

Mrs. Charles H. Stout AKA Henrietta Maria Schroeder (HMS)
The Lady of the Dahlias
by Harry Waterson

It all started with the Nine of Spades. It was not a card needed to fill an inside straight but the rather tongue-in-cheek name for the Garden Club of Short Hills, NJ. The club was started in 1906 with nine members. New members joined and they soon outgrew their name. In 1908 they settled for the more prosaic but location specific Short Hills Garden Club.

The nine original members had a huge interest in the welfare of their gardens. Some never went beyond their membership in their local club but others went on to have an impact both statewide and nationally. To all nine, the Short Hills Garden Club (SHGC) was the home club and where their roots went deepest. The club is still thriving in Short Hills and the first nine are remembered in the club logo. The spades are now trowels but they all still point to the same center with the same aspirations as they did in 1906. One of the 1906 gardeners was Henrietta Maria Schroeder Stout. Her horticultural enthusiasms would take her out into the wide wonderful world of the dahlia and the rock garden. Here's her story.



Henrietta Maria Schroeder (HMS) was born and bred in New York City. She was the daughter of Charles Francis Schroeder (1814-1886) and Lucy Langdon. Known as 'Frank' he had a varying career. He graduated from Roundhill College and then traveled throughout Europe with his father. In 1849 he was appointed Chargé d'Affaires to Sweden under president Zachery Taylor and five years later Franklin Pierce raised him to Minister resident. After three more years he returned to New York City and became connected with the Astor Library and subsequently was the Superintendent of the Library until his retirement in 1871. Frank Schroeder was a widower and he married his second wife, Lucy Langdon, in 1868. Henrietta Maria was the third child of that marriage. Born in 1875, she was almost ten when her father died in 1886. When Henrietta was 14, her mother took her on a tour of Europe. She filled an enormous scrapbook with pressed flowers and leaves all carefully identified and labeled where they came from in Europe.¹ In 1890 The Brearley School for Girls, founded in 1884, was a liberal arts high school at 6 East 45th Street. Henrietta Schroeder entered Brearley that October at age 15 and completed three years of academic study. She left in June, 1893 without graduating and began her finishing school that fall at The Art Students League on 57th Street. She took a painting class from William Merritt Chase from the fall of 1893 through the spring of 1894. Chase was the doyen of the American art world in the 1890s and an accomplished teacher. "The most generous of teachers, not only giving exhaustively of his stored knowledge of how to do things, but fostering as well the will to do it."² For the balance of the 1890s HMS devoted herself to portrait painting.

Henrietta Schroeder took a freighter cruise to Central America on the SS Venezuela the summer of 1896. Her companion on the voyage was Miss Fannie Stout. Three years later Henrietta married Fannie's older brother Charles. Charles Hermann Stout was born in New York City, February 13, 1864. His parents were Charles and Frances (Merrell) Stout. He was Cashier of the National Bank of the Republic, New York

Henrietta M. Schroeder and Charles H. Stout were married in 'The Little Church Around The Corner' on May 27, 1899. The 'Little Church' was the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration at 1 East 29th Street just off 5th Avenue. The church decorations consisted almost entirely of palms. The bride was given away by her half-brother Lt. Cmdr. Seaton Schroeder, USN, a future vice admiral.

The bride wore a white satin gown embroidered in pearls and finished with point lace. Her tulle veil was caught with orange blossoms.³ Photo by Davis & Sanford.

The reception was held at the home of Mrs. Francis Schroeder, the bride's mother, at 137 Madison Avenue, just around the other corner from the 'Little Church' and two blocks north. 137 Madison became the Stout's city residence and in 1903 the Stout's first son Merrell Langdon Stout was born there. The Stouts also built a country house, Charlecote, in Short Hills, NJ. Charlecote was named after Charlecote Park, a 16th-century country house with its own deer park on the banks of the River Avon in Warwickshire, England.

Charlecote became the focus of Mrs. Stout's energies as she became involved in the design and creation of their home's landscape and gardens. She became a keen amateur gardener and would maintain that amateur status for the rest of her life.



Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society



Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society

This picture of the newlyweds was taken in Montpelier, VT by Wilkinson when they visited the family of Frances Schroeder, the bride's mother, shortly after the wedding.

1906 was a momentous year for Henrietta Stout. She gave birth to a second son on March 11th who died the same day. She became one of the original spades in the Nine of Spades. A feature article about Charlecote appeared in *American Homes and Gardens* magazine.⁴ The house was designed by Parish & Schroeder, New York. Schroeder was James L. Schroeder, Henrietta Stout's older brother. This house was the canvas on which Mrs. Stout would hone her horticultural skills and lavish her floral aspirations. Charlecote was in a planned suburban community created by Stewart Hartshorn. His goal was "a harmonious community for people who appreciate nature."⁵ Esthetics and planned development were his guiding principles. The Stouts were enthusiastic supporters of these ideals.



Charlecote front



Charlecote back

The Nine of Spades offered Henrietta Stout the opportunity to cultivate her garden along with like minded women who were her neighbors. Their purpose was to promote the knowledge and appreciation of horticulture, to conserve local natural resources, to stimulate plantings in public spaces and to maintain those spaces to a high standard in their community. Henrietta Stout came under the influence of Mrs. Edward B. Renwick (Emily D), the president of the club. Stout once explained why the Dahlia was the Short Hills Garden Club flower of choice.

"Dahlia Variabilis! Was there ever a better name for a flower whose range of color and forms knows no limit, and whose sulks and smiles are apparently without cause! It is this variability which has held our interest. There is nothing monotonous in dahlia culture. This is especially so in our locality for besides catering to their whims it is one long battle against the elements from the day the clumps are first started into life until they are gathered again into the store house for their winter's sleep. Our climate is hot and dry all summer. The sun's rays scorch with cruelty by day and seldom are there dews by night to heal the injuries. We live on the site of an ancient moraine, and though most of the soil is clay, plentifully interspersed with rocks, there are also many sandy pockets. The dahlia does just as well in one place as the other, which goes to show what an accommodating plant she is even though her temper may not always be relied upon."⁶

In 1913 Emily Renwick and Mrs. John A. Stewart, Jr., another original Nine of Spades, joined 22 other women at an estate in Philadelphia to found The Garden Club of America (GCA). These ladies represented 12 garden clubs from Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Michigan. The clubs were the founders and the women representing them the talented and energetic enablers. These clubs were soon joined by others and five more were admitted even before the first Annual Meeting was adjourned on May 1, 1913. The idea of garden clubs from around the country joining together for their mutual benefit, exchange of information and to advocate for conservation took hold and grew. The goal was to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening and to play no less than a

lead role in the beautifying of America. Henrietta Stout took these goals to heart. She had been working in her garden for over ten years serving her apprenticeship. That was now over.

1915: Henrietta Stout first received national recognition for a prize Dahlia she raised from seed in 1913. She called it *Sunshine*.⁷ It took first place in the 1914 Short Hills Dahlia Show in the single class. The new American Dahlia Society (ADS) was organized May 10, 1915 and Stout was a founding member.

The 1st Annual Dahlia Exhibition was held at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City on Sept. 24-26, 1915. *Sunshine* received their first "Certificate of Merit" in the duplex class. Mrs. Frances King wrote, "It is, without doubt, the rarest of all the yellows from many points of view. The texture of the flower struck me as rich beyond description. Its color is thus described from Ridgway's Chart: By strong daylight the petals are Pinard Yellow, shaded with Salmon Yellow and the center in Capucine Orange. The flower turns at night to an indescribable pink."⁸ Mrs. King also quoted an unnamed seedsman who wrote: "*Sunshine*, a semi double, was entered in the single class. It is very large and beautiful. I would describe it as a pinkish yellow, but in some lights it seemed to be a rosy buff. The judges were puzzled and didn't try to describe it."⁹ Photo Courtesy Ellen P. Morris.



The Short Hills Garden Club held their 6th Annual Dahlia Show on Sept. 29 & 30, 1915. All the members of The Garden Club of America were invited to attend and exhibit. The invitation included lunch on the 30th hosted by the Club. Mrs. Stout, the Club Secretary, organized this interclub event and her *Sunshine* won a First Prize in the singles category. Despite the question of classification, Mrs. King noted *Sunshine* had won eight prizes and one medal by the end of 1915.¹⁰ In early 1916 an ad appeared in the GCA Bulletin selling tubers and plants of *Sunshine* for the benefit of The American Red Cross.¹¹ The response was very gratifying to Mrs. Stout who sent a thank-you note to the members of The Garden Club of America. Through their generosity she was able to send quantities of warm blankets to Red Cross Hospitals and 45 pounds of knitting wool.¹²

1916: The American Dahlia Society moved their exhibition to new premises - the Engineers' Building at 25 West 39th Street in midtown Manhattan September 26 to 28. There was keen competition for a cup offered by Mrs. Gertrude Dahl-Mordecai, the only living descendant of Professor Dahl from whom the Dahlia obtained its name. Mrs. Mordecai's prize for the best new seedling Dahlia included it being named after her.¹³ Mrs. C. H. Stout won the silver cup for her seedling to be called the *Gertrude Dahl*. The Short Hills Garden Club Show which followed the ADS Exhibition had to be restricted to 'members only' because of an outbreak of poliomyelitis.



The gentle grace of the Peony type
(Gertrude Dahl)

Gertrude Dahl excited much interest in the Dahlia community. It was a very large peony Dahlia with strong still stems. It was an opalescent pink and apricot in color and was very free flowering. Mrs. Stout once again wrote the GCA Bulletin "As soon as the American Dahlia Society gave me the prize, I had a number of cuttings made from the two plants I have in my garden, and now think that I shall have a number of 'pottubers' which I will be able to sell to those that want them . . . I will be able to take orders at \$3 per plant or two plants for \$5. Orders may be sent to Mrs. Henry B. Binsse, Short Hills, NJ who is to handle the money and buy and ship supplies to a hospital in Brittany. This hospital is on the estate of her sister Mrs. Thebaud, and they have also upward of 1,000 Belgian children there. I know personally that the money is entirely used for that purpose, and feel that greater good is done with it than any other such charity which has come to my notice."¹⁴

Drawing to the left is of *Gertrude Dahl* done by Mrs. C. H. Stout.¹⁵

1917: A year of major events in the world of Henrietta Maria Schroeder Stout.

In March Mrs. Emily D. Renwick, her gardening mentor, died at the age of 51. This line was carefully chiseled into her headstone "A soul as beautiful and sweet as the flowers she so lovingly tended."

In April the US entered the Great War on the side of England and France.

In May her husband Charles (Chick) Stout retired from banking and became Secretary of the NY County Chapter of the Red Cross.

