

ROSE LETTER



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ROSE LETTER

The Heritage Roses Group

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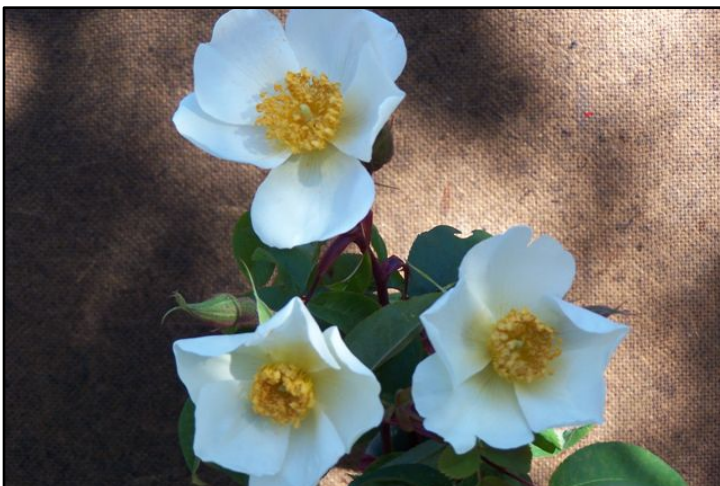
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Leschenault de la Tour and His Rose: *R. leschenaultiana*

Girija and Viru Viraraghavan

The upper reaches (over 6000 feet elevation) of the southern Indian mountain range, called the Western Ghats, is home to a rose species, belonging to the musk rose complex, named *Rosa leschenaultiana*, after a French naturalist and ornithologist, Jean Baptiste Leschenault de la Tour. He found this rose species, among other new plant varieties, like a *Mahonia*, a *Vaccinium* and many others (all of which have his name attached to them) in the forests of the ‘Neilgherries and Pulney Mountains’ of south India in the early 1800s.

Leschenault (1773-1826) was an intrepid botanical adventurer, traveling with Nicolas Baudin on his sea voyage to Australia (1800-1803), then to Java and other parts of Malesia, India and Ceylon, and later to South America. While many plant species were discovered by him on his travels, the entire plant genus of *Leschenaultia* of Australia comprises a range of beautiful shrubs with flowers in incomparable shades of blue. We saw them in all their glory in the Botanic Garden, outside Perth in Western Australia.

Born in Chalon-sur-Saône, (in Burgundy), the son of a judge, his botanical interests took him all around the world. He married Marguerite Bonin in April 19, 1796. They seem to have been childless. He collected plant and

bird specimens in every country, and sent them back to Paris. His herbarium specimens and some of his documents are housed in the National Herbarium (Phanerog), whilst his other manuscripts are with the Library of Natural History Museum, in Paris.



While in South America botanising in French Guyana, ill health forced him to return, where he died in his own home.

He came to India in 1816 as ‘*inquisitor rerum naturae*’ and was made Director of a botanic garden ‘Jardin Royal de Pondichéry’ in Pondicherry, then a French territory. He was given permission by the British in Fort St George, Madras (now Chennai) to travel in the areas under their governance, in order to make botanical collections. He is said to have sent seeds and plant material to the French Island of Reunion, in the Indian Ocean. He was in India till 1822.

He sent material of the rose species he found in the hills to the botanist Claude Antoine Thory in France, who named it *Rosa leschenaultiana*. Redouté made his drawing of the rose in ‘Les Roses’, from Leschenault’s herbarium specimens.



Ellen Willmott in *The Genus Rosa* writes that "*R. leschenaultiana* has often been called the South Indian form of *Rosa moschata* Mill. But it is a perfectly good and distinct species. It is closely related to the South European *Rosa sempervirens* L., thereby referring to its evergreen character. Its leaflets are 5 to 7, elliptic,

oblong, 1.5 to 2.5 inches across, numerous, in large corymbs; the buds very acute; the fruits globose." It was considered a 'geographical form' "being more robust, with larger flowers and with very glandular leaf petioles, pedicels and calyx."

The modern view, however, is different as it is considered to be a part of the musk rose complex (synstylae). It is now called *R. leschenaultiana*, Wight and Arnot. (Robert Wight also discovered it in 1836 in the same Nilgiri and Palni Mountains). Earlier its nomenclature was either *R. sempervirens* var *Leschenaultiana* Thory (in Redouté, *Les Roses*, 1824) or *R. moschata* var *Leschenaultiana* Rehder (in Bailey 1902).

The distinctive feature of this straggling, climbing rose is its violet-purple stems. Once very luxuriant and common in the forests, festooning native 'shola' trees to a height of 60 to 70 feet with long trails of single pure white flowers, faintly fragrant, it is increasingly getting rarer, with the onset of development. In the Centenary Rose Garden in Ooty, (short for Ootacamund, now called Uthagamandalam, capital of the district of the Nilgiris, in the state of Tamil Nadu, south India) the hedges on either side of the wide entrance steps are of this rose species, commonly called the Ooty Rose.

While the rose grows in the inner fastnesses of the forests in the Palni Hills where we live, a part of the Western Ghats, we have found it in a location by the side of a road leading to an interior hill village, making it easy to take rose enthusiasts to see this special rose species growing in the wild. We have a plant growing in our garden, clambering over our back verandah.

Viru has hybridized with this species and has named and registered a seedling, a cross between 'Rêve d'Or' and *R. leschenaultiana* as 'Leschenault de la Tour' to honor and memorialize the Frenchman who traversed our hills in the early 1800's.

We are indeed very happy to launch this rose in honor of Jean Baptiste Leschenault de la Tour. It is singularly appropriate that this rose is doubly French, with 'Reve d'Or', one of the best known of French roses, as the seed parent and *Rosa leschenaultiana* as the pollen parent.

The new rose hybrid is virtually a larger version of that famous white Noisette, ‘Lamarque’, again French.

