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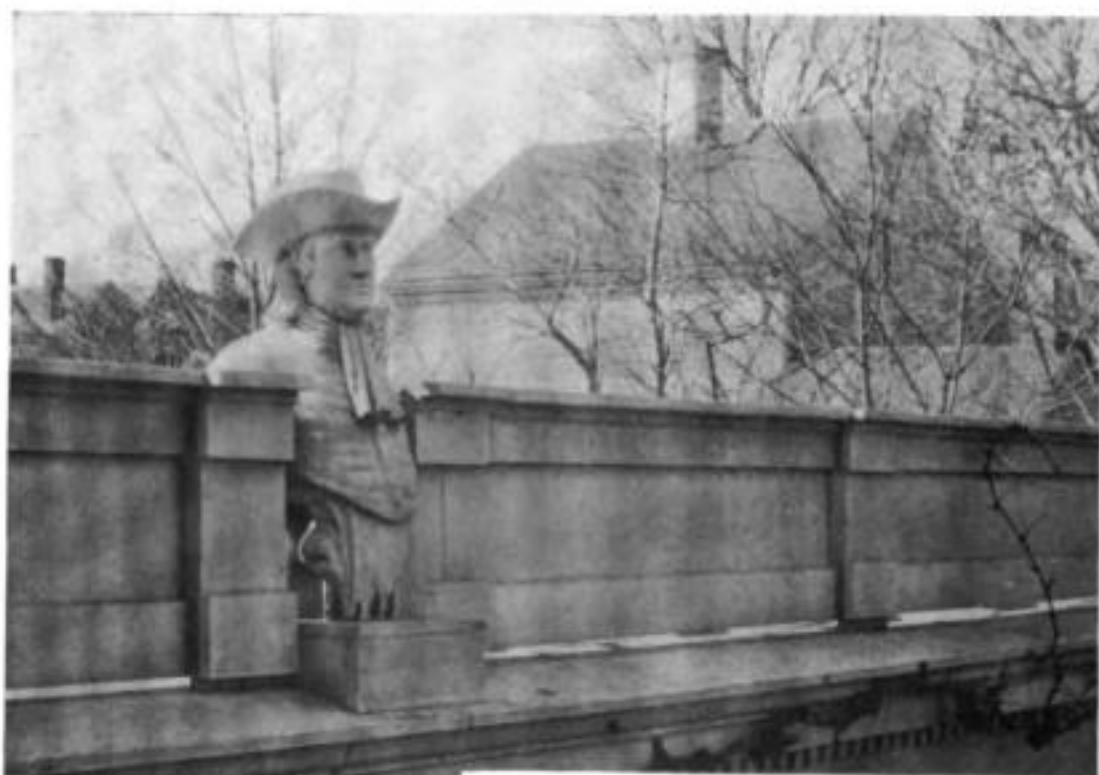
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A FIGURE-HEAD ON THE STABLE, SANFORD PLACE

OF those fragments of the state of Massachusetts which lie detached from the mainland off the southern coast of Cape Cod, only one has harbored a community of sufficient size and individuality to entitle it to be named with the more important towns of the mainland. That fragment is the island of Nantucket, and its largest settlement, known as the town of Nantucket, has always been associated in the early history of New England with the famous maritime countries of the Old World. In those days the frigates, merchantmen and whalers of Salem and Newburyport, New Bedford and Nantucket, were as well known in foreign ports as the ships of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia; and the world's trade looked upon these towns of the early settlement as important centers in its ganglia of production and carrying. This glory has for-

TWO NANTUCKET GARDENS

BY

ARTHUR A. SHURTLEFF.

saken the lesser towns until their names are now recorded only in shipping lists and ledgers which have been mouldering for half a century in empty warehouses and dismantled offices.

The decay of commerce in a community preserves its antiquities. New York and Boston have few landmarks to show of the times when they were rivals of Nantucket; but Nantucket, Salem, Newburyport and New Bedford remain to-day in many respects unchanged in appearance since trade languished in them. It is consequently in these towns that we find examples of streets, houses, gardens, and a thousand other things which pleased our ancestors and which now please us on account of their quaintness and their associations. The student of gardens who is not a worshipper of these qualities will find but little to interest him in the ruined gardens



GENERAL VIEW OF NANTUCKET



MAIN PATH, *Looking toward the Stable Yard*

SANFORD PLACE

of Nantucket, for there are present in them no striking characteristics of design or excellencies of architectural detail which can compare with many a garden upon the mainland.

