

McFarland Revisited

By James Delahanty, April, 2001

Roses of the World in Color

J. Horace McFarland. (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1936).

Available through used bookstores on the Internet.



'Mrs. John Laing'
(HP) reproduced from
McFarland

Recently I purchased a copy of McFarland's '**Roses of the World in Color**.' Acclaimed as 'the first authentic color book of roses' (Sean McCann), the book remains eminently readable and viewable some sixty-five years after its initial publication. McFarland was the owner and operator of the Mount Pleasant Press in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and the typography and illustrations in the book were from his company. Nor did his talents stop at roses and color printing: he was an environmentalist before the word was coined, a founder and supporter of the National Parks, an avid civic beautification activist, and political agitator of some rare talent. He edited the Rose Annuals of the American Rose Society for nearly thirty years.

The book '**Roses of the World**' appeared in his late seventies. His energy level must have diminished, but you could not tell that from the passion exhibited for roses and rosarians in the text. The plan of the book was not very complicated: One and half pages of Introduction, four pages of rose history and nine pages of rose cultivation preceded 288 pages of rose pictures and text, including 240 color photographs.

The Introduction established that the motto of the American Rose Society and the author were identical: "A rose for every home, a bush for every garden." The desire was to produce a concise dictionary of roses suitable for widespread growing as well as to include roses of dominant historical importance. The rose history focuses on the creation of the Hybrid Tea class of roses, the introduction of the orange-yellow strain into hybrid teas by Joseph Pernet-Ducher, and the introduction of *rosa multiflora* and *wichuraiana* into the modern American rose picture. The cultivation section discusses choosing roses, planting roses and post planting care in the form of 'dusting' and spraying (once a year); the evils particularly mentioned are aphids, powdery mildew, and blackspot. If these sections are somewhat perfunctory, it is seemingly because the author wants to get on with the subject of individual roses.

The dictionary section is organized in a quasi-alphabetical sequence; considerations of space and illustrations sometimes compromise the alphabetical sequence, but not enough to undermine the basic structure of the book. Exclusive of species roses, 522 roses are mentioned and judged as worthy of inclusion; there are 240 color illustrations, 24 black and white photographs illustrating various rose gardens (including one labeled "NOT an ideal") as well as 17 or so black and white photographs of individual roses and one picture of a rose hybridizer: J. Pernet-Ducher for whose roses McFarland admits a preference. Whatever mute professions of impartiality and distance might have been the goal of the author, the passion for roses and individual roses and rosarians is impossible to disguise. And the capacity for arousing enthusiasm and the desire for possession in the reader has not faded with the intervening years. A look at the picture of 'Nigrette,' for example, must have fostered the desire to restore this rose to commerce, even aside from any preservationist considerations. It is hard to judge photographs that are over sixty years old; suffice to say that many of the photos arouse the desire to see the rose in actuality, touch the petals and foliage, and inhale the promised fragrances. McFarland's tour de force is all the more remarkable when you consider that **Modern Roses** (1930) had identified some 2511 roses in commerce. (For comparative purposes, the current Official Guide to Exhibition Names lists about 25,000 roses and the "Combined Rose List 2001" lists some 12,519 roses and cultivars.)

The usual format is to list the name of the rose, its designated class, the hybridizer and the year of hybridization, and the introducer to the American market with a later date. A sentence or two describing the colors and other characteristics of the particular rose completes the entry. This apparently rigid format does not confine McFarland to the role of some pallid and neutral companion during the journey through the roses.

He can be generous in his praise: 'Etoile de Holland' has set the 'standard of excellence' against which red roses must be judged. 'Frau Karl Druschki' is simply the 'world's greatest white rose to date.' 'Gruss an Aachen' represents the 'most useful of all the Polyanthas so far.' 'Isobel' delights as 'one of the most exquisite of roses, distinguished by the three-day variation in color beauty, given as each flower unfolds from the tightly rolled bud into the open bloom.'

McFarland can be dismissive: 'Veilchenblau'-which by virtue of the shortcomings of name and color he could only mention with 'execration.' Or 'Eugene Jacquet' which he found 'not very pleasing in the garden.' Or 'Crimson Champion:' This rose was not retained 'in commerce probably because of its poor growing habit.'

He can be confident enough in his printer's art to note that 'Dainty Bess' 'defies the printer's art.' And that the two-toned beauty of 'Betty Uprichard' is 'almost unreproducible.'

