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| |  | | --- | | The following historical background for the Garden Project was prepared in 2019 by a former member of the SH Curatorial Staff, Lana Dubin, before she left to work at the Tenement Museum in New York City.  In 1880, Theodore Roosevelt purchased 155 acres of farm land in Oyster Bay, New York, to build a homestead for his new bride, Alice Hathaway Lee. Roosevelt’s new property consisted of “agricultural fields of buckwheat and corn, pastures for grazing, an asparagus bed, an orchard, woodlands, beach, and an old farm barn.” Shortly after his purchase of the property, TR sold 68 acres to family members.  Roosevelt intended on maintaining his property’s rural character as a working farm, so the first building he commissioned was a stable and lodge. Alice died in 1884 before Theodore’s plans were fully realized, and Roosevelt left his sister, Anna Roosevelt Cowles or "Bamie," in charge of the construction of his new home and his new infant daughter.  Historic photographs show that after the home was completed in 1885, the surrounding area completely lacked vegetation. According to correspondence between Roosevelt and Bamie, and Theodore Jr.’s recollection, Bamie began planting “almost immediately after the completion of the house.”  Roosevelt remarried, and returned to Sagamore Hill with his second wife, Edith Kermit Carow, in 1887.  Kathleen Dalton writes in the Historic Resource Study that, “a shared interest in nature was one of the bonds that made Roosevelt’s second marriage especially happy. He and his wife, Edith, wanted to make a beautiful spot even more lovely,” so they “expanded the original tree plantings put in by Bamie in 1885-86 and added much landscaping of their own.” Historic photographs verify that by the “early 1890’s these plants were well established.”  Once Theodore and Edith were settled into their new home, they turned their attention to cultivating the grounds. Fields were sown to the south, east, and far north of the house. Pastures of hay and clover were used to feed livestock. An orchard of apple, pear, peach, plum, and cherry trees was located near the pastures to the east of the home. Most significant was the large 3.2-acre flower and vegetable garden to the northeast of the house that “provided all the fruits and vegetables for the rapidly growing family.” Depending on the year, between twenty and forty of the fifty-five acres of non-wooded viable land were cultivated. These fields, pastures, orchard, and garden were “separated by rustic wooden rail fences that were so expansive that only the woodlands formed their boundary far in the distance.”  After Edith’s death in 1948, Sagamore Hill was purchased by the Roosevelt Memorial Association (RMA), and the landscape was transformed from a working farm to a manicured park.    The most dramatic landscape change was the installation of a paved entry drive and visitor parking lot in 1953, bisecting the historic flower and vegetable garden and leaving fragmented pieces to the east and west. Historic structures such as arbors, frames, gates, and fences were removed, and in September 1958, the TRA purchased a “wood timber gazebo and installed the structure west of the entry drive at the end of the truncated central path of the historic garden.” This gazebo and the planting of non-historic trees and shrubs destroyed all references to a productive landscape and instead implied that the garden was “primarily decoration for a restful, covered seating area and [was] not actively maintained to provide food and recreation opportunities.”  **Garden Project Objective**  The aim of this project is to restore approximately a quarter acre of flower and vegetable garden from the edge of the parking lot west to the Garden Shed to help interpret Sagamore Hill as a family home and working agriculture landscape. In preparation for rehabilitating portions of the flower and vegetable gardens primary source documents, oral histories, and photographs should be referenced, and an archaeological survey should be conducted to identify the original foot print of the garden, garden paths, and fence lines. Paths, beds, plant material, fence lines, structures, and existing historic trees and shrubs should all be incorporated in a comprehensive rehabilitation plan.  **Historic Garden Update – Lana Dubin** | |

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| |  | | --- | | **Area outlined in blue identifies boundaries of the original garden. Area in red indicates the proposed garden.**  Through the initiative of Susan Sarna and the Sagamore Hill Curatorial Staff the resurrection of Garden Restoration was proposed to the Theodore Roosevelt Legacy Partnership (TRLP) Board, which agreed to offer financial and organizational support.  A subcommittee of the TRLP Board composed of Sandra Coudert Graham, Margaret Stacey, Rick Elinson, and Donna Oom is organizing the Project. In looking at the Project, the TRLP will need to hire a professional horticulturist who would oversee volunteers working on setting up and maintaining the Garden. The Garden Subcommittee has identified some possible contractors. Funding will be provided by the TRLP through the Coudert Foundation and public donations.  **Garden Status During Coronavirus**  The trees have been removed. A National Park Service archaeologist was scheduled to check the paths for the garden; however, due to COVID-19, the NPS will not authorize travel unless it's an emergency. Therefore, the archaeological study has been pushed back to Spring 2021. The TRLP, Jonathan Parker (Park Superintendent), and Susan Sarna, (Curator and Cultural Resources), will come up with work options during this lag time. Based on what we know, material for the paths will be customized as to color and appearance (maybe to look like oyster shells). It is expected that once we get started the entire area should be dug up and the survey lines and paths laid out within a two-week period. During construction there could be a sign identifying the project as Edith’s Garden. Since this is an open area, we will need to limit access without making it look like a construction site.  Once completed the Garden could be open for interpretive tours. The TRLP is looking forward to resuming work on the Garden Project site once the NPS authorizes travel for the archaeologist.  Anyone interested in participating on this project should contact Bill Reed at [**TRlegacypartnership@gmail.com**](mailto:TRlegacypartnership@gmail.com). | |