



Mason Farm forests and fields burned two weeks ago are already turning green with vigorous spring growth.

PHOTO BY JOHNNY RANDALL

FLORA

FROM PAGE 1

“Fire suppression, from early colonists to present day, represents one of the most pervasive threats to biodiversity conservation nationwide. Times are changing; the week of Feb. 7 was declared N.C. Prescribed Fire Awareness Week by Gov. Beverly Perdue!

“European explorers and American botanists of the 18th century described the Carolina Piedmont as having vast savannas, prairies and plains of ‘many spacious tracts of meadowland ... burdened with grass six feet high ... with buffaloes ranging in droves feeding upon the open savannas morning and night.’

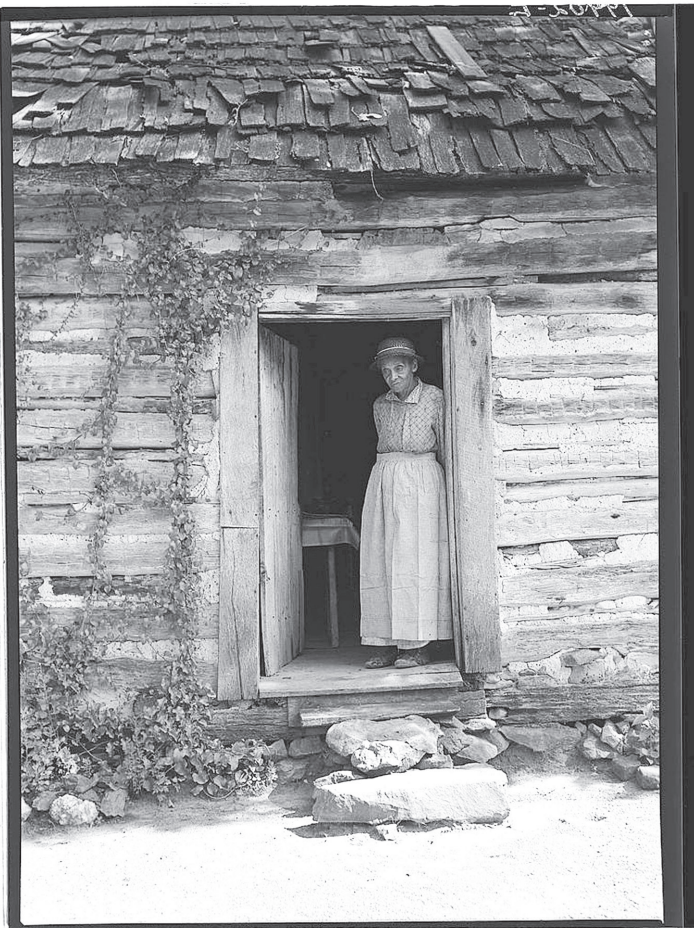
“We also use prescribed fire to reduce wildfire hazards from lightning strikes or arson. In order to execute prescribed fire safely, the Botanical Garden has a N.C. Division of Forest Resources certified in-house burning crew and follows a very strict ‘prescription’ based on weather conditions and other parameters. Our closest neighbors in the Kings Mill/Morgan Creek neighborhood have been accustomed to the smell of smoke from the 30 years of annual burns in our sandhills and coastal plain habitat gardens next to the Totten Center.

“Visit Mason Farm frequently this spring to observe and celebrate with us the Phoenix-like savanna rebirth at Mason Farm and *take a closer look* at the sequence of vegetation and floral display that begins emerging almost immediately.”

Many thanks to Johnny Randall for contributing this week’s Flora story and thanks to his dedicated garden colleagues and volunteers who help manage Mason Farm so wisely!

Email Ken Moore at flora@carrborocitizen.com.

