

## The Origins of Windrush

By John Monroe

The Louisiana State University facility we now know as Burden Center occupies land donated by the Burden family, which was once a part of a larger property known as Windrush Plantation. John Charles Burden, an early ancestor, was the first in this family to enter the Western Hemisphere. His home and place of birth was Oxfordshire, England. Our understanding is that he was employed as an agent for an English importer, finding and purchasing materials and products, then arranging for their shipment back to England. We believe he traveled throughout the Caribbean before entering the Southern United States and eventually Baton Rouge. Here, in 1856, he met and married Emma Gertrude Barbee, the niece of a well known and wealthy businessman and entrepreneur, William S. Pike.

In 1861, William S. Pike purchased 600 acres of land near Baton Rouge at a Sheriff's sale. This land or plantation was owned and occupied at the time by William Thomas. The purchase price was \$9,334. In addition to the land, the sale included all improvements, machinery and implements of husbandry as well as one slave, Nathan, who was 35 years old at the time. We believe that this William Thomas was a close relative, perhaps the son of Philemon Thomas, a minor but significant figure in Baton Rouge history. Philemon

Thomas was the commandant of the West Florida militia who led a small



**John Charles Burden**

force to overthrow the Spanish and seize Fort San Carlos (the second Battle of Baton Rouge) during the West Florida rebellion in 1810. The new West Florida Republic was soon absorbed into the United States. In 1812, William and Francis Thomas settled on the land that later became known as Windrush Plantation.

After the purchase by Pike, John Charles and Emma Gertrude moved onto the property and began an agricultural enterprise. We do not know exactly when this occurred but the census of 1860 lists John Charles occupation as merchant while the 1870 census lists his occupation as a

farmer. The Burden family home we have today was either built by them or expanded to house their growing family. William Pike Burden, Sr., one of their sons, was born at Windrush in 1870. His children (Ione; Pike, Jr.; and Steele) made the donation of Windrush to Louisiana State University.

John Charles died in 1872. His time at Windrush was entirely contained within the period of the American Civil War and the end of Reconstruction, 1862 to 1877. Baton Rouge was occupied by Federal troops during almost all of this time, lost its role as the capital city to New Orleans and was, in general, severely depressed economically. Life could not have been easy for John, Emma and their children. His estate was valued at \$2634.50, the larger part of that value coming from 5 mules, 15 cows and heifers, 38 acres of cane, 8 bales of cotton and 250 bushels of corn. He was almost 39 years old.

The history of John and Emma at Windrush is one of the reasons for the Burden family's passion for preserving the property intact. At some point during his life on this land, John named the property Windrush. The family legend is that the lazy little stream (Ward's Creek) that wound its way through the place near the old house reminded him of the quiet and scenic Windrush River that can be found in the Cotswolds near his birth place in Whitney, Oxfordshire, England.

## Reforestation and Restoration of Burden Woods

By Pat Hegwood

Gustav created a unique opportunity to reestablish Burden Woods into manageable woodlands that supports growth of native flora and fauna. Previously, much of Burden Woods had been overgrown with invasive species. The debris in the maintained areas, including the trails in the woods, has been removed and stockpiled for chipping. We are in the process of implementing a sustainable forest management plan by reducing these piles of debris to wood chips which will be used for mulch and compost. This compost will be used as a soil amendment to enrich our landscape beds here at Burden Center. All merchantable logs in the Burden Woods have been salvaged for lumber.

We are now preparing the forest floor for seed drop this fall from the remaining trees. The removal of the invasive species will greatly aid the germination and growth of new seedlings in the spring of 2010. This management plan will enhance regeneration of the Burden Woods with similar species that have always been there.



Debris stockpile.

The downed trees in the portion of Burden Woods that borders Wards Creek were not harvested and will be allowed to remain in place. No attempt to control invasive species or prepare the forest floor for new seedling growth in this area will be made. This area can serve as a control demonstrating different management practices that can be used after a destructive hurricane providing information for future urban forest management.



Gustav debris to be chipped as mulch.

## Trees and Trails Update and Reception

On March 4<sup>th</sup> the Burden Horticulture Society together with Baton Rouge Green hosted a lovely reception for the Junior League and Forum 35 volunteers whose hard work made the Trees & Trails at Burden Center possible. The official opening of these trails, which was planned for October 2008, was delayed by Hurricane Gustav. The celebration acknowledged the volunteer's accomplishments and contribution to Trees and Trails. The event included a hayride through the woods to show the devastation caused by the storm. The volunteers were thanked for their work and were assured that their efforts were not in vain as a new trail opening date is targeted for October 2009 which includes plans for a new pavilion with restroom facilities and a picnic area so that it can be used as an outdoor classroom for visitors.



Hayride through Burden Woods viewing Hurricane Gustav's devastation.

