



GORE PLACE

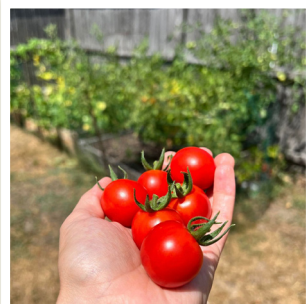
THE AGRARIAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF GORE PLACE | FALL 2022 | ISSUE NUMBER 13

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SOCIAL MEDIA MOMENT



Credit: Christina Murphy on Facebook



Credit: Mary Coughlan on Facebook

Customers' tomato harvests from Farmer Scott's Heirloom Tomato Plant Sale.

Share your memories and photos with us. Tag @goreplace on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



From the Collection of Gore Place Society. | Photo by Eric Workman | TMP Images

Commissioned by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, this Heathcot Pear chromo lithograph appeared in the MHS publication, *Transactions*, Volume 1, 1847.

Mrs. Gore's Garden

"An excellent horticultural spirit awakened in our community."

—Zebedee Cook Jr., founding member, Massachusetts Horticultural Society

"On a bitterly cold day" in February 1829, "when the streets were piled with snow," sixteen gentlemen with gardens on their minds met in Boston to found a society "for encouraging and improving the science and practice of horticulture." This meant improving gardens—finding new species of fruits, vegetables, trees, flowers, and other ornamentals, and improving their cultivation.

Interest was high and within a month, 160 men joined. The new Massachusetts Horticultural Society (MHS) put out a call for more: "We hope that none who are desirous of joining the Society will be deterred by the belief that its ranks are full. There is yet room." The MHS saw horticulture and gardens as widely appealing and was pleased to be attracting a variety of men, including the "scientific," as well as "opulent citizens, and many of our highly respected practical cultivators," the gardeners. They failed to mention women.

A Woman in the Garden

The following year, MHS members found themselves debating the proposed election of two women as Honorary Members: Rebecca Gore and Mary Griffiths.

Like Rebecca, Griffiths was a widow running a large country estate, Charlie's Hope, her place on the Raritan River in New Jersey, which featured rare strawberries, thousands of fruit trees, an 800-foot grape walk, and two small vineyards. Known for her "extensive, interesting, and valuable experiments as a practical cultivator of the soil," Griffiths was also an expert on bees. Both women were known for their "zeal in forwarding the objectives of the Society."

Yet some members resisted allowing women, because, as one man explained, only partly in jest, "a woman in the garden made great trouble as long ago as the days of Adam." Such complaints were silenced by Society President H. A. S. Dearborn, and the women were admitted. These first two women elected to the Society joined an elite group of Honorary Members that included expert gardeners, statesmen, and scientists, men like the physician and leading botanist David Hosack, Presidents George Washington and John Adams, and the Revolutionary War hero, General Lafayette.

Mrs. Gore's Garden
is continued on page 4



GORE PLACE

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Letter from Our Board President

Dear Friends of Gore Place,

Gardens were a prominent part of life in the 19th century. Not only did gardens provide food, they were thought to be physically, mentally, and spiritually restorative. Reflecting a growing interest in horticulture, the Massachusetts Horticultural Society was founded in 1829. The next year Rebecca Gore was one of two women elected as honorary members, joining an elite group defined as “eminent persons, distinguished either in this or other countries for attainment in the science of horticulture.”

Christopher Gore had a vision for the future of agriculture in America and supported his wife Rebecca's efforts. The Gore estate was admired for its landscape and gardens. Following the loss of her husband in 1827, Rebecca continued to support horticultural advancements through the work of her gardener, Roderick Toohey.

Last year, Gore Place undertook a long-term project through the Andrew Fiske Memorial Center for Archeological Research at UMass Boston to understand the agricultural and horticultural landscape around the Mansion. Ongoing research and excavations at the site of the 1806 greenhouse have recovered partial marble tile and many other building materials and artifacts used in the greenhouse.

A “new era” is definitely reshaping the landscape at Gore Place. I cannot end without wishing you well and at the same time asking you to consider “watering our garden” with your Annual Fund gift this year.

With warm regards and thanks.

Thomas W. Thaler

Celebrate the Season with Gore Place!