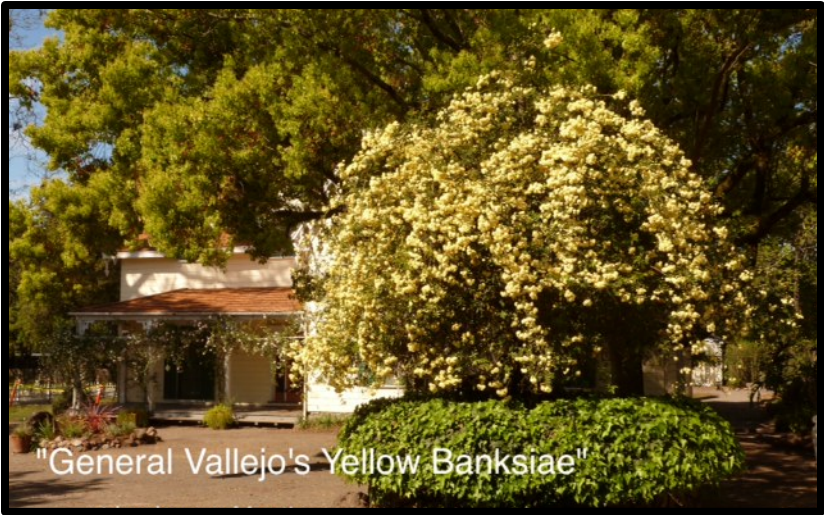
It bears beautiful globular white flowers, displaying an exquisite medley of petals, illuminated by the light gold of the center, wafting a soft fragrance, and happily, remontant. This climbing rose has elegant light green foliage and climbs easily three to four meters.



In our opinion, it is a fitting tribute to the sadly brief, but prodigiously rewarding life of this plant explorer, a life cruelly cut short in its prime. But what a life! A brief but brilliant meteor flashing across the startled skies of India, Australia and the West Indies.

This article first appeared in Roses Anciennes en France 2016. The Viruraghavens are world-renowned rose breeders in India.

We still have copies of *The Yellow Booklet*, a small illustrated history of when the color yellow was fashionable in the Western world and experiments with yellow roses began. For a copy, sent \$5.00 (which includes envelope and postage) to The Editor, 101 Benson Ave., Vallejo, CA 94590. All proceeds go to HRG.



Help Me Find "General Vallejo's Yellow Banksiae" Rose

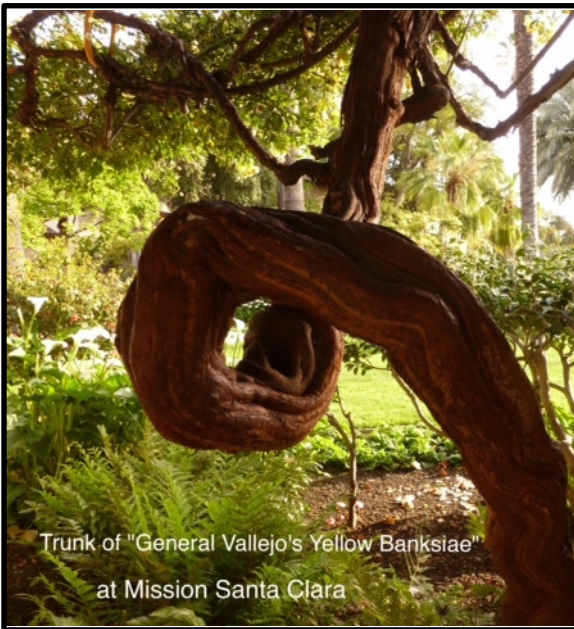
Don Gers

The Banksiae roses are among the first to bloom in early spring. In hedgerows, haystacks or just hanging like tinsel from trees or eaves, the effect is beacon-like, a solid mass of yellow or white, a "pretty but most un-rose-like appearance" Thomas Rivers wrote in 1846. While best appreciated en masse from a distance, only the white invites you up close by its delicious fragrance. But now the yellow deserves a closer look since we've discovered there's more than one to meet the eye.

Growing in the courtyard of General Mariano G. Vallejo's home, Lachryma Montis, in Sonoma is a very different double yellow Banksiae rose, larger in all its parts. The double yellow *Rosa banksiae lutea* commonly found in California has a flower diameter of 3.3 cm (about the size of a half dollar) with 40 petals per flower and a pedicel 4.2 cm long. But "General Vallejo's Yellow Banksiae" has a flower diameter of 4.4 cm (about the size of a silver dollar) with 75 petals per flower and a pedicel 6.5 cm long (the length of a toothpick). This larger flowered, double yellow Banksiae also appears to be rare, so far found in only five locations in the San Francisco Bay Area. And interestingly, four of

those locations are associated with General Vallejo during his lifetime.

It was first discovered in 1992 at Pagani Ranch in the Valley of the Moon near Glen Ellen and later the same day at Vallejo's home in Sonoma. Ninety-three year old Violet Pagani declared the rose was already growing on her parent's property when they bought the ranch in the late 19th century. General Vallejo passed the ranch on his trips from Sonoma to Santa Rosa.



Several years later a rose friend, Judith Serin, found it in the Sunnyside district of San Francisco. Judith suggested it might be the Banksiae rose 'Jaune Serin' mentioned by Thomas Rivers in 1846 as having "larger flowers...a really fine and vigorous growing variety." It's also possible "General Vallejo's Yellow Banksiae" is the result of chromosome doubling, an amphidiploid, and we hope Dr. Malcolm Manners will find out that.

And just last year we found "General Vallejo's Yellow Banksiae" at two additional locations. It is growing along the eaves on the oldest remaining adobe at Mission Santa Clara, built in 1822, and also on the 1844 Mexican land grant of Rancho Cañada de Pogolimi at Valley Ford on the Sonoma County coast. This rancho was deeded to the widow of James Dawson, one of several American sailors General Vallejo sent to settle the coast as a counter to the Russian presence at Ft. Ross. In a curious historical footnote: James Dawson was originally supposed to share ownership of Rancho Estero Americano with his

fellow sailor Edward McIntosh, but only McIntosh's name ended up on the deed. So the outraged Dawson sawed their cabin in half and moved his half across the creek which eventually became the Rancho Cañada de Pogolimi.