Dahlia shows were abbreviated affairs in 1917. The American Dahlia Society Show was again held at the Engineers' Building for just a two- day run. September 26 & 27. It was conducted in conjunction with the Annual Fair of the American Institute of the City of NY. The reporter from the New York Herald¹⁶ defended the Dahlia Show occurring during the stress of wartime with these lines of Emerson:¹⁷

Tell them, Dear, if eyes were made for seeing
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being.

The Red Cross Dahlia, a hybrid cactus variety of a wonderful yellow color shading to a deep orange, which had been introduced in 1916 was a popular favorite and won its grower, John F. Anderson a special prize.¹⁸

The Short Hills Garden Club Dahlia Show was reduced to five hours on the afternoon of October 3 with all proceeds going to the local Red Cross Chapter. Only prize ribbons were awarded. The Club felt that due to wartime conditions, expenses should be kept to a minimum. Mrs. Stout was motivated to melt down all the silver medals and cups she had won and donated the proceeds of the sale of the silver bullion to French war orphan charities.



1918: The American Dahlia Society Show returned to a three day schedule in late September in the same NYC venue with the same exhibit partner as 1917. The NY Times reported that Mrs. C. H. Stout exhibited many new seedlings.¹⁹ One of these seedlings was the *Emily D. Renwick* Dahlia. This dahlia won a silver medal at the Short Hills Garden Club Dahlia Show which followed shortly afterwards. The *Emily D. Renwick* was a decorative type.²⁰

1919: In November the entire stock of this Dahlia was consigned to George Smith & Sons, East Orange, NJ. The profits of the sale of the tubers was returned to the Short Hills Garden Club to create a permanent memorial to Mrs. Renwick, the club's beloved first president.²¹

1920: In January it was announced by The Garden Club of America that the Emily D. Renwick Memorial Fund would be used to create and endow a medal in her memory. This medal was to be awarded to The Garden Club of America member who during each year achieved

distinction in the advancement of horticultural interests.²² The medal was designed by Henrietta Stout and a number of medals, struck in the spring of 1920, were delivered to the GCA in time to be awarded at their annual meeting on June 29, 1920. B&W illustrations below are from GCA Bulletin.²³



It was not awarded and it took the balance of the year to work out the details of award rules and procedures. This report was in the AGC Bulletin of July, 1921. "Before announcing the award of the Emily D. Renwick Achievement Medal, the committee respectfully asks the attention of the Garden Club of America to the rules under which the awards are made:

1. The Medal presented by the Short Hills Garden Club to The Garden Club of America may be awarded each year to the member attaining the greatest achievement in gardening or in a line pertaining to gardening.
2. A Committee shall be formed to consist of the President of The Garden Club of America, one member of the Short hills Garden Club, and as many others as shall be necessary.
3. The Committee year shall be from January 1st to January 1st, the award to be made at the succeeding annual meeting.

4. The Member Clubs of The Garden Club of America shall submit to the committee before January 1st of each year, the names of candidates and their qualifications for the honor.
5. It is earnestly hoped that each Member Club will give this subject careful consideration and do all in its power to encourage competition for this medal.
If the claims of candidates submitted under the rules for a given year shall not seem to justify the making of the award, the medal need not be given that year.

The first Emily D. Renwick Achievement Medal was awarded for the year 1920 to Mrs. William H. Cary of the New Canaan Garden Club. Mrs. Cary created a remarkable Herbarium (mounted specimens of the weeds and wild flowers native to the region of New Canaan, CT). Her generous use of this for The Garden Club of America and for her own community are the facts on which the award was based. We hope that this first bestowing of the Medal, given in memory of a singularly devoted and intelligent amateur of gardening, may stimulate the Presidents of our Clubs to inquire as to the qualifications of their own members for this honor."²⁴ The silver medal was presented to Mrs. Cary by the President, Mrs. Samuel Sloan at the 8th Annual Meeting May 10, 1921 at the home of Mrs. Harold Irving Pratt of NYC



While the GCA was busy sorting out the Renwick Medal rules, Mrs. Stout was not idle. On January 29, 1920 she attended the organizing meeting the American Iris Society at The Mansion on the grounds of the NY Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY. She was a founder and charter member. In April she joined The Horticultural Society of the City of NY. Under their auspices she gave a lecture at the Museum of Natural History on October 20th entitled, "How to Grow the Finest Dahlia Blooms." In December Stout was named Chairman of the GCA Committee on Special Plant Societies. She also became a de facto member of the Board of Editors of the GCA Bulletin. Her task was to strengthen the ties between the Garden Club of America and the various specialist plant organizations around the country. Rose, Dahlia, Iris, Peony, Sweet Pea, etc. She would serve on behalf of Special Plants for five years. The portrait to the left of Henrietta Maria Schroeder Stout by Floride Green shows a mature woman at the top of her game.

In May of 1920 a member of the Short Hills Garden Club²⁵ published this catalog of Dahlias in the GCA Bulletin.

List of Dahlias Grown by Mrs. Charles H. Stout

SUNSHINE Golden Duplex, petals broad and rounded, tall and vigorous. Won the first Certificate of Merit ever issued by the American Dahlia Society, 1915

Garden Magazine Achievement Medal, 1915

Certificate New York Horticultural Society, 1916

Certificate Florists' Society, 1916

Two Blue Ribbons and Sweepstakes Prize overall at Portland, Oregon, 1916

Has won first in every class and show where exhibited.

GERTRUDE DAHL Opalescent pink Peony flowered. Early bloomer, medium height, exceptionally free flowering. Of slender refined habit.

Certificate American Dahlia Society, 1916

Silver Cup American Dahlia Society, for the best new Dahlia, and named by the Society for Gertrude Dahl-Mordecai, direct descendant of Andree Dahl for whom all Dahlias are named 1916

EMILY D. RENWICK Rose decorative, base of petals pale yellow, giving them a transparent appearance, frilled edges. Plants are large, of medium height, very free bloomer. Cut flowers will keep ten days or more in water.

Certificate American Dahlia Society, 1918

Certificate New York Horticultural Society, 1919

Silver Medal Short Hills Dahlia Show (Garden Club) 1918

Entire stock has been bought up by Geo. Smith & Sons, East Orange, NJ

J. HARRISON DICK Hybrid cactus dahlia, pale corn colored, edges of petals are picoted with delicate lavender. Heads are held upright so that back petals hang down in a shower like a chrysanthemum. Long stems.

Certificate American Dahlia Society, 1918

Winner 1916 American Dahlia Society, for best unnamed "tested" seedling Dahlia to be named by the Society for their late Secretary, Mr. J. Harrison Dick.

This Dahlia is now the property of the American Dahlia Society from whom plants may be purchased, \$1.00 each. Address Richard Vincent, Jr., Pres., White Marsh, Maryland

LUCY LANGDON Pale pinkish lavender Decorative. Vigorous grower, very free bloomer. Strong stems

Certificate American Dahlia Society, 1918

MINNESINK Large deep red Decorative. Strong grower, free bloomer, flowers have stiff stems.

Certificate American Dahlia Society, 1919

At Short Hills Show, 1918 established as a seedling, it was taken out of its class and given the Silver medal as the finest Dahlia in the Show.

PENELOPE VAN PRINCESS Short stocky plants, bearing enormous salmon scarlet hybrid cactus blooms

Certificate American Dahlia Society, 1919

AMERICAN BEAUTY Heavy hybrid cactus Dahlia, of true American Beauty color. Free bloomer but needs severe disbudding.

BLUSH Enormous pale pink Decorative, almost white at the center. Very long stems, blooms freely

APPLE BLOSSOM Charming pink single on long graceful stem. Flowers very freely, resembling its name.

NINE OF SPADES Enormous blood red peony Dahlia, with splendid stem. Not very free bloomer causing the flowers to grow to great size.

Four of the above have not yet been submitted for Certificates.

SHANTUNG Seedling of 1919. Exhibited only at Short Hills. Geisha coloring, peony Dahlia. Stems four feet long, stiff as walking sticks. Blooms average ten inches across. Very free flowering. Was able to show six blooms at the Show, and cut four more the next day from one plant, of course. Silver Medal, Short Hills Garden Club, 1919.

At various Dahlia Shows in the 1910s, Henrietta Stout won 10 silver medals, 24 silver cups, first prize of the American Dahlia Society for collection of seedlings in 1919 and the silver medal of the New York Horticultural Society for a collection of her own hybrids.²⁶ While most of the silver went to orphan war relief, the achievement itself can't be melted down.

In the late spring of 1920 Mrs. Stout was part of a tour of gardens along the North Shore of Long Island. There was one garden that stood out in her memory. "The owner was not a member of any Garden Club. He was a Mere Man, an Octogenarian and a proud native of that beautiful shore. His tiny front yard was a mass of bright color, mostly red and yellow, of course, but a cheery sight for a mile or more as we motored up the road. All the bright flowers of a generation ago, crowding and elbowing one another for space, and responding gratefully for the loving care of this dear old man. It is not necessary to be an octogenarian and a native to have a mass of bloom like this, but it is best to be satisfied with the things which enjoy growing in one's own particular soil and locality. Encourage them with tender care, cultivate them according to their individual needs — make friends with them."²⁷

In 1920 the ADS moved their show to the Roof Garden of the Hotel Pennsylvania Sept. 27-29. Stout took two awards. Most Meritorious Amateur Exhibit and a first in the amateur class for best seedling. Henrietta Stout also designed another award for The Garden Club of America. The design was in the shape of a 2x1½-inch rectangle and is called a plaque.

1921: The GCA Directors voted in January that the Stout plaque be known as The Garden Club of America Medal. Initially it would be awarded in gold for the "Finest Exhibit" in any class at the upcoming 8th International Flower Show at Grand Central Palace, March 14 through 20. Adolph Lewisohn of Ardsley-on-Hudson won the first GCA Gold Medal. He exhibited in 55 classes and won firsts in 20. .



The plaquette shows 'Flora' resting on her spade, offering a laurel wreath to the winner. She stands in a niche in a garden of Iris, Hollyhocks, Foxglove, etc. The reverse of the plaquette has the insignia of the Club. It signifies the "Lamp of Enlightenment." The twelve oak leaves refer to the twelve Charter Member Clubs of the Garden Club of America.²⁸ The reverse also bears the initials of the designer - H.M.S. - at the bottom left and the initials of the sculptor - R.E. - at the bottom right. The sculptor is not known but was probably a staff artist at Bailey, Banks & Biddle of Philadelphia who struck the medal.

The insignia on the reverse of the plaquette immediately began to appear in the Bulletin of The Garden Club of America. Starting with the March 1921 edition, the insignia was part of the masthead of the periodical just below the main title. This would be the visual identity of the Club for decades to come.



