

The Glorious Gardens of Gordonsville, Virginia

The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton

Visiting Gardens Club-to-Club Trip Arrangements made with the Dolley Madison Garden Club

Visiting Gardens Committee's Purpose Statement

The Visiting Gardens Committee plans trips both in the United States and abroad to educate members of GCA clubs in garden history and design, horticulture, and the environment. The committee also facilitates club member visits to the gardens of other GCA club members throughout the United States as well as the gardens of GCA international courtesy clubs.



Members of The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton. All photos courtesy of Martha Moore, except as noted.

Club-to-club visiting gardens trips are one of the many benefits of association that The Garden Club of America offers to its clubs and club members. Each year trips are planned to see the gardens of other club members in different locales.

Last October, 52 members from The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton in Richmond, Virginia, traveled to Gordonsville, just an hour's drive away, to visit Springfields and Rocklands. These two special homes have unique histories, which include connections to the Bolling Haxall families of Richmond.

Bolling Walker Haxall (1814-1885) was a partner in Haxall's Flour Mill, his family's enterprise in Richmond. It was one of the largest flour mills in the world at that time, which made Haxall one of Richmond's wealthiest and most prominent businessmen before the Civil War. He also was president of Old Dominion Iron & Nail Works. Haxall maintained homes in Richmond (the Bolling Haxall house built in 1858, and purchased in 1900 by The Women's Club) and at Springfields in Gordonsville.

This visiting gardens trip to Gordonsville was arranged with the assistance of DeLane Porter and Gail Babnew, both from the Dolley Madison Garden Club in Orange, Virginia.

Springfields

This 100-acre property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is one of the Virginia's most historic and beloved farms. Springfields was part of the original Nicholas Meriwether land grant first settled by Revolutionary War hero Colonel Reuben Lindsay, who built a home there in 1791.

Currently at Springfields is a Georgian Revival house built in 1895, vast gardens, and grounds that include Lindsay's 1791 stone tower (that once was Christ Episcopal Church) and the Lindsay family graveyard.

From 1862 until his death in 1885, Springfields was the Gordonsville home of Bolling Walker Haxall. It is now owned by Gail Babnew (Dolley Madison Garden Club) and Joel Silverman. Gail's book, *Springfields' Memoirs*, was inspired by her love of history and her desire to uncover the stories of those who called Springfields home. She spent ten years researching and writing this fascinating book, which is presented in a diary format.



Rose arbor at Springfields

Springfields is documented in the Smithsonian's Archives of American Gardens (AAG). Gail is a former vice-chair of the GCA's Garden History and Design Committee and was instrumental in the submission of Springfields to the AAG.



Pollinators at Springfields

The gardens at Springfields include terraces, rose-filled parterres, and a conical boxwood allée directing access to the pool. Over the years, Gail and Joel have installed approximately 3,000 plants and 1,000 new trees in the 40 distinct gardens on the property. Throughout the gardens are trellises and arbors, stone urns, picket fences, and statuary, including an English armillary and a French sundial. There are approximately 700 English and American boxwoods, over 300 David Austin roses, and 400 hydrangeas and perennials. The various garden landscapes surround a 1791 kehouse, a new greenhouse, a terraced strawberry and cutting garden, an 1840s gambrel dairy barn, and a renovated chicken house. The courtyard stable and indoor riding arena, landscaped with roses and berry gardens, define the northwestern boundary of the farm. The juxtaposition of informal and formal gardens represents Gail and Joel's efforts to achieve a balance between a restoration and a renovation of the property—thus preserving the past while making a contribution to the future.



