10-1941

Bulletin No. 4: The Connecticut Arboretum, Its Tenth Anniversary

George S. Avery

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THE CONNECTICUT ARBORETUM

ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT
A decade is a short time in the world of growing trees; yet to look around the Arboretum today is to see impressive evidence of the developments many friends have helped to bring about. To you who have had vision and interest in the Arboretum, and to you who are being introduced to it for the first time, it is hoped the achievements of these ten years will be a source of lasting pleasure and a challenge for the years ahead.
Rocky ledges extend for nearly half a mile along the east border of the ravine tract. This rough woodland was acquired by a group of friends and given to the Arboretum in 1936.

The pages that follow will bring you a few glimpses of the Arboretum as it was and as it is. The efforts of the first ten years have involved the conservation of natural beauty as well as the development of useful recreational and scientific facilities.

The Arboretum Tract — a Bit of History

The tract of land making up the Connecticut Arboretum includes about 90 acres of woodland. It is unknown to many but of definite interest to all that the Arboretum tract was probably a part of that bought by Thomas Bolles from the Mohegan Sachem, Owaneco, son of Uncas. It is believed that the tract included the 12-acre plot in the western portion of the Arboretum known as “Bolleswood.”

Bolleswood was a gift from the poet Anna Hempstead Branch to Connecticut College and it was hers through inheritance from a long line of Bolles forebears in direct descent from Thomas Bolles; it was he who paid Owaneco the four yards of duffels and perhaps other considerations unmentioned in the receipt.

The receipt was formerly in the possession of the late Dr. William P. Bolles of Boston, a cousin of Miss Branch. He bequeathed it to the New England Historic Genealogical Society of Boston of which he was a member, and the society has placed it as a permanent deposit with the Connecticut Arboretum at Connecticut College. It is on exhibition in the Palmer Memorial Library.

Photograph of the original Owaneco receipt
The land on which Connecticut College was founded included a tract opposite the Williams Street gate to the College. This land was first used by the College as farm and woodland, and during the early years it was a favorite hiking and picnicking spot for the students and townspeople. Aside from a planting of young pine trees made (though later inadvertently destroyed) in 1916 by Dr. A. H. Graves, then Professor of Botany, little was done to the tract until Mr. Allen B. Lambdin became Business Manager for the College. He had the marshy area, then used for a pig pen, partially cleared, and a concrete dam erected to make the lake. When Dr. Avery joined the botany staff in 1931, it became his task to develop the tract as an arboretum, and the work of the past decade has been done largely under his guidance.

Many friends of the Arboretum felt it desirable for safety's sake to add to the approximately 70-acre tract; neighbors to the west were cutting trees adjacent to the then majestic hemlock grove. The ravine tract of 15 2-3 acres, just west of the former ledge boundary, was purchased late in 1936 by Mr. James M. Graves, acting as agent for Alice Lathrop Allis et al, and immediately quit claimed (December 24, 1936) to the people whose gifts made possible its purchase.

The following statement to the College, written by Miss Katharine Matthies, Secretary of the Arboretum Association, accompanied the deed for the ravine tract: "The very first time I visited the Connecticut Arboretum at Connecticut College some years ago, I felt that the beautiful ravine which borders the hemlocks of Bolleswood should be a part of it. So fine a wooded area, with its running water, is always attractive.

"There were various difficulties in the way of its purchase, but these were gradually removed. Finally in the late fall of 1936 a group of interested persons were enabled to buy it. Now this same group takes

Donors of the Ravine Tract all signed the deed, and on March 22, 1937, the deed conveying the land to Connecticut College was filed for recording in the Town of Waterford.
great pleasure in presenting to President Blunt, for the College, a deed for this land. The names of all donors appear on the deed.

"The ravine enlarges the Arboretum by 15 2-3 acres, and gives additional protection to the majestic hemlock grove known as Bolleswood. It will offer opportunities for water-loving plants along the stream and will open up a new area for people to enjoy.

"It is a pleasure to the donors to know that this delightful area is set aside permanently as a preserve for the plant and animal life native to this region."

A brook runs through the ravine; the area is still in the wild. Bounding it on the east are granite ledges; steep hillsides lie to the west.