Late in 1921 the use of The Garden Club of America Medal was greatly expanded. It was renamed the Horticultural Medal of The Garden Club of America. Silver examples of the medal were offered at no cost to Special Plant Societies for their use as awards at their annual shows. Initially, the Dahlia, Iris, Peony and Rose Societies participated. Other Societies were added over time. The same medal in bronze was offered to all Member Clubs for the finest exhibit i.e., the exhibit with the highest number of points, in their respective Annual Shows by a Garden Club of America Member. The GCA required that to use this medal as an award, the Club Show must be of an excellent standard, i.e., having at least twelve classes of entries and being judged by competent and experienced judges in good standing with local horticultural societies. Member Clubs could purchase these bronze medals at cost from the GCA. 12 Member Clubs exercised this offer in 1921. Mrs. C. H. Stout chose this year to become a Life Member of the ADS.

The New York Times reviewed the Dahlia Show in the Horticultural Gardens in Bronx Park on September 4, 1921. It applauded the remarkable development of the flower in recent years. "Of a lovely pink shade is the *Emily D. Renwick*, one of the striking varieties originated by Mrs. Charles H. Stout. It suggests the pink of an aster."²⁹ The ADS Show took place later that month from the 27th to the 29th in the Hotel Pennsylvania Roof Garden and Conservatory. The Short Hills Dahlia Show followed immediately on September 30 for two days. Mrs. Stout as Secretary of the Short Hills Garden Club made sure this proximity occurred as often as possible offering the members of the ADS the opportunity to see both shows without a gap. On this occasion a special luncheon was served to the visiting members on the 30th. Mrs. Stout had a particularly good Short Hills Show garnering 19 firsts, 3 seconds, 1 third, 1 Honorable Mention and 3 silver medals. In November Stout offered a silver cup to the Dahlia Society of California as a prize for the best English Cactus Dahlia grown in California. The end of the year was marred by the death of Henrietta Stout's mother, Lucy Langdon Schroeder. She died at Charlecote on December 14, 1921 where she had been living since 1915. She was 81.

1922: The 9th International Flower Show took place March 13-19. The Horticultural Gold Medal of the Garden Club of America went to Julius Roehrs of Rutherford, NJ for a magnificent "Rock Garden" exhibit. This was the second time this gold medal designed by Stout was awarded. She must have found Roehrs' exhibit of special interest as she had begun to put in a rock garden at Charlecote five years earlier.

March 24, 1922 was the publication date for *The Amateur's Book of the Dahlia* by Mrs. Charles H. Stout. This book made a very successful debut both in the US and the UK and was favorably reviewed in both the horticultural and general press. One reviewer wrote that the book was very strongly recommended to

any who are interested in Dahlia culture. "It is by no means dry reading."³⁰ This book firmly established Henrietta Stout's reputation in the gardening world as a major authority on the Dahlia.

At the 9th Annual Meeting of the GCA on June 13, 1922 at Kirtland Country Club, Cleveland, OH, Mrs. Stout was the recipient of the Emily D. Renwick Achievement Medal for her services to the horticultural community in 1921. The nominating letter read in part: "Mrs. Stout's work in Dahlia cultivation and hybridization is well known. During the past year she has perfected the hybridization of many Dahlias which have been awarded certificates by the American Dahlia Society and named. Among them are: *Mexican Beauty*, a hybrid cactus; *Penelope Van Princess*, also a hybrid cactus and *Westhope*, a decorative Dahlia. Besides lecturing on the subject before many societies and garden clubs, Mrs. Stout has written numerous articles for horticultural publications. In addition to this work, Mrs. Stout has designed the Horticultural Medal of The GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA, a most artistic and charming work, considered worthy of a place in the Museum of the American Numismatic Society as an example of American medallic art." Mrs. Frances King presented the medal to Mrs. Charles H. Stout.

Did anyone wonder at the irony of Mrs. Stout winning a medal designed by HMS? She herself must have appreciated the moment. And this was a moment that would happen again and again.

The 8th Annual ADS Show, back in the Hotel Pennsylvania Roof Garden and Conservatory, ran from September 26 to 29. The Annual Meeting of the ADS took place on the second day of the show and Mrs. Stout was elected a vice-president of the Society. The Short Hills Dahlia Show was nicely timed to begin as the ADS show ended and Mrs. Stout was again a medal winner. She received the gold medal of the Dahlia Society of California for a collection of seedlings of her own crossings - the seed parent in every case being *J. Harrison Dick* crossed with some California varieties as well as some new English types. She won the Hall Cup for the second time. Three times and she could keep it. The cup must be competed for with 5 types of flowers; Single or Duplex, Peony, Decorative, Cactus and Hybrid. In this case she exhibited respectively, *Golden Sunshine*, *Shantung*, *White Sister*, *Milton Edwards* and *Gladys Sherwood*. *White Sister* also brought her a Rookwood vase for the best 1921 seedling.

1923: The Dahlia Society of New Jersey (DS-NJ) was organized at a meeting of 150 amateur and professional dahlia growers at the Washington Hotel, Newark, NJ on February 10, 1923. The plan was to hold an annual show in one of the larger cities in the state and to encourage the amateur dahlia grower in every way possible. Mrs. Charles H. Stout was elected temporary chairman.³¹ The Executive Committee of the American Dahlia Society met in New York City on March 14, 1923 and afterwards Stout drafted all the members of the committee to go with her to Grand Central Palace to help complete the organization of the Dahlia Society of NJ.³² Stout went from temporary chairman to president of the Dahlia Society of NJ at that meeting. On April 28th, the first regular meeting of the Society took place in the Council Chamber of the City of Newark. The Society had grown to more than 300 members.³³

The first annual Dahlia exhibition of the DS-NJ would take place September 13, 14 & 15 at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark, NJ.³⁴ Exhibitors would compete in many different classes. The president of the Dahlia Society of New Jersey offered a silver and a bronze medal of her own design for the best Dahlia originating in New Jersey.³⁵ The silver plaque was won by *Jersey Gem*, a pink decorative and the outstanding flower of the whole show. It was grown by William H. Waite and exhibited by W. W. Kennedy & Sons.³⁶ The ADS Bulletin review of the show noted that the Society made it known it stands only for the best - its motto, "Quality above Quantity." Their first move was for better stems, and it was a considerable shock to many old-time exhibitors to find that not a single short stemmed bloom was permitted in the competition. They all fell in line, however, when they saw the wonderful effect. One and all voiced the opinion that the long stem show had come to stay. It was a daring move - the first in the

history of any Dahlia Society but its success was unquestioned. Visitors expressed their gratification at being able to see the blossoms in their true loveliness, and of course the general appearance of the hall was an hundredfold more beautiful.³⁷



This is a bronze example of Mrs. Stout's 1923 design for the Dahlia Society of New Jersey. Nude figure of a young boy standing in a dahlia garden with hand resting on a shield. The heater shield repeats the three plows of the seal of New Jersey that honor the state's agricultural tradition. The garden is notable for the long stout stems of the Dahlias. A drooping Dahlia would be unfortunate in this composition.

The plaquette is 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inches high by 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inches wide. Mrs. Stout's initials HMS are at the bottom of both sides of the plaquette and the maker's initials JRG are at the bottom of the front. JRG stands for J. R. Gaunt & Son of Birmingham, England. Their house medallist was Edward Carter Preston and he cut the dies for this plaquette. This award, sometimes silver, sometimes bronze, occasionally gold-plated, was awarded for collections of Dahlias in many amateur classes but most often for the best Dahlia originating in New Jersey and grown by an amateur. It was occasionally awarded at the annual American Dahlia Society exhibition for the best New Jersey amateur Dahlia. The plaquette was used throughout the life of the DS-NJ. It faded from the pages of the Jersey press in 1963.³⁸ Today there is a New Jersey Dahlia Society with no records of a predecessor society.

The 9th Annual ADS Show at the end of September flowed seamlessly into the Short Hills Dahlia Show. Both shows awarded the Dahlia Society of New Jersey 'Medal.' The plaquette quickly became a fixture in the dahlia award arena. The Dahlia Society of California published their first list of Honorary Members in December, 1923 and Mrs. C. H. Stout was one of thirteen dahlia luminaries so honored.

1924: The horticultural press in the early days of the twentieth century had a strong penchant for poetry. The various bulletins often opened with an appropriate verse or two by well known authors and their

pages were sprinkled with member submitted rhymes which editors unfailingly published. Henrietta Stout stuck to prose in her paeans to the Dahlia but in January she offered a prize of \$50 for the best new and original poem on the Dahlia. The offer appeared in *The Garden Magazine & Home Builder* for the best brief lyric of a joyous mood. The magazine ran the contest and Mrs. Stout, who was not a judge, asked only that the composition be of intrinsic merit. The contest closed Oct. 1, 1924.³⁹

On January 12, 1924 the Dahlia Society of New Jersey held its annual meeting in the Newark Chamber of Commerce rooms. Charles H. Connors of the New Jersey Agriculture Experimental Station, New Brunswick, NJ was elected president.⁴⁰ Mrs. Stout had successfully launched the NJ Society and now she equally adroitly stepped away to let others run it.

The American Dahlia Society changed venues for their 10th Annual Show. They moved to the 71ST Regiment Armory, Park Avenue and 34th Street, September 23-25, 1924.. This single space was almost 40,000 square feet. A builder's half-acre. The Roof Garden and Conservatory at the Hotel Pennsylvania came to only 17,000 square feet so exhibition space was more than doubled. Henrietta Stout saw this as an opportunity. Her husband Charles was a member of the board of the New York League for the Hard of Hearing. She suggested a tea garden be added to the exhibition space for the benefit of the League. The ADS show committee agreed and a Spanish Tea Garden was created at the rear of the Armory where a light lunch could be had and where tea was served every afternoon by debutantes and members of the younger social set - all members of the Women's Auxiliary of the NY League for the Hard of Hearing. Entertainment was provided every afternoon and evening.⁴¹ The League reported to its members: "Three Thousand visitors who came to see the Dahlias departed knowing of the League. Of course, all did not patronize the tea garden; many did so and many more asked questions at the garden gate and took away our literature. Everyone wants to know how much the Women's Auxiliary cleared. They report a balance of about \$240 in cash but a sum total of publicity whose effects will last for months to come. Mrs. Stout was as ever a strong helper and an inspiration throughout."⁴²

The ADS show also saw the coming of age of *White Sister*. Here is a photo of Mrs. Stout standing in front of her *White Sister* basket. It is credited to United Newpictures, New York and the caption read in part: "The Lady of the Dahlias. . . pictured at the Fall Flower Show on Sept. 23rd, with her prize winning 'White Sisters,' said to be the finest white dahlias ever grown." The source for the "finest white dahlia" judgment is unconfirmed but it received wide circulation because the picture ran in many papers throughout the country.

