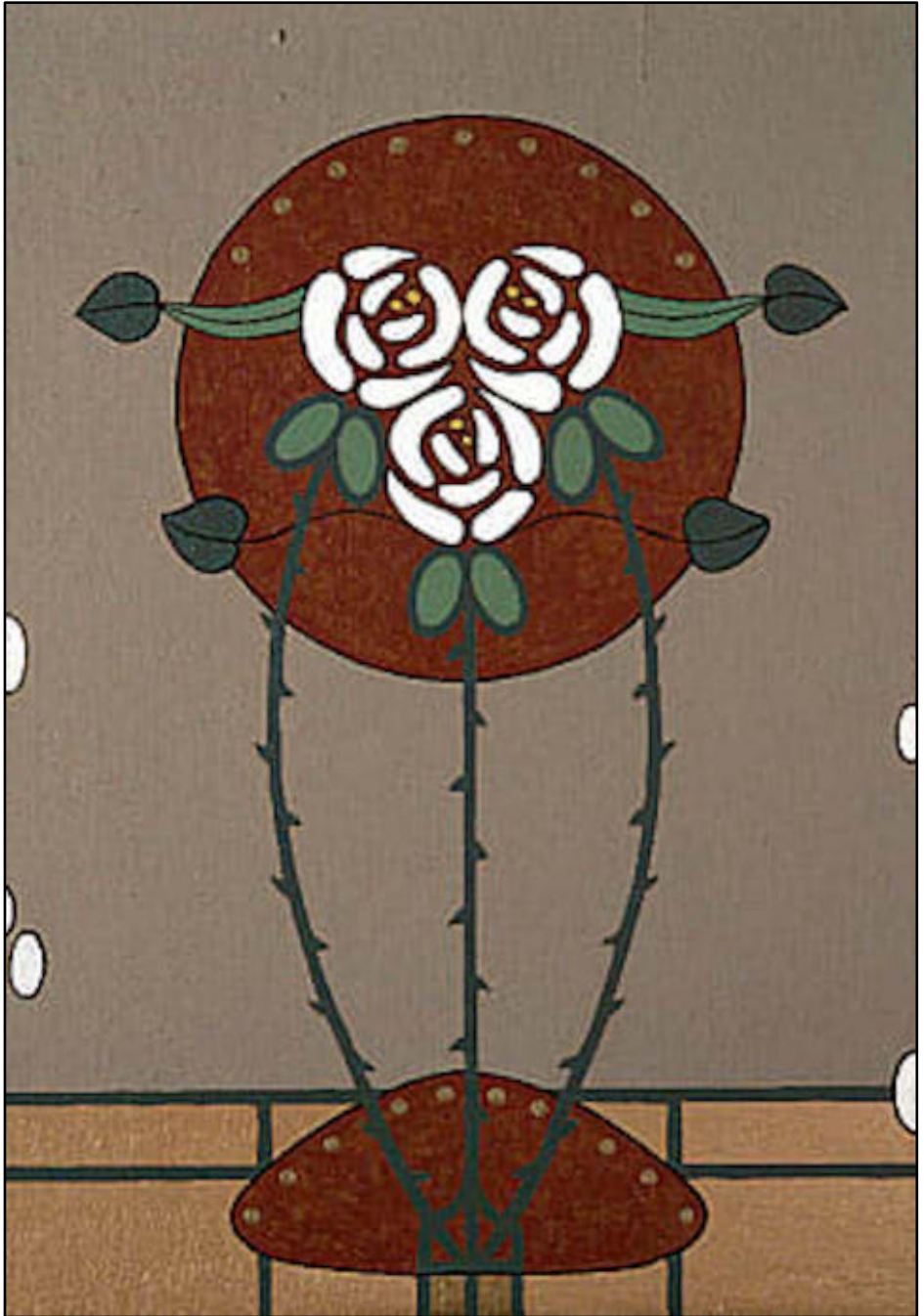
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