

ROSE LETTER



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ROSE LETTER

OF

The Heritage Roses Groups

©

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AMERICA'S MID-19TH CENTURY ROSE BREEDERS

Darrell g.h. Schramm

Much has been written about some of America's earliest rose breeders during the first half of the 19th century—John Champneys, Philippe Noisette, Sam Feast—and rather less about John Fraser, Caroline Herbemount, Joshua Pierce, and Daniel Boll (see my article “America's First Rose Breeders”). But even less has been written about those who began introducing new roses in the 1850s and continued to do so for the next ten to thirty years.

Perhaps the reason is that so very few roses from that period are still in commerce—a mere three. But that meager survival does not lessen the efforts of those early breeders. Many a later rose may not have been born were it not for these intrepid breeders.

Andrew Gray was one of those. He had first worked for the rose breeder and famous rose author Robert Buist in Philadelphia but soon moved to Charleston, S.C., where he became the gardener of Governor Thomas Bennett. He also opened his own business, Commercial Gardens, where he raised a yellow seedling from ‘Cloth of Gold’ (also called ‘Chromatella’) in 1853, a tea rose which



Isabella Gray

he introduced the following year, naming it for his oldest daughter Isabella Gray. That rose was to remain popular for at least thirty years. In fact, William Paul, the renowned English breeder, called it the yellowest rose in commerce. Gray also introduced ‘Jane Hardy’, named for his wife, also a yellow tea, but it neither opened nor bloomed well. In 1858 he came out with the tea rose ‘Ophelia’. These roses have long since vanished.

James Pentland (1820-1902) of Baltimore, an immigrant from Ireland, worked first as a gardener at Green Mount Cemetery, then, after several years, opened a nursery across the road, selling grapes, bedding plants, cut flowers, and roses. His first rose was

‘Beauty of Greenmount’ in 1854, a hybrid setigera. Today, a found rose under the study name of “Green Mount Red,” growing in that cemetery, as well as another on the grave of George F. Harison of ‘Harison’s Yellow,’ is speculated to be the same rose. Pentland also produced two noisettes, ‘Dr. Kane’ in 1856, and ‘Woodland Marguerite’ in 1859, and also the bourbon ‘George Peabody’ in 1857, a purple-crimson flower still popular until World War I. Unfortunately none of Pentland’s roses survive. Or is someone still growing ‘George Peabody’?



American Beauty



The man who produced the most roses of this thirty-year period was Anthony Cook, also of Baltimore. Of fifteen roses, four were teas (‘Cornelia Cook’, ‘Desantres’, ‘Paradine’, and ‘Caroline Cook’); six, according to Henry Ellwanger, were hybrid *damascena*, that is Portlands (‘Souvenir de President Lincoln’, ‘Rosalina’, ‘Il Defense’, ‘Contina’, ‘Charles Cook’, and ‘La Brillante’); three were bourbons or hybrid bourbons (‘Renno’, ‘Charles Getz’, and ‘Oplitz’); and two were noisettes (‘Tusennellea’ and ‘Nasalina’). A sixteenth rose seems the only survivor. That rose in his nursery attracted the daughter of the historian George Bancroft (said to have the most beautiful garden in America at that time) who bought it and planted it in her father’s garden in Washington, D.C. There a florist, Mr. Field, saw the rose and propagated many plants from it, naming it ‘American Beauty’. That, at any rate, is the story as told by rosarian and writer Georgia Torrey Drennan, who claimed in her book that “Mr. Cook is very positive that it is one of nine hundred seedlings that he raised.” However, records are scant. The rose is also claimed to have been bred in France by Henri Ledechaux, who in 1875 named it ‘Mme Ferdinand Jamin’ and that an English rose supplier sent it to Bancroft in the States, where it was rechristened. Regardless, it is a poor garden specimen, rarely grown today but for the florist trade.

Professor Charles G. Page of Washington bred several roses in the 1850s and early 1860s. ‘Amarante’, ‘Buena Vista’, ‘Bunker Hill’, ‘Edward Evereth’, ‘ and ‘Star of the West’ were all bourbons; ‘Mr. Vernon’ was a china, and ‘Dr. Franklin’, ‘Dr. Kane’ (echoing Pentland’s rose), ‘General Oliver’, and ‘General Washington’ were hybrid perpetuals. That latter, a rose of 1855, should not be confused with Granger’s ‘General Washington’ of 1860 or 61, a rose still available today. Page also developed two noisettes, ‘America’ and ‘Cinderella’, both of 1859. **‘Cinderella’** still graces a few nurseries and gardens today. (It should not be confused with the modern miniature of that name nor the hybrid wichurana of 1909 by Walsh.) ‘Cinderella’ is a very full flower, floriferous, white but softly tinted with pale carmine, quartered and quite fragrant. The plant blooms repeatedly and grows eight to ten feet tall, doing well as both a climber and a pillar rose. These earmark descriptions suggest why this 150 year old rose is worth growing and keeping.

The Reverend James M. Sprunt of Kenansville, North Carolina, raised two—though some would say three—roses. ‘James Sprunt’, a climbing china of 1856 was still sold 90 years later but seems to have disappeared. Far more successful and still sold is the 1855 tea rose **‘Isabella Sprunt’**, named for one of his daughters. He had discovered it as a sport of ‘Safrano’. In 1860 Sprunt sent cuttings to Isaac Buchanan of New York for cultivation. Initially the rose was mistakenly advertised as ‘Catherine Sprunt’, an error corrected after the Civil War. (One gets the sense that the rose was advertised but put on hold until war’s end.) Thereafter, only Buchanan and Robert Buist had authority to sell the rose. The original plant was still alive in 1880, 24 years later, clearly a hardy and healthy plant. Today in 2013 the rose is offered by ten rose nurseries, seven of them in the USA.