Curtis Redfern, a San Francisco grower of Dahlias shipped his exhibit via air mail



to the 71ST Regiment Armory in New York for the 10th Annual ADS Show. The flowers were cut just before 9AM Tuesday, and arrived just after 6PM Wednesday in Mineola, LI, and brought by ground transportation to the Armory. Mrs. C. H. Stout was the addressee. She opened the box of dahlias just after 8PM and found all in good condition. She arranged an exhibit of the blooms right next to the gate into the Tea Garden for the last day of the show. They were seedlings originated by Redfern and included pompom and decorative blooms in pale pink, champagne and a light lilac, the latter to be named the *Helen Hayes*. With them was a spray of small, single, flame red wild Mexican dahlias picked near Mexico City.⁴³ Mrs. Stout wrote the Post Office this note of appreciation, "It may interest you to know that the blooms were in remarkably fine condition, fresh and firm, showing that the box must have been handled with much care and kept in cool spots in the fourteen different planes used. Your department apparently extended every facility in order to secure a successful delivery."⁴⁴ A modern airline today would be hard pressed to make thirteen successful baggage transfers during the course of one journey.

The 10th ADS Show segued smoothly into the 16th Short Hills Dahlia Show. Richard Lohrmann who served as a judge at Short Hills wrote: "There was one seedling that deserves especial mention. It was a flower of perfect form and great depth; a Decorative; the color a deep iridescent bronze with lighter shadings at the base of the petals and with a stem especially strong and rigid. It is a seedling of *J. Harrison Dick*, exhibited by Mrs. Charles H. Stout. Awarded the first prize for best seedling of New Jersey Origin, it has been named *Prince Fireshine*, after the ancestor of the Mikado."⁴⁵

1925: A year of portent and change. At the January Committee Meeting of the ADS, Henrietta Stout tendered her resignation as Vice-President. She wrote that she was going abroad for an extended trip. The resignation was received with regret but Mrs. Stout stated she realized the importance of every officer being present at each meeting in order to keep in close touch with the activities of the Society and assist in the vast amount of work.⁴⁶ Mrs. Stout continued to serve until she was replaced at the Annual Meeting in September. She in fact only missed one meeting, that of February 19th, during the balance of her term. Mrs. Stout and her husband spent most of February and part of March in Bermuda.

In the April issue of *The Garden Magazine & Home Builder*,⁴⁷ the Prize Winning Poem of the Mrs. Charles H. Stout Dahlia Poem Contest was published:

DAHLIAS by Robert Hillyer

Vanquished by the threat of night
Not only do our eyes behold
Spreading wild wings the day takes flight,
Their pageantry of red and gold
Pledging the armies of the light
Now when the twilight shudders cold
Not to surrender;
With fears unspoken;

And in our westering world appear
But shining centuries to rout
Dahlias, the sunset of the year,
The hazes of autumnal doubt
Kindling the misty atmosphere
While proudly summer marches out,
To sudden splendor.
Her ranks unbroken.

Soon will the summer leaves be tossed
Recessional in robes of power
Where summer's memories are lost,
A sunset folded in a flower
And, bound in iron bands of frost,
When first the grey horizons lower
The Earth will harden;
With sullen warning,

But in this final hour there gleam
They are the pledge of springs to be
Banners of glory, to redeem
After the snow; a prophesy
The lingering hostages of dream
To rive the bonds of night, and free
In summer's garden.
Another morning.

Robert Hillyer was a published poet and a prominent member of literary academia. His poem was selected from nearly 1,000 entries by a three man panel of judges, all men of distinguished literary achievement and gifted makers of verse. Hillyer's lyrics are especially effective when read aloud. The poem was reprinted with permission in the April edition of the Bulletin of the Dahlia Society of California.

The ADS joined the American Institute for their 11th Exhibition. They had partnered with them previously for shows at the Engineers' Building. Now they would join the Institute at the 104TH Field Artillery Armory at Broadway and 67th Street which would hold the 94th Annual Fair of the American Institute of the City of NY in combination with the 11th Annual Exhibition of the American Dahlia Society, September 30 through October 2. The armory had the largest clear span drill hall in New York City and according to the show advertisement would hold the largest and finest agricultural and horticultural show ever held in New York. The Armory had a dirt floor. The ADS Bulletin touted this as an asset. "The armory where the show will be held this year has an earth floor that can be sprinkled and kept moist. Can you imagine anything more ideal to preserve exhibits of flowers than to wet the ground at night. Also this floor lends itself to innumerable innovations in the way of floor displays and miniature gardens."⁴⁸ Some members were not thrilled with this venue. The Westside location was not attractive to many New Yorkers and the space itself was quite stark. Richard Lohrmann had articulated this point of view in the Dahlia Society of CA Bulletin when he wrote about what he thought of the ADS Show at the 71ST Regt. Armory. "Personally, I am of the opinion that an Armory or any other large Auditorium is not a suitable place for a Dahlia or any other cut flower show, unless there is used in decorating, groups of tall boxed or potted plants to break the monotony. I prefer the ballroom or the conservatory of a large hotel. The general effect is more pleasing and overcrowding can be avoided by leaving second and third rate flowers at home."⁴⁹ In point of fact, it would be 1931 before the ADS Show would play a hotel ballroom again. This situation is explained at length to understand that despite the fact that Mrs. Stout had resigned in January; at the June 11th Executive Committee Meeting, Mrs. Chas. H. Stout was named to the Joint Committee on Exhibits. Her skills were needed and she acquiesced.

On June 18, Henrietta and Charles Stout attended the graduation of their son from Harvard. He would enter medical school at Harvard that fall. After the graduation Mr. and Mrs. Stout sailed for England where they spent a month, landing back in New York on the 18th of August. While in England Mrs. Stout was elected a Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society. They also visited Henrietta's sister Lucy Langdon Dyer and her husband at Westhope Manor in Shropshire. Their son, Leonard Schroeder Dyer had just married that June.

The Joint Show at the 104TH Field Artillery Armory showcased over 1,000 individual exhibits. At the ADS Annual Meeting held at the Armory on October 1, N. Harold Cottam was elected vice president to fill the post held by Henrietta M. Stout. The Editor of the Bulletin of the Dahlia Society of CA marked this occasion with these words, "Mrs. Stout's withdrawal from the activities of the American Dahlia Society will prove a distinct loss to it. Her intense and intelligent interest in floriculture has centered on the Dahlia, and the American Society has been most fortunate in having her for one of its untiring workers since its organization. Her charming personality, so clearly reflected in her masterly book on Dahlia Culture has made for her thousands of friends, who will be pleased to learn that she will continue to spread the Dahlia's message of beauty through her connection with the Garden Club of Short Hills, NJ."⁵⁰

Mrs. Stout was correct with her reason for stepping down from the ADS in the short term. Growing Dahlias required constant attention and she had failed to accompany her husband and son who visited England the previous two summers - 1923 and 1924. More to the point Mrs. Stout was taking a horticultural hiatus because her husband's health was deteriorating and she needed to be there for him.

1926: Charles and Henrietta Stout took a winter cruise to the West Indies on the SS Columbus the first three weeks of February. Mrs. Stout had few floricultural commitments this year outside her own garden. She was named to the Advisory Council of the NY Botanical Garden. She served on that Council until 1932. She did take on one special Dahlia show assignment that year. Mrs. C.H. Stout was elected Honorary President of the Dahlia Society of New Jersey at their annual meeting. She agreed at that time to chair the Joint Committee of the DS-NJ and the Camden Dahlia Society for the 1926 US Sesquicentennial Dahlia Exhibition at the new Convention Center, Camden, NJ. The show took place September 21-22 and "More than one million dahlia blooms" were on view. An unusual entry list included hundreds of the 12,000 known varieties of dahlias which covered 27,000 square feet of floor space.⁵¹ She also headed the Jury of Awards for this show.

Mrs. Stout fulfilled her 1921 promise to award a cup for the best English Cactus Dahlia grown in California. She did this on her own volition as reported in the Dahlia Society of CA Bulletin.⁵²

"Some people grow Dahlias for love, some for profit, and a few for both. Dr. Teves and Mrs. Stout both grow the for love although Mrs. Stout sells some of her seedlings and devotes the money to a most excellent charity. They are both well known all over the country for their love and enthusiasm for this fine flower. Both are fortunate in being generously endowed with worldly goods so can indulge their fancies.

Mrs. Stout has offered for some seasons, a prize for the best English type of Cactus developed in California. The California growers have been developing the American type of Cactus which is coarser petaled than the English so for several seasons Mrs. Stout's generous prize has not received attention from the growers who felt they had nothing to offer for it.

However, Dr. Teves has been more fortunate than the professional growers in raising seedlings of English Cactus. The exhibits made by his gardener in the Palace Hotel show have been particularly strong in this type. Mrs. Stout is very well informed on Dahlias through correspondence and reading the Bulletins so she graciously sent the cup for the best English Dahlia shown on stem to Dr. Teves. This unexpected courtesy gave Dr. Teves great pleasure and while his Dahlias are never offered in competition he surely was deserving of Mrs. Stout's prize."

1927: Charles and Henrietta Stout took the same cruise to the West Indies they had taken the year before on the same ship. They sailed Jan 27 and returned Feb. 21. They were accompanied by Charles Stout's cousin William J. Stout and his wife Elsie. When the Stouts returned to Charlecote a private duty nurse was hired to help care for Charles Stout. Her name was Virginia Mason Farwell. She was 29. She is important to this story so here is some background. She and her twin sister Ruth were born December 3, 1897 in Brooklyn, NY. Their parents were Frank Mason Farwell and Lucy Caroline Farwell. The twins had a younger sister, Clara Ray, born August 5, 1899. Frank Farwell worked for Bell Telephone and in 1910 he was made Division Superintendent Bell Telephone Traffic, Southwest Territory and he and his family relocated to Kansas City, MO. In 1913 Frank Farwell died of acute appendicitis. His widow and three daughters returned to Brooklyn. Virginia was 15. Lucy Farwell in 1914 became the Employee Welfare Officer for the largest Bell telephone exchange in Manhattan. After high school Virginia Farwell began nurses training at Carson C. Peck Hospital in Brooklyn. She lived in the nurses residence. She got her RN in October 1920. Exactly how she spent the next six years in the nursing profession is not known but the assumption is that she cared for a succession of patients in their homes as a private duty nurse.