Daily Mansion Tours

View the 1806 Gore Mansion decorated for the season.
Monday through Saturday

Holiday Boutique Shopping

Shop small and local with Gore Place and cross everyone off your holiday gift list!
Saturday and Sunday, November 26-27

Home for the Holidays: Crafting Extravaganza

For children ages 6-12.
Saturday, November 26 and December 10

A December Evening holiday party

Tuesday, December 6

Seasonal Concerts

Details at goreplace.org



Supporter Spotlight: Pam Swain

In 2005, Pam Swain had recently retired as the assistant director of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. One day, she and friend Debbie Gates, then president of the Board of Governors of Gore Place, were walking their dogs when Debbie introduced Pam to Gore Place. Pam has been a governor and long-term Gore Place supporter ever since.

Originally from a fifth generation family in Washington, D.C., Pam grew up in Toledo, Ohio. When she came east to go to college, she fell in love with New England and stayed. For many years, she and husband Chick were active residents of the Weston community. Pam now lives in Wayland.

Pam's professional career in nonprofit administration served her well on the many Gore Place projects she has undertaken. Her first project involved working with Susan Robertson, Gore Place's executive director, to rewrite the organization's by-laws and code of ethics.

A recent collaboration involved revising Gore Place's personnel handbook. Currently she is a member of the Marketing Committee working to update the organization's marketing plan.

Asked what changes she has witnessed over time, she says, "Gore Place has tackled many projects, not being afraid of the responsibility for this vast landscape. The advent of the new barn makes Gore Place even more than ever a property of the people, as well as an elegant mansion."

Looking ahead to the future, she says, "the challenge will be to remain an oasis in an urban environment. It will be more important than ever to maintain strong and positive relationships in the community."



Pam Swain in front of the Gore Mansion

Photo by Gore Place Society



HOUSE IN BLOOM: A FLORAL DESIGN SHOW

In Collaboration with the Waltham Garden Club
View all the designs on our website at goreplace.org.

Photos by Eric Workman | TMP Images.

Rebecca's Garden

By her husband Christopher's will, in 1827 Rebecca had inherited their four-hundred-acre Waltham country seat with its mansion, gardens, and working farm. Called splendid and elegant, it was known, too, as "Gore's Garden." The couple's eight years in England with visits to its grand estates had influenced the landscape they created, and Rebecca almost certainly participated in the Waltham estate's landscape and garden design. Her interest and knowledge are apparent in a letter from John Codman, who, while visiting the Gores in London, wrote to his wife about their own Lincoln, Massachusetts, country estate: "Mrs. Gore and myself have been planning improvements at Lincoln. She says it is the handsomest place in America and might be made a l'Anglaise with ease." As Rebecca would later sit in Paris with the French architect Legrand to design the Waltham house, she sat in London with John Codman to design his grounds in the new English style.

The Gores returned from England in 1804 and created in Waltham what the MHS later noted was "one of the most beautiful places as regards landscape gardening," citing its "park a mile in length. . . groups of English elms, limes, and oaks . . . finest varieties of fruit . . . trees being trained on walls, in the English method . . . also a grapery, greenhouse, and hothouse." In early America, the Society historian wrote, the Gores' estate and William Hamilton's Philadelphia residence, "The Woodlands," were "the two best specimens of the modern style." The MHS deemed these heights of landscape design "the fine art of horticulture." Almost thirty years after the Gores' return to America, in her late 60s, the widow Rebecca would continue horticultural advancements at the Gore country seat, especially through the work of her gardener.

Mrs. Gore's Gardener

When bugs attacked Christopher Gore's plum trees in 1825, Roderick "Rody" Toohey successfully went to work applying a solution of tobacco juice, oils, soap, and soot. Later the *New England Farmer* published his methods. This highly skilled gardener, born in 1796 in Ballin o Clough, Ireland, had immigrated in 1823 and began work for Gore. After Christopher's death, Toohey stayed on as Mrs. Gore's gardener.

When, as an early member, Toohey joined the MHS in 1829, he and Rebecca had already made a major contribution to horticultural advancement. In an 1828 letter to the *New England Farmer*, Toohey introduced a new, native fruit, the Heathcot Pear. He named the pear after John Heathcot, an earlier Gore gardener, who had raised the tree from seed in Gore's garden. A "fine and handsome fruit," Toohey announced. Desirable in many aspects and "highly flavored," the Heathcot can, Toohey wrote, "justly claim its place among the first pears in the country."

He delivered samples to the newspaper so that horticulturists, as he urged, could examine the Heathcot and decide for themselves. Mrs. Gore joined the pear campaign and twice delivered to MHS offices "a few of her fine Heathcot Pears from the original tree in her garden." As Toohey predicted, horticulturists judged the pear "superior" and "worthy of cultivation." The

MHS committee on fruits awarded its yearly premium in 1830, a prize of \$4, "for the best native pears (Heathcot) to Roderick Toohey, gardener to Mrs. Gore."

