

The Eight Founding Clubs of the Garden Club of Virginia

Featuring the Albemarle Garden Club

Excerpts from Follow the Green Arrow I

In the search for the perfect title several husbands made recommendations with tongue in and out of cheek. The husband of a former president suggested, "In the beginning, there was The Garden Club of Virginia," adding, "Well, I'll tell you one thing of them, there shall be no end!" In appreciation for the certainty of his second statement, we'll use his first and start with: In the beginning, there were eight garden clubs that came together in 1920 to found the GCV. What they were and what they had done, they brought to this formation council. Their early years are of interest. So in the order of their founding dates let's see how they began and how they continued to 1920.

ALBEMARLE's history begins: "On October 16, 1913, nine ladies met at Morven, the home of Mrs. Samuel H. Marshall, to form a garden club." Mrs. Marshall became its first president.

In 1915 is recorded the first garden restoration, the Schele de Vere Garden, one of the old walled gardens on the East Lawn of the University of Virginia. (It was named for the Modern Languages professor who lived in this Pavilion 4.) For many years Albemarle maintained this garden, presenting it as "a glimpse of a garden of Thomas Jefferson's day."

"The study and culture of flowers and the study of landscape gardening for which the club was formed were put aside in 1918, and all energies were devoted to the production and conservation of food because our country was at war." A stall was rented in the Charlottesville Curb Market, and, bi-weekly, members sold their vegetables, fruits, flowers, butter, cottage cheese, and eggs, the proceeds used "to pay an extra district nurse through the influenza epidemic, to maintain a French orphan for several years, and to send money for the devastated gardens of France."