On June 14, 1927 Mrs. Stout attended the 14th Annual Meeting and Luncheon of The Garden Club of America. It took place at the Westchester-Biltmore Country Club in Rye, NY and the chairman of the Renwick Medal Committee made this short speech at the meeting:

"So it is my great pleasure to give this medal to Mrs. Charles H. Stout for her Alpine Garden in Short Hills, NJ. The garden was executed in a year - seeds and plants have been collected through friends from

24 countries on the continent, in Europe and Asia. Educationally Mrs. Stout has done very much for all garden enthusiasts with her carefully prepared lists of more than 1,000 Alpine plants and by showing visitors almost daily how to set rocks, prepare soil and the many other things that spell success or failure. Mrs. Stout has also given most generously of her time in lecturing with *Our Alpine Garden* as the theme. The United States Department of Agriculture has requested a list and photographs of the plant material. And all this has been done by one woman in one year - and with the greatest pleasure we present Mrs. Stout with the medal."⁵³

Mrs. Stout was dumbfounded. As chairman of the medals committee in 1921 she had written the original rules for awarding this medal. It was never intended that it be won more than once and since Stout had already received the medal in 1922 she certainly wasn't looking for another. Mrs. John A. Stewart, Jr., the President of the GCA and a member of the Short Hills Garden Club made the presentation. "We are proud to be able to give the Renwick Medal to Mrs. Stout. As Mrs. Stout is a member of my own Garden Club, I feel the reflected glory."⁵⁴ Mrs. Stout who could usually rise to any occasion with aplomb told the audience "I did not know that I was to receive the Renwick medal today or I would have been prepared to give you my formal thanks. I am grateful for the honor conferred upon me."⁵⁵ She sat back down.

This was a moment of special interest. If the Nine of Spades, the original members of the Short Hills Garden Club, had an order of precedence, this presentation was the Two of Spades giving the Three of Spades a medal named after the Ace of Spades.

The Stout family, Charles, Henrietta, their son Merrell along with Nurse Farwell sailed for Glasgow, Scotland in August arriving on the 28th. Their time in the UK was very short and they sailed back from Liverpool on September 10, arriving in New York on the 18th. The trip was quite difficult for Charles Stout and he continued to fail. Mrs. Stout did make one trip into the city September 21st to see the 13th Annual American Dahlia Society Show and to attend the annual meeting. The show was still in the 104TH Field Artillery Armory. At that meeting, N. Harold Cottam, the man who succeeded Henrietta Stout as VP was elected President of the American Dahlia Society. A good part of his support came from his desire to get the Annual Show out of the upper Westside and this he would do.

1928: Charles Stout died in St. Luke's Hospital, Manhattan on March 15th. He was 64 and was described as dying after a lingering illness. Funeral services were held on the 17th at St. Thomas's Church, 5th Ave. and 53rd St. He was survived by his widow, Henrietta Schroeder and his son, Merrell Stout.

The 14th Annual American Dahlia Show was set for September 26 & 27. Harold Cottam moved the show to 50th Street & 8th Avenue. Madison Square Garden! 75,000 square feet of floor space! No dirt!

One of Mrs. Stout's earliest public appearances after the death of her husband was as a judge of the Garden Club entries at the Madison Square Garden show. Cottam served for just one year and then stepped down. Thomas Leavitt was the new president. The show stayed at the Garden for two more years - 1929 and 1930. The same ad ran for three years with only the dates changing.⁵⁶

Sometime shortly after the death of Charles Stout, Henrietta adopted Virginia Farwell and she became Virginia Stout.

FLOWER SHOW

American Dahlia Society

TWO DAYS ONLY

Millions of Flowers, Acres of Blooms. See the world's largest Dahlias in dazzling colors; the latest flower sensations.



MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

Wednesday and Thursday, September 26 and 27, from 10 A.M. to 10:30 P.M.

Admission 50 Cents

Virginia was introduced to horticulture when she was first hired by the Stouts. She wrote a dozen years later. "Do you remember the two gigantic Autumn flower shows in Atlantic City in 1930 and 1931? It was there that miniature dahlias made their debut in this country. Two people are largely responsible for this achievement. One was the late George Farnum of Media, PA, our devoted friend whose keen interest together with the enthusiastic energy of my dear mother, Mrs. Charles H. Stout helped to popularize small Dahlias. These two amateurs, working separately, had seen miniature Dahlias growing in England, Belgium and Holland. Each imported several varieties. I can remember so well our first importations in 1927, some 30 varieties, pot roots. To mention a few of the varieties there were Rhoda, a pink; Fairy, faun; Agalia, buff-orange; Lady Bird, salmon; Judith, rust-red; and Raider, cinnamon."⁵⁷

Henrietta Stout had found a willing companion in her new daughter, Virginia and together they explored what was worth growing and thrilled at seeing how their selections turned out.

1929: Since 1926 Mrs. Stout had become absorbed in the growing of Alpine plants for rock gardens. Many rare specimens gathered from friends and on trips abroad grew in Charlecote's garden. In January Henrietta and Virginia Stout traveled to Hawaii where they spent three weeks. The highlight of their trip was collecting examples of Silversword from active volcano craters. From Mauna Kea on the Big Island and Haleakala on Maui. Today these are highly endangered plants on both islands. In the 1920s they were already decimated and could only be found at 7,000 feet above sea level in remote crags on the volcano' walls. Mrs. Stout became a founding member of the Alpine Garden Society started in the UK in 1929.

On June 22nd, Merrell Langdon Stout married Helen Scarlett (1903-1983) in Baltimore. Virginia Stout was a bridesmaid. Merrell and Helen Stout had two sons, Charles Langdon Stout (1931-2009) and Merrell Langdon Stout, Jr. (1936-2017).

1930: There are two sources that said that this year the rock garden at Charlecote was recognized by a Garden Club of America Achievement Medal.⁵⁸ One source was derivative of the other and a second supporting reference has not been found. This is important because in 1930 the GCA did not have an Achievement Medal. It had a Medal of Honor but only six were awarded in the 20s and 30s and all recipients are known. The Emily D. Renwick Achievement Medal was discontinued in 1931. Again all recipients are known. The first GCA Achievement Medal was awarded in 1932 posthumously to Mrs. J. Willis Martin. The GCA Horticultural Gold Medal was first awarded for the "finest exhibit" at the Int'l Flower Show in 1921. The Chair of the Archives Committee of the GCA confirmed that their Gold Horticultural Medal in 1930 went to Mrs. William G. Mather for her Spanish Cloister Gardens at the Cleveland Flower Show, John T. Scheepers for his Bulb Garden at Central States Garden and Flower Show, and Albert H. Atkins for his "Spirit of the Sea" at the Exhibition of Sculpture in the Open Air in Philadelphia.⁵⁹ No award for the Charlecote Rock Garden. This writer thinks the first source just got her facts slightly muddled. She was actually referring to the 1927 Renwick Achievement Medal for the Stout Alpine Garden at Charlecote. So she was three years off, she dropped the word 'Renwick' and she generalized Alpine Garden into Rock Garden. A researcher's nightmare has been resolved. This is something that would not much bother the reader but was a huge bother to the writer.

1931: This year Henrietta Maria Stout got her second wind. In June her son received his M.D. from Harvard Medical School. From September 22 to 25, the ADS held its 17th Annual Show at the Commodore Hotel on East 42nd Street. The show was back in hotel ballrooms after seven years. 12,000 people attended the show. At the general meeting held at the hotel on the first day of the show Mrs. Stout was elected a vice president of the Society for the second time. Miss Virginia Stout representing Short Hills Garden Club won seven ribbons for Dahlias in the Garden Flower Section. Her fellow member, Mrs. M. W. Failoute, won five ribbons. Their combined score won the Short Hills Garden Club a silver medal.

1932: At the Executive Meeting of the American Dahlia Society at the Hotel Lexington on January 13, Mrs. Charles Stout was added to the Garden Club Section Committee chaired by George Farnum. Mrs. Stout was appointed a committee of one to provide a design for a new ADS Medal. Mrs. Stout generously offered to contribute \$100 toward the expense of making new dies if those present would subscribe the balance of the costs of the dies. Amount was fully subscribed.⁶⁰ Mrs. Stout submitted a drawing of the proposed new medal. The design was approved. The medal was called "Flora Blesses the Dahlias."



Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society

The July issue of the ADS Bulletin was delayed because of the death of the editor and was dubbed the 3rd Quarter 1932 issue. Photographs of the front and back of the medal designed by Mrs. Stout were published in that issue. The gold medal was awarded for the first time at the 18th Annual ADS Show held at the Hotel Pennsylvania. The medal went to Fisher & Masson, Trenton, NJ for the most meritorious Dahlia exhibit at the show. The show ran for two days, September 22 & 23 and this time occupied the entire ballroom floor. Bronze examples of the medal were available to affiliated societies.



The above bronze cupola plaque was sculpted by Jonathan M. Swanson (1888-1963) obverse and Henri Weil (1867-1949) reverse and struck by the Medallion Art Co., NY. in gold, silver and bronze. It is 1 7/8-inches high at the center by 2 7/8-inches wide. Even though this is a plaque, albeit with a domed or cupola top, the ADS followed the GCA convention and called it a medal.

In the Garden Flower Section at the ADS show, Virginia Stout was on a roll. She won the sweepstakes prize for Garden Club entrants in the 50 classes assigned to them in the exhibit. The Bulletin commentator wrote "Outstanding among the club exhibits was a collection of Dahlias from the Short Hills Garden Club, NJ. This was arranged by Miss Virginia Stout. It included all types of Dahlias from the smallest pompons, on through to the largest decoratives. The entire display was shown on a large table before a mirror. The smaller types were grouped about a beautiful center display - a large basket effectively arranged with many perfect blooms of *Omar Khayyam*, large formal decorative Dahlias, the autumn coloring blended perfectly with branches of autumn foliage and berries. This basket, which was chosen by the judges as the best basket of Dahlias in the entire Show, was awarded The Hotel Pennsylvania silver trophy. Miss Stout is to be congratulated for this splendid exhibit."⁶¹ Virginia Stout was the cover girl for the October issue of the Bulletin. The caption says it all.



In this issue a new section was introduced called: Dahlia Forum and Exchange, conducted by Lynn B. Dudley. He asked Henrietta Stout for an article on practical uses of Dahlias for ideal decorative purposes. She wrote *Arranging Dahlias in the House*,⁶² a guide to balance in the display of Dahlias in the home. In this same issue among the Section I winners was a seedling grown by George Farnum named *Yetta*, after Mrs. Charles Stout (this being a nickname).⁶³ The writer is ever grateful for this editorial aside. It is lovely to know that Mrs. Stout answered to this seldom used diminutive of Henrietta. It made her more human.

After serving as Secretary of the Short Hills Garden Club for 12 years beginning in 1915, with time out during her husband's illness, Henrietta Stout was elected permanent Honorary Secretary by the Club.

1933: Beginning with the January issue of the Bulletin of the American Dahlia Society, the ADS medal appeared at the top of the bulletin masthead on each issue. This masthead art was used at least through 1946.