## Digging in the Dirt

By Jeff Kuehny

The winter/spring bedding plants are in full flower, the roses have been pruned, strawberries are ripe for picking and the bedding plant and vegetable transplants ready to be planted for evaluation and research at Burden Center. However, before you get consumed by "spring fever", plant your feet on the ground and think about the soil that these plants are growing in.

The farm crew at Burden Center has been doing just that, preparing the soil for this year's growing season. The tractors circling the fields in the research plots as you head to Windrush Gardens, are not designing crop circles. For all the time we spend tending the plants in the research plots, we must also spend time caring for the soil. The fields at Burden are being graded to maintain proper drainage for use in the research and extension efforts that are conducted by the Horticultural Scientists. Soil testing is conducted on an annual basis as well as cultivation and fertilization.

For the home gardener, take a moment and give your plants the best home to grow by properly caring for the soil. Knowing which nutrients are in your soil and which nutrients are needed is a basic step towards good plant health. Over fertilization will

cause a buildup of nutrients and a high or very high test result. The nutrient balance in the soil must be managed for best plant growth. The pH of the soil is also important as it determines the nutrients available to be taken up by the roots. A good general pH is 6.0 to 6.5 but the optimum soil pH varies according to plant species. For example, azaleas and camellias prefer a slightly acid pH of approximately 5.5.

Proper drainage is also important and can also be provide by amending some existing soils, but more intensive work may be needed for more poorly draining soils. Organic matter is the best soil amendment that can improve drainage, add

### The All American Selections Display Garden

The All American Selections (AAS) Display Garden is a new garden that is being implemented across from the Ione Burden Conference Center. We are preparing the beds for the new display garden which will contain the best of the best vegetables and ornamental annuals and perennials. How can we say these flowers and vegetables are the best? Because they have been tested by a network of independent judges in trials across the United States who

nutrients and improve the physical properties of soil. My favorite organic amendment is leaf debris. I saw someone in a brand new BMW convertible with bags of leaves in his front and back seat. I assume they were for his garden. Now that is a dedicated gardener!

Soil samples may be brought to your local parish LSU AgCenter office or delivered to the LSU soil test lab in Sturgis Hall on the AgCenter campus in Baton Rouge. The charge is \$7, and results can be e-mailed back to you. Go to <http://www.lsuagcenter.com/stpal> or contact your local county agent for more information.

determined these plants garden performance was superior. The network of nearly 200 dedicated AAS Display Gardens includes 55 selected locations including Burden Center. Please visit the garden this summer to view these plants and get information on how to best grow them. If you are interested in helping plant and maintain these gardens you can do so by joining Les Amis Jardin, the volunteer arm of the Burden Horticulture Society.

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### *Did you know....BHS patrons get FREE or reduced admissions?!*



American Horticultural Society Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP) promotes horticulture across America, encouraging people to visit gardens while traveling. This program is a network of gardens with similar objectives, encouraging members to discover, explore, and share in this diverse community, striving to make "America a Nation of Gardeners, a Land of Gardens." Since its inception in 1990, this program has grown and evolved to represent a diverse community of more than 225 organizations in 44 states, plus Canada, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Cayman Islands.

**Please visit <http://www.ahs.org> for the most up-to-date listing!**

Thank you for your participation in the 2009 AHS Reciprocal Admissions Program!

## Reflections from the Chair

By Ginnie Bolin

Looking back over the last three months, the Burden Horticulture Society has been very busy with our very successful lecture series, Reflections in the Garden, and our popular special events series with the Camellia Morning and Azalea stroll at Windrush Gardens. Please refer to the calendar on the last page for future events.

The Master Plan will consume much of our time in the coming months. The Planning and Design Team of the Portico Group from Washington State will be conducting a three-day workshop with the Master Plan Working Group on March 31 through April 2. Other workshops will follow which will involve our patrons. The Portico Group plans to complete their Master Plan design by the end of the year.

BHS will 'kick off' the annual appeal the first week in May. The success of our funding is

critical to our efforts in helping the Burden Center reach its potential as center for public horticulture. Please look for the appeal packet in the mail and remember that your financial contribution will help us to begin the implementation of the Master Plan. If you are able, a contribution of time will allow us to expand our activities.

Some very exciting activities that are in the works are the All American Select Display Garden (see Dr. Kuehny's article on page 3), the ribbon cutting ceremony for the reopening of the Trees and Trails in October, and a cooperative effort with the LSU Press to publish a book about Steele Burden. Please come participate in these and other activities and learn about and enjoy this incredible green space in the middle of our city. Thank you for your interest; we hope that you will continue to support our efforts.