‘Isabella Sprunt’ shows off icy lemon blooms, darker in the center, creamy lemon on the outer petals. Except during heat waves, it is rarely



Isabella Sprunt

without flowers. What is especially noteworthy are its winter blossoms, for it is an ardent, prolific, and fragrant grower in mild winter months. While this tea rose has many descendents, ‘Marechal Niel’, a first generation offspring, is her most famous child.

Another rose, the china ‘Le Vesuve’ was named in the American Rose Society annuals of 1916, 1918, and 1922 as bred by Sprunt. However, no original source of the 19th century that I have read confirms this. The first source to attribute ‘Le Vesuve’ to Sprunt (rather than to Laffay in 1825) was Rose Georgina Kingsley in her 1908 book *Roses*

This attribution an error on her repeated for the without any

Like china/bourbon graces mild flowers. While the Sprunt rose, three to five against my 2012. And like ‘Setina’ is a sport of the old which Luther repeatedly to roses. Florist New Jersey 1859 and years later.. (In a dwarf sport, known named ‘Little ‘Setina’s’



Setina

a lilac pink, with petals that scroll back at the edges.

‘Cinderella’, ‘Isabella Sprunt’, ‘Setina’—the Three Graces, as the survivors of a long ago, early American period, still dance to a roundelay of springtime in some of our gardens. For their endurance, their testimonial, their quiet beauty, we offer one or two or all three a haven, a defense, a keep.

and *Rose Growing*.

seems to have been part, unfortunately next two decades evidence.

‘Isabella Sprunt’, the climber **‘Setina’** too winters with its not as productive as it was never without open blooms house in December ‘Isabella Sprunt’, sport, a climbing rose ‘Hermosa’, Burbank used breed most of his Peter Henderson of discovered it in introduced it twenty 1879 he was to find America’s first polyantha, which he White Pet’.)

scented flowers are

The Heritage Roses Group is a non-profit association founded in 1975.



THE ISHAM ROSE

Laura King

Five generations of Isham descendants have handed down their family rose since the first planting in Oregon soil. James Jefferson Isham, his wife Clarissa Wynn, and their five children left Cass County, Illinois, in 1852. In Missouri they joined a wagon train and the westward migration on the Oregon Trail. Their eldest daughter, Mary Ann, died and was buried along the way. It is told that the family brought several favorite roses with them. Upon reaching Oregon, the family first settled in Champoeg on the French Prairie of the Willamette Valley and planted their roses. A few years later they owned and operated a farm and ferry landing on the West side of the Willamette River in Wheatland. It was known as Isham Landing, and they planted their roses again.

Their son, William Uriah, was only two years old when he crossed the plains in the covered wagon. After he married Mary Fowler, they planted the fragrant pink rose on their farm in the Labish Center area of the French Prairie. William Uriah and Mary's

son Allen was born in 1876. When Allen married Almira LaFlemme, he took a few cuttings of the rose and planted them beside their new home so he and Almira could enjoy the rose's fragrance when the windows were open. After Allen passed away, his son Red cut four starts of the family's beloved rose and planted one on each corner of the Isham plot in Hopewell Cemetery. Only one of the original four Isham family roses now survives at the Hopewell Cemetery. It has been suggested that perhaps this mystery rose is a Bourbon or a Bourbon hybrid because of the "shape of the closed buds and their sepals, the relatively smooth canes with some prickles, the shape of the leaves, the slightly nodding flower, and the translucence of the color." It is hopeful that another generation of Isham descendants will follow the footsteps of Dorene Isham Standish and carry on the tradition of tending the rose. To share this remarkable story and continue the legacy, the rose will be planted in the French Prairie Heritage Rose Garden in Brooks, Oregon. We hope to persuade Hopewell Cemetery to allow replanting of the three missing Isham Roses.

Laura King is an active member of the Northwest Rose Historians and serves on the Board of Friends of Lone Fir Cemetery. She lives in Portland, Oregon. For more information, contact her at reef@teleport.com.

'GREAT MAIDEN'S BLUSH'

Our Cover

Called *Rosa alba regalis* by the painter, 'Great Maiden's Blush' is one of the many flowers painted by Redoute in his *Les Roses*, which was published in 1817 to 1824. Also de Nymphe', its mystery, but it was Turner in 1557. Kew 1797. Strongly and rose is cupped and pink but even lighter the edges may fade, remains. Borne on with few prickles, the clusters of usually plant proves itself hardy, adaptable, shade tolerant, and tough. Its height reaches from three to five feet. It remains an old favorite.



installments from referred to as 'Cuisse origins remain a first mentioned by Gardens acquired it in sweetly scented, the quite double, pale at the edges. Though the blush in the center sturdy, long stems flowers grow in small three to five. The

OLD ROSES IN EUGENE

Angelique Laskowski

Two spots worth visiting if you are in the Eugene, Oregon area are the ten-acre Eugene Masonic Cemetery and the Owen Memorial Rose Garden.

The Masonic Cemetery roses are in a natural, forested setting—the cemetery gardeners mow only on a limited basis. The cemetery is on a hill with paths crisscrossing throughout it. I took my dog, and we had a very pleasant walk looking at both the old (and some modern) roses—such as the ‘Common Moss’, ‘Mme Caroline Testout’ ‘Perle d’Or’, ‘Tuscany Superb’, ‘Alba Semi-Plena’—and the historic gravestones. Many of the roses are unidentified, but the Northwest Rose Historians group (www.nwrosehistorians.com) is attempting to research and identify as many of the roses as possible. The cemetery’s website is www.eugenemasoniccemetery.com.