In the July issue of the ADS Bulletin, the editor wrote: We are fortunate in having two Dahlia Ambassadors Plenipotentiary traveling in Europe this summer, Mrs. Charles H. Stout FRHS of Short Hills, NJ and Mr. George Farnum, FRHS of Media, PA. Both are vice presidents of the Society. Each has promised to be on the lookout for new and different Dahlia varieties - and report their finds. Both were officially designated as delegates to European Dahliadom in the interests of knowledge of what our neighbors across the sea are growing. Their reports will be made in a later issue.⁶⁴

Henrietta and Virginia Stout took a North Cape Cruise leaving NY on July 1 visiting many of the great fjords. They collected hundreds of alpine specimens for their rock garden. They were gone for more than five weeks and the Dahlias at Charlecote suffered a bit from their absence. At the 19th Annual ADS Show September 21 & 22, Virginia Stout scored only four firsts and a second in the Garden Club Section at the Hotel Pennsylvania. Still a respectable showing.

The November issue of the Bulletin featured this report as forecast by the editor in July.: *Dahlias in Iceland in July* "Believe It or Not, I Saw Them Blooming There" says Mrs. Charles H. Stout. The first stop on her North Cape Cruise was Reykjavik, Iceland and there Stout made this discovery, "Walking along the little plaza which surrounds a squared pond in the best residential section of the town, I suddenly stopped short in amazement. There was my old friend Dahlia Countess of Lonsdale better than I had seen it grow at home. Not far off was a red cactus similar in form and habit and with them pompons of many hues. A few tall ones I saw in other gardens and borders of miniatures were a joy."⁶⁵ Stout investigated and found these Dahlias benefited from a volcanic soil rich in potash, a month of June sunlight, air soft with gentle moisture from the sea and showers aplenty to satisfy the Dahlias thirst. The catalyst was an underground water system moving hot thermal spring water and steam from house to house in hollow logs.⁶⁶ While Henrietta Stout was off pursuing her Alpine plants passion, her Dahlia passion still managed to bring her up short and capture her attention. Unfortunately the European report from George Farnum never materialized. He passed away after a 6-month illness in July, 1934.

In November, Mrs. Stout and eight other prominent rock garden enthusiasts met at the Hotel Commodore to set up the organization committee for a new society - The American Rock Garden Society. This Society was formally announced in the January 1934 issues of the GCA Bulletin and the Gardeners' Chronicle of America. All rock gardeners in North America were invited to attend the organizational meeting in March, 1934.

1934: In February Virginia Stout, Helen and Merrell Stout along with their son Charles Langdon (age 4) took a cruise to Bermuda and spent a week there together.

Dahlias the lyric poem by Robert Hillyer that won the 1925 Stout Poetry Prize was reprinted in the ADS February Bulletin. The editor used this reprint to appeal to readers for Dahlia poem submissions.⁶⁷ The republication of *Dahlias* was quite timely. Robert Hillyer won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in May, 1934.

On the afternoon of March 21, the organizational meeting of the American Rock Garden Society (ARGS) took place in the West Ballroom of the Commodore Hotel. 250 amateur and professional rock garden

partisans attended this formal launch. Constitution and Bylaws were approved and Montague Free, horticulturist at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden became president. Other posts were filled and Mrs. Stout was named a director for a two-year term. Everyone expressed the opinion that this had been one of the most interesting and enthusiastic meetings they ever attended.⁶⁸ The first Annual Meeting of the ARGS was held in the Administration Building of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) on the 22nd of May. The meeting was held in conjunction with the BBG Annual Rock Garden Day and 48 members attended. The ARGS did not publish its own bulletin but rather had a section in *The Gardeners' Chronicle of America*, a monthly magazine whose editor, Dorothy Ebel Hansell was the secretary of the Society. It was one of the few horticultural societies with monthly rather than quarterly communication with its members.

On June 30th, Virginia and Henrietta Stout left on a Mediterranean Cruise on the Italian liner SS Roma. The ports of call on this cruise were reported in the Feb. 1935 ADS Bulletin by Mrs. Stout. The cruise was recounted Dahlia by Dahlia from Madeira to Odessa. She ended her account with the Holy Land. "Reverently wending our way to Jerusalem, we visited among all the Holy Places, the Garden of Gethsemane. Its hoary two thousand year old olive trees swayed in the breeze against a sunset sky. Its little beds of flowers were in perfect order and peace reigned supreme in the fading light. There the dear grey bearded monk was bending over a bed of Dahlias, disbudding the stalks - even as you and I!"⁶⁹

The 20th Annual ADS Dahlia Show was held September 20 & 21 at the Hotel Pennsylvania. The DS-NJ Honorary President's Medal for best Dahlia of NJ origin went to Etherington Dahlia Gardens, Westwood, NJ. The winning Dahlia was *Judge Samuel Seabury*, a formal decorative, pale lavender and cream.



Above is Mrs. Stout's Honorary President's Medal. 1934 is the first time noted that it was awarded. This medal was first struck in 1922 for the City Gardens Club of New York founded in 1918. They used it as an award until replaced in 1928. After that it became a stock medal available to any buyer from Medallic Art Company of New York City (MACo). The medal illustrated is from the current MACo catalog and is still available in bronze at 2½-inches wide. The interest here is that the sculptor of the medal, Julio Kilenyi, could not draw. Mrs. Stout could draw and she was an early member of the City Gardens Club. It is entirely possible that Mrs. Stout designed this medal. The writer believes she did but he has no proof.

1935: In the February issue of the ADS Bulletin Virginia Stout was named to the Executive Committee.

65 Members and guests of the American Rock Garden Society attended a lunch at the Lexington Hotel in NYC on March 21 to celebrate the first anniversary of the Society. It took place during the week of the

International Flower Show. The event featured a round table discussion on various rock garden topics by eleven rock garden experts. Mrs. Stout was a prominent player at the table.

The First National Rock Garden Exposition occurred May 16 to 18 in Cincinnati, OH. The exhibits were installed in Fleischmann Gardens Park exhibition hall and various outside spaces appropriate for exhibit display. In addition to ribbons for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place and honorable mention in the 42 classes at the First ARGS Show, four special awards were offered in Classes A, B, C & D. The award for Class D was a gold medal donated by Mrs. Stout. Only two of the four special awards were made. Class D was won by Carl Kern, Wyoming Nursery, Wyoming, OH for his collection of Dwarf Conifers. Stout also put in a non-competitive exhibit to help aid the effectiveness of the show. At the Second Annual Meeting at the Alma Hotel on the 17th, Montague Free, the president of ARGS presented the "Horticultural Medal of Mrs. Charles H. Stout to Carl. Kern."⁷⁰ Just what medal Mrs. Stout provided is not known and it is a subject of ongoing research. Nearly 500 delegates and visitors attended the exhibition and it was extended one day because of the excellent showing and interest displayed.

Henrietta and Virginia Stout made an ocean crossing to Ireland and England in July and spent a month in England including a visit to Henrietta's sister Lucy and her family. They returned the end of August. September 26 & 27, the 21st Annual ADS Show was at the Hotel Pennsylvania once again. Attendance reached 6,000 for this show. Virginia Stout exhibited and won firsts in two classes of the Garden Club Section A. She also served as a judge for the first time. Mrs. Stout's DS-NJ Honorary President's Award for the Best Dahlia of NJ origin went to J. A. Kemp, Little Silver, NJ.

1936: The year opened in January with an Executive Board meeting of the American Rock Garden Society in the Lecture Room of the Gardens of the Nations at Rockefeller Center. Mrs. Stout presented a set of 90 colored slides and accompanying syllabus to the Society. The were for the use of garden groups interested in rock gardening.

The picture to the right is a view of the Charlecote rock garden. It is in the Smithsonian Institution Collection. It is a 3¼ x 4 inch lantern slide hand colored by Henrietta Stout.⁷¹



The February issue of the ADS Bulletin had as its lead article "A Proposal for the Nationalization of the American Dahlia Society." by Lynn B. Dudley. He wrote that the ADS had "a unique opportunity now to assume a position of real leadership in the matter of National Dahlia Progress."⁷² Mrs. Stout immediately responded, "I talked hard and long to Mr. Vincent (Richard Vincent, Jr., Founder) about Nationalizing the Society as I believed its name was bigger than the Society. We did get as far as electing vice presidents from the various zones. The plan you have outlined is fine. I wish I could help you with it but I am going south soon in search of my ever elusive health."⁷³ This was the first hint Henrietta Stout was having health issues. Research quickly brought to light that Henrietta and Victoria Stout checked into The Breakers in Palm Beach, FL on February 28. They were back in NJ by March 19th for an ARGS Board meeting and Annual Luncheon at the Hotel Montclair, NYC. 85 members and guests attended.

It was announced that the First ADS National Show would take place in Convention Hall, Detroit, MI on September 18 & 19 followed by the 22nd Annual ADS Show in the Hotel Pennsylvania, NYC on September 23 & 24. The latter show was changed to the Horticultural Hall of the Gardens of the Nations, Rockefeller Center in conjunction with the Dahlia Society of New Jersey. The venue had to be changed quickly⁷⁴ - no reason given. It is easy to see the fine hand of Henrietta Stout at work here.

The Annual Meeting and ARGS Show took place in the Horticultural Hall in Boston MA May 1 & 2 under the auspices of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and in conjunction with their Daffodil Show. At the afternoon session on the 1st, the Rock Garden slide show created by Mrs. Stout was shown to an appreciative audience. The New York Show of the ARGS was held in the rooms of the Horticultural Society of the City of NY on Madison Avenue in cooperation with that Society on May 14 & 15. The show was commendable and noteworthy for the rarity of some plants on exhibit. Mrs. Stout got a third for Six Specimens, All Different. That June, Mrs. Stout opened her rock garden at Charlecote to members of the ARGS. It was described in the Gardeners' Chronicle as well planned and attractively planted.

The two 1936 Dahlia shows of the ADS were conducted with good reviews and Virginia Stout once again served as a judge for the NY show. The Annual Dinner for the Society took place at the Hotel Pennsylvania, 16 blocks south of Rockefeller Center on September 23rd, just 15 minutes after the show closed for the day. A group of senior ADS officials - the president, two editors and two VPs - all crowded into a checker cab. They discussed medium-sized Dahlias and how to make them better liked by American growers. They agreed to rename them 'Florists' Types' and to seek members to express their feelings on the subject. The Annual Dinner went well and Mrs. Stout was one of five members presented with an honorary gold medal for meritorious service to the Dahlia. She was cited for her ardent love and promotion of the Dahlia and the Society. It is suspected that one of the cab riders cornered Mrs. Stout at this event because she produced an article in very short order on the practicality of the Florist Type Dahlia for the average grower and exhibitor.