The Washington Entrance to the Arboretum, opposite the Williams Street gate of the College, was given in 1932 by the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution. Extending down the hillside from the entrance court are grassy steps flanked by a thousand laurel plants, a thrilling sight in early June. These steps lead to the lake and the Outdoor Theatre. The landscape architect was Mr. A. F. Brinckerhoff.
The Connecticut Arboretum includes some 90 acres, about 20 of which constitute the planted units. The tract offers a variety of habitats for plants—bog, rocky ledges, deep woodland, open hillsides, stream bed and lake. Since these many haunts provide a natural environment for all the trees and shrubs native to Connecticut, it is not surprising that the Arboretum now contains a specimen of nearly every tree indigenous to the state. There are 1.6 miles of mowed paths, along which are some 200 species of native perennials, gift of the Marsh Botanic Garden at Yale University. Several miles of rough trails also extend through the Arboretum, making the woods an attractive hiking area for students, townpeople, scout troops, and children of the community.
The Arboretum Association

The Arboretum Association is the organization responsible for the
Arboretum and its welfare. Arboretum maintenance and development
costs are met in part by funds from the College, and in part by the
Arboretum Association. Association membership comprises organiza-
tions and individuals interested in wild life and its conservation, who
give evidence of this interest by joining the Association.

The Advisory Committee of the Association is the policy deter-
mind body. It includes representatives from the Federated Garden
Clubs of Connecticut and other persons throughout the state who are
leaders in conservation.

As you know, Connecticut College is a private institution without
state support. It is therefore necessary for a large part of the cost of
development of the Arboretum to come from its friends.

Garden clubs and other civic-minded organization-members of the
Association may secure “tree dividends” (gifts of young trees and
shrubs for civic plantings), and all members may use the Arboretum
and its facilities, receive its bulletins, attend the Summer School of
Horticulture, and share in creating landscapes of the future.

Memberships in the Arboretum Association have been arranged as
follows:

**Individual Memberships**

Any interested person may become a member upon payment of an
annual fee of $2.00. The Bulletin will be sent to members without
cost. Individuals may become sustaining members upon payment of
$25.00 yearly.

**Organization Memberships**

Civic and state-minded organizations may become annual mem-
bers upon payment of $10.00 yearly, sustaining members upon payment
of $25.00 yearly, and supporting members upon payment of $100.00
yearly.

Checks should be made payable to the Connecticut Arboretum at Connecticut Col-
lege, and mailed to the Director.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judge Christopher L. Avery</td>
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<td>Mr. George S. Avery, Jr.</td>
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<td>Director of the Arboretum</td>
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<td>Miss Katharine Blunt</td>
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<td>Mr. F. V. Chappell</td>
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<td>Miss Pauline H. Dederer</td>
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<td>Mrs. Malcolm J. Edgerton</td>
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<td>Mr. Walter O. Filley</td>
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<td>Mr. Austin F. Hawes</td>
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<td>Mrs. Janet Crawford How</td>
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<td>Mrs. George E. Kirsten</td>
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<td>Mrs. Allan B. Kitchel</td>
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<td>Miss Katharine Matthes, Sec'y of the Arboretum Asso.</td>
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<td>Mr. Edmund W. Sinnott</td>
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<td>Mr. Frederic C. Walcott</td>
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<td>Mrs. W. Z. White</td>
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<td>Mrs. S. H. Williams</td>
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Arboretum Association Members
July 1940 - June 1941

ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

ANNUAL
Branford Garden Club
Bridgeport Garden Club
Cheshire Garden Club
Clinton Garden Club
Connecticut Valley Garden Club
Danbury Garden Club
East Haddam Garden Club
Garden Circle of the Meriden Woman's Club
Garden Club of Cornwall
Garden Club of Danion
Garden Club of Glenbrook
Garden Club of Hartford
Garden Club of Old Greenwich
Garden Club of Woodbridge
Garden Department of the Woman's Club of Bristol
Garden Department of the Woman's Club of Stamford
Greens Farms Garden Club
Greenwich Garden Club
Greenwich Woman's Club Gardeners
Haddam Garden Club
House and Garden Club of Bridgeport
Hubbard Heights Garden Club
Lyme Garden Club
Middletown Garden Club
Mystic Garden Club
New Canaan Garden Club
New Haven Garden Club
New Milford Garden Club
Norwalk Garden Club
Pomperaug Valley Garden Club
Ridgefield Garden Club
Riverside Garden Club
Roxbury Garden Club
Shippman Point Garden Club
Spring Glen Garden Club
Stratford Garden Club
Suffield Garden Club
Waterbury Garden Club
Westbrook Garden Club
West Hartford Garden Club
West Haven Garden Club
Westport Garden Club
Whitneyville Garden Club
Connecticut Botanical Society
Lucretia Shaw Chapter, D.A.R.
Sarah Ludlow Chapter, D.A.R.