In the meantime, the search continues for other locations of this rare variety. So I'm asking you readers to help me find it. If you would examine the flowers on the double yellow Banksiae roses you encounter this coming spring to see if their pedicels (the thin green stalks beneath the flower buds) are the length of a toothpick and the flower about the size of a silver dollar, you've probably found "General Vallejo's Yellow Banksiae".



Email me (gersdonald@yahoo.com) details of the location and if possible a photo of the flower cluster with toothpick for scale, or mail me a specimen to 6950 St. Helena Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Many people searching for "General Vallejo's Yellow Banksiae" will help uncover its history and grant the rose the recognition it merits.

[This rose is available from Rose Petals Nursery, FL--The Editor]

*For those readers unfamiliar with California history, the following provides a background to the previous article on General Vallejo's yellow *Banksiae* rose.*

GENERAL MARIANO VALLEJO

General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo was born in July of 1808 (a few sources state 1807) and died at his country home in Sonoma in 1890. Years before California statehood, he was made as a young man a comandante in 1831 by the Mexican government which then controlled the territory. In 1834 he was granted the Petaluma rancho. That same year he laid out and established the town of Sonoma around the Solano Mission. He also took the first steps to establish a civil authority at the pueblo of San Francisco, then turned it over to a governor.



By 1837 he was the most prominent man and one of the richest in all of California. Also granted to him over the years were Rancho Suisun, Ranchos Yulupa (bordering Ranchos Petaluma, Cotati, and Santa Rosa near Sonoma), Temelec (between Sears Point and the Mexican colony of Lakeville), Agua Caliente (which included Glen Ellen north of Sonoma), and an eight-square league grant in Mendocino County. He also owned the Soscol rancho, which he deeded to Robert Semple in 1846, his partner in laying out the town of Benicia.

Vallejo built a huge mansion on the plaza at Sonoma and by 1849 a large farm home outside the town, naming it Lachryma Montis, where he was to end his days. It is at Lachryma Montis where the old yellow *Banksiae* rose still grows, a rose plant larger in leaf, pedicel, and flower than the usual *Rosa banksiae lutea*.

A generous man, General Vallejo also donated 156 acres for the town of Vallejo, where his son Dr. Platon Vallejo was to live (at 420 Carolina Street). Throughout his life Vallejo remained friendly with the indigenous people of the area, with the Russians at Fort Ross, and with other immigrants to California. On the eve of statehood, he became a member of the constitutional convention. Though not much liked by John Sutter of Gold Rush fame, he remained an honorable and respected gentleman all his life.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- March 25 Spring Beauties Awaken Tour, 10:00 a.m. Sacramento Historic Cemetery, 1000 Broadway, Sacramento, CA
- April 8 Open Garden, Sacramento Historic Old City Cemetery (same as above) 9:30-2:00
- May 2 Heritage Roses Northwest spring meeting, 1:00 pm. Len Heller on Austin roses. Site TBA. oldrosen@gmail.com.
- May 18-20 Heritage Rose Foundation conference, Fredericksburg, VA, with tours to Monticello, Charlottesville and Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery



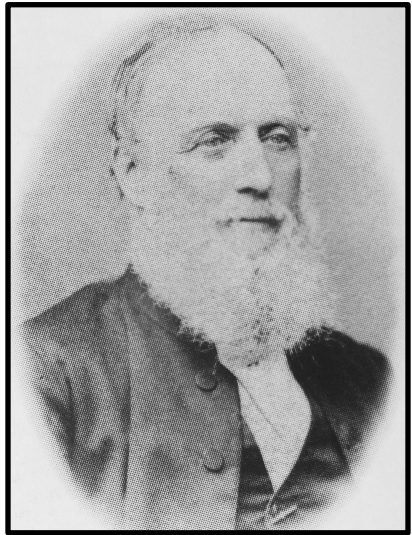
ADVANCING ROSES: THE REVEREND D'OMBRAIN

Darrell g.h. Schramm

Breeders aside, when we think of those who have done much to advance the love and gardening of roses, most of us are inclined to think of Graham Stuart Thomas, Peter Beales, Miriam Wilkins, Gregg Lowery, J. Horace McFarland, Ethelyn Emery Keays, Ellen Willmott, Henry Ellwanger, and/or Dean Reynolds Hole. Edward Bunyard, Gertrude Jekyll, and two or three others might also slip into the list, but rarely, I suspect would the name Reverend Henry Honeywood D'Ombraim appear.

Not only did D'Ombraim write about roses in articles and books—his *Rose for Amateurs* is a little gem—but he was also one of the initial six organizers and the “driving force” who established the National Rose Society of England, the first rose society in the world. Thereafter he served as the society’s secretary for 25 years (though after the first two years he shared that position with Edward Mawley as joint secretary).

Henry D’Ombrain was born in London in 1818 but from infancy was reared in Ireland. At Trinity College as a student he helped establish the National History Society of Dublin in 1838, serving as its secretary until he was ordained in 1841. By 1847 he had returned to England, and with him his wife Mary whom he had wed in 1840. Employed by the Church first as a curate then as a vicar in Kent, he became a notable rose grower, his first garden on a windy cliff, his second in a partition of field, both difficult locations. When his wife died in 1850, he remarried in 1852 to a Catherine by whom he had a daughter Marguerite and a son Robert, who committed suicide while a Lieutenant during the Zulu-Boers War in 1879.



In the 1860s D’Ombrain began visiting rose breeders and nurseries in France, his ancestral grounds. There he familiarized himself with the popular and the new roses produced in that nation. In one of his sojourns, at a particular nursery he noticed a box of seedlings set aside to be discarded. One specific seedling attracted his attention. He took the liberty to ask that this seedling be given a chance. It was. And when that rose was introduced in 1864, it became one of the two or three famous Noisette roses of all time, ‘Marechal Niel’. Indeed, Reverend D’Ombrain introduced the Noisettes to England.