Nantucket was the home of seafaring men. The moneys which built her houses were

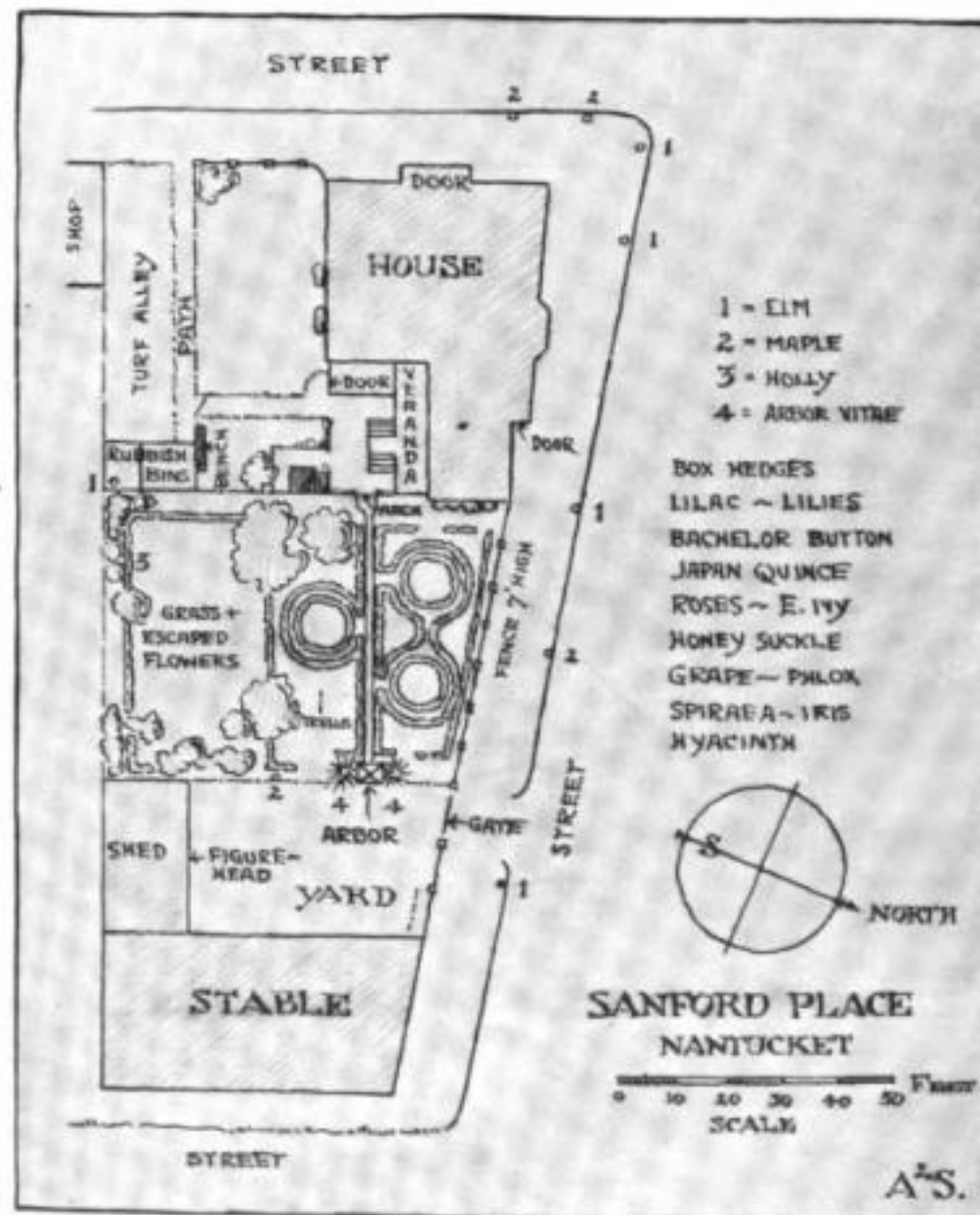
earned upon the high seas, and her carpenters were skilled in ship framing and in figurehead carving. It is not strange, therefore, that the houses of the captains were shiplike,—staunch, modestly small, prettily paneled and corniced, and neat to the last degree. They were placed