SUSTAINING
Garden Club of Madison
Fairfield Garden Club

SUPPORTING
Federaled Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.
New London Garden Club

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS*
Judge Christopher L. Avery
Mr. George S. Avery, Jr.
Miss Bethy Anderson
Mrs. Esther L. Batchelder
Miss Katharine Blunt
Miss Mary Bulkley
Mrs. C. Sanford Bull
Mrs. Rosamond Beebe Cochran
Mr. Wilbur L. Cross
Miss Pauline H. Dederer
Mr. Walter O. Filley
Mr. Harrison B. Freeman
Mr. Austin F. French
Miss Louise C. Howe
Miss Katharine Ludington
Miss Katharine Mathies
Miss Cora A. Marsh
Mrs. Parker McCollister
Miss Ethelyn McKinney
Mr. Wm. James Morgan
Mrs. Mary Foulke Morrison
Miss Martha W. Norton
Mrs. Edgerton Parsons
Mr. Clement Scott
Miss Paula W. Seidenburg
Mr. and Mrs. Earle L. Stamm
Mrs. Paul P. Swett
Mrs. Alden H. Vose
Mr. Frederic C. Walcott
Miss Miriam Dwight Walker
Mr. Alain White
Miss Marian Whitney

* Several individual members have made supplementary gifts.

Arboretum News

At its October 3, 1941 meeting the Advisory Committee authorized the year 'round employment of a horticulturist. Mr. William C. Peck has been appointed to this position. He holds a diploma in Horticulture from Massachusetts State College, and has already given several years of devoted service to the Arboretum.

The grand old white pine, unofficial seal of the Arboretum, and integral part of the Outdoor Theatre, was badly damaged by the storm of 1938. A recent gift from Mr. and Mrs. Nelson L. Buck of Chicago makes possible (this coming year) the planting of a new but somewhat smaller white pine in its place.

The many inquiries from Arboretum Association members, students, and others about what kinds of trees and shrubs to plant in this or that situation, led to the publication of “A Plant Handbook.” It was compiled by Dr. Harriet Creighton and Miss Priscilla Pasco, and was issued in 1940 as Arboretum Bulletin No. 3. The “Plant Handbook” is composed of lists of plants for specific landscape uses. These lists include trees and shrubs with attractive flowers and fruits, plants for autumn foliage color, for street plantings, for seaside conditions, etc. The Handbook also has descriptions of all the plants listed, giving both their scientific and common names. As may be noted from the picture, it is a spirally bound handbook, conveniently indexed. It solves quickly and easily the majority of planting problems.
The Former Hemlock Grove

About a quarter of a mile west of the lodge lies the ravine tract, and bordering it on the east is the granite ledge along which ancient hemlocks grew. The hurricane of September 21, 1938, uprooted or otherwise destroyed all but 18 of the 130 old trees. Subsequent study showed most of the trees to be about 150 years of age; a few were as old as 200 years. By 1940 most of those left standing after the hurricane were dead. The three or four which now remain, if they live, will be the giants of the century to come.

But for those who want to know more details of the study on the fallen hemlocks,* the following may be of interest: Transverse sections were cut from the trunks of uniform-sized trees growing in the ravine and on the ledge, and these sections were brought into the laboratory. With the aid of students, annual growth rings were counted and their widths carefully measured. Rings were consistently wider in the trees growing in the moist and shady ravine than in those growing on the dry rocky ledge. But despite this difference in habitats, both groups of trees showed the same general cyclic fluctuations over long-term periods. This discovery was new to science.

Attempts to correlate ring width with rainfall over the last fifty growing seasons were unsuccessful, but there was a little evidence of cooler seasons favoring greater growth.


Buck Lodge: a meeting place, picnic spot, field classroom, and Outing Club haunt. The Lodge adds much to student life, and is available to Arboretum Association members. It is the gift of Mr. Nelson L. Buck.
Financial Statement
July 1, 1940 to June 30, 1941

RECEIPTS

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DISBURSEMENTS

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<tr>
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<td>“A Plant Handbook”)</td>
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<td>Wages</td>
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The Connecticut Arboretum and You

“Where,” you ask, “do I count in the Arboretum enterprise? What is my obligation to this project?”

You count tremendously if you like trees, and if you feel that it is important to gather together the plant life of Connecticut in a place where it may flourish for all time. Our collective belief in the urgent need for preservation and making available of our native plants for study . . . the making of new acquaintances with our environment . . . is the essence of the Arboretum undertaking. If you want a partnership, understanding that quiet satisfaction will be the main income from your investment, join the Arboretum Association.