McFarland adds tidbits of information about particular roses: We learn that 'Tom Thumb' should be kept away from rich soil, that 'Reverend Page-Robert's was harmed by over-propagation, and that 'Paul's Lemon Pillar' will 'not endure' cutting back.

McFarland is fairly sensitive to the nuances of names. He regards 'Peaches and Cream' as having an 'absurd' name and expresses the same opinion with regard to 'Imperial Potentate;' but 'Ghislaine de Feligonde', on the other hand, can be easily pronounced after one trial (maybe by McFarland). 'Souvenir de Alexandre Bernaix' has a 'long and uneuphonious' name; 'Gloire de Chedane-Guinoisseau' has a 'complicated' name but is 'indispensable' in the garden." Only the name of 'Mme Gregoire Staechelin' has stopped its 'sweeping the rose-world' with its completely unique value and beauty as a

climber. Presumably, 'Mme deSancy de Parabere' did not suffer from a similar nominal disability.

Of course, even a master can be in error. Even though he dubs 'Mrs. A. R. Barraclough' as a 'rose aristocrat,' declares 'Mrs. Dunlop Best' to be a 'necessity' in the garden, and expresses 'enthusiasm' for 'Springtime,' none remains in commerce today. And even a master can coin clunky phrases; he notes that 'Blaze' 'started up like a rocket and almost came down like a stick' and that 'If a rose can said to ring a bell, 'Carillon' is that rose.'" But minor errors and prose clunkers aside, McFarland is a grand companion on a survey through the roses available in the first third of the last century. A quick search on a popular used book site on the Internet reveals that some 60 copies of the book, at prices ranging from five to a hundred dollars, were easily available.



*'Leonard Barron' (HT) reproduced
from McFarland*

II

The easy availability of the book raised the question in my mind as to the ease of availability of the roses mentioned in **Roses of the World in Color.**

Armed with a copy of the "Combined Rose List 2000," I checked to see which roses were still in commerce and whether they could be easily obtained. I differentiated between roses 'Widely Available' and those merely 'Available' through specialist nurseries for purposes of making a distinction, 'Widely Available' was defined as being listed in at least six nurseries on two continents; all other roses were divided into 'Available' or 'Not in commerce.'. Since the usual rule of delineation's is that the most fertile territory is the area where the distinctions clash, those cases where the data conflicted were examined with some care. The most obvious of these would be where there were more than six nurseries but only on one continent, or where the number of nurseries was under six, but two or more continents were represented. There was just one instance of more than six nurseries but only on one continent; that case involved 'Black Boy,' a rose that is widespread in Australia and New Zealand (16 nurseries offer it), but not offered elsewhere.

On the other side of the axis, there were five cases in which fewer than six nurseries offering the rose spanned three continents and 30 cases in which fewer than six nurseries spanned at least two continents. The three continent category of five included the roses 'Cecil' and 'Heinrich Wendland,' where three nurseries on three different continents offered the rose in question. The thirty cases involving two continents included more than half where the number of offering nurseries was only two or three in number. By no stretch of the imagination can one or two nurseries on a continent be considered 'widely available.

The more general question of availability indicates that of the 522 roses mentioned by McFarland (exclusive of species roses), 396 are currently available in commerce; of those number 174 are widely available by the definition given in the previous paragraph. Two hundred and twenty-six roses mentioned or 43% of the roses in question are not available through regular commercial channels. Of course, some of the roses not available in commerce might be available through private non-commercial channels or through associations with public or private gardens or collections. And, it is also true that some roses move in and out of commerce with great rapidity characteristic of modern roses as well. Thus, 'Tip-Top' (a 1909 Polyantha by Lambert), which was available within the last decade, is not currently available commercially, although cuttings can be obtained from private rosarians.

Of the 396 roses available, 174 were designated as widely available and 122 as available only through diligence in searching at specialized nurseries. Still, the precariousness of the availability factor can be easily demonstrated; the less widely available rose number would be significantly reduced were not Vintage and Sequoia nurseries carrying them. In over 70 cases the less widely available roses are available only in the United States at either or both Vintage and Sequoia nurseries. In fact, of the total 396 roses still in commerce from **Roses of the World in Color**, 233 are carried by Vintage and 69 by Sequoia. (In the case of the Vintage numbers, it should be realized that in many cases the rose is carried on a custom budding basis which can delay the acquisition of the rose up to two years.) Nevertheless, the Vintage numbers are impressive, representing some 45% of the roses discussed in '**Roses of the World in Color**.' There is a temptation to speculate that the numbers are a product of a specific intent to garner roses associated with the McFarland book, especially since the Vintage percentage of roses from another later less well known book - **Roses Illustrated** by Morrie Sharp and Dean Collins (Portland, Or, Western Trail Publishers, 1952)-is only 35%; however, it is more likely that the numbers are an incidental byproduct of collecting and preserving older roses as the primary activity, or as an accidental byproduct of that endeavor. Gregg Lowery, of Vintage Gardens, disavowed any specific intent to collect the roses listed in McFarland's books, but noted that the pictures were sufficiently 'seared in our consciousness' to create an inability to pass up the opportunity to acquire a rose shown in McFarland's book. The Vintage numbers hold up as exemplary upon a consideration of the roses available at major public rose gardens in California.