The Reverend considered ‘Marechal Niel’, in his words, “the prince of roses,” a rose to be planted in “a warm and sheltered spot.” (Elsewhere in his writings he faults it for a drooping head.) Today there are those who still consider that rose a prince, at least among the Noisettes. A prince is not, of course, a king, and so D’Ombrain called another rose, ‘Cloth of Gold’, “the grandest of all yellow roses.” Another rose

D’Ombrain introduced to England from France was ‘Mme Caroline Testout’, a rose still popular today, especially in the Pacific Northwest. He also promoted the Bourbon rose to his fellow Englishmen.

In 1868 D’Ombrain transferred his religious duties to the larger parish of St. Mary’s Church in Westwell, Kent, the town in which he would live out his life. But the larger demands of this “village cathedral” did not prevent him from serving also as secretary for a special fund-raising organization to help those French nurserymen and rose growers decimated by the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. All the while, he wrote horticultural articles for several magazines, even giving lectures on gardens and plants. Ever active, in 1876 he was instrumental in forming the National Rose Society, the first such nationwide horticultural group in the world. Humbly, when discussing its origin in his rose book, he makes no mention of his role in the society.

His book *Roses for Amateurs* came out in 1887, a practical guide for the newcomer to roses. Unlike the famous Dean Hole who wrote primarily for rose exhibitors, D’Ombrain frankly declared his readership to be rose gardeners, those for whom beauty in the garden supersedes the staged beauty of a show. To be fair, however, he wrote one chapter on exhibition of roses. In this book he declared that rose standards, those unnatural bouquets on a tall stick, “could never be considered ‘a thing of beauty’, and when to [their] extreme ugliness there was added the probability of . . . succumbing to a severe winter, [they have] gradually been put [to] one side” in England and France. No doubt many growers in warmer climates would disagree.

Likely an outgrowth of his book, from 1888 to 1902 D’Ombrain published at his own expense for the National Rose Society the *Rosarian’s Year Book*. Not only did this service promote the society and provide an early record of its work, but it also enlightened and encouraged novice and amateur rose growers.

At the time D’Ombrain wrote his little book in the late 1880s, he affirmed Tea roses and Noisettes to have become more popular than Hybrid Perpetuals, the rose type that launched rose exhibitions. What finally made the Tea rose conducive to cool England where it had previously been grown only tentatively and under glass, was the use of the Sweet Briar as budding stock, the introduction of which was spearheaded by George Prince of Oxford. He added, however, that of

all roses ‘Marechal Niel’ was the most popular. What ‘Gloire de Dijon’ was to Dean Hole, ‘Marechal Niel’ seems to have been to Rev. D’Ombrain. And while the strain of ‘Gloire de Dijon’ has considerably weakened over the years, ‘Marechal Niel’ still thrives.

One late summer day, Gregg Lowery presented me with a rose. The gesture was so unexpected, the rose so beautiful, its perfume so magnificent that the flower is etched into my mind. The rose was ‘Reverend H. D’Ombrain’. Bred by Jacques-Julien Margottin in 1863, a seedling of ‘Louise Odier’ crossed with ‘General Jacqueminot’, it grows on a compact bush, bearing large, double Bourbon roses. The outer rim of petals are light or silvery pink, the next circumference of petals is of a lilac or mauvish pink, and the wide central circle of petals are carmine or soft red; to me the rose conveys the overall impression of being almost lavender. The fact is that colors are not a precise description. Just as colors of the spectrum meld into one another without a clear demarcation, so too the coloration of any rose more than one solid color.

And even the solids, such as a pure red ‘Altissimo’ or pure white ‘Frau Karl Druschki’ are really, I suspect, imaginary as to their purity. A rose is not just any rose.

Growing roses, writing of roses, lecturing on roses, introducing certain French rose varieties—not to mention a whole class, the Noisettes—aiding French horticulturists who had lost their plants and livelihood in war time, calling for and establishing a national rose society, Henry Honeywood D’Ombrain was indeed a consummate promoter of the rose. Though nearly extinct, the rose that bears his name still survives. I urge readers to try to obtain and grow ‘Reverend H. D’Ombrain’. The remarkable man himself died in 1905.



Reverend H. D'Ombrain

WE THE FAIRIES BLYTHE AND ANTIC, Pt. II

Stephen Hoy



"Abbott & Burns Family Rose"

The chronicle of the westward journey of many old rose varieties is told in Thomas Christopher's wonderful book *In Search of Lost Roses*. However, despite the mention of many a China rose, not one account is told of a Lawrenciana type. As with 'Dolly Dudley,' a family history opens our eyes to the

preservation and relocation of another historic "found" rose. In 1857 several families banded together to depart from their Arkansas homes and travel west to California. The Abbott, Burns, and Epperson expedition encountered many hardships and endured the loss of family members, livestock, and personal possessions. Suggesting something of its intrinsic value, a tiny pink China rose was among the belongings that survived the arduous journey. One of the Abbott daughters, Catherine, married young Jesse Burns the day after their arrival in California. The little rose, an Abbott family keepsake, survives to this day nurtured in the historic rose garden located in the Sacramento Historic City Cemetery known as the "Abbott and Burns Family Rose." In my garden the little semi-double to double pink blossoms continue to remind one of the significance of plants as family heirlooms.

The story continues, shaped to some extent by America's Civil War. As conflicts over the issues of slavery and states' rights became prominent, a push to establish a "Southern" approach to things agricultural and horticultural arose in the 1840's and 50's. For example, Danish immigrant Robert Nelson moved to Macon, Georgia (just 20 miles from my home) in 1847 and created Troup Hill Nursery, offering hundreds of different types of fruit trees and over one hundred and fifty varieties of roses, all sold own-root. (Nelson went bankrupt within a

decade. Philadelphia nurseryman Robert Buist was one of his largest creditors.) Although Nelson sold many Teas and Chinas, including the ‘Green Rose,’ no Lawranceanas were on his most recommended list. Another Southern nursery, however, can be credited with marketing several miniature China hybrids.

