
In Memory—Fred Charles Galle

August E. Kehr

Hendersonville, North Carolina

On July 26, 1998 the azalea and holly worlds lost one of their most illustrious horticulturists, Fred C. Galle, when he was tenderly laid in his final resting place at Pine Mountain, Georgia. He is known to persons all over the world for his books on azaleas and hollies. These giant achievements were made by an individual who was once told by a nurseryman that he was too small to dig trees and shrubs. By his attainments as a writer and horticulturist, Fred has proven that the pen is greater than a shovel and that brains are commonly more productive than brawn.

The love of green plants and the joy of growing them took root at an early age for Fred, along with a fascination for books. He was born on July 10, 1919 in Dayton, Ohio, where plants are so important in feeding the stomachs, as well as nourishing the souls of people who grow them. His love of horticulture came from his training at Ohio State University, where he got his Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Horticulture. He was in the service in World War II where he won a Purple Heart, Bronze Star and a Cluster.

Fred never got a Ph.D. He completed all graduate research and class work at the University of Tennessee and even had done a draft of his doctoral thesis. At that point he decided to visit Gregory Bald to take final notes for his doctoral dissertation about the azaleas there. One day while he was out looking over the magnificent display of plants, a bear ate his only draft of his doctoral thesis. He never found a single page of it. Fred always joked by saying he did all the work and wrote it up, but the bear got the degree. While the loss of the doctorate degree to Fred was personal calamity, the loss of several years of definitive research on the azaleas on Gregory Bald is a loss to the azalea world that is a major catastrophe. It is difficult to even try to assess the level of the loss of detailed knowledge about native azaleas on Gregory Bald as made by one of the world's greatest authorities during the period of 1947-1952. Such a history would be of extreme value to the Azalea Society today. It is most fitting that Robert Frost's poem "A Road Not Taken" was printed as part of the celebration of the life of Fred Galle.

I do not know when Fred and I first crossed paths, but I can recall with great clarity he asked me in 1981 to arrange a meeting with Dr. Henry Skinner, Dr. John Creech and myself to offer guidance on an outline, and a request of support on a project of writing a book on azaleas. The last version of *The Azalea Book* by Frederic P. Lee had become obsolete in the intervening quarter century. Little did we know that the meeting of four azalea enthusiasts would result in a 519-page masterpiece describing over 7,000 cultivars of azaleas as well as describing all the species of these plants known to the horticultural world. This book is listed as one of the "Fifty Great Horticultural Books" by the National Arboretum.

Have you, dear reader, any idea of the magnitude of effort that went into gathering names and details of the color, size, type of flower, names of hybridizers, parentage, year of introduction, and similar facts for 7,000 varieties? If not, sit down and prepare this same information for any ten varieties in your garden without referring to the book *Azaleas*.

Fred had a busy life. He was Director of Horticulture at the Callaway

Gardens in Pine Mountain, Georgia from June, 1953 until December, 1979, and continued to serve there as Curator until 1983 when the first edition of the book took up his full time. He was a member, and President of The American Horticultural Society, which awarded Fred their Liberty Hyde Bailey Award for Outstanding Contributions to Professional Horticulture. Also Swarthmore College conferred on him the Arthur Hoyt Garden Award. Fred was also a member and President of the American Rhododendron Society and was given a Gold Medal, the highest award of that Society.

The Holly Book, which was published in late 1997, is the first authoritative and comprehensive guidebook on these plants in the English language. In its 591 pages are described over 800 *Ilex* species, as well as all named varieties in cultivation. It is a companion book of reference to the one on azaleas. The Holly Society gave him the Shiu-Wing-Hu Award for Scholarly Publication on the Genus *Ilex*.

Other societies in which Fred Galle was active included the International Tree Conference and the Georgia Horticultural Society, from whom he received the Certificate of Merit. He won the Silver Medal of the National Council of State Garden Clubs and the Porter Henegan Award for Horticultural Research of the Southern Nurserymen's Association.

In 1964 Fred Galle was appointed to the elite Advisory Council of the United States National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., where he served until 1971.

