



Living



Great Head's long-lost Eden

Scarred by fire, reclaimed by nature, garden's glory preserved

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Cool air filters lazily in from the nearby Atlantic like the downdraft from a freezer popped open on a hot, muggy day. The steady beat of waves snapping hard on the nearby shore is muted by thick stands of spruce and fir providing the background rhythm for the melodies of warblers and white-throated sparrows. Dappled sunlight dances across a thick brown carpet of pine needles while mosquitoes whine to and fro in search of a decent meal.

Here in the woods behind Sand Beach, near Great Head, in Acadia National Park there is a true aura of wildness; a place filled with the timeless beauty of an ancient natural landscape. Most visitors who walk those trails, however, remain blissfully unaware of the signs that betray that this spot was once a man-made garden paradise.

Nearly a century ago, the grounds behind Sand Beach were part of a grand 110-acre estate called "Great Head," owned by Louisa Morgan Satterlee, the daughter of financier J.P. Morgan, who was one of the owners of the ill-fated *Titanic*. The estate, which was managed in season by a staff of ten household servants and five gardeners, was a wedding gift from Mrs. Satterlee's father.

In 1921, Mrs. Satterlee hired the renowned garden designer Beatrix Farrand to

transform the landscape. The magnificent grounds, which included beds for annuals and perennials, and even a bridge, in a forested setting, remained in bloom until part of it was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1947 which finally blew itself out over the nearby headlands in a swirling firestorm.

Given to Acadia National Park in 1949, most of the estate's buildings were removed shortly thereafter. Nature took its course, and the once spectacular gardens returned to woods and meadows.

Exactly what the garden looked like in its prime is now the subject of an exhibit at the Beatrix Farrand Society's Garland Farm on Route 3 in Bar Harbor. The centerpiece of the exhibit is an oil painting of the garden. The painting was once owned by estate superintendent Charles F. Salisbury. It was donated to the society by his widow, the late V. Leona Salisbury.

Items on display include images printed from hand-colored glass lantern slides now housed in the Smithso-

nian in Washington, D.C., maps, and other black and white images from the Satterlee's 1917 photo album as well as aerial photos.

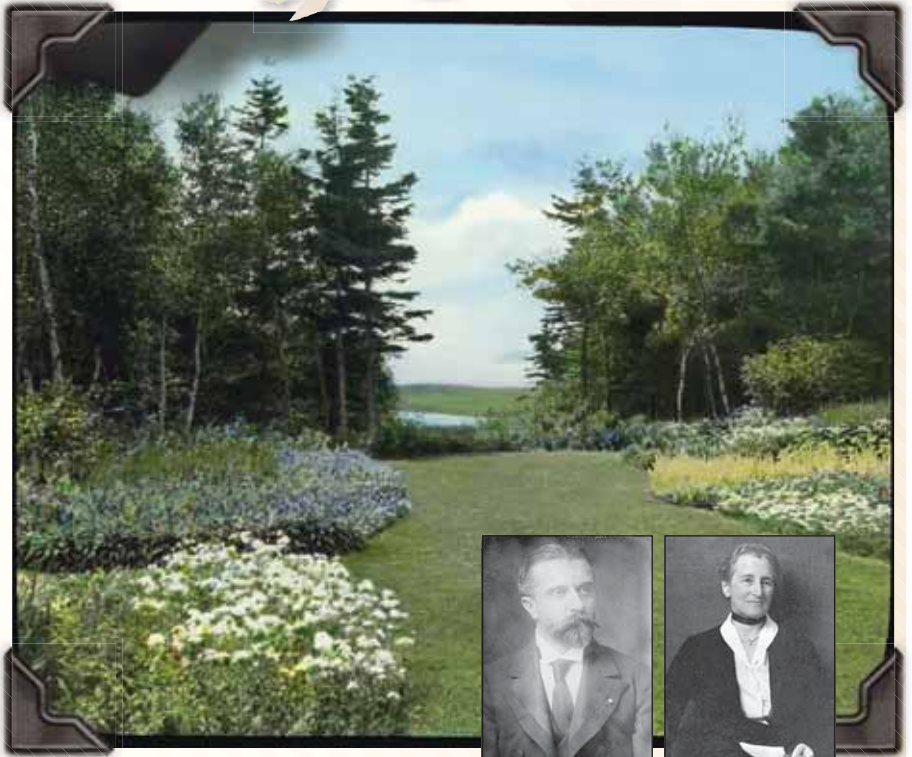
"The exhibit offers artistic interpretation of one of MDI's most dramatic meetings of mountains and the sea," a statement from the Farrand Society says.

The society maintains Garland Farm where Ms. Farrand spent her last days and cultivated a small garden. During

her illustrious career, Ms. Farrand carried out commissions for more than 200 gardens, mostly on the East Coast, including Dumbarton Oaks, Eolia (now Harkness Memorial State Park), and the old campus at Princeton University.

The path that now runs from the Great Head parking lot to the east end of Sand Beach was once the driveway for the Satterlee's main house. The estate included the gardens, barns, greenhouses, servants' quarters, guest houses, a water tower, and boathouse and tennis courts. An oddly out-of-place concrete foundation here, or stone retaining wall there, are all that remain.

For those willing to explore, the foundations and some of the original plantings remain, slowly being absorbed by the eternal woods, not far from where the Atlantic continues its timeless battle with the shore.



LANTERN SLIDE COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

This view of the Satterlee garden at Great Head in the 1920s was discovered on a hand-colored lantern slide. Inset, Henry Satterlee, left, and Beatrix Farrand.

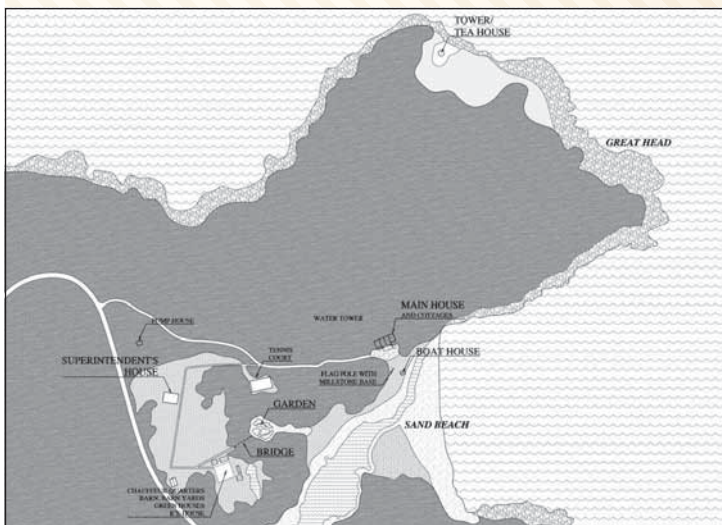
When and where

The Satterlee Garden at Great Head exhibit is open on Thursday afternoons from 1 to 5 p.m. through Sept. 13. Admission is free but donations are welcome. No access from Route 3. Access the parking area by taking immediate left after turning on to Bay View Drive. Call 288-0237.



ISLANDER PHOTO COURTESY OF BFS

An oil painting of the original garden at Great Head, the Satterlee family estate that once stood near Sand Beach, was donated recently to the Beatrix Farrand Society in Bar Harbor.



ISLANDER IMAGE COURTESY OF BFS

A map of the former Satterlee estate near Great Head in Acadia National Park is part of the ongoing exhibit at the Beatrix Farrand Society in Bar Harbor.



ISLANDER PHOTO COURTESY OF DON LENAHAN

A metal marker now delineates the spot where the Satterlee estate once stood near Sand Beach in Acadia National Park.