The Owen Memorial Rose Garden is a more formal setting with most of the garden set aside for modern roses. However, there is a large area of old roses, including a hedge of ‘Perpetual White Damask Moss’ roses that are sporting back to ‘Autumn Damask’. The air is highly scented when the roses are in bloom (mid-June would probably be an ideal time to visit), and there are paths through the roses with a scattering of benches to sit and enjoy the garden. A website with directions and a description and some pictures of the garden can be found at www.discovereugene.com/things-to-do/eugene-city-parks/owen-rose-garden/. The city of Eugene also has a website with a webcam of the garden at www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=629.



TUSCANY SUPERB



BIOGRAPHY OF AN ORPHAN ROSE: 'FANTIN-LATOURE'

Darrell g.h. Schramm

It's a glorious rose, a fragrant rose, a rose out of a mysterious past, an orphan rose. 'Fantin-Latour' is a powder pink flower, large and full, on a bush of few prickles, about five feet high. It can climb higher, in which case, given its heavy blooms, it will probably need support. Initially the flowers are cupped much like many of David Austin's roses, the looser outer petals usually paler than the inner ones. A button eye reveals itself as the petals open further. The plant is not averse to hot, dry summers; once-blooming, it puts on its show for a long month.

'Fantin-Latour' is a mystery rose. Neither its breeder nor its date of origin are known, making it an orphan arrived from the mists of the past. Nor do we know with certainty its class: most rosarians consider it a centifolia, though likely not a pure one.

Precisely what do we know of this rose? Very little precisely. Graham Stuart Thomas re-introduced—but did not name—the rose in 1945. According to his 1992 article "Rose Nomenclature," he had received it from a Mrs. Ruby Fleischmann who dubbed it 'Fantin-Latour' because it called to mind roses in that artist's paintings. Mrs. Fleischmann had been given the rose by Mrs. Messel of Nymans, an

English garden in West Sussex owned by three generations of Messels, now under the supervision of the National Trust.

The rose, however, had been in some, perhaps limited, circulation before 1945. Connoisseur and author Edward Bunyard had listed a rose by that name in his 1938-39 catalogue. Furthermore, in the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) ledger for September 1939, an entry indicates that Colonel (Sir Frederick) Stern dispatched cuttings of 'Fantin-Latour' from Highdown in West Sussex to the RHS garden at Wisley. Clearly, a rose by that name was in existence in southern England prior to World War II.

To complicate matters, a possibility exists that 'Fantin-Latour' became confused or conflated with another rose in Bunyard's possession, one he described as equally "new" but merely called 'Best Garden Rose'. Still another puzzlement is Bunyard's classification of both 'Fantin-Latour' and 'Best Garden Rose' as hybrid perpetuals. Hybrid perpetuals had long lost their popularity. If Bunyard was correct, could the two roses have been seedlings of hybrid perpetuals? Yet today 'Fantin-Latour' is most often classified as a centifolia but sometimes a bourbon hybrid.



Rose specialist Leonie Bell suggests the rose is a hundred years older. In 1980 she asserted her belief that the rose

masquerading under the name of ‘Fantin-Latour’ is actually ‘Celine’, a hybrid bourbon introduced (she wrote) about 1845 and for some time widely used as an understock. While her date is incorrect —‘Celine’ was introduced by Laffay in 1824—the rose still remains an orphan, for the parentage of ‘Celine’ remains likewise unknown. While I have many times seen the actual rose by the name of ‘Fantin-Latour’, I have seen only photos of ‘Celine’, and that of the bloom only, not the whole plant. On that scant basis alone, the two roses appear not to be the same; the blooms of ‘Celine’ show fewer petals, no button eye, and a different shade of pink. I will be the first, however, to concede that those facts are too few and probably inconstant to compare and identify the rose correctly.

Henri Fantin-Latour himself (1836-1904) is often categorized as a flower painter, but that is only partially true. In his homeland, the French knew him as a portrait painter—often of group portraits—especially of other famous artists of the day, such as Monet, Manet, Whistler, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud as well as many of himself. Because of his English agents, most of his 800 or so still lifes, mostly of roses and other flowers, sold inexpensively in the United Kingdom. Through the eyes of the English, then, he is seen as a flower painter. Americans seem to have followed British views. Whether his paintings were of flowers or of faces, through his delicate and luminous brushwork, Fantin-Latour helps us to see people and plants in another light, in a non-traditional way, broadening our own perspective.

Having endured several wars and political crises—the Crimean War, the Franco-Prussian War, the Commune of Paris, the assassination of a president—Fantin-Latour apparently became somewhat paranoid whenever he saw soldiers, to the extent that he would walk in another direction or cross the street when he saw a soldier approaching. His cottage in a village was no doubt a welcome retreat from Paris.

Fantin-Latour cultivated his own rose garden at his weekend cottage Croix Fantin in the village of Bure, Normandy. According to the photographer and writer of garden books, Derek Fell, in the late 1990s, the present occupants of the cottage told him of the painter’s last day there. Supposedly one late August day in 1904 while having lunch on the terrace Fantin-Latour began to feel ill and decided to stroll in the garden. There, not knowing he had lyme disease, he suddenly collapsed among the roses and died.

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John and Annie Bidwell

**The General And His Roses
(Annie's Too!)**

Julie A. Matlin

Located below the sunny, east-facing brick veranda of the Bidwell Mansion in Chico, nestled between a gnarled old wisteria arbor and the hydrangea and herb garden, is a small, colorful rose garden, located close enough to the sidewalk that it smiles and beckons to University students with its fragrance as they walk to their classes. This garden, a ten-year restoration of familial love, research, and acquisition, is home to a few of the marvelous roses that General John Bidwell (1819-1900) carried in his nursery at Rancho Chico Nursery between 1870 and 1892. The rose nursery would be run by Frederick Petersen (Grounds Manager) after Bidwell's death, and then eventually be phased out with the sale of the Rancho property after Annie Bidwell (1839-1918), John's wife, died.