THE SANFORD PLACE FROM THE STREET

NANTUCKET

closely together like ships in a haven, and their owners looked with unenvious eyes upon the acres of unoccupied moorland in the interior of the island. The maritime interests of the people and the unproductive soil gave little encouragement to farming. So sterile was the soil that many garden plots were supplied with rich earth brought in ships from the fallow lands across the water to the north. However it may be explained, Nantucket was apparently deficient in



PLAN OF THE SANFORD PLACE

gardens as compared with contemporary towns upon the coast of the mainland, if we are to take as evidence the singular dearth of gardens existing to-day. Disappointing though Nantucket gardens are in point of numbers, they possess the charm of the best New England gardens to a remarkable degree. This is to be attributed perhaps to the mildness of the island's climate which allows many of the less hardy plants a more luxuriant growth than is possible upon the



ALONG THE MAIN PATH



SANFORD PLACE

mainland and gives a longer life to arbors, and other structures of wood. It is also to be attributed to the care with which these gardens have been maintained, and their freedom from modern innovations, like the cast-iron vase and plants with foliage of violent color contrast. Their designers seem to have realized the value of a direct relation between the garden and the house, and the effectiveness of a formal design in the garden itself. The rectangular shape of the land about the house and the rectangular subdivision of the house into rooms, suggested a general design for the garden which hardly could be improved. The garden was treated as a modified extension of the house-plan in which clipped box edging, clearly defined walks, symmetrically placed arbors and vine-clad fences repeated the structure and ornaments of the indoor dwelling. Distracting views of adjoining houses and traffic were screened from sight by high boundary fences, walls, and plantations which extended the privacy of the house into the garden. A further degree of seclusion was attained by plantations of apple and pear trees which tempered the light from the sky without producing a shade too dense for the thrifty

growth of verdure beneath. These trees also furnished a display of blossoms in May which almost outrivalled the later flowers of summer. There can be but little doubt that the gardens served a real usefulness in the family life, if we are to accept as evidence the presence of arbors and benches which afford agreeable resting places while offering effective vantage points for views of the garden. Better testimony of the gardens' favor in the family regard is evidenced by the mere fact of their existence to-day after a lapse of years, during which they would have been overgrown and obliterated had they not enjoyed constant and appreciative care. Destruction by the weather of wooden buildings is slow, and it can be arrested from year to year by renewal of shingles and clapboards; but the gardens fall so quickly a prey to exposure that, without the painstaking care of appreciation, they are likely to be lost as records and as places of delight. They belong to a period of wooden architecture, and therefore their arbors, benches, and terrace steps are frail and quickly fall to ruin. Indeed the most persisting objects in them are usually the edgings of box which often outlive the apparently more

permanent paths and low terraces of the garden. Happily there are hands which care for many of these gardens, and repair their ruins tenderly as they dwindle, taking delight in the generations of roses which have blossomed year after year for half a century or more in the same knot or bed.

The accompanying plans and photographs illustrate the Sanford and King gardens which are perhaps the most interesting of the older gardens on the island. Sad to say, like the majority of existing New England gardens, they were built at a comparatively recent period, the early part of the last century being the date ascribed to them. Fortunately there is evidence to support the tradition that they were copied from much older gardens then in their prime. A detailed description either of the design of these estates or their plantations would perhaps prove tiresome, but it may be profitable however to consider briefly a few of the more important features of the designs. Formality is evidently the first characteristic of the two gardens. This element was doubtless



THE SANFORD ROSE GARDEN IN WINTER

much less an esthetic object of the designers than an expedient of economy imposed upon them by the limited size of the gardens and their effective maintenance, as well as the ease of marking the designs upon the ground. The seclusion given the gardens by means of border screens which separate them from the street, from neighboring property, and even to a slight degree from the houses themselves, is also a noteworthy characteristic. In both

designs, however, there is little effort to screen the stable from the garden, and the only path connection between the house and stable is afforded by the garden footways. The economic value of the garden is also evidenced by the presence of fruit trees which were probably as much prized for their material yield as for their embellishment of the enclosure. The two plans also indicate the dependence