The San Jose Heritage Rose Garden carries (according to a 1999 catalog) 194 of the roses mentioned in **Roses of the World in Color**. On a walk-through of Huntington Rose Gardens, some 122 were espied. And Descanso revealed 66 in a similar walk-through. (A list of the roses available for viewing at Descanso and Huntington will be placed on the Ventura County Rose Society web site.) The private garden of Kim Rupert in Santa Clarita contains over forty of the roses mentioned McFarland's classic.

Whether or not the staying power of the roses mentioned by McFarland is a tribute to his perspicacity in spotting roses of great and enduring character, or to the rules of chance involved in citing nearly a quarter of the roses then in commerce with a large number already having displayed durability (those from the 19th century), there is no question that today's rosarian doubly benefits from the continuing existence of so many of the roses he cited as well as the continued availability of his book.

III -- A Modest Proposal

In the millennial year under the auspices of the World Federation of Roses a Specialized Conservation Committee was formed with the mission of preserving the 'genetic diversity which currently exists within the genus *Rosa* by identifying rare species and cultivars and ensuring that they are propagated and grown at multiple locations worldwide.' The group is committed to creating a master database of

the roses in both public and private rose gardens with a view to the ultimate work of acting as a conservator of the world's roses. Nor should the work of private and public entities in preserving the past go unrecognized.

Yet, while the work of preserving roses from the 19th century continues, Descanso Gardens has created a rose bed of what it calls Vintage Hybrid Teas and labels them as the 'most in danger of extinction.' Even the work of a contemporary hybridizer such as Jack Christensen can move out of commerce quickly-over a third of the roses he has hybridized are already listed as no longer in commerce or in his pungent phrase-'no longer sold.'

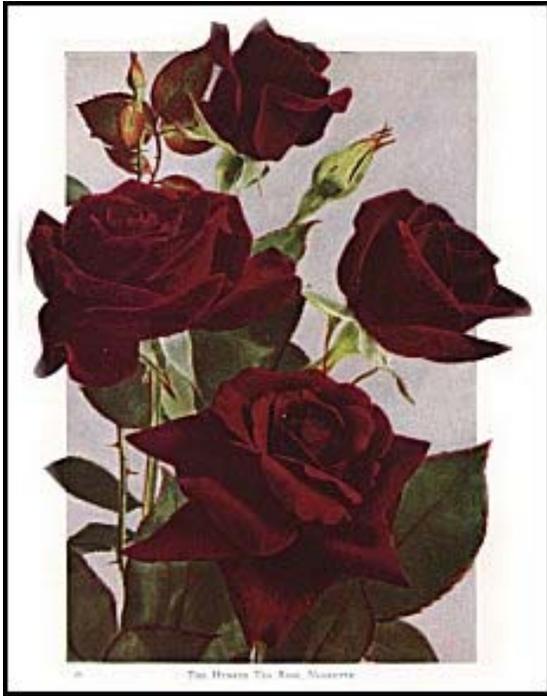
While macrocosmic efforts are being made to preserve what is available at the world's greatest resources of roses, it may not be amiss to think of possible actions on a microcosmic level. This thought has been inspired by the work of some of the rosarians on the VenturaRose listserv. An effort is being made to determine which roses actually bloom over the spring, summer, and early fall months on a regular schedule. The effort is being coordinated by Lynnette Buchanan-Roth, who is collecting the data with a view to producing a list of dependable roses for the rosarians within the growing areas of the Ventura Rose Society. At the beginning of the month, the reporters send her a list of the roses growing in their gardens with a note as to the class of the rose as well as whether the rose constitutes a new planting or an older one. The speed of the personal computer and the reality of ample storage space enable this activity.