### Report from the Chancellor —

By now most of you may have heard of the proposed budget cuts to higher education and, subsequently, to the LSU AgCenter. The governor's executive budget calls for a reduction of approximately \$219 million for higher education in Louisiana. This is in addition to this year's midyear budget reduction to higher education of \$55 million. For the LSU AgCenter this means an additional \$13.3 million cut (15.1 percent) for Fiscal Year 2010 over the Fiscal Year 2009 \$3.8 million midyear budget cut (4.4 percent). Cuts of this magnitude would be devastating to our educational programs, including those that affect the landscape and nursery industry. Our horticultural programs are some of our most popular and vital to the state's prosperity. I strongly urge you to contact your state legislators and share with them your personal concerns about how these cuts will affect you and ask them to take action to ensure that such cuts do not happen. Please feel free to contact me if you want more information. And please go to our Web site, [www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com), for more specifics on how the budget cuts affect us. Click on Chancellor's Office and then Governmental Relations.

Bill Richardson  
Chancellor, LSU AgCenter

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## Color, Color Everywhere

By Marianna Ritter

After The Year of the Hurricane, when so many people in our area have suddenly sunny gardens, Master Gardeners are growing many colorful plants for bright areas. From softly subtle to brazenly bold, there are colors for every garden palette.

For these sunny areas, **angelonias**, provide a variety of colors from pink to blue to purple. The summer snapdragons, which are lovers of heat, humidity and full sun, offer varieties from semi-trailing, to compact, to taller versions. There are **coreopsis** for a contrast: 'Early Sunrise, a golden yellow and 'Mardi Gras' a vibrant gold with red star



like blooms. **Pentas** are another nice choice, ranging from a rather compact 12 – 15 “, to the taller 18 – 24 “ varieties, in colors of bright red, deep red, lavender pink, violet, white and a red lace, that have been described by Norman Winters as the prettiest pentas in the market. **Verbenas** are available in a number of colors, and in a brand new variety called Homestead Carpet Red verbena, displaying a vibrant red, trailing, heat and drought tolerant plant that resists mildew blooming from spring to fall. Not so many years ago, **petunias** were considered our cool weather plants. Then came the waves, next came the tidal waves, and this year, Master Gardeners are offering easy waves – Coral Reef and Rosy

Dawn, and shock waves – Pink Vein and Purple. Bred closer to home are the Laura Bush red and pink petunias. All of these varieties will perform for us in late spring and early summer, with a trim in the hottest part of our summer for fall bloom.

For those who still have shady or partially shady areas in their gardens, a nice selection of hydrangeas, coleus, torenias and impatiens can provide color.

Many other delightful plants, both blooming and foliage plants, native plants, easy care roses, cacti and succulents, hanging baskets, herb pots and more, await the gardening public. Please visit the East Baton Rouge Master Gardeners Association Annual Plant Sale on May 9, 2009 from 8 am to 2 pm at Burden Center off Essen Lane.



### “Reflection in the Garden” Lunch Series

Noon to 1:00 PM in the  
Ione Burden Conference Center  
the first Monday of each month

Special guest speakers!  
Bring a brown bag lunch  
Drinks will be provided!

Jan 5	From Shade to Sun: Retrofitting Your Gardens After Gustav	Dan Gill
Feb 2	Fantastic Low Maintenance Roses	BRRS members
Mar 2	Spectacular New Warm-season Annuals for 2009	Allen Ownings
Apr 6	Growing Tomatoes Your Neighbor Will Envy	Pat Hegwood
May 4	Eating Healthy from the Garden	Judy Myhand
June 1	Backyard Fruit for Food and Fun	Charlie Johnson
July 6	Crape Myrtles—Golden Oldies and New Varieties that Rock	Allen Ownings
Aug 3	Spice Up Your World with Gingers	Jeff Kuehny
Sept 14	How to Brighten Your Landscape for Fall and Winter	Bob Mirabello
Oct 5	Those Sultry Gardens of the Deep South	Neil Odenwald
Nov 2	Birds Bees Shrubs and Trees	Tom Pope
Dec 7	Holiday Decorating from Garden to Home	TBA

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### *Burden Horticulture Society*

BHS is a 501 (c) 5 non-profit organization recently formed to promote, support, and expand the use of the LSU AgCenter's Burden Center. It operates under the auspices of the LSU Foundation solely for educational and fundraising purposes. Partnering with other gardening and outdoor organizations, plus the Rural Life Museum, we strive to offer informative opportunities for the public and to increase awareness of this local resource.

Your gift will allow us to develop a Master Plan for Burden Center and will help sponsor special educational events.

Please mail to:                      Burden Horticulture Society  
    4560 Essen lane  
    Baton Rouge, LA 70809

*B*urden Horticulture Society  
4560 Essen Lane  
Baton Rouge, LA 70809



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR BHS SPECIAL  
EVENTS**

Camellia Day (February 28, 2009)

Azalea Stroll (March 15, 2009)

Afternoon of Roses (April 19, 2009)

Gingers and Sale (August 15, 2009)

Trees and Trails Ribbon Cutting (October 2009)

Hayrides and Pumpkin Patch (October 2009)

Wine and Roses (October 2009)