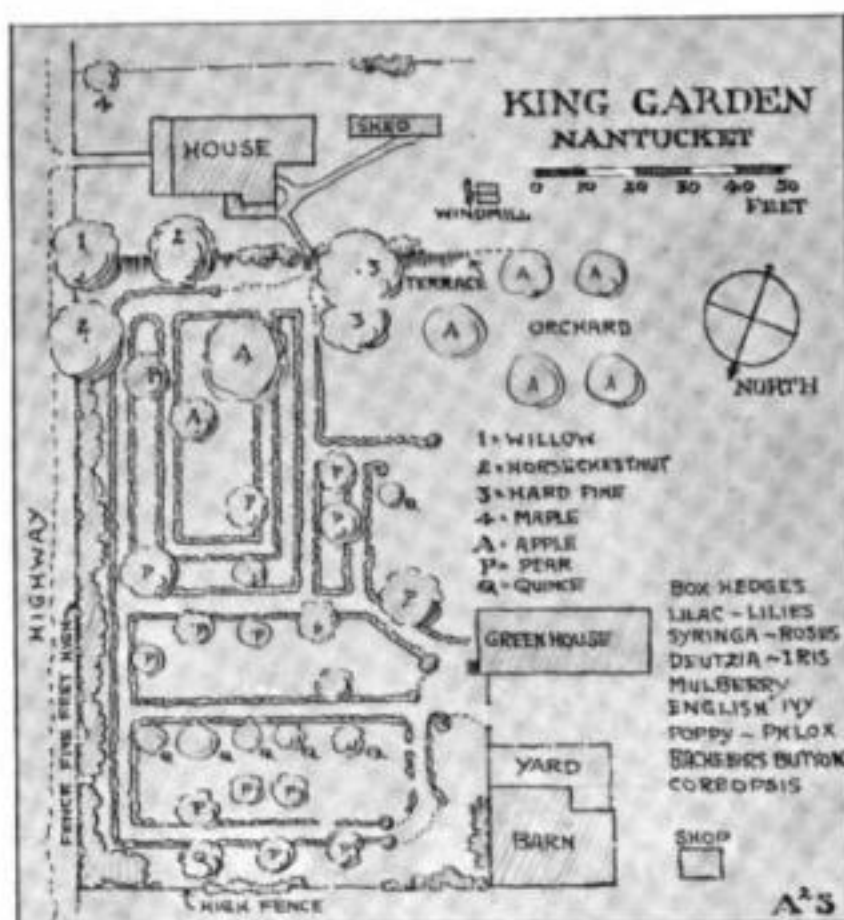
DIAGONAL VIEW OF ROSE GARDEN

SANFORD PLACE



IN THE GARDEN OF THE KING PLACE

Two Nantucket Gardens



PLAN OF THE KING PLACE

placed upon box hedges to mark off for the eye's pleasure the main outline of the garden's pattern and to give character to designs which without hedges would have rather



A WALK IN THE KING GARDEN

suffered than have been improved by the presence of flowers in the ill-defined panels between the paths. Indeed the only considerable architectural effect in the gardens



THE KING GARDEN FROM THE WINDMILL



THE PATH ALONG THE EAST SIDE



THE NORTH EXTREMITY

VIEWS IN THE KING GARDEN

NANTUCKET



DOOR YARDS

results from the use of this box plant in ribbons, strings and knobs. The absence of architectural objects like balustrades, fountains, sun-dials and statuary, is characteristic of the designs, and is perhaps difficult to explain when it is considered how fond were the early architects of colonnades, intricate cornices, porticos, elaborate newel-posts, alcoves, and delicately traced mantels. Perhaps there was wisdom in treating the garden in a manner so simple because it was thus removed from rivalry with the house, and could be the more completely devoted to a display of forms and surfaces seen at their best under conditions of exposure which were not favorable to the permanence of wooden ornaments. The names of a few of the more



NANTUCKET

important plants which appear in the gardens are entered upon the plans.

Much might be written of the dooryards of Nantucket, since this part of the typical estate seems usually to have enjoyed much more care than the little rectangle of open land behind the dwelling. The white palings of the front fence upon the one side, the lively glitter of window panes upon the other, and the constant interest of passing in the street earned for the few square yards of turf at either side of the front door steps the chief regard of the family. These door yards, rather than the gardens, are usually the most attractive part of the grounds about the homestead, and one to which the casual visitor is likely to attribute a great share of Nantucket's charm.



East Entrance Sanford Garden