The collection is not large but is a good representation of those rose classes that grow well in hot Chico summers (100 degrees and up) and thrive in its rich Vina loam. They are the roses that

contributed to Chico's nickname "The City of Roses."

John Bidwell's contributions to the early growth and development of California have been a source of more than one biography, and anyone who knows the history of Chico knows that the town of Chico, California State University Chico, and Bidwell Park (the land being a gift from John and Annie) are only a few of the legacies he left for its citizens, and for California.

Bidwell's personal growth from that of an untried twenty-two year old emigrant, on one of the first wagon trains (the Bidwell-Bartleson Party) into the wild, unknown west of Alta California, as it was called in 1841, to the greatly respected and honored "General John Bidwell," whose name was known from California to Washington, was a man who not only saw and lived the history of California, but helped create the history of California from 1841 until his death in 1900. Effort, determination, achievement, tolerance, and adaptation were a few of Bidwell's personal goals; his personal development was California's development, from wilderness to cultivated statehood.

Certainly, Bidwell's greatest tangible contribution to both Chico and California was his love of nature and the land. By the time gold was discovered in 1848, Bidwell had purchased and planted the fruit trees that would become the foundation stock for his Rancho Chico nursery. By 1869, the 22,000-acre ranch was a hub of local growing activity, its own little town, growing as many varieties of all things green as Bidwell could imagine, as well as processing what was grown. The ranch provided a living for at least half of Chico's residents. Chico's founder and patron had realized early on the huge agricultural and horticultural potential of the valley. He understood the creativity it took to develop a ranch that would become famous for its agricultural and horticultural diversity and innovation. As such, Bidwell constantly experimented with as many different types of plants as he could obtain. In this way, he was constantly improving Rancho Chico, and the ranch became the model for modern agriculture in the new state. He spearheaded northern Sacramento Valley's agricultural and horticultural potential through Rancho Chico. Bidwell helped establish county and state fairs so that California's new "industry" could be experienced first-hand and at its best.

Chrysanthemums may have been Annie Bidwell's (1839-1918) first love, and John Bidwell had the largest chrysanthemum-growing operation between Bakersfield and the Oregon border, but she also loved roses. Bidwell's love of roses and of many kinds of ornamentals was only enhanced when he wed Annie Kennedy in

1868. When Master Gardener Frederick G. Petersen came from Germany in 1890 to manage the mansion grounds, he would design and construct beautiful arrangements and unique placements of roses for Annie's private and public gatherings. Rose bouquets could be found placed throughout the mansion's rooms. Annie also had her rose garden, and because of Chico's long growing season, she could enjoy roses for most of the year.

John Bidwell understood the affection and importance for roses that many new residents to the young town of Chico held. With roses, they could beautify the land and create gardens; they would also have roses available for cemetery plantings. He was also a good nurseryman who brought in those varieties he knew would grow well in this soil and climate, as well as what was "popular" at the time. Many of his roses were purchased from Louis Prevost in San Jose. Bidwell carried an excellent selection of roses in his nursery, supplying Annie and many eager rose lovers from around the Chico area, with many choices for many years. His nursery catalog devoted six pages of glowing descriptions and uses for each rose: price, growth habits, fragrance, bloom cycle, disease resistance, and a page devoted to cultural practices for the customer. The catalog was a Victorian "green" dream for shopping for roses to beautify Chico's dusty and barren spaces.

'Devoniensis' ('Magnolia Rose,' Foster, 1838) is the rose my great-great "walked" to is this rose the Bidwell restoration. *Selected Roses* as part of his

*Descriptive
Rancho Chico
Bidwell
'Devoniensis'*



grandmother California. It that sparked garden Bidwell's was included larger, comprehensive *Catalogue of Nursery*, described as

'*Magnolia Rose*,' beautiful, creamy white, with rose centre, full and double, deliciously fragrant, one of the best. It is listed with "Everblooming Roses." Some other popular ever-blooming roses were 'Apolline' (Verdier 1848), 'Bon Silene' (Hardy 1835), 'La Sylphide' (Boyeau 1842), 'The Bride' (May 1885), 'Niphetos' (Bougere 1841), 'Comtesse Riza Du Parc' (Schwartz 1876), 'Mme Lambard' (Lacharme 1877), 'Mme Caroline Kuster' (Pernet

1872), 'Mme Margottin' (Giullot et Fils 1866), 'Perle Des Jardins' (Levet 1874), 'Safrano' (Beauregard 1839), and 'Triomphe Du Luxembourg' (Hardy/Sylvain-Pean 1835). Tea roses were, and are, still considered the “Roses of California” and this list goes on. Bidwell was very aware of their robustness as well as their beauty. Teas had top-billing in Bidwell's catalog.



La Reine

**Souvenir de la
Malmaison**

Agrippina

The “Victorian Rage,” the Hybrid Perpetuals, had their own heading. They were well represented by the cultivars ‘General Jacqueminot’ (Roussel/Rousselet 1853); ‘Geant Des Batailles’ (Nerard/Guillot Pere 1846); ‘Lord Raglan’ (Guillot Pere 1853); ‘Empress of India’ (Laxton/G. Paul 1876); ‘Auguste Mie’ (Laffay 1851); ‘Abel Carriere’ (E. Verdier 1875); and, a huge favorite in this area, ‘La Reine’ (Laffay 1844). The Chinas included ‘Agrippina’, a synonym for ‘Cramoisi Superieur’ (Coquereau/Audiot/Vibert 1835), and is never out of



bloom here.