Scottish horticulturist Thomas Affleck immigrated to the United States in 1832, living in New York, Pennsylvania, and Indiana before moving to Cincinnati in 1839. There he assumed the post of editor of the *Western Farmer and Gardener*. In 1842 he resettled near Natchez, Mississippi, taking over the management of his second wife’s plantation and establishing one of the earliest commercial nurseries in the Deep South. He purchased and introduced to southerners a vast number of plants from a variety of American and European nurserymen. Beginning in 1845 and continuing to 1865, he published and edited *Affleck’s Southern Rural Almanac and Plantation Garden Book*, addressing an extremely broad variety of agricultural and horticultural topics. An 1851 edition includes comments on numerous classes of roses recommended for the South and their availability from his nursery. The following brief statement appears: “The Miniature China Roses (*Rosa Lawrenceana*) are pretty little gems, of many colours and shades.” Affleck credits the English firm of Thomas Rivers as the original source of all his rose offerings, in effect a commercial “stamp of approval” as to their quality. In his 1840 book, *The Rose Amateur’s Guide*, Thomas Rivers discusses his rose recommendations in a flowing commentary. Among the Lawrenceanas that Rivers mentions are ‘Caprice des Dames,’ ‘Gloire des Lawrenceanas,’ ‘Jenny,’ ‘Lilliputienne,’ ‘Nigra,’ ‘Pallida,’ ‘Petite Laponne,’ and ‘Retour du Printemps.’

Affleck was very connected to New Orleans culture through his publishing interests and business contacts. At least one Lawrenceana-type, possibly introduced to commerce through Affleck, has strong ties to The Big Easy. Some measure of its connection can be found in the writing of Mississippi native Georgia Torrey Drennan, later a resident of New Orleans.

The youthful Georgia daughter of a wealthy plantation owner

married young lawyer and judge William Drennan at the outbreak of the Civil War. Ms. Drennan would go on to become a horticulturist of note. A number of articles written by the well-educated author on a variety of subjects, including poinsettias, hyacinths, water lilies, and peppers, appeared in numerous “Southern” home and garden-related publications. Her most enduring effort, however, was dedicated to roses and, in particular, the still-new repeat-flowering roses highly suited for growing in the Deep South and Gulf Coast. Published in 1912, Drennan’s *Everblooming Roses for the Outdoor Garden of the Amateur* remains a classic rose book flowing with passion and devotion for life in the garden. It encapsulates her knowledge of and familiarity with the Tea, Noisette, and China rose families, the Hybrid Remontants (Hybrid Perpetuals), Polyanthas, Hybrid Rugosas, as well as “old” once-blooming favorites from her family’s Round Hill Plantation gardens north of Jackson, Mississippi (which burned to the ground during the war), the garden she and husband established in nearby Lexington, and the New Orleans garden she created in 1895.

Among the many varieties of roses included in her book is a very brief mention of the “Lawrienciana or Picayune” rose. From the text one concludes that it is a singular cultivar, pink in color, eminently everblooming “with undiminished vigor.” She comments that it “makes an ornament for the garden so striking that the wonder is that it has ever fallen out of popular favor and is not seen elsewhere than in old gardens with other old-fashioned plants that are still there simply because they are naturally hardy and long-lived.” Ms. Drennan also explains the use of the term “Picayune,” a reference to a small Spanish coin common in New Orleans culture. About the size of a dime, they were demonetized in 1857, becoming essentially worthless. Although in today’s parlance the term has come to mean “of little value” or “insignificant,” its



association with the Lawranceanas is tied to the size of the coin, not its value.

Two “Picayune” roses – Lawranceana types – with traces of late 19th/early 20th century New Orleans heritage remain with us; however, whether they are/were named varieties or seedlings is a mystery unlikely to be solved. Ms. Drennan’s medium pink double-flowered Lawranceana may well have been passed along in New Orleans’ gardens in the fashion of many other roses. One HMF member, Sarah Jumel, relates that for decades several relatives living in New Orleans grew what they knew as ‘Pink Picayune,’ most likely purchased from a local nursery named Guillot’s [destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and with no apparent connection to the famous French family of the same name]. This same rose was discovered growing along old U.S. Highway 290, near Brenham, TX, near Mike Shoup’s Antique Rose Emporium and, coincidentally, near the location of nurseryman Thomas Affleck’s second Texas-based business. Now given the found rose name “Highway 290 Pink Buttons,” it has been speculated that it and ‘Pink Picayune’ are one and the same. A second rose, primarily white with just a blush of pink, is simply identified as ‘Picayune.’ The earliest mention I have found so far is in *Modern Roses V* (1958). There it is tentatively classed as a Polyantha, “[p]ossibly an old variety from France, still grown in the South,” and is characterized as “light pink, opening white.” Corroboration that white-colored “Picayune” roses were known as far back as the late 1800s was found in an 1894 edition of *The Mid-Continent Magazine* (formerly *The Southern Magazine*) that advertised dolls with “faces made of white Picayune roses” (Vol. 3, p. 404). The provenance of the cultivar I grow as ‘Picayune’ can be traced to South Carolina nursery Roses Unlimited. Co-owners Pat Henry and Bill Patterson have had the variety in the RU catalog for over three decades listed as a China. Pat informed me she got the plant from a friend’s garden in Charlotte, NC. An old *Combined Rose List* shows that it was at one time available from OGR enthusiast Mike Lowe.