Fine specimens of horticulture

Saturdays during growing season, the MHS exhibited flowers, fruits, and vegetables, submitted by their growers as "particularly fine . . . excellent specimens." Frequent exhibits came from Mrs. Gore's garden. The same year Toohey won the Heathcot prize, for instance, he won the annual prize for the most successful cultivation of the *Rhododendron maximum*. The next year he "exhibited a rare flower called *Bignonia Grandiflora* and several blossoms of the *Rhododendron maximum*"—both "particularly noticed not only for the intrinsic beauty of the flowers but also as fine specimens of horticulture."



A watercolor of a *Rhododendron maximum*. Rody Toohey, Mrs. Gore's gardener, won the 1830 MHS annual prize for this beautiful bloom.

Rosebay *Rhododendron* (*Rhododendron maximum*), 1926. Watercolor on paper. By Mary Vaux Walcott (1860-1940). From the Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Gift of the artist.



A *Bignonia grandiflora*, much like the *Bignonia* here, was the “fine specimen of horticulture” exhibited by Toohey.

Trumpet Creeper (*Bignonia radicans*), 1926. Watercolor on paper. By Mary Vaux Walcott (1860-1940).

From the Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Gift of the artist.

Mrs. Gore's Garden Continued from page 4

From Mrs. Gore's garden came impressive forced vegetables, early maturing specimens made possible by the hotbeds the Gore farm manager Jacob Farwell helped Toohey to build. In May 1830 the MHS reported, “forced vegetables were shown by Mrs. Gore's gardener,” including “potatoes, string beans, cucumbers, and mushrooms, all of fine appearance.” Even more impressive was the early asparagus. On February 24, 1830, too early for the MHS exhibitions, Toohey “left at the *New England Farmer's* office, some bunches of asparagus 6 inches long, which we expect,” the paper wrote, “is the first cut this season in this vicinity.” The following February when he sent “several bunches of good size and fine appearance,” the paper reported: “Mr. Toohey has produced the first asparagus that has appeared in Boston for several years past.”

Toohey exhibited early potatoes in July 1831, followed that October by “fine sweet potatoes,” ending the season and beginning the winter lull in exhibits. But next season and on, there is no record of Toohey until December 15, 1835, two years after Rebecca's

death, when, at age 39, Toohey died of epilepsy. He was buried in Waltham.

The partnership of Rebecca Gore and Rody Toohey had left a significant mark on the horticultural landscape of Boston and their passing ended a brief but brilliant season.

By Diann Ralph Strausberg, Historian

SOURCES

The New England Farmer and Horticultural Journal, 1822-1835.

Papers of John Codman III (1755-1803), Historic New England.

Records and histories of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Massachusetts Horticultural Society, *Transactions of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society*, 1847.

David Hosack, American Botanist

David Hosack (1769-1835) was a physician, educator, and America's leading botanist in the early 19th century. Hosack trained at the University of Edinburgh and was the first American to be inducted into the Linnean Society of London, the world's oldest organization devoted to natural history. Like Rebecca Gore, Hosack was an honorary member of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and among the first donors to that organization.

As a physician, David Hosack became intimate with many of the principal figures in the young republic. He was the attending physician at the duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr and was the doctor for both men's families, and for Rebecca Gore's friend, Mary King.

David Hosack believed America contained all the resources required to build a lasting nation. Turning his efforts to collecting

native species of botanical plants, he sought to improve the health of the country by using those resources. To provide his medical students at Columbia College with a living laboratory of medicinal plants, Hosack established the Elgin Botanic Garden.

Construction of the garden began in 1801 where Rockefeller Center stands today. Here, students could study living plants rather than dried specimens or drawings in books. Funded almost entirely by Hosack, Elgin was the first public botanical garden in America. By 1805, the garden was home to over 1500 species of plants from all over the world.

For more about David Hosack, see *American Eden: David Hosack, Botany and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic* by Victoria Johnson.

By Thom Roach, Director of Interpretation



***The Elgin Garden*, circa 1810, artist unknown.**

From the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of The New York Botanical Garden.

Digging the Garden

By Thom Roach, Director of Interpretation

Christa Beranek is a research scientist at the Fiske Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. In the summers of 2021 and 2022, she led teams of graduate students as they searched for evidence of a garden in the Gore-era landscape. The excavations concentrated on the formal space north of the mansion.

