

Coming Spring

By Betty Lauria*

*Cool is the breeze upon my cheek
Happiness, the feel of grass beneath my feet
Hark! to the sound of returning birds
Hear the chime of a distant church.*

*Sweet is the laughter of a happy child
Boys having fun, really wild
All my cares fade far away
As coming spring I see each day.
God is there in his heaven above
He gives us hearts so filled with love
All he asks that we be aware
All this love is nestled there.*

*The world is bright!
Even the stars that shine at night.
We all should care about those we meet
Life is good!
Life is sweet!*

*Hold your own close in your arms
But, see that others come to no harm
Be there, where need is noted too!
All this love comes back to you.*

*Winter blues with all the cold
Is leaving soon so be quite bold
Take a walk and you shall meet
Happy people along your street.
Cool is the breeze upon my cheek
Soon the feel of grass beneath my feet
God in his heaven loves one and all
Be right with yourself and never fall.*

*Coming spring is here once more
Pleasing all with a great encore
Happiness is yours to greet
Happy people along your street.*

*The author is a senior citizen who lives at Calabash.

Spring Helps Orton Gardens Bloom Again

Warm weather this spring will help determine the extent of damage caused by January's record-breaking freeze at Orton Plantation, the third blow dealt to the historic gardens in the past two years.

The freeze of December 1983 caused some damage, but some of the plantings were restored in the spring and summer of last year. In September 1984, Hurricane Diana damaged additional areas of the gardens and some of the stately 300-year-old trees. A clean-up kept the gardens closed until March 1.

Despite the problems, many undamaged sections of the 250-year-old colonial era plantation will still delight visitors as they tour the grounds this year. Spring bulbs, such as daffodils and early Japanese azaleas will herald the color show. Visitors can also expect some shrubs and flowering plants to have survived the winter, with peach and cherry trees, forsythia and the first stages of dogwood and wisteria to create an impression of spring.

Located just off of Highway 133 north of Southport in Brunswick County, Orton Plantation and gardens is considered a floral showplace in North Carolina. Its history dates back to colonial days.

Orton Plantation was built in 1735 by Roger Moore who named the home in honor of his family estate in England. Moore, who later became better known as "King Roger," began the plantation era of Orton

soon after it was built and his rice fields and forests soon brought him great wealth.

Orton Plantation was featured in Dino De Laurentiis' movie "Firestarter," a production of his international film studios in Wilmington. It was Orton that attracted De Laurentiis to locate his movie studio in Wilmington, said Orton co-owner Kenneth M. Sprunt.

"The people who were producing the movie saw a picture of Orton Plantation on the cover of 'Southern Accents,' a magazine that was featuring the gardens in one of its issues," Sprunt said.

"They contacted us and we agreed to let them film here," Sprunt said.

In the film's fiery climactic finish, a two-dimensional replica of the Orton mansion burns to the ground. The replica was built on the plantation grounds south of the actual building.

Moore built the Orton mansion as a sturdy fortress with thick, brick walls loop-holed for firearms to repel Indian, pirate or Spanish invaders. These walls still stand in the center of a much larger Orton Plantation.

The plantation remained in the Moore family for a short period following his death in 1750. The property was inherited by his sons who soon sold it to Benjamin Smith, a colonial Army officer and aide to Gen. George Washington.

In 1840, Dr. Frederick Hill, who had purchased the property from Smith interests, added four huge col-

umns and a second story to Orton.

The Civil War brought another change in ownership and a military tone to the guest list. Thomas Miller, Orton's proprietor, entertained Confederate soldiers stationed at Fort Fisher and Fort Anderson. After the fall of Fort Fisher in 1864, Federals overran the plantation and Orton was used as a hospital for smallpox victims.

After that came a period of decadence in Orton's history. There was little activity or upkeep. Miller sold the plantation to Col. Kenneth Murchison, who passed it on to his son-in-law, the late James Sprunt. Wings were added to Orton in 1910 and the now-famous gardens were started under the Sprunt ownership.

Still owned by the Sprunt family, Orton now boasts many formal gardens, including Sun Garden, Scroll Garden and White Circle Garden. The grounds also include a Colonial cemetery, old rice fields, lagoons, a chapel and a Chinese crooked bridge where one can lose evil spirits that might be following them.

There is an admission charge to tour the gardens while children under six are admitted free.

While the house is not open to the public, its gardens and walkways overlooking the Brunswick River are open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. from March 1 to Sept. 1 and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Sept. 1 to Nov. 20.

Handful of Sand

is ready to
Celebrate Spring!

Featuring unique ladies' clothing in natural fabrics and beautiful spring colors.

JUST ARRIVED!

CEEB swimwear of Miami—many styles to flatter the mature figure with boy legs, shorts, skirts, built-in bras, tummy control panels. One- and two-piece. Sizes 8-20.

23 Causeway, Ocean Isle Beach
Phone 579-5065

© 1985 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON



Shallotte Fashions

MAIN ST. 754-9422
(Across From Post Office)

HOURS: 9:00-5:30 MON. THRU SAT.

- Fashion Dresses
- Casual Slacks
- Comfortable Tops
- Capri Pant Sets
- Flattering Swimwear and Mesh Cover-ups
- Shapely Shorts
- Fashion Jewelry



SHALLOTTE'S NEWEST LADIES READY-TO-WEAR

MASTERCARD & VISA WELCOME