Significant in the history of the Lawranceanas and in the evolution of today’s modern Miniature roses was the introduction of *Rosa multiflora* ‘Polyantha’ into Europe in the early 1860’s. From it



Jean-Baptiste Andre Guillot raised a number of second generation seedlings out of which he selected for introduction in 1875 what is considered to be the earliest Polyantha rose, 'Pâquerette.' While hybridizers were introducing new Polyantha cultivars, seedsman Leonard Lille of Lyon developed a strain of dwarf, remontant roses derived from *R. multiflora* that could be grown quite easily from seed. Marketed as 'Plate Bande,' or 'Polyantha nana perpetua,' the seedlings were reblooming with double flowers of white and varying shades of pink. Several years later, a

second strain appeared in catalogs sold as 'Multiflora Nana,' generally producing a greater number of single or nearly single miniature roses also in whites and pinks. The more hardy character of *R. multiflora* redirected hybridizing efforts away from the Lawrenceanas and towards the new Polyantha class.

The history-line of the Lawrenceanas essentially comes to a screeching halt with the "discovery" in 1917 of one of today's most prominent Lawrenceanas – *Rosa rouletii*. An officer and surgeon in the Swiss Army Reserves during World War I, Dr. Andre Roulet, wrote his friend, Swiss horticulturist, nurseryman, and alpine specialist Henri



Corrévon, that he had noticed a diminutive potted rose bush on the windowsill of a home in the resort village of Mauborget. It was a mere two inches tall and was reported to have been growing in the container for over 100 years, blooming throughout the growing season. When Corrévon visited the town, he

reported that fire damage prevented him from collecting cuttings or a plant. To his relief, a villager informed him that a woman in the nearby town of Onnens had a plant of the same variety. Sometime later he and Dr. Roulet called on the rose's owner and obtained a small slip. From that miniscule beginning a brief revival of interest was born. By 1922 Corrèvon reported big numbers of the little novelty rose, now named for his friend, were being sold in England, France, and America. He went on to further study his "discovery," contrasting it with the single-flowered "Miss Lawrance's Rose" which he already had growing in his extensive garden and also compared it to another cultivar already familiar to Swiss rose enthusiasts—*Rosa indica humilis*—brought to Switzerland by the aforementioned Augustin Pyramus de Candolle roughly a century earlier. The size difference presented a problem that Corrèvon concluded might be explained by container-cultural factors. The speculation that revolves around the similarity/identity of *Rosa rouletii* and the China rose in commerce known as 'Pompon de Paris' continues to this day.



The growing commercial availability of *R. rouletii* caught the special attention of two European rose hybridizers. The Netherlands' Jan de Vink contributed a number of early cultivars beginning with 'Peon,' a cross of *R. rouletii* with the Polyantha 'Gloria Mundi' (1935), and several descendants from it, 'Red Imp' ('Maid Marion' in the U.S.), and 'Cinderella.' Spain's Pedro Dot began making crosses of *R. rouletii* and 'Pompon de Paris' with various Hybrid Teas and Polyanthas (also Floribundas which were known as Hybrid Polyanthas), resulting in a number of miniaturized hybrids—'Baby Goldstar,' 'Perla de Alcanada,' 'Perla de Monserrat,' 'Para Ti,' and perhaps the smallest rose ever introduced to commerce, 'Si.'

Roughly at the same time Mr. de Vink's 'Peon'/'Tom Thumb' was developing among his seedlings, a novel rose was discovered in a garden in England. Early miniature rose enthusiast Margaret Pinney, quoting miniature tree and shrub expert Anne Ashberry, wrote that rose breeder C. R. Bloom procured a plant or cuttings from an elderly lady near Oakington in Cambridgeshire. The variety, given the name 'Oakington Ruby,' is thought to have come from the garden of the ancient Ely Cathedral and is very possibly an historic Lawranceana still growing from the heyday years of their popularity. Ms. Pinney noted in her invaluable *Book of the Miniature Rose* that Mr. Coyne, the rose propagator of the old New Jersey firm Bobbink and Atkins, told her that it and 'Gloire de Lawrencianas' were "evidently the same."



Robert Pyle of Star Roses/Conard-Pyle fame had established a working relationship with many of Europe's leading rose hybridizers in the early 1900's. Soon after seeing Jan de Vink's 'Peon' he recognized its commercial potential in America and gained permission to market it from their West Grove, PA business newly named 'Tom Thumb.' So many orders for the "miniature" rose arrived that it had to be removed from the catalog for a season so that stock could be built up to meet the demand.

A California nurseryman and rose hybridizer by the name of Ralph Moore purchased plants of 'Tom Thumb' and 'Oakington Ruby' soon after their

introduction to the U.S., and a dream that was to change the world of roses was born. ‘Oakington Ruby’ produced a number of early self-pollinated seedlings for Ralph in the 1950’s: ‘Centennial Miss,’ ‘Patty Lou’ (also known as ‘Petite’), and ‘Pink Joy.’ Ralph simultaneously discovered that crossing these early miniaturized hybrids with other types would often result in plants with miniature flowers and a new class of Miniature



roses was off and running—which is, of course, another story. Today’s Miniature roses are a complex group characterized by an extremely diverse genetic blending of rose families: China, Polyantha, Floribunda, Multiflora, Wichuraiana, and Hybrid Tea, just to name a few.

Is there a future for this more or less overlooked class of dwarf China roses? Are they just a stepping stone leading to a forgotten destination? Have they joined other classes of roses supplanted by the newest catalog offerings? For this rose lover, the Lawranceanas are roses that simply bring wonder into the garden, a feeling summed up nicely in the words of poet Amos Bronson Alcott : “Who loves a garden still his Eden keeps,/ Perennial pleasures plants, and wholesome harvest reaps.”