“B or me, documentary photography is less a matter of subject and more a matter of *approach*,” wrote Dorothea Lange. “The important thing is not what’s photographed, but *how*.” The famous *LIFE* magazine photographer, whose iconic “Migrant Mother” is burned on the inner-eye of our national consciousness, is less well-known for her work right here in central North Carolina. To right that wrong, photo-historian Steve Rankin has compiled an impressive website devoted to Lange’s work in Orange, Chatham, Wake, Person and Granville counties, June 30-July 9, 1939. One of my favorite photographs is, I believe, a reflection of Lange’s gentle



Atwater Farm, July 1, 1939

“don’t-stomp-on-the-daisies” approach to her subjects. I can’t help but feel that Caroline Atwater, standing in her kitchen doorway, shared a connection with the photographer: The Atwater home and farm, Rankin notes, was located six-tenths of a mile east of old Blackwood Station on Mt. Sinai Road in Orange County. (Ironically, Blackwood Station, just north of Chapel Hill off N.C. 86, is well known to older local Boy Scouts as a favorite camping ground back in the ‘50s and ‘60s.) To explore the painstaking work of Steve Rankin, go to tinyurl.com/DortheaLange2



A THOUSAND WORDS

BY JOCK LAUTERER

Do you have an important old photo that you value? Email your photo to jock@email.unc.edu and include the story behind the picture. Because every picture tells a story. And its worth? A thousand words.

WHIRLD

FROM PAGE 1

Discovered around 400 B.C., the camera obscura technology is photography’s distant relative and found use by ancient Greek and Chinese cultures and later by Renaissance painters.

New Whirld consists of a dark room that’s entered by a shiny copper hatch. Set in the hatch is a lens that allows light from the outside to pass through and strike the interior wall. The result is that the outside image is reproduced inside the room, upside-down and flipped, but with color and perspective intact.

New Whirld also has a steering wheel inside, which allows users to turn themselves 360 degrees inside the machine.

“It’s almost like magic,” Lev said. “You get a panoramic movie wrapped all around you.”

Lev said his purpose for the piece was to challenge people’s sensory perception.

“It’s kind of cool that light coming through this little hole can make such clear images,” said Sara Nelson after taking a spin at new Whirld’s exhibition. “It’s something that I think is accessible to a lot of people and it’s something that can be interpreted in a lot of different ways.”

This isn’t the first time one of Lev’s pieces of art has been on display in the Carrboro area. Some might remember his original camera obscura that stood at 400 W. Main St. in Carrboro, directly across from the fire station. The piece, which served as Lev’s senior thesis for Amherst College in Massachusetts, was a Carrboro landmark that stood for nearly 15 years.

“A lot of people knew me from that piece,” Lev said. “Mayor Nelson asked at the time if it was an outhouse,” he said with a smile.

Lev says he would love to find a home for new Whirld somewhere in Carrboro, but says he would prefer that it find its way into a museum, where it could continue to inspire people.

“One of the purposes of art, the one that I am most interested in, is to get people to see the world differently,” Lev said. “And if people see the world differently, then they will act differently too.”

Lev hopes that if people notice how beautiful the world is through his lens, maybe the world could become a more beautiful place.

“That’s something art can do,” he said.

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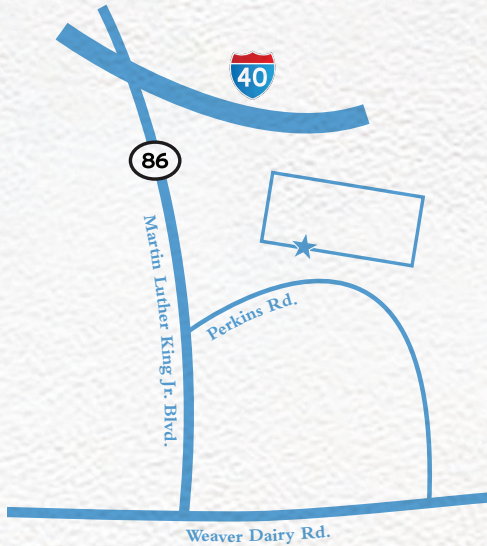
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