No Victorian rose collection or restoration would be complete without the indomitable Hybrid Tea 'La France' (Guillot et Fils 1867) of which so much has been written. Chico gardeners loved 'La France', and it was always requested at Bidwell's Nursery. Whether it is the first Hybrid Tea is debatable, but it certainly is the prototype of the class. Now after a few years, as the rose gets older, it is almost disease-free in this organic garden, and is a real beauty. It receives lots of compliments.

'Hermosa' (Marcheseau/Rousseau 1834) and 'Souvenir De La Malmaison' (Beluze 1843) were both well-known, loved, and sought-after Bourbon roses when Bidwell carried them at his nursery; 'Hermosa', for its multitude of bright pink, nicely shaped flowers, never out of bloom; and 'Souvenir' for its intense, spicy fragrance, beautifully shaped roses, and compact form. I am eager to determine if the newly acquired 'Apolline' will turn out to be a Bourbon or a Hybrid Tea, as some rosarians believe. However, Bidwell included an excellent description of this rose under his "everblooming roses," so we will see who is who!

'Mme Plantier' (Plantier 1835), a Hybrid Noisette: "a good spring rose and suitable for cemetery planting, white;" and 'William Jesse' (Laffay 1838), a Hybrid Bourbon, a rose now in question, bloom once here in the season, but are gorgeous when they do, and are always admired. The lovely Noisette, 'Aimee Vibert' (Vibert 1828), is certainly one of Vibert's finest creations, and scrambles along the brick veranda, in bloom all season, spring through fall, delicately scenting the air.

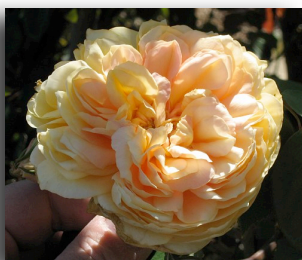


Comtesse de Murinais

The Moss Roses have their own page. Bidwell knew the value of offering roses that were somewhat unusual, and the mosses were. The Victorians loved them for the pungent scents to be found in the flower's sepals and receptacles. 'Comtesse De Murinais' (Vibert 1843): "elegantly mossed; very fine;" 'Etna' (Vibert 1845): "delightfully fragrant;" 'Gloire Des Mousseux' (Laffay 1852): "a magnificent moss rose; one of the very best;" 'James Veitch' (E. Verrier 1846): "one of the most constant moss roses ever introduced;" 'Raphael' (Robert 1856): "beautiful buds;" 'White Bath' (Salter 1817): "very beautiful, free blooming, very mossy;" and 'White Moss Rose' (Shailer, 1788): "one of the most mossy varieties."

Four Polyanthas that were very popular with Chico rose growers were 'Mignonette' (Guillot et Fils 1880), 'Pacquerette' (Guillot 1875), the exquisite 'Perle D' Or' (Rambaux, 1884), and what would become the classic "Sweetheart Rose," 'Mlle Cecile Brunner' (Ducher/Vve. 1881).

A few roses such as 'William Jesse', 'Pacquerette', 'Mignonette', 'Apolline', and 'Comtesse Riza Du Parc' need to be studied further. The answers for positive identifications are out there, and the research, although complex, is stimulating to the end, one aspect of old garden rose restoration that is so rewarding.



Chromatella

'Devoniensis' may have sparked the restoration of the garden, but the China Climber 'Fortune's Double Yellow' (Fortune 1845) is its cornerstone rose. This venerable rose, known by several other names, was carried to California by several different routes. It could be found growing in huge form on the Mansion grounds, as well as along Chico's main thoroughfare, The Esplanade. It was a true pioneer rose, spectacular in bloom, and was one of Annie's favorites. Today, one of those original 'Fortune's Double Yellow' holds court in the garden.

Some of Bidwell's other climbers that could be purchased are today's "classics:" 'Queen of the Prairies' (Feast 1843); 'Baltimore Belle' (Feast 1843); 'Solfaterre' (Boyau 1843); 'Chromatella' (Coquereau/Vibert 1843); and 'Lamarque' (Marechal 1830).

A number of roses from the collection are considered extinct, or there is no source for them at present. That does not mean there are not some survivors growing in our area. The search and research of this collection is always ongoing: 'Aline Sisley' (Guillot et Fils 1874); 'Maria Guillot'; 'Mme Villance' (Villeran pre-1848); 'Souvenir De Mme Pernet', which I believe is actually 'Mme Pernet-Ducher' (Pernet-Ducher 1891), because the old descriptions match; Henri Lecoq (1871); 'Abel Carriere'; 'Archduchesse Isabella', which is possibly 'Archiduchesse There-Isabele' (Barbot 1834); and the polyantha 'Little Gem' (Alderton 1892).

Whether Bidwell developed his love of roses as young person is not recorded. However, he surely understood the value and love that people held for this special flower.

Bidwell's hope of seeing Chico develop as a gardening community, enhanced by excellent soil, a long growing season, and by offering roses at reasonable prices, a rose for every garden so to speak, met fruition when the official city seal featured "a bunch of roses in various stages of bloom and above the engraving "City of Roses." An excellent achievement for a town barely twenty-three years old.

The preservation and conservation of the old garden roses, like Bidwell's, is crucial if nothing more than from a historical perspective. Further, the rose also represents a living symbol of ideals that every generation strives for: love, friendship, and peace. However, the ultimate standard by which the rose is judged is a standard not original to any generation since the rose was first cultivated by man, that standard being beauty. Bidwell was aware of this when he determined that Chico would be known as the "City of Roses." It is certainly one reason why my great-great grandmother so carefully tended her cutting of 'Devoniensis' when she walked to California. I like to think that the General and Annie still enjoy their garden of roses every day.

Julie Matlin is a Master Consulting Rosarian for Butte Rose Society, the archivist for Bidwell's roses, and co-convener for Bidwell Heritage Rose Group.