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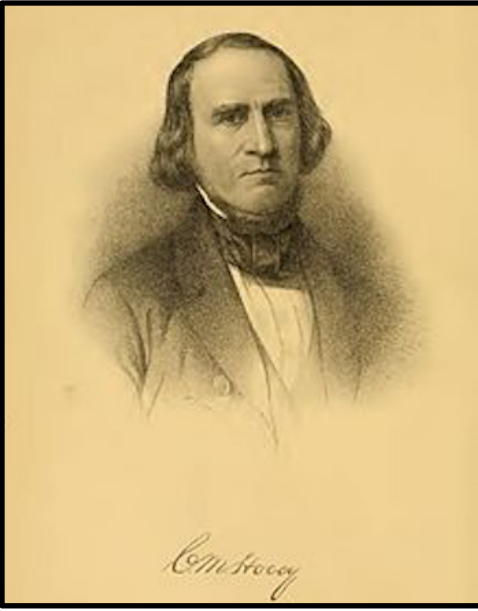
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Hovey's Roses

Darrell g.h. Schramm



Old rose catalogues can be both informative and instructive while simultaneously speculative regarding heritage or antique roses. As a primary example, consider the Hovey and Co. rose catalogue of 1845-46.

But first—and you have reason to wonder—who was Hovey? Charles Mason Hovey (1810-1887) with his brother Phineas opened a nursery in

Cambridge, Mass., in 1832. Having visited the respectable Landreth nursery in Philadelphia the year before, Charles Hovey was determined to realize his own horticultural dreams. And he succeeded beyond those dreams. On thirty-five acres, he grew and sold roses and other plants. For instance, he hybridized strawberries, camellias, chrysanthemums, geraniums, lilies, and other plants, all of which he offered for sale. In his largest greenhouse, he had a “breath-taking camellia collection set off by the best varieties of climbing roses twining up the inside columns.” Jackson Dawson, who later became the first propagator for Harvard’s Arnold Arboretum, served as Hovey’s apprentice in the mid-1850s.

With his brother Phineas, he also founded and edited *American Gardeners’ Magazine* in 1834, changing the name two years later to *The Magazine of Horticulture*. It was America’s first successful horticultural periodical and lasted until 1868. Furthermore, Hovey was active in the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and served as its president from 1863 to 1866. In 1886 Thomas Meehan as editor of *Gardeners’ Monthly* wrote that “horticulture on this continent is probably more indebted to [Hovey] than to any living man,” referring to the period of 1830-1860. That assessment still seems valid today.

Prior to issuing his rose catalogue in 1845, Hovey had made a trip to France to procure roses not yet on the English or American

market. The catalogue contains an astounding 790 rose varieties. Indeed, along with two or three other nurseries, Hovey became a major supplier of roses and other plants to California pioneers before, during, and after the Gold Rush. For example, plantsman Joseph Aram, Commodore Stockton, and nurseryman Bernard Fox, all early California settlers, obtained their plants from him.

By contrast, Ellwanger & Barry of the Mt. Hope Nurseries in Rochester, New York, an enterprise that was to become one of the largest nurseries in the world by the 1870s, offered in their 1845-46 catalogue a selection of only 196 different roses. Charles Walker of San Francisco, who established his nursery there in 1849, the second such in the state, ordered some of his roses from Ellwanger & Barry.

Also by contrast to Hovey, Colonel James L. L. Warren's Boston nursery catalogue of 1845 listed only 207 rose varieties, many of which he seems to have carted with him when he emigrated to California in 1850. At any rate, any rose that Warren and Ellwanger & Barry offered, Hovey did also, and considerably more.

These catalogues may inform us of which roses customers were buying. They seem to suggest also which classes of roses were favored.



Or do they?

Even were we to omit the fifty variegated, striped, spotted, and marbled Gallica roses (such as 'Camaieux' and 'Lycoris'), Hovey offered another 125 varieties of that French rose type alone. William Robert Prince of New York had on sale 89 Gallicas, Ellwanger & Barry offered only nine, and Warren offered none! This enormous difference may be the result of Hovey's visit to France where, it appears, the Gallica reigned still supreme, roses such as 'Duchesse de Buccleugh', 'Tuscany Superb', and those now considered Hybrid Gallicas like 'Belle de Crecy', 'Alain Blanchard', 'Anais Segalas', and 'Eulalie Lebrun'. The difference may also reflect the tastes of the nurserymen.

Of course Hovey included all the other classes of old roses: Albas such as 'Felicite Parmentier' and 'Queen of Denmark'; Damasks such as 'Duke de Cambridge', 'Mme Hardy', and 'Leda'; and the merging Hybrid Chinas such as 'Brennus', 'Mme Plantier' and 'Fulgens', Mosses such as 'De Condolle' and 'Princesse Adelaide' (a new rose that year), not to mention Bourbons,



Brennus



Noisettes, two Lawrenceanas and so on.

On the other hand, if we read Philadelphiaian Robert Buist's *The Rose Manual* of 1844, we discern his enthusiasm for Gallica roses, expending as he does over ten pages on them. Similarly, Englishman Thomas Rivers in his third edition (1843) of *The Rose Amateur's Guide* waxes enthusiastic, devoting over thirteen pages to the Gallica. A

man of the season, he, however, in his fifth edition (1854) asserts of the Gallicas, "Only a few of these roses are now worth retaining," convincing himself that most of them were by then "or ought to be, obsolete." Pity. One does detect some rivalry in that statement, now that the English were gradually taking over the French in rose breeding.

My implication here is that, in the 1840s, Gallicas continued to be quite popular, not only in France but also in areas of England and the United States. Yet too often we are led to believe by contemporary writers on roses today that the Gallicas had nearly faded from memory by the 1830s, limping along in the shadows of Chinas, Hybrid Chinas, Bourbons, and Noisettes. Clearly that was not the situation. The 1840s were the transition years for the antique, once-blooming roses while the Bourbons, Teas, and Hybrid Perpetuals were gradually gaining in popularity. Even then, Hybrid Gallicas still proliferated. In fact, 125 years later in 1971, a British writer in *The Rose Annual* declared, "Gallica roses have a future; they do not survive on recollections of vanished popularity but are currently being used by discriminating hybridists." And so, to a small extent, they were. And are.



De Condolle

FROM A READER

I wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed the article on Harry Tevis in the *Rose Letter*. I've been to that property many times, and the [San Jose] Heritage [Garden] has several roses that grew there. My friend Tamara Cermak-Johnson propagated most of what was still there in the 90s. I haven't looked around there since the drought began, but there probably aren't as many roses as there were before it.

