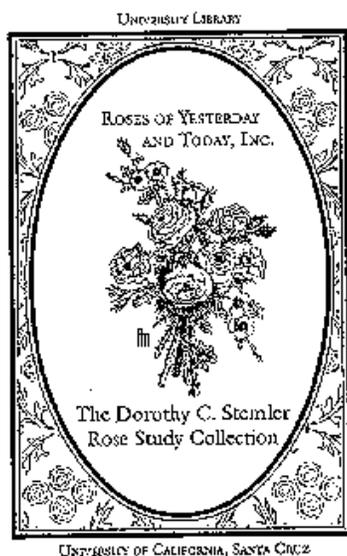


Roses of Yesterday and Today: A Library Garden



A Growing Gift: "Cultivating Our Library"

A year ago, a new endowment supporting acquisitions in the field of horticulture, was established in honor of Ruth Engle, long-time Friend of the UCSC Library. Endowments usually take some time to flower. But the Friends of the Library honored Ruth by immediately donating three fine rose books in the name of her endowment, including facsimiles of the works of two great rose painters of the nineteenth century, Redoute and Henry Curtis. Maureen Carey a library staff member and superb botanical illustrator designed the Engle Endowment bookplate with the Voltaire motto "il faut cultiver notre jardin," paraphrased above as a slogan for the library.

By remarkable coincidence, perhaps having something to do with the mystical power of roses or rose-books, the University Library was soon blessed with two other closely related donations. One was a fine library of gardening books gathered by the late Elizabeth Jarboe of Browns Valley Road, Watsonville, and donated in her memory by her daughter Milbeth Mauer. A lovely example from the Jarboe collection is displayed: roses popping up from two pages of poems.

The other volumes in the donor case and most of the books in the rest of the exhibit came from a famous neighbor of Mrs. Jarboe, the great rosarian Patricia Stemler Wiley. She retired recently, after decades of service to the rose-growers of the world as owner of *Roses of Yesterday and Today, Inc.* The library was thrilled to find a home for her splendid library, much of which, including the *Moss Rose* (New York, 1847) in its handsome Victorian binding, and the *Glory of Roses* (New York, 1990), is in the current display.

"By Way of Introduction"

Some of the early *Roses of Yesterday and Today* catalogs contained the quaint heading "By Way of Introduction" under a photo of a shelf of books, with the caption - "The Little Rose Library : Our Grateful Acknowledgements." Having received a greatly enlarged version of that "little rose library," the University Library is pleased to echo and amplify that gratitude.

The current exhibit can be enjoyed in any order. The display described above is located near the library's donor wall at the entrance placing the gift in the context of other related philanthropy. Opposite the donor wall, two cases and a wall display show the *Roses of Yesterday and Today* (RYT) catalogs as handsome expressions of the history of the firm.

Another case displays a selection of books signed and inscribed by other authors and rosarians influenced by one or more of the three RYT stewards, Will Tillotson, Dorothy Stemler or Patricia Wiley. Yet another includes several fine examples of the rose motif applied to the design of books. Other cases relate the gift to roses already in our collection: an anthology of the rose in literature and a collection of images of the rose in art and design.

The finest large format books from the Wiley gift are featured in two large upright cases, the lower shelf of which holds a

"little rose library": about fifty books, suggesting how large this exhibit would have been, had we the space to do justice to the whole collection.

Several other books from the Wiley gift, illustrating the rose in garden history, are on display in the Science Library. Both McHenry and Science Library exhibits, are up until March 6, 1998.

Rose Books of Yesterday and Today.

An introductory sampler of the donated rose books includes an early RYT catalog showing the "little rose library" and a characteristically genial introduction by Will Tillotson. Mr. Tillotson took over the Browns Valley rose nurseries, originally planted in Browns Valley near Watsonville by the pioneer rosarian, Francis Lester. Mr. Tillotson left the nurseries to his "Honorable Secretary" Dorothy Stemler, whose copy of Francis Lester's *My Friend the Rose* (1942), is opened to the endpaper to show her cheerful barrow-load-of-volumes book-plate.

Mrs Stemler herself wrote two books on roses and added them to the office library: *Roses of Yesterday* (1967), wonderfully illustrated by Nanae Ito, with an introduction by James Gould Cozzens; and *The Book of Old Roses* (1966), illustrated with her own superb photographs.

Dorothy Stemler, her daughter Patricia Stemler Wiley, and their firm were featured in the American Horticultural Society's *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Gardening* (1980). Shown here is the beginning of the article outlining the history of the Lester/Tillotson/Stemler/Wiley rose gardening tradition which has "captured the imagination and loyalty of a growing group of gardeners since 1932," and a photograph of mother and daughter rosarians among the blossoms of Browns Valley Road.

In recognition of her leadership among rose growers, Patricia Wiley was asked to write the Foreword to Macoboy's *Ultimate Rose Book* (1993), the "ultimate" acknowledgement of her work as gardener, photographer, writer and book lover. The current exhibit reflects each of these talents, especially the last. Future lovers and scholars of the rose and its books will be grateful for her own bibliophilia and generosity.

This exhibit was curated by Alan Ritch, Head of Collection Planning at McHenry Library. If you have questions or comments please write him at: aritch@cats.ucsc.edu

or call (408) 459-4482.

[Return to the UC Santa Cruz Library Home Page](#) [Return to the UC Santa Cruz Library Home Page](#)