We look upon a study of the old roses of our neighborhood, and the scattering additions from all over the country, as merely a wicket gate into the ancient ancestral estate of a queen whose reign has no ending.

--Ethelyn Emery Keays, 1934



Jean Bach Sisley

The Woman Mistaken for her Grandfather

Darrell g.h. Schramm

A fairly uncommon rose, though sold by a dozen U.S. nurseries, should be much better known, if only because it is one of the loveliest of chinas. The rose is 'Jean Bach Sisley'. For a long time it seemed to have vanished, since it was not mentioned in *Modern Roses* until the ninth edition. In 1989 only The Antique Rose Emporium in Texas and Heritage Rose Gardens in Fort Bragg, CA, owned by sisters Virginia Hopper and Joyce Demits—now closed—carried it. We are fortunate to have this rose among us still.

'Jean Bach Sisley' is dressed in an almost diaphanous silvery pink with a darker pink center for accent; sometimes the outer petals are salmon-colored or pale carmine, often veined. The flowers are quite double, quite fragrant (unusual for a china), and exhibit flowers solitary or three to a stem. It produces young leaves of purple, aging to green. The shrub is graceful, symmetrical, and reaches four or five feet high. Surely, it is one of the best chinas.

The year of its introduction appears debatable, but quite likely it was 1898. After *Modern Roses 10* changed the year from 1899 to 1889, virtually every publication thereafter followed suit. Perhaps the American Rose Society based its change on the book *Les Roses Cultivées à L'Hay in 1902*; however, I suspect L'Hay made a typographical error, the eight and nine easily transposed on a keyboard. An 1898 issue of *Lyon Horticole* gives the date of the rose as 1898—and Dubreuil, the breeder, lived and worked in Lyon. Surely, if incorrect, the error would have been remedied. *Journal des Roses* followed with a statement that the rose was released on November 1, 1898. These two much respected journals were much closer to the source than those that came after. I believe 1898 to be the correct date. Brent Dickerson in *The Old Rose Advisor* agrees.

Oh, such quibbles, the reader might mutter. Perhaps. But to historians these facts matter. Historians attempt to bring order in a world resigned to chaos.

More serious is the mistake that the rose was named for the Lyon horticulturist Jean Sisley, one of the founders of the Lyon Horticulture Association. His son, according to Graham Thomas, sent him the seeds of the wild *Rosa multiflora* from Japan, which Guillot was to use to procure the first polyantha roses, 'Pacquerette' and 'Mignonette'. But the rose was not named for him. Even the iconoclast Norman Young got it wrong. In his book *The Complete Rosarian* he twice mentions Jean Sisley in his text, but in his index he lists him as Jean Bach Sisley. *Jean Bach Sisley was not a he!*

Jean Bach Sisley (1864-1949) was the pen name of Jeanne Louise Marie Sisley. A poet, a novelist, a non-fiction writer, and the founder and host of the Lyon Poets Salon, she was well known in Lyon and throughout France. She edited an anthology of Lyon poets; she wrote numerous books (*Roman Evenings*, *Joseph Serre*, *The Vigil*, *Voyages*, *Tony Tollet*, *Artists and Poets*, *The Evolution of Song* are just a few); she even co-authored several volumes, including one with the composer Claude Debussy, *et al.*, entitled *On French Music*. Clearly, she was renowned enough to be honored with a rose named for her.

We have merely to study the family tree to realize the rose truly was named for her. No other family member in the genealogy includes the name Bach. In fact, the online genealogy even includes her nom de plume. Jean Bach Sisley was the daughter of Jean Jules Gabriel Sisley (1838-1908), a Lyon tradesman, and of a mother who was a professor of piano. Her father was the son of Jean *François Henri* Sisley (1804-1891), the horticulturist. Perhaps she took the male name (Jean rather than Jeanne) to honor her grandfather. Perhaps she

took it because many women writers of the 19th century assumed a male pen name. But honor to whom honor is due. Madame Jean Bach Sisley has for years—at least in America—been mistaken for her grandfather. The rose was named for a woman.



Jean Bach Sisley

IN MEMORIAM

As most of you know, the great Peter Beales died on January 26, shortly after we'd gone to press with our last issue. In that august company, we also remember **Jean Lewis** who died on February 17th of this year. Jean, a longtime member of the Heritage Rose Foundation was the research editor for the international rose journal *Rosa Mundi* from its beginning to the winter 2012 issue. On the evening of her death at the Zen Hospice in San Francisco, a memorial washing ceremony was held in her honor. Participants then took turns covering her body with rose petals. A remembrance service was held on February 24 at the Redwood Chapel of Oakmont Memorial Park in Lafayette.

LETTER FROM GREGG LOWERY

Dear Friends, Customers and Supporters of Vintage Gardens,

A rosy outlook is what I wish for you all during these hard times; and it is what I hope you will try to maintain as I share with you that Vintage Gardens will close its doors to new orders on June 30th, 2013. We have tried to prepare our customers for this announcement over the past two years. I know that with the demise of so many rose nurseries recently, our closing will mean a very significant loss of resources to lovers of old roses, but we cannot continue operating the nursery at a loss.

This is it, then, the final months of Vintage Gardens. Our time table is focused on selling off the large number of roses we propagated in 2012, on shipping spring orders, and on propagating remaining custom orders to ship in the fall of this year.

We will

- NO LONGER ACCEPT CUSTOM ROOT ORDERS FOR ROSES NOT IN STOCK.
- Continue accepting orders through June, and shipping them.
- Ship our spring season orders through June.
- Close our office on June 30th.
- Prepare all outstanding custom orders propagated in May and June for shipping starting in September.
- Ship our delayed French Import roses beginning in September.
- Ship a small number of orders to cold climates in the Spring of 2014.
- Close our website on December 31st, 2013.

