

Southern saga: two ladies' tales

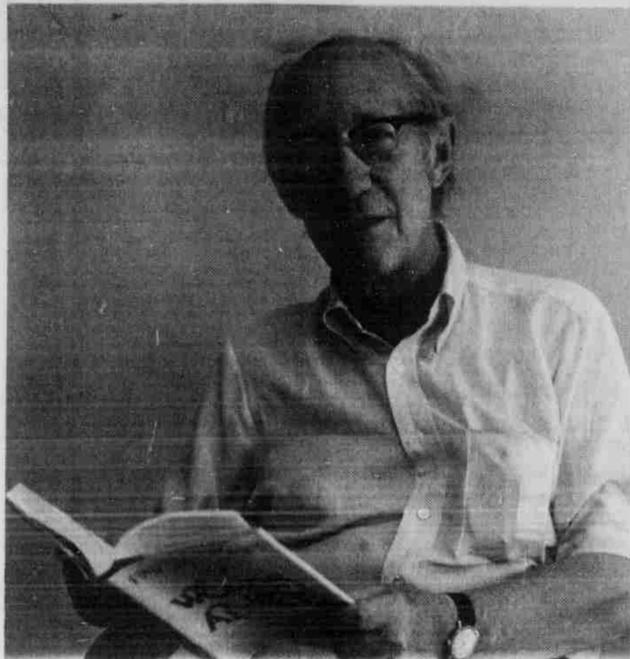
A Northern lady and a Southern lady are the heroines of two current and popular novels: *A Dark Lady* by Louis Auchincloss (Houghton Mifflin Co. 246 pp. \$8.95) and *Look Away, Beulah Land* by Lonnie Coleman (Doubleday, 492 pp. \$10.95). How different are their ladies?

Louis Auchincloss grew up in New York state, attended Groton School and Yale, now lives on Park Avenue and has an office on Wall Street. In one novel after another he has drawn skillful portraits of Northern men and women: orderly, reserved, well-educated well-bred, affluent, elegant, seemly. His best novel may be *The Rector of Justin*, based on the headmaster of his prep school, Groton, but equally illuminating of the Northern character are *Portrait in Brownstone*, *The House of Five Talents* and *The Great World and Timothy Colt*.

Lonnie Coleman is a native of Georgia, worked as a newspaperman in North Carolina and lived in New York until his best-selling *Beulah Land* brought in enough money for him to buy a home in Ireland. He has known Southern women all his life; and one of his most effective novels carries the title of *The Southern Lady*.

Mr. Auchincloss' "dark lady" is Elesina Dart, beautiful, well born, but a victim of too little money, two unsuccessful marriages and a weakness for alcohol. An aspiring actress, she once played the role of "the dark lady" of Shakespeare's sonnet sequence — and was perfectly capable of playing any role in the social world which she believed would prove advantageous to her.

Elesina's greatest admirer — and manager — was Ivy Trask, a middle-aged, shrewd fashion editor who introduced Elesina into the richly elegant home and priceless art collection of Irving and Clara Stein, then pushed Irving into divorcing his wife and



Walter Spearman

marrying Elesina, and finally prodded Elesina into a steamy love affair with Irving's son, David.

This is the basic plot of *The Dark Lady*, but Auchincloss embroiders his unsavory story of lust and greed with polished pictures of the Stein salon, with witty dinner table conversations about Shakespeare and contemporary drama, art treasures by Holbein and Botticelli and New York politics. The reader may not admire Elesina Dart Stein, but he may well admire the precise elegance with which Auchincloss depicts this overly successful northern lady, who at the end of the book is headed into Republican politics with the aid of her clever homosexual secretary.

Readers of Lonnie Coleman's earlier *Beulah Land*, compared in some circles to *Gone With the Wind*, will remember the Kendrick and Davis families living on their neighboring ante-bellum Georgia plantations, raising cotton, being kind to their slaves, intermarrying rapidly and indulging in a good bit of same-sex activities under the oak trees. The inevitable sequel, *Look Away, Beulah Land*, carries the story right on through the Civil War and into Reconstruction, running from 1864 to 1874 with the indomitable Southern lady, Sarah Kendrick, managing the plantation, finding a new husband, befriending a forlorn Yankee soldier, marrying off two of her grandchildren and standing off the Yankee invaders and the invading carpetbaggers with courage and determination.