I haven't seen any of the roses you listed except 'American Pillar', which David Giroux found along Bear Creek Rd higher up than the area I've explored. Across the road from the large pond is 'Felicite Perpetue', and along the road on the near side are a row of eglantine hybrids. A few other eglantines grow nearby, but I think they were bird drop seedlings. 'Danae' used to grow there, near the pond, but it's long gone, except for Tamara's plant. I have a rose I used to think was 'Debutante', and it's also on the Santa Clara Univ. fence, but the I.D.



Felicite Perpetue



Danae



Rambling Rector

is wrong. It's some 'Dorothy Perkins' type, but lighter and a bit smaller. It was growing near the back of the remains of the mansion, but it got too shady there.

Amongst the trees alongside the lake there's a 'Rambling Rector', and another climbing single white multiflora. There used to also be what I think was 'Blush Noisette', but it was lost to some cleanup efforts by Mid-Peninsula Open Space District. Near it was a 'Quatre Saisons Blanc Mousseux', partly reverted to 'Autumn Damask'. Tamara got poison oak collecting cuttings from them, but considers it worth it for the plants she got. The 'Reve d'Or' was growing in more and more shade as the trees along the road got bigger, and the rose kept getting smaller. I took a long piece of the only cane it had left, and we have a big row-end climber from it in San Jose. Every time I see it in bloom (most of the time), I imagine it's thanking me. There used to be a 'Silver Moon' on Hwy 17 near Alma College Rd, but it's long gone. There may still be one other multiflora rambler along the road. It was climbing the trees that were shading the 'Reve d'Or'. We've seen other short rose stems on the property— possibly rootstocks, but never managed to propagate them to find out, and I'm pretty sure they haven't survived. Tamara has at least one other rose we never identified, and I also remember finding a hybrid tea with Rose Mosaic Virus that we never tried to collect.

Somewhere, I may still have the slideshow for a talk I gave to South Bay HRG around maybe 2003. I can send it to you if I find it. It has maps showing the San Andreas fault through the property, and some old photos. Have you read Marlea's article in the Garden History Soc. newsletter from years ago? I have a copy.

Jill Perry, Santa Cruz, CA



CORRECTION

In our last issue I, the Editor, made a grievous error in the article "The Story of Harry Tevis." I had assumed that Countess (Eila Haggin) Festetics was the same person as Countess (Mary Victoria Douglas) Festetics. But the former was known as Countess Festetics de Tolna, and the latter Countess Festetics-Hamilton who had married Count Tassilo Festetics de Tolna. Both countesses were, then, wed to a Count Festetics de Tolna, but they were not the same man. Mary Victoria (1850-1922) added her maiden name Hamilton no doubt partly to prevent the very confusion that befuddled me. My apologies.

PHOTO & ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

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Page 27	top, D. Schramm; middle, Bill Grant; bottom, Karl King
Page 28	top, Karl King; bottom, D. Schramm
Back cover	"La Rose" by Jamain & Fornay 1873

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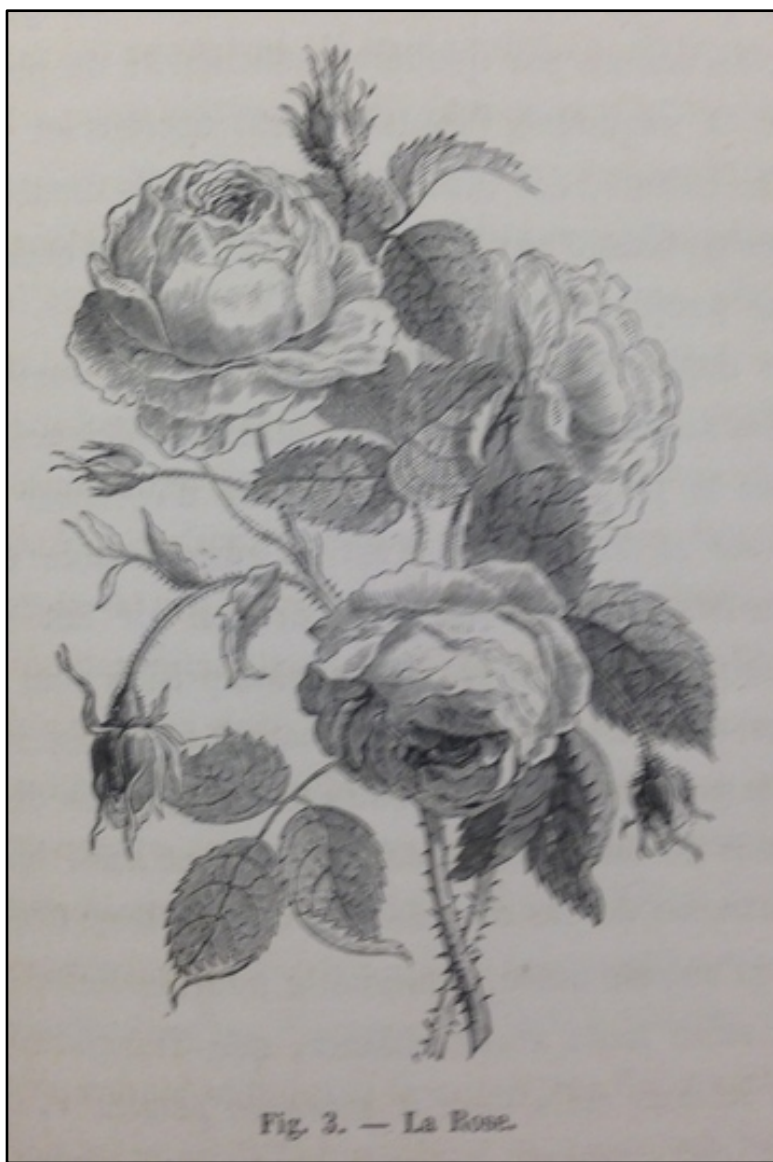


Fig. 3. — La Rose.