As I face the end of an effort that has engaged me for 30 years, I look ahead now to all that must still be done in the name of the rose. Central to my rosy outlook has been the efforts of a group of old rose lovers who have created a non-profit organization to preserve the collection of roses that I developed with Phillip Robinson beginning in the late 1970s. The Friends of Vintage Roses, assisted by the Heritage Rose Foundation, has begun the work of stabilizing and restoring a collection of old and rare roses that once numbered over 5000 varieties.

This organization will complete its application to the IRS for tax-exempt status this month. Donations raised by the Heritage Rose Foundation have already benefited the rose collection, including the restoration of more than a thousand lost and nearly varieties.

The years ahead will keep me busy helping the efforts of The Friends of Vintage Roses to preserve and provide public access to the roses. And my commitment to the Heritage Rose Foundation will continue to demand much from me as well. We have set for ourselves the challenging goal of meeting all of our promises to supply roses to our customers, and to retire our business in good standing with our customers and suppliers. We will need your good will, your good words, and your assistance in order to do this.

I thank you all for your understanding, your support of Vintage Gardens' efforts to keep so many rare old roses in commerce, and for being rose gardeners; the best sort of people I know!

-Gregg Lowery

PHOTO CREDITS

Page 2: 'Isabella Gray'	<i>Illustration Horticole</i> , 1859, plate 212
Page 3: 'American Beauty'	Bill Grant
Page 4: 'Isabella Sprunt'	Margaret Furness
Page 5: 'Setina'	Darrell Schramm
Page 6: "Isham Rose"	Laura King
Page 8: 'Tuscany Superb'	Darrell Schramm
Page 9: 'Fantin-Latour' bush	Bill Grant
Page 10: 'Fantin-Latour'	Bill Grant
Page 12: Bidwell photos	Public Domaine
Page 14: 'Devoniensis'	Bill Grant
Page 15: 'La Reine'	A. Barra
Page 15: 'Souvenir de la Malmaison' . .	Darrell Schramm
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Page 16: 'Comtesse de Murinais' . . .	Karl King
Page 17: 'Chromatella'	Karl King
Page 19: 'Jean Bach Sisley'	Karl King
Page 21 'Jean Bach Sisley'	Bill Grant
Page 24 'Jaune Desprez'	Jeri Jennings
Page 25 'Sophie's Perpetual'	Darrell Schramm

Front Cover & page 7: *Rosa alba regalis*--'Great Maiden's Blush' . . .
Pierre-Joseph Redoute

Back Cover: 'Comtesse de Murinais' . . .Bill Grant



'Jaune Desprez'

Old Garden Roses On Facebook

Do you use Facebook to keep up with friends, trends, and family? If you're there, stop by and visit the Heritage Roses Group, for photos and discussion about old, rare, and unusual roses.

To drop in, search for **HERITAGE ROSES GROUP**. *“Like”* us, and you'll see the new things posted there by HRG friends and members – in the U.S., and around the world.

While you're at it, do another search for **GOLD COAST HERITAGE ROSES GROUP**. *“Like”* and follow the traffic on this site, maintained by a Southern California Local HRG group. *“Like”* us, and join the action.

THE UNSETTLED CASE OF ‘SOPHIE’S PERPETUAL’

Darrell g.h. Schramm

In 1960 Englishman and rose lover Humphrey Brooke apparently discovered the rose ‘Sophie’s Perpetual’ at his place, Lime Kiln, in Claydon, Suffolk, England. Six years earlier he had acquired the property from his father-in-law. One wonders why it took him so long to find the rose—or rather, the roses. Perhaps he belatedly took actual possession of the property or had delayed work on the garden. The latter seems likely, given one source that states Brooke began to cultivate roses at Lime Kiln after he had been forced to resign—apparently for his bipolar disorder—from the Royal Academy in 1968.



Brooke had married Nathalie Benckendorf, the granddaughter of Countess Sophie Benckendorf (1855-1928). The Countess had designed her own garden at Lime Kiln, ensuring that it was replete and redolent with roses, 500 of them, many being ramblers, such as the 1910 hybrid *nichurana* ‘Aviateur Bleriot’ and the 1902 climbing hybrid tea ‘Lady Waterlow’. Married to the last Czarist ambassador to London, the Countess was widowed in 1918. She lived another ten years.

According to Brooke, in 1924 Countess Sophie had bedded six of the plants, then named ‘Dresden China’, from George Paul’s nursery at Cheshunt. This seems quite plausible. The rose was in commerce before 1922, for the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* in its 1922 issue reports it as ‘Dresden China’, from G. Paul of Cheshunt, a “very free flowering, sweetly scented China rose of moderate size and a pleasing carmine-rose color.” Another source suggests that the rose was even bred by Paul much earlier.

However, in a 1986 article published in *The Rose*, Brooke wrote that ‘Sophie’s Perpetual’ was “probably raised by Russian botanist Count Schonvaloff,” father of the Countess. This seems mere speculation and a puzzling change or contradiction to Brooke’s earlier story—unless, of course, the Count had given the rose to Paul’s nursery for commercial introduction. But Brooke goes on to write—gainsaying his previous account of her acquisition of the rose—that it is likely that her father gave her the rose. If so, did the Countess then buy an additional six ‘Dresden Chinas’?

After Brooke acquired Lime Kiln, he found four specimens of ‘Sophie’s Perpetual’ still surviving, three as climbers, one as a bush of about three feet. He decided to rename the rose in honor of his wife’s grandmother and of the nearly year-round bloom of the rose. In 1972, R. C. Notcutt of Woodbridge re-introduced the rose under its current name.