The first section of the novel, under the appropriate quotation from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "Hell is empty and all the devils are here," draws a believable and

authentic picture of how one Southern family managed to survive the war, even though the plantation house at Beulah Land was burned, the black women slaves raped and a few people killed. The villain of the piece is the greedy black man, Junior Elk, who connived with the carpetbaggers but met the end he deserved. Other blacks are sympathetically portrayed, and one of the best scenes in the book is the vengeance taken on Yankee sergeant Billy Smede, who pillaged and raped, when he is caught by black Floyd, 12-year-old Ben and Yankee-deserter Daniel Todd. The novel ends with

books
By **WALTER SPEARMAN**
A Dark Lady
by Louis Auchincloss
Look Away, Beulah Land
by Lonnie Coleman

the establishment of a school for free blacks, set up by money Junior Elk left his good son, Roscoe Elk.

Look Away, Beulah Land lacks the vitality of the earlier *Beulah Land*, as though Lonnie Coleman realized a sequel might be popular but lacked any great interest in writing it. After all, *Beulah Land* had already provided him a new home in Ireland. But any reader who was already caught up in the characters of the Kendricks and the Davises will be interested to follow them along for a few more years in Georgia. And it is intriguing for any reviewer to wonder how Auchincloss' "dark lady" Elesina would have handled a Georgia plantation or how Coleman's energetic Sarah Kendrick would have fared in New York's sophisticated salons.

Walter Spearman is a professor in the UNC School of Journalism.

Herb expert tends garden

By **KIMBERLY MCGUIRE**
DTH Contributor

Most likely you'll find her bent over in the sun, wearing sneakers and a denim skirt and a big straw hat to fend off the 90 degree heat. She won't say anything that sounds like she's doctoring people, but she'll quickly pick some jewel mint from her garden to aid your poison ivy.

Mercer Hubbard worked in the Country Doctor Museum Medicinal Herb Garden in Bailey, North Carolina until she came to Chapel Hill four years ago. Three and a half years ago, as a charter member of the foundation which supports the North Carolina Botanical Garden, she donated the five dollars with which the herb garden was started here.

Since then, the garden has grown, and so have the number of devotees who value the herbs for their medicinal, culinary and industrial purposes. "The FDA is terrified. They can't figure us out. So we promised not to prescribe our herb remedies," Hubbard says. Did you know that Foxglove is used effectively in heart medicines?

Besides their medicinal qualities, many of which have been learned from the Cherokee Indians in this area, the herb gardeners "like to show off and cook with herbs," Hubbard adds. Lemon thyme cookies are a favorite and everybody loves "saving herb recipes and trying to outdo each other." Ever tried sorrel soup (from the herb sorrel)? Rosemary tea is noted for its delightful aroma, while it works on your memory and helps you not to forget.

Herbs are usually good pesticides. "The pennyroyal plant keeps mosquitoes from going in the kitchen door and the dog loves to lay in it in the summertime." Saponaria is commonly called the soap plant and if you beat the stems and swish them in water, it makes suds like the Indians used.

Looking around the terraced garden, build into cinder blocks for proper drainage, Hubbard remarks. "It's amazing how all the herbs are so different; this stuff's fascinating — it can get hold of you and you'll go crazy."

The North Carolina Botanical Garden is owned by the state and funded by the Botanical Garden, Inc., a non-profit public foundation. The real support and strength of the garden, which keeps it a growing and active project, comes from the volunteers who work long, hard hours.

Many volunteers have specialized and concentrated on specific plants. The most notable is Villa Zola, an ex-librarian who donates time at the garden. Nicknamed the "poison lady," she knows practically everything about poisonous herbs and their harmful



Staff photo by Joseph Thomas

Mercer Hubbard bends over her herb garden at the Botanical gardens in Chapel Hill. An expert in herbs and medicinal plants, she also teaches classes and coordinates volunteers for the herb garden.

effects. Perhaps the most vital contribution is made by Charlotte Jones who heads up the "rescue squad." Jones stands up to bulldozers in the Chapel Hill area and takes it upon herself to "save" plants before they're damaged by construction. She brings them back to a safe, new home in the Botanical Gardens where they can survive in a natural habitat.

Hubbard says that the emphasis in the volunteer program is on having a good time. The success and extensiveness of the program, which now includes 200 men, women, and children, is obvious at the garden. Forty of the volunteers work on the Herb Garden with Mercer and they all have straw hats like hers. "Can't you see it? A bus full of us, headed for Winston-Salem to visit another garden, all wearing these wild straw hats with the green ribbons on them!" Hubbard says laughing.