As indicated, the collection of data is partially made possible by the availability of storage space through the advent of the personal computer. But it also gives rise to other possibilities. Possibly, on a district wide basis or even just local rose society basis, data could be collected as to the roses in the gardens of members with a view to preserving and protecting rare cultivars and ensuring their survival. The options available through the collection of such data, could prevent the irreparable loss of valuable plants as well as ensuring that survival would be deliberate and planned rather than the work of dedicated individuals or relying on the memory and grace of people in the process of great life changes as they age, relocate, and weary of the tasks associated with maintaining large numbers of roses. There could be a plant adoption process, or a program of assistance to those nurturing valued cultivars under difficult personal circumstances, or a program of donation to the District itself of cultivars, cuttings, or grafts as part of the general program of preservation and conservation. The District Offices could act as a clearinghouse for the information and the general programs. Gardeners with valuable and distinctive cultivars could be encouraged to register the contents of their garden with the District as well as with such entities as www.helpmefind.com or a similar agency. This is one of the points in which the federal/local structure of the American Rose Society and the local societies and Districts could allow for a variety of approaches in each entity appropriate for the particular District and/or society.

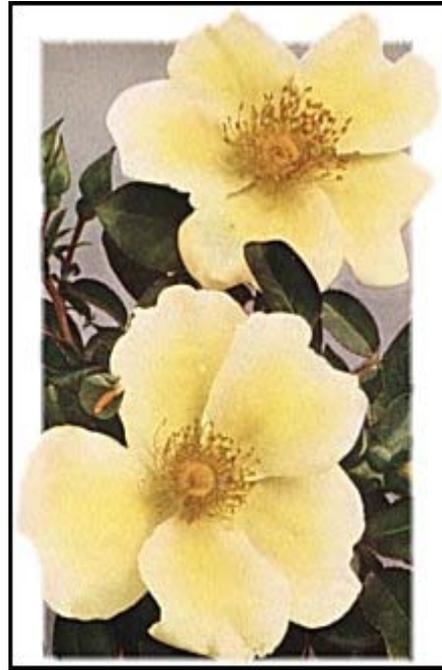
That there might be incidental benefits attached to such a program is easily apparent, if only to foster any kind of rapprochement between whatever dolours exist between those primarily interested in Heritage roses and those interested in more modern roses. Recent and less recent roses of yesterday are simply the Heritage of tomorrow. And, of course, it would be a tremendous service to the future even if only a few roses are saved and the diversity of roses maintained or expanded.

Certainly McFarland would actively campaign for any program benefiting the genus *Rosa*.

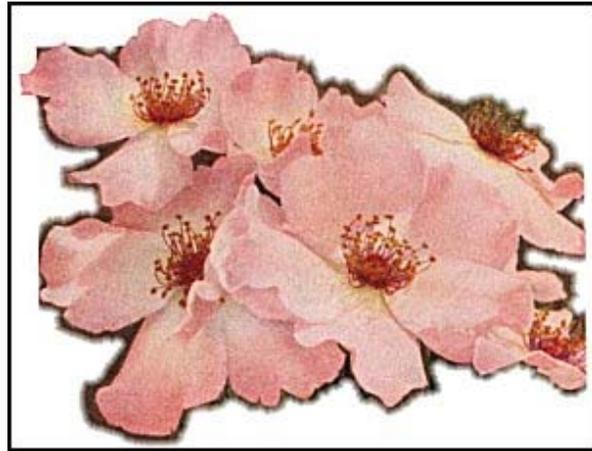
-- Jim D, Sherman Oaks, CA



Nigrette (HT) reproduced from McFarland



'Mermaid' (Hb) reproduced from McFarland



'Dainty Bess' (HT) reproduced from McFarland

Where Are They Now?

The Huntington Library and Botanical Garden, San Marino, CA

Huntington Rose Gardens has 122 of the roses mentioned in McFarland's 'Roses of the World in Color.' Of these, 15 are roses not to be found in the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden and are marked with a plus sign '+' and 78 are not to be found at Descanso Gardens and are marked with an asterisk (*).