In his October 1974 article of *The Rose Bulletin*, Brooke explains that he also changed the name because he wished to avoid confusion with the Kordes rose ‘Dresden’ and because he found the china classification somewhat misleading. Its habits, its fragrance, its cup-shaped flowers, its near absence of prickles were, he asserted, closer to the characteristics of a bourbon. He did grant the china strain in its exceptional repeat-blooming. As a result, he categorizes the rose as a china-bourbon.

To complicate matters, a more recent article, “Volatile Components in Chinese Roses” (2007) by five Japanese scientists, suggests that, given ‘Sophie’s Perpetual’ fragrance, which emits the same Nerol 2.40 and Beta-phenylethyl alcohol as *Rosa damascena* Miller, the red damask rose, ‘Sophie’s Perpetual’ may be related also to *R. damascena*. In that case, it would certainly be closer to a bourbon than a china.

This lovely bi-colored rose with its pale centers and red outer petals will grow in difficult conditions such as heavy shade and dry banks. Brooke maintained his garden without fertilizers or sprays or pruning, merely dead-heading his roses. Should it be a surprise, then,

that after one mild winter his 'Sophie's Perpetual' bloomed for thirteen consecutive months before stopping for a six-week breather? The sustainable garden rewarded him profusely. Though the case of this rose has not been settled, it is definitely a rose worth settling in and gracing your garden.

CALENDAR

May 18, 2013--Old Rose Symposium, Wyck House, Philadelphia

May 19—Celebration of Old Roses, Community Center, El Cerrito, CA

May 31-June 2—Great Rosarians of the World Lectures, New York City

June 8—Old Rose Rustling Symposium, Mendocino, CA

June 16—Heritage Roses Northwest, Rose Display at Antique Rose Farm, Snohomish, WA

June 19-23—World Federation of Rose Societies, International Heritage Rose Conference. Sangerhausen, Germany

June 30—Vintage Gardens closes

September 10-12th--Heirloom Expo, Santa Rosa, CA

November 15-17—Heritage Rose Foundation Conference, Lakeland, FL

On page 16 of this issue we feature a photo taken by Karl King of 'Comtesse de Murinais'. I have never seen this rose edged in lake or mauve-red. I know this rose only as pure white. Has any reader seen the rose as in Karl's photo?

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Virginia & Adjacent Area	OLD DOMINION GROUP Connie Hilker 335 Hartwood Rd., Fredericksburg, VA 22406; c.hilker@comcast.net

‘JAUNE DESPREZ’

On page 24 of this issue is a photo of ‘Jaune Desprez’. Of this rose, Nancy Steen in 1966 wrote, “This is a lovely rose which we grow on a fence next to the lavender-blue, large-flowered clematis ‘Mrs Hope’. The buff-coloured flowers are shaded with warm yellow, peach, and apricot, and have a rich fragrance. Early and late in the season, these blooms are really lovely; but the midsummer ones are poor in comparison as they fade out quickly in the hot sun.”

The Charm of Old Roses, p. 156

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

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Mark Your Calendars For The Weekend Of **June 8** **& June 9** **Ft. Bragg, CA**



**JOIN US ON THE BEAUTIFUL NORTH COAST OF MENDOCINO CO. FOR AN
IMMERSION IN ROSE EVENTS.**

On June 8th long-time heritage rose collector, nursery owner, and scholar Joyce Demits will open her garden for the day.

Rose lovers will gather to examine and enjoy her large and eclectic collection, learning from HRG rosarians about the varieties and classes.

On this day, roses will be labeled with the goal of identifying them in preparation for a second Seminar, to be scheduled for Fall, 2013.

(At the Fall event, date still pending, cuttings will be taken and shared.)

On June 8, we'll begin the day with a presentation by Jeri and Clay Jennings. Groups will then form, to carpool to Joyce's garden, where we will spend the day among the roses.

There is no charge for the gathering.

Participants will bring their own lunches, and are advised to bring a folding chair and sturdy shoes. An interesting raffle to benefit HRG is shaping up — Tickets will be available on site.

This is an opportunity to preserve some parts of Joyce Demits' legendary lifetime collection and enhance one's own garden projects as well.

Contact Alice Flores for information about registration and lodging suggestions: aflores@mcn.org

On Sunday, June 9th, many attendees will head over the Coast Range to the Willits area to visit Pamela Temple's the extensive and beautiful garden. Pam's annual event, "*Rosalia*," is planned as a benefit for Haiti, and will include food and music.

This promises to be a full weekend, and one saturated with the delights of roses, and rose gardens.

A Celebration

Old Roses



Sunday, May 19

11 am.—3:30 p.m.

*El Cerrito Community Center,
7007 Moeser Lane El Cerrito, CA 94530*



Rose-Lovers from across California will bring blooms to the El Cerrito Community Center on the Sunday following Mother's Day, for this tradition of ***"A Room Full Of Roses."***

The heart of the Celebration is a one-hundred-foot display of Old Roses, grouped by type, displayed informally for the enjoyment of all. There's no judging. Feel free to look, TOUCH, smell the roses. Pull out your shears, clip off a couple of your best blooms, and bring them to share. Or, bring a whole bouquet of roses for display.

Have a rose that you can't identify? Bring a bloom, place it on the ***"Unidentified Rose Table,"*** and wait for suggestions ...

Purchase heirloom and hard-to-find roses. Vendors — some new this year — will sell rare perennials, crafts, china, books, greeting cards, calendars, honey, jam, jewelry, and clothing — all of it rose-inspired.

Enjoy a Talk — Perhaps two. :-)) Don't miss the Grand Raffle!

Compete in a Silent Auction of Very Rare and Hard-To-Find roses.

The youngest Rosarians will enjoy our Children's Area — with coloring, face-painting and other rosie fun.

Doors open at 11:00 a.m. Close at 3:30.

22 Gypsy Lane
Camarillo, CA
93010-1320