Taking their lead from an early 19th-century map of the grounds drawn during Theodore Lyman's occupancy (1834 to 1838), the team set out to establish the exact location of the Gore-era fruit wall and to discover the meaning behind a large rectangle drawn on the North Lawn section of the Lyman map. Did this rectangle represent a Gore-era garden?

Following a survey using ground-penetrating radar, several trenches were dug 14 inches below the surface, covering 161 square feet in 2021 and an additional 200 square feet in 2022. Christa says artifacts and other evidence found at this level suggest this is Gore-era soil.

"It's rare to find a historic site where a specific period of the property's past is so well preserved over such a large area," says Christa. She attributes the remarkable preservation of Gore-era soil to the fact that subsequent owners made only superficial changes to the land.

Our untrained-eye saw little evidence of activity in the trenches, but with Christa's help, the evidence of 200-year-old plantings soon came into focus.

"It's all about the color of the soil," Christa says. "Yellow soil is undisturbed, sterile soil. The dark circles show enriched soil. When someone digs a hole to place a plant or set a fence post, enriched soil gets carried down, cutting into the sterile soil. You can see evenly spaced circles of enriched soil extending in lines. There are different shapes and patterns that suggest rows of bulbs and of small and large plants. It looks like they planted this area just once, which suggests many of the plants were perennials." Christa says finding such evidence is exceedingly rare. "My boss came out, and this site blew him away."

It's not just evidence of a few rows of perennials that makes this dig exciting. Further evidence of wooden posts buried deep in the soil leads Christa to believe the site was just a corner of a more extensive garden.

"If the posts mark the edge of the garden, there is evidence for planting beds that extend twenty feet in, showing the scale of Gore's garden," she says, "We hope to gather a lot of evidence about what and where the Gore's were planting without being too invasive."

"By combining the areas excavated in 2021 and 2022, we are able not only to see the plan of a larger area of the garden but also to see that there is evidence for two different gardens in succession, each on a slightly different orientation. Both predate the better known curvilinear garden plan that was laid out in the mid-19th-century."

As exciting as discovering the Gore garden was for Christa and her team, uncovering the Gore fruit wall during the 2021 dig was even more thrilling.

The 200-foot-long fruit wall was a brick structure, running roughly east to west, near the northern border of the 50-acre home lot. In length and orientation, it mirrored the 1806 mansion. Used in agriculture for centuries, fruit walls support trees, shrubs, and vines. Facing south, the bricks of the Gore-era wall absorbed heat from the sun during the day, releasing it in the cooler hours overnight. Like a greenhouse, a fruit wall creates its own microclimate and fends off frost.

Working from the Lyman map, again aided by ground-penetrating radar, the team made some test trenches in the area where the fruit wall once stood. What they uncovered appears to be a portion of a footing for the 30-foot east section of the structure. "It looks like they built it yesterday; the mortar and brick are so well preserved," says Christa.

Deposits in front of this section of the wall match the descriptions in late 18th- and early 19th-century manuals for growing grapes, suggesting that this part of the fruit wall was a graperly. While searching for evidence of the fruit wall, Christa and her team made another surprising discovery.

"There is a big pit that extends 15 feet behind the fruit wall. It's more than a foot deep. It contains dark soil and pockets of charcoal and bone. I think it's a compost pit for creating enriched soil for the gardens and fruit wall plantings."

For now, the dig is over. The pits filled in. Grass covers the sites where Christa and her team made their discoveries. Now, it's back to the lab to analyze the data and create a composite plan of the buried garden features.

A few more pieces of the puzzle are now in place. Bit by bit, the Gores' landscape is returning, thanks to the research of the Fiske Center archaeologists and UMass students.

Archaeological research is an important tool for telling the story of the Gores and their estate. Past digs located the original site of the Coach House and greenhouse, told us the exact configuration of the drive, and identified areas of Gore-era cultivation. The more we learn about the Gore landscape, the better we can recreate it for the enjoyment of our visitors.



Archaeology team uncovering evidence of Gore-era garden during the summer of 2022 excavation.

Photo courtesy of Christa Beranek.