"This is a teaching garden, where

people may study and find pleasure," Hubbard says. There are classes offered for children and adults where wreaths and natural dyes and potpourri are made from the available herbs. Blind people can learn about herbs, as they are easily distinguishable by touch and smell and taste. In the future, cassette tapes will aid the blind in learning more about herbs. Wheelchair paths will be built throughout the garden area for the aged. A "beginner's garden" where children can come and pinch and smell the herbs is planned.

Snipping some spearmint (which is a plant native to North Carolina), Hubbard says "It's late in the afternoon and they don't smell as good as they do early in the morning." She looks up and adds, "lots of these trees are herbs as well. The walnut tree there, and the sassafras, it's used to make root beer. There's no end to it, it goes on and on..."

Flying club ready for take-off

The Chapel Hill Flying Club will hold its fall membership meeting at 7 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 15 in the Carolina Inn.

Club benefits, regulations and fees will be explained at the meeting and two films, "Wings for Beginners" and "Flying in the Bahamas," will be shown. Interested UNC students, faculty and staff are invited. Refreshments will be served.

The Flying Club was organized in 1961 by five people who wanted opportunities to fly

at a reasonable cost. There are now 60 members and four flying instructors.

Four planes are maintained by the club for members' use. Two are two-seaters used primarily for flight training. Two four-seaters are used for cross-country pleasure and business trips by club members who have their private pilot license.

All members are invited to participate in regular meetings, picnics and flying contests. For more information call Edward Boer, 967-3104.



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DERBY DAY IS COMING!

Plaza 1
Held Over 6th Big Week Sorry — No Passes
Shows: 2:20, 4:45, 7:10, 9:35
JAMES BOND 007 THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

Plaza 2
NOW SHOWING
Shows: 2:30, 4:45, 7:00, 9:15
IT'S THE MOST HILARIOUS SUSPENSE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE!

SILVER STREAK

Plaza 3
Held Over 5th Big Week Sorry — No Passes
Shows: 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
LIZA MINNELLI ROBERT DE NIRO NEW YORK NEW YORK

Varsity
Held Over 11th Big Week Sorry — No Passes
Shows: 2:30, 4:45, 7:00, 9:15
A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away... STAR WARS

The Suspense of a Lifetime
3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
Held Over 4th Wk
3:15 5:15 7:15 9:15
Ram Foreign Films Are Back!
• Francois Truffaut •
3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30
ORCA THE ONLY ANIMAL WHO KILLS FOR REVENGE.
RICHARD HARRIS RICHARD HARRIS
COLOR CHARLOTTE RAMPLING
RICHARD PRIOR He drove 'em wild!
PAM GRIER
GREASED LIGHTNING
"A CELEBRATION AND A JOYOUS ONE. MAGICAL AND BLESSEDLY FUNNY."
—Joy Cocks, Time Magazine
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HELLO SUZANNE
I HAVE WHAT MAY BE A RATHER DIFFICULT QUESTION FOR YOU...
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING DEPRESSED AND JUST FEELING BAD?
WHO CARES?
THAT WASN'T SUCH A DIFFICULT QUESTION AFTER ALL!
STRIKE THREE
ROY ROAST BEE
BOY, I'M STARVED! LET'S EAT.
HOWDY PARTNER!
HOWDY PARTNER!
"HOWDY PARTNER!" THAT'S A RIOT, NEXT SHELL BE SAYIN' "HAPPY TRAILS"
DANCE PARTNER!!!
YOU TAKE THIS WESTERN KICK PRETTY SERIOUSLY, DON'T YOU?
DOONESBURY
"AND FURTHER, TIM RIZZO FROM MAINTENANCE HAS OVERDRAWN HIS CHECKING ACCOUNT BY \$31.67, AND DONNA FILLMORE FROM THE SECURITY COUNCIL OVERDREW HERS BY \$180.50!"
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS IS JUST A PARTIAL LIST, ALL OVER THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH REGULAR PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME MAKE EVERYDAY LITTLE ERRORS IN BALANCING THEIR CHECKBOOKS...
SUCH MISTAKES ARE HUMAN. I HOPE THEY WILL HELP YOU PUT INTO PERSPECTIVE SIMILAR MISTAKES MADE BY OUR BUDGET DIRECTOR.
JODY, WHEN'S LANCE GOING TO RESIGN?
LET ME GIVE YOU A FEW MORE EXAMPLES...

"Scene after scene is unforgettable."
—Penelope Gilliat, New Yorker Magazine
2:30, 4:50, 7:05, 9:20
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