About 15 years ago he sent me seed of *Rhododendron arborescens*. When the plants from this seed flowered, there were many plants that were clearly the true species, but some of the seedlings turned out to have yellow blossoms, and flowered in July and early August. When I asked Fred about the possible parentage of these unusual yellow deviants, he replied,

"I wish I knew because I would like to repeat the cross". It is perhaps very coincidental that on 17 July of this year Dr. Kathleen Kron of Wake Forest University identified the yellow plants as hybrids of *R. arborescens* x *R. prunifolium*. I am already in the process of propagating the best plant. Perhaps it would be fitting to name and register it as "Fred Galle" in his honor.

I was deeply honored when Fred asked me to write Chapter 12 in his azalea book. In appreciation he sent me autographed copies of both the original book, as well as the revised edition along with short statements above the autograph. These books are choice to me.

Fred Galle was truly one of America's most notable lecturers, writers, and horticultural consultants, and he will be sorely missed by all those who grow azaleas and hollies. Can you believe (as mentioned above) that a nurseryman once told Fred in his young formative years that he was too small to dig trees and shrubs?

To his wife, Betty, we send our warmest sympathy. □

[A similar version of this article has appeared in the ARS Journal, ed.]

IN MEMORY— ROBERT MIRAVALLE

Robert John Miravalle, past president of the Louisiana Chapter of the ASA and a retired scientist for the U. S. Department of Agriculture, died of complications from heart surgery at St. Tammany Parish Hospital. He was 69. Mr. Miravalle was born in St. Louis and received a BA and a Ph.D. degree in Plant Genetics from Washington University in St. Louis. His scientific work was in the field of fiber research. He lived in Folsom, Louisiana for the past 20 years and will be remembered for his enthusiasm for off-season fall blooming azaleas. He was a member and past president of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees. □

IN MEMORY—BILL LAND

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Bill Land this past August. Bill was an active member of our Northern Virginia Chapter for many years, and had served as membership chairman for the last four years. He really loved growing azaleas and often provided special plants for our plant exchange. We will miss his presence and enthusiasm. □

IN MEMORY—ANDREW N. ADAMS, JR.

Andrew N. Adams, Jr. died on July 5, 1998. Andy Adams was the retired president of Ten Oaks Nursery. Ten Oaks Nursery founded by Andrew Adams, Sr., was one of the original distributors of the Glenn Dale azalea introductions. Andy attended Westtown School (operated by the Society of Friends) and served in the US Army in World War II. Andy is survived by his wife, Ruth. Following are two recollections of Andy Adams written by William C. Miller III and Roberta (Bobby) McCeney, both from the Brookside Gardens Chapter.

Bill Miller: I think I met Andy Adams for the first time in 1986. It was my first visit to the Ten Oaks Nursery in Clarksville, Maryland. During the course of my research into the Glenn Dale story, I had discovered a picture taken at the U.S. National Arboretum at the dedication of the Morrison Garden on May 3, 1954.

I recognized most of the people in the picture but there was one that no one at the National Arboretum could identify. One of the people in the picture was Andy's father, and I had been meaning to visit the Ten Oaks Nursery since, of the big three in Maryland (Ten Oaks Nursery in Clarksville, Henry Hohman's Kingsville Nursery near Baltimore, and Tingle's Nursery near Pittsville), the Ten Oaks Nursery was the only one still in existence. It was my hope that Andy would be able to identify the "unknown." From Bethesda, the road to Clarksville took me by the Triadelphia Reservoir and past mostly undeveloped farm land. In those days, Clarksville was out in the middle of nowhere, somewhere between Ashton and Columbia. My first impression of Andy remained the same throughout the time I knew him.

In short, Andy was a very nice person. He examined the picture carefully, but could not identify my unknown person. Then, perceiving my appreciation for historical material, he voluntarily pulled out several notebooks and files of correspondence between Ben Morrison and his father from 1948 and 1949 which he loaned to me without hesitation. I never forgot his kindness. I was a total stranger, and yet he was respectful, attentive, and genuinely helpful. I was to learn later that my colleague, Dick West, had received pretty much the same reception, but that is getting ahead of the story.

"Public speaking" was not Andy's strength. Andy and Ruth, his second wife, were soft spoken and both exhibited a quiet reserve. Andy spoke with a pattern that I will call "Maryland country" with a touch of "Baltimore." I had to listen carefully, because at times, I found him a little difficult to understand. Some of the problem was undoubtedly attributable to my hearing, but his sentences frequently tailed off to a soft ending. Andy did not speak much, but when he did it was because he had something worthwhile to say. He told