Agnes *	Etoile de Holland *	Mrs. Wakefield Christie-Miller *
Amelia Earhart	Etoile de Lyon *	Mrs. John Laing *
Angels Mateu *	Eugene E. Marlitt *	Mrs. Pierre du Pont *
Antoine Rivoire *	Feu Joseph Looymons *	Mrs. Sam McCredy
Autumn *	F. J. Grootendorst *	New Dan
Barcelona *	Francois Juranville *	Night *
Better Times * +	General John Pershing * +	Ophelia
Belle of Portugal *	General Jacqueminot *	Orleans *
Betty Uprichard * +	Gloria Mundi *	Padre *
Cecil *	General MacArthur *	Paul Neyron
Chateau de Clos Vougeot *	Gruss an Aachen *	Paul's Scarlet Climber * +
Christopher Stone *	Gruss an Coburg *	Perle des Jardins
Comtesse du Cayla	Gruss an Teplitz *	Permanent Wave *
Climbing American Beauty * +	Hadly *	Papa Gontier * +
Columbia *	Hortolanus Budde *	Pink Grootendoorst
Comtesse Vandal	Irish Elegance *	President Herbert Hoover *
Comtesse du Murinais	Isobel *	Paul's' Lemon Pillar *
Bloomfield Abundance * +	Innocence *	Radiance
Bloomfield Dainty * +	Joanna Hill *	Red Radiance
Breeze Hill	Kaiserin Auguste Viktoria *	Rapture *
Briarcliff *	Killarney	Red Talisman *
Blanc Double de Coubert *	Kitty Kininmonth *	Sarah Van Fleet * +
Cameo *	Lady Alice Stanley *	Saturnia *
Condesa de Sastago	Lady Hillingdon	Schneezweg *
Crimson Glory *	Lafayette *	Shot Silk *
Crimson Queen *	Los Angeles	Snowbird
Dame Edith Helen	Lyon Rose *	Signora *
Dainty Bess	Mermaid *	Soeur Therese
Danae	Mlle Franziska Kruger	Summer Snow *
Dazla *	Miss Rowena Thom *	Talisman
Dorothy Perkins *	Mlle Cecile Brunner	Trier *
Dr. Van Fleet * +	Mme Jules Bouche	Topaz * +
Duchess of Atholl * +	Mme Leon Pain * +	Ulrich Brunner *
Ducher *	Mme Caroline Testout *	Veilchenblau *
Duchesse de Brabant	Mme Butterfly *	Victoria Harrington *
Eclipse *	Mme Edouard Herriot *	Ville de Paris *
Editor McFarland *	Mme Gregoire Staechelin	William R. Smith * +
Else Poulsen	Mrs. Aaron Ward	Will Rogers *
Ellen Poulsen	Mrs Charles Bell *	York & Lancaster *
Evangeline *	Mrs Herbert Stevens *	Zepherine Drouhin
Etoile de Feu *	Mrs. Lovell Swisher *	

DESCANSO GARDENS, La Crescenta, CA

Descanso Gardens has 66 of the roses mentioned in McFarland's '**Roses of the World in Color.**' Fifteen of these roses are not in the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden and are marked with a plus sign (+); twenty-seven of the roses are not in the Huntington and are marked with an asterisk (*).

Albertine * +	Ellen Poulsen	Mme de Sancy de Parabere *
Alberic Barbier *	Frau Karl Druschki *	Mme Gregoire Staechelin
Alida Lovett * +	Ghislaine de Feligonde * +	Mrs. Aaron Ward
American Beauty * +	Golden Moss *	Mrs. Sam McCredy
American Pillar *	Gloire de Dijon *	Nevada * +
Belle of Portugal	Gruss an Coburg	New Dawn +
Breeze Hill +	Henry Nevard *	Ophelia
Black Boy * +	Hermosa *	Paul Neyron
Captain Christy *	Killarney	Perle des Jardins
Cameo	La France *	Radiance
Catalonia *	Lady Hillingdon	Red Radiance +
Comtesse du Cayla	Lady Ursula *	Reve D'Or *
Comtesse Vandal	Leontine Gervais * +	Ruskin * +
Comtesse du Marinais	Long John Silver * +	Snowbird
Condesa de Sastago	Los Angeles	Soeur Therese
Dame Edith Helen	Lorraine Lee *	Sunny South *
Dainty Bess	Magna Charta *	Talisman
Danae	Marechal Niel *	William Allan Richardson *
Ducher	Max Graf *	York & Lancaster
Duchesse de Brabant	Mlle Franziska Kruger	Yvonne Rabier * +
Eblouissant * +	Mlle Cecile Brunner	Zepherine Drouhin +
Else Poulsen	Mme Jules Bouche	

THE SAN JOSE HERITAGE ROSE GARDEN, San Jose, CA

The San Jose Heritage Rose Garden has 83 roses not available at either the Huntington or Descanso in addition to another 111 roses also available at either of the other two gardens.