SUMMERSAULT INTO FALL *at* GORE PLACE

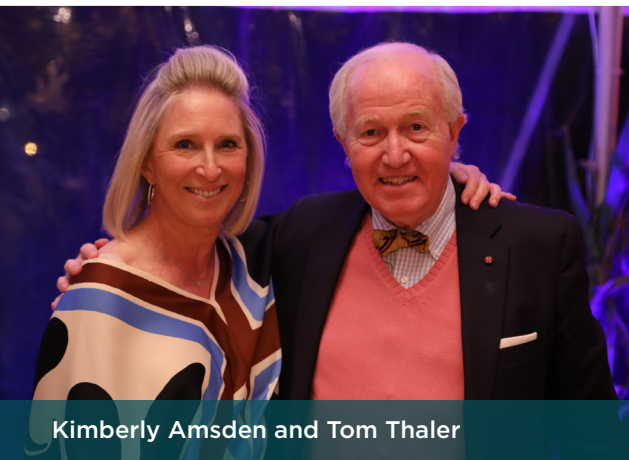
SEPTEMBER 15, 2022



Cameron Roberts, Harriet Parker, and Carter Roberts



Sarah Wilsterman and Lydia Kimball



Kimberly Amsden and Tom Thaler



Prudence and Bill Crozier



Chris and Kita Reece



Vicky Thaler Cabot, Tom Thaler, Eva Ravenel, Judith Parker



Andrew Chin, Emily Griset, and Lucinda Vanderweil



Tom and Katie McGauley



Merry Harding and Douglas Harding



Richard Thaler, Tom Thaler, and Charlotte Patten

Noteworthy shares news about Gore Place. While the pandemic continues, our Board, staff, and volunteers continue to produce many accomplishments for Gore Place, so we devote this page to these highlights!

Donate to
the Tree Fund

Sign up for
a Tree Tour

goreplace.org



Naturalist and Gore Place guide, Lorna Keith, stands next to a tree planted at the estate because of her donation to the Tree Fund. Thank you, Lorna!

Archaeology

An archaeology team from UMass Boston's Fiske Center returned in July for more investigations into a Gore-era garden near the Mansion. In 2021, they identified that the preservation of the Gore garden features is extraordinary. Read more about these discoveries on page 6!

The Tree Fund

Christopher and Rebecca Gore planted thousands of trees at their Farm at Waltham.

Contributions to the Tree Fund at Gore Place support efforts to restore trees that the Gores would have known. We are very pleased to announce that this year we have added five native specimen trees to our landscape. The trees were selected from a tree list created by Scott Clarke with oversight from Craig Halverson, landscape designer.

Our new trees

Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)

Often found near early 19th c. historic homes.

American Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

The tallest eastern hardwood that can grow to 160'.

American Yellowwood (*Cladrastis lutea*)

Wisteria-like spring blooms, yellow autumn leaves, and pale yellow wood under the smooth bark.

American Elm (*Ulmus americana* "Princeton")

The classic American elm reborn.

Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*)

A great shade tree with an attractive peeling bark.

Our Agrarian Landscape Plan provides suggestions throughout the estate where trees and shrubbery are to be added. Next year, we would like to add English oak, white oak, horse chestnut, and sugar maples. Some will be planted as specimen trees and some added to our tree-lined borders. Want to learn more and help plant trees? Donate to the Tree Fund at Gore Place on our website at goreplace.org. Join our Tree Tours with naturalist Lorna Keith, as she welcomes guests to learn about and appreciate our many handsome trees.



A pathway funded by the MCC's UP program grant.

UP Program Grant Award

Gore Place was awarded a second UP (Universal Participation) program grant from the Mass Cultural Council to continue accessibility improvements to our outdoor interpretive panel exhibit. The grant will fund additional walkways to panels and benches.

Community Connections

Thank you to the Waltham Garden Club for their participation in House in Bloom, a floral design show in the Gore Mansion in September. More than 450 guests viewed the 13 spectacular designs. See the designs on page 3 and on our website at goreplace.org.

Thank you to our floral designers!

Waltham Garden Club designers

Cathy Collins
Rita Cutroni
Mary Ellen Donovan
Kathy Hines
Mary Kopsiaftis
Adelina Mega
Evelyn Polli
Cathy Vieria

Independent designers

June Alexandra
Scott Clarke
Yasuko MacDougall
Susan Robertson

People News

We are very pleased to welcome three new staff members to our team:

Our new farm historian and educator is **Donnie Weisse**. Donnie recently received his Master's degree from Brandeis University. His thesis was on the history of agriculture in Massachusetts. Donnie will develop programs for our farm.

Our new family educator is **Meg Stockton**. Meg was a public school educator for the last five years. She has previous experience at Gettysburg and Fredericksburg National Military Parks so she is very excited to be back at an historic site.

Our new volunteer coordinator is **Gail Wiegner**. Gail retired from Boston College after a long career in recruitment and training. Now she will use her talents to assist us in growing our volunteer corps.