"Last October, at a giant banquet which I attended, The stage was flanked by *Jane Cowl* on stems five feet tall. In front of these was a myriad of florists' types in all the autumn shades and every form interspersed with a little crimson cactus, so dainty and so full of life that they caught the eye of everyone present. The speakers table at this banquet was decorated with medium-size white Dahlias mixed with small white chrysanthemums and white pompon Dahlias in white Wedgwood vases. The effect was most unusual, not to say entrancing. Instead of Gardenias or white Carnations, the ladies corsages and the gentlemen's boutonnieres were made with little white Dahlia *Corronne*, a large sized miniature of the decorative type.

Coming into bloom when the roses and lilies are on the wane and chrysanthemums and greenhouse flowers have hardly begun to come into market, the Dahlia is a Godsend to the florists. It is for us to make a specialty of those kind of Dahlias which the florist can use for corsages, table decorations, home decorations which will fill the average sized vase and table, which can compliment the daintiest bride, and yes, even grace the most elaborate funeral, or the finest banquet table. For this is the ultimate practical use for the Dahlia."⁷⁵

1937: At the Annual Meeting of the Dahlia Society of New Jersey, Virginia Stout was elected 5th Vice President. Virginia and Henrietta Stout then left on a winter cruise to the West Coast via the Panama Canal. While they were away the February issue of the ADS Bulletin published an article written by Virginia Stout called, "Artistic Arrangements of Miniature Dahlias." It was reprinted from the August 1936 edition of the Dahlia News of New Jersey. It was a considered look at design elements available to create a pleasing floral arrangement.⁷⁶

Mrs. and Miss Stout were part of the group that welcomed 100 members and their guests to the ARGS Annual Luncheon. The 2nd Annual ARGS Show followed shortly afterward at the Museum of Natural History on May 14-16 in conjunction with the Horticultural Society of NY. The Annual Meeting with 75 members on hand was held at the Museum on the first day of the show. Mrs. Stout completed her two-year term as a director at that meeting. The Mrs. Charles H. Stout Horticultural Achievement Gold Medal went to Kurt Baasch, Baldwin, Long Island for a collection of Saxifrages - 25 plants, well staged. She herself got a third place ribbon for Three Specimens, All Different and a special award for a plant of Wild Azaleas raised from seed gathered on Mt. Fujiyama, Japan.

Five days after the show Mrs. Stout entertained 25 Rock Garden Society members at Charlecote where they viewed her other beautiful gardens in addition to her rock garden. They saw 2,000 native woodland plants and alpines all carefully labeled.

The American Dahlia Society returned to the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Pennsylvania with The Dahlia Society of NJ as co-sponsor for their 23rd Annual Show. The dates were September 24 & 25. This would be the first ADS event in an air-conditioned space. The ADS did not sponsor a National Show but rather decided to support the 4th Annual Mid West Show in Indianapolis, IN September 18 & 19.

That summer Henrietta and Virginia Stout took a cruise to European and Scandinavian ports. They were back by mid August. While they were gone the August issue of the ADS Bulletin was published and it contained an article by Mrs. Stout recounting her adventure as an Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the ADS on her last cruise. One of the ports of call was La Libertad in El Salvador. Mrs. Stout and her daughter took a shore excursion to see San Salvador, the capital of the country. The trip through the jungle reads like a black ops mission. They stopped at a tiny village where they saw dying mahogany trees smothered in orchids in full bloom. "Children climbed up to gather them so that each of us might have a bouquet to wear which on 5th Avenue would have cost a \$100 apiece." The journey continued, "around curves on two wheels, bouncing about and clutching at any part of the car which seemed firm enough to steady us." Finally they arrived at the hotel in San Salvador where a feast was laid on. "The table was groaning with fruits of the fertile soil and decorated elaborately with hybrid Dahlias. One of them was our old friend *Jane Cowl*. I had seen it before in Sicily, Palestine and Greece. The others were unknown to me, but among them a lovely white cactus type, which I saw again in Guatemala and South America. These Dahlias were displayed with great pride and each of us after lunch added Dahlias to our bouquets of orchids. This was February, not September, and Dahlias, not orchids, were de luxe."⁷⁷

The ADS Show opened and went so well that on the second day the members of the Society were three hours late for the annual meeting in the Roof Garden of the hotel. Business was not completed so some items was held over to the Get-Together Dinner on Jan 22, 1938. That event was soon aptly retitled the American Dahlia Society Mid-Winter Dinner Meeting.

1938: The Mid-Winter Dinner-Meeting opened with the 2 PM Business Meeting of the ADS at the Hotel Shelton. The 150 attendees taxed the Parlor to its limits. Business was conducted expeditiously and the meeting adjourned well before time for the 6 PM Reception preceding the Dinner in the Gothic Room. After dinner the opening 'entertainment' was Miss & Mrs. Stout presenting a 16mm color motion picture depicting their recent European travels plus sequences shot of the gardens at Charlecote. The editor who reported on the event wished "... he might have the space of an entire Bulletin to paint word pictures of the quaint bits of landscape, the local color of prince and peasant, the sunny slopes and volcanic disturbances which form but a part of this wonderful travelogue in Southern Europe."⁷⁸ The Lady of the Dahlias gave a wry running commentary to this ever changing Dahliacade as Dahlia after Dahlia appeared on the screen. Other multimedia Dahlia presentations followed and the evening was a huge success.

The Stouts left on the SS Columbus February 5th for a 47-day "Around South America" cruise. NYC to Cuba, through the Panama Canal, then south down the West Coast, through the Straits of Magellan, and back up the East Coast stopping at Trinidad and the Bahamas. There were many South American ports of call. The SS Columbus returned to NYC on March 24th. The ship was the pride of the North German Lloyd Merchant Marine Fleet. It was the 7th largest passenger liner in the world at the time. In December 1939, the SS Columbus was discovered by a British destroyer 400 miles off the Virginia coast. To avoid capture the crew burned and scuttled the ship and were picked up as survivors by a US heavy cruiser. One wonders what the atmosphere was like on the ship when the Stouts were aboard one year earlier?

The Spring meeting of the Dahlia Society of NJ met on April 2. Virginia Stout was appointed a delegate to the Spring Conference of the New Jersey Garden Club on April 11, in Westfield, NJ. The NJ Society decided to have their own Dahlia Show in Summit, NJ and end their co-sponsorship of the ADS Annual Show. They did become the 1st State Branch Society of the ADS. Mrs. Stout donated 12 posters used as part of the Dahlia Exhibit at the International Flower Show to the Society. These posters depicted the twelve principal types of Dahlias. They were pencil drawings created by Mrs. Stout and it is too bad that their whereabouts today are unknown. Miss and Mrs. Stout gave an illustrated talk on their just completed voyage "Around South America." As a sailor has a girl in every port, Mrs. Stout can find a Dahlia on every shore excursion. This was another sparkling Dahliacade narrated by Mrs. Stout and enjoyed by all.

In May ADS announced it was moving the Annual Show to Uptown New York. The show was going to the beautiful Ballroom of the Concourse Plaza Hotel on Grand Concourse at 161st Street. "The move is made necessary by the ever increasing automobile traffic in the business section of the city making it nearly impossible for one not familiar with New York traffic to either bring in an exhibit or attend by car."⁷⁹ There was a bit of spin going on here. No where is it mentioned that the Grand Concourse is actually in the Bronx. If there was location resistance in the past to the move to the upper Westside - the Armory at Broadway & 67th Street - that resistance would intensify over a move to the Bronx.

September 20 & 21, 1938. The ADS 24th Annual Show opened at the Concourse Plaza Hotel on the 20th at 3PM amid a cloudburst. It had been raining for four days. The annual meeting took place at 2:30 PM on the 21st. The business of the Society, including moving the annual meeting to January was accomplished while the fury of a storm lashed the hotel. A hurricane later called the Long Island Express first made landfall at Bellport, LI around 2:30PM and a second landfall at Bridgeport, CT around 4PM. It was the worst hurricane to hit Long Island and New England in a hundred years. The Consolidated Edison powerhouse at 133rd Street was flooded and Manhattan from 59th Street north into and across the Bronx lost electric power at 8PM. The ADS Show went on to candlelight. The hotel supplied saucers with small votive candles attached and viewers carried these as they looked at Dahlias under flickering flames. The show closed when the last candle went out.

The Show of the Dahlia Society of NJ scheduled for September 27 & 28 in Summit, NJ was cancelled due to the ravages of the Long Island Express hurricane. After some serious consultation the Executive Committee decided to have a special meeting of the Society on October 1 at Trinity Parish House in Newark and hold an informal show for members only, offering them an opportunity to show off any of their good surviving blooms. Three tables were set up to hold the few blooms expected. When members started to arrive it was soon clear three tables were not enough. There were 125 entries at the start of the meeting. The quality of the blooms was excellent and all were astounded at the wonderful showing that had been made. Virginia Stout won the sweepstakes prize.

When the American Rock Garden Society was organized one of the perks members got was a list of rock gardens that they might visit. The list grew quickly and included most of the major rock gardens in the

Middle Atlantic states. The gardens of the Society founders were at the top of the list. The rock garden at Charlecote was notable because it was not on the list. Charlecote was not added until June 1936. By that time the national membership of the Society came to about 400 and it would remain at that level for the balance of the 1930s. Certainly the amount of membership traffic through Charlecote would never be more than a few at a time. As noted earlier, in May 1937, Mrs. Stout hosted a relatively large party of members at her home. So what had changed? In the October issue of *Gardeners' Chronicle* all was revealed. Mrs. Stout wrote a short article called "Widen Your Paths." She told of her mind set when she first built her rock garden.⁸⁰

"It was my very own intimate garden and no thought came to me that anyone else would want to study it except an occasional botanist or student of alpinists. Stepping stones were all I needed to reach the various sections." She did not take into account that friends wanted to see her garden and her friends had friends ". . . but, alas, some people stepped without looking and many precious plants died an unwarranted death." She did not want her garden closed to anyone who wanted to see it so a major refit was organized. She put in paths at least 3½-feet wide with occasional platforms where the visitor could stand or sit. She paved the paths with great flat stones from a river bed with little creeping things planted between which do not mind being stepped on. Mrs. Stout had learned a



lesson and she wanted to share it with the members of the ARGS. "To those who contemplate building a rock garden, I would admonish them to build with wide paths for the sake of their plants and those who wish to study them."⁸¹

1939: After the Annual Meetings of the Dahlia Society of NJ and the American Dahlia Society, both now in January, the ladies Stout set sail in February on the SS Santa Elena for a 16-day Caribbean Cruise calling at ports in Curacao, Venezuela, Panama, Jamaica and Haiti. The great Dahlia hunt sailed on. They returned to find out that the NY World's Fair would not be able to accommodate the 25 Annual ADS Show. Hortus, Inc., the horticultural concessionaire at the fair did not have enough room in their building for the ADS Exhibition.