A parterre at Springfields

Rocklands



The French garden at Rocklands

Rocklands is a beautiful home near Montpelier in Gordonsville, Virginia, that also is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It currently comprises 2,200 acres, which are in a conservation easement with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

Rocklands was built in the mid-1800s by Richard Barton Haxall from the Richmond milling family. Jacqueline and Bruce Gupton, the current owners, acquired Rocklands in 1998. Jacqueline is French and the gardens and grounds reflect her continental aesthetics. The Guptons are avid collectors of antique statuary and stonework from the US, England, and France. Jacqueline Gupton's father was a landscape architect at Fountainbleu. The design of the three main gardens—English, French, and Italian—reflect Gupton's passion for design and beautiful garden structure. The property has an incredible view of the Blue Ridge Mountains that borders Montpelier.

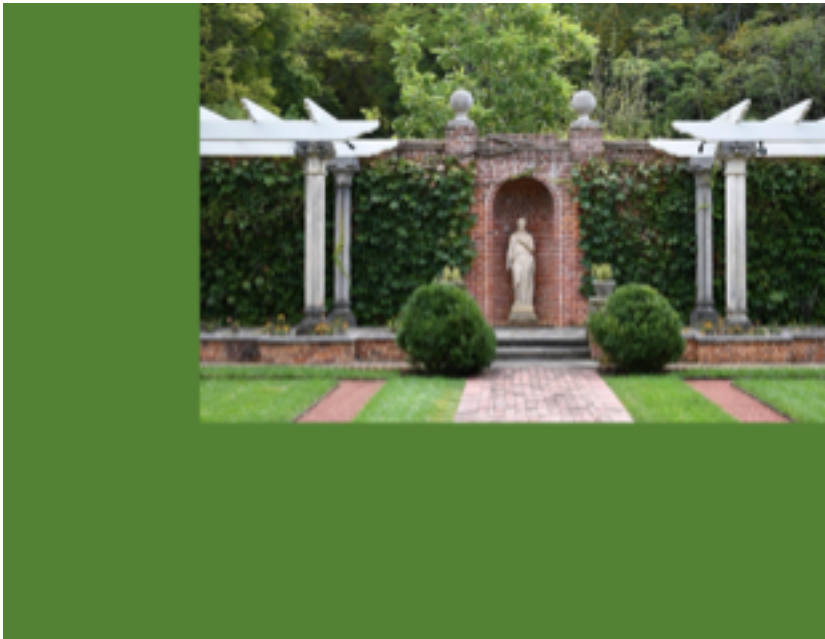
The Guptons have helped preserve and revitalize the town of Gordonsville, which includes a small park that she designed.



An urn at Rocklands

In the 1930s, Umberto Innocenti helped create the layout for the English garden while working along with architect William Lawrence Bottomley. Landscape architect Charles Gillette also assisted in the overall landscape plan for Rocklands.

In the French garden there is a terraced horseshoe design as at Montpellier. Except for the horseshoe, the rest of the garden design was added by the Guptons. There is a lovely Louis XIV style fountain in the center that was imported from France, as were the Gothic style columns on a pergola. The main stone stairs were imported from Lyon, France.



Rocklands

The English garden features four mature magnolias that flank its four corners. The fountain and Putti statue are original to the garden. Many of the wrought iron gates came from markets in East London.

In the Italian garden the Four Seasons statues were commissioned by the owners from the only stone carver left in Carrara, Italy, who carves the entire statue himself. The brick and stone wall at the end of the garden was inspired by Achille Duchene, whose work includes the Vanderbilt estate on Long Island. The Italian garden has several lovely water features.



Rocklands



The medieval tower at Rocklands

The property includes a medieval stone tower that was transported here from Limousin, France, and reassembled. The Guptons often invite local school children to see the tower and experience a bit of 12th-century life.

To finish off the day, these happy travelers from Richmond enjoyed lunch at the home of one of their garden club members who had relocated to Keswick, Virginia. Lunch was followed by a very fun wine tasting at nearby Merrie Mill Farm & Vineyard. “We learned a bit about viticulture at this very young vineyard, and had a chance to relax and enjoy the beautiful fall day together.”

Martha Moore Programs Co-chair The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton, Zone VII



Photo courtesy of Merry Mill Farm & Vineyard



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