On May 9 & 10th, the 6th Annual Meeting of the American Rock Garden Society took place in Philadelphia. Home base was the Warwick Hotel. On the 9th there was a dinner and business meeting in the evening. Miss Virginia Stout was elected to a three year term as a director. The next day the members toured five different rock gardens in the Philadelphia area, each with its own character and charm.

The venue for the ADS 25th Annual Exhibition was announced in the May ADS Bulletin. The Silver Anniversary Edition would take place in the Florentine Grill of the Hotel Park Central on 7th Avenue at 56th Street, September 26 & 27. Parking was available at reasonable rates, the room was air conditioned and since it was on the ground floor, no elevator travel was needed. Also it was not in the Bronx.



The ladies Stout had gone south last winter and now they went north in August on an 11-day cruise on the SS Fort Townshend to Halifax, Nova Scotia and St. John's, Newfoundland. No Dahlias or Alpines in the western hemisphere would escape these ladies. The Dahliacade sailed on.



Snowsprite

The September ADS 25th Anniversary Show got very good notices. The miniatures got a special mention with the classes providing the best varieties known. In the Miniatures, 5 Bloom Class, Virginia Stout won a 1st for *Snowsprite* in the white category. J. A. Kemp won the Dahlia Society of NJ Honorary President's medal for best Dahlia of NJ origin. He had previously won this medal in 1935. In the December issue of *Gardeners' Chronicle*, Virginia Stout had an article simply titled, "Miniature Dahlias." Though written by Virginia its viewpoint was mother and daughter. They recount their 12 year history of raising miniatures, their successes, their failures and the choices now available to the grower.⁸²

This is what the Florentine Grill looked like for the 25th Anniversary of the American Dahlia Society



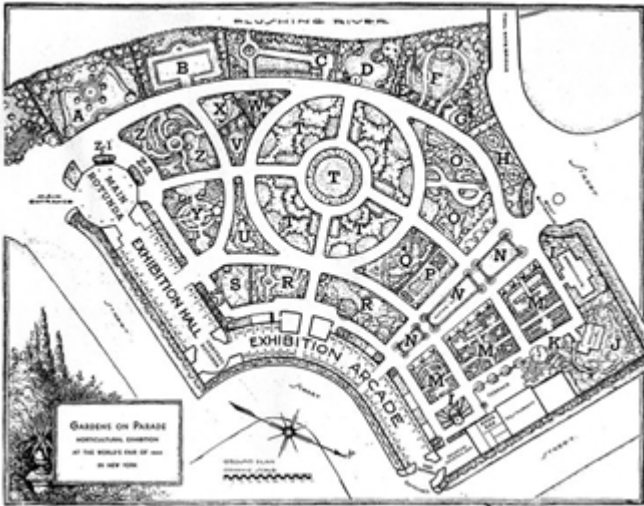
A closer look at this picture revealed that the ladies Stout were right at the bottom of the center aisle closest to the camera. Once they were identified it seems likely that the senior management of the ADS is ranged behind them. It is evident some careful staging went into this 'casual' picture. Even the point of view matches the postcard of the empty Grill.



The people in the picture are merely described as 'enthusiastic spectators' in the caption in the Bulletin.⁸³ The Bulletin editor must have had a very dry sense of humor. It is sincerely hoped there is a copy of this picture stored in some ADS archival box with the names of all the players who participated in this company front located and identified on the back.

1940: In February, Henrietta Stout and her son and daughter-in-law went on vacation to Havana, Cuba returning to Port Tampa, FL on the SS Cuba on the 15th.

On August 2nd, Sir John Ludovick Swinnerton-Dyer died suddenly in Switzerland at the age of 26. He left no heirs. He was the only child born to Sir John Dyer, a Captain in the Scots Guards who died in action July 31, 1917 at the age of 26 when his son was only three. The end of this line caused the title to revert back four generations to the male offspring of a second son. Lucy Schroeder Dyer, Henrietta Schroeder Stout's older sister suddenly found herself at the age of 70, Lady Lucy Langdon Schroeder Swinnerton-Dyer, wife of Sir Leonard Whitworth Swinnerton-Dyer, 14th Baronet of Tottenham. This must have caused an interesting spate of letters between the two sisters that summer.



The American Dahlia Society successfully booked their 26th Annual Exhibition into the Gardens on Parade section of the New York World's Fair at Flushing, LI. 69,000 people attended the Fair over the run of the show, September 20 to 22, and a goodly portion of those saw Dahlias on Parade. A major success for the ADS. Greater interest was manifested in miniatures and pompons for garden borders than in previous exhibitions. "The selection of a magnificent white seedling Dahlia to bear the name of *Edith Willkie* was the most outstanding event of the opening day of the American Dahlia Society's Show at Gardens on Parade. Miss Jane Todd, vice chairman of the Republican State Committee; Mrs. Pearl H. Bridegum, New Jersey member of the National Republican Committee and Mrs. Harold Irving Pratt, president of

Gardens on Parade chose an especially beautiful white semi-cactus seedling to bear the name of the wife of the Republican presidential candidate. The seedling was grown by Earnest E. Tooker of Rockville Centre. It won first in several classes. As soon as the selection had been made, two of the huge white blooms were rushed to LaGuardia Field and put aboard a plane for presentation to Mrs. Willkie."⁸⁴

The president of the American Dahlia Society, Conrad Frey, won Mrs. Charles H. Stout's annual medal for the best New Jersey Dahlia, *Yellow Glory*, a huge but beautiful rich yellow semi-cactus. Mrs. Stout also offered a one-time trophy at this show for 12 blooms of miniatures less than 3½-inches wide. Henry Olsen won with a variety called *Red Robin*.



Miss Jane Todd, Mrs. Pearl H. Bridegum & Mrs. Harold Irving Pratt

One week later on September 28th, Virginia Stout had a particularly successful Dahlia Society of New Jersey Flower Show in Kearny, NJ. She won the medal of the Dahlia Society of Georgia for miniature Dahlias. She was also runner-up in the Grand Sweepstakes. In addition Miss Stout donated a trophy for best miniature Dahlia arrangement which was won by Elmer Davenport. The Stouts were certainly very active in promoting miniature Dahlias in 1940.

1941: This was the last calendar year of the life of Henrietta Maria Schroeder Stout. She was 65. Her appearances at horticultural events were often curtailed by her ailments but it is sincerely hoped that Mrs. Stout was well enough to attend the 27th Annual ADS Show at the Museum of Natural History in NYC on September 24 & 25. This was the site and the dates of the 1st ADS Show and Henrietta Stout's first national acclaim as a Dahlia Amateur. There is a certain symmetry to the Lady of the Dahlias completing her Dahlia journey where it began. And seeing it without the restrictions and upheavals of a country at war. In this iteration, the Dahlia Show occupied the new Education Hall (Maxwell Memorial Hall) and extended into the old Memorial Hall. There was plenty of space for each Dahlia to tell its own story. She continued to offer her prize for the Best NJ Dahlia at both the ADS and the DS-NJ Shows. Her daughter served in various capacities in the management of the three Societies closest to Yetta Stout's heart. She passed away January 21, 1942 at Charlecote.

There were many obituaries, all listing some horticultural organizations she had contributed to. No list was complete and the compiler of this biographical sketch doubts he could put one together either. She did much that just never rose to the attention of the press and horticultural bulletins during her lifetime. Three days after her death the annual meeting of the ADS was called to order at 3PM at the Hotel Shelton. Lynn B. Dudley, Chairman of the Resolutions Committee presented the following resolutions which were adopted:

"With the passing of Mrs. Stout on January 21, 1942, the Dahlia has lost a friend—
The American Dahlia Society, likewise, has lost one of its most loyal and interested members—
Mrs. Stout was a charter member, and her enthusiasm and generosity has helped the Society to weather many of the struggles which have been a part of this growing organization-through the years. Through her intimate knowledge and experience in horticulture she was able to write one of the most widely read books on Dahlias and Dahlia culture ever published.

Further, her desire to see the Dahlia become the garden flower of more people, led her to give generously of medals and prizes to our Shows.

Not only was this true, but through her artistic ability she designed several horticultural medals, one of which is our present official A. D. S. medal.

She loved gardens and those at her home, Charlecote, Short Hills, N.J., were visited by many people, including her host of friends every season. Her collection of Rock Garden plants was one of the finest in this section.

But, though her interest in horticultural was diversified, she was always a devotee of the Dahlia-and particularly the miniature types.

Yes, the Dahlia has lost one of its truest friends.

Therefore, be it resolved that this meeting of The American Dahlia Society express in this manner its deep loss, in the passing of Mrs. Stout and to extend to her family its heartfelt sympathy. And that a copy of these resolutions be placed in our records and a copy sent to her family."⁸⁵

When HMS passed away the US had been on a war footing for only six weeks. The Garden Club of America became very active very quickly in the war effort. The GCA supported various gardening related programs and it was felt that members actively engaged in these programs could wear a badge identifying them as authorized participants.



The executive committee decided on a pin designed from the familiar emblem of The Garden Club of America - the Lamp of Enlightenment surrounded by 12 oak leaves. Above the emblem the words THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA would be engraved and beneath the emblem the words WAR SERVICE. These pins had to be purchased but no member could just order one on their own. The presidents of the local clubs submitted names of members who were deserving of the pin by taking part in the various War Service programs of the GCA. This was all done on the honor system. Pins were available for purchase at

cost by members of the GCA who were thus nominated by their local clubs for their War Service. From 1942 to 1944 many of these pins were distributed by the GCA for sanctioned War Work. The pin itself is 1x1¼-inch sterling silver oval with enamel paint; green leaves, gold lamp and blue lettering.

In 2002 the GCA emblem again came under scrutiny and its appearance was modernized and made more easily printed and used by computers. Marilyn Worseldine, a graphic artist from Washington, DC, did the adaptation.



In 2003 the Stout GCA emblem came roaring back as the main device on the Elizabeth Craig Weaver Proctor Medal awarded for exemplary service and creative vision in any field related to The Garden Club of America's special interests. The emblem for the GCA has seen almost a century of use in various forms as the logo of the foremost organization for Gardening in America. And it is a continuing testimonial to Henrietta Stout's exemplary service and creative vision.

Henrietta Stout's medallic legacy continues on. Flora still flourishes. The American Dahlia Society awards a gold-plated 'Flora Blesses the Dahlias' plaque at their national show each year and it is their highest award. The Garden Club of America still awards the 'Flora with Spade and Wreath' plaque. It is their bronze Medal of Merit which is awarded today to a member of one's own club for contributions of exceptional merit in horticulture, conservation, civic achievement or leadership. It is the highest club level award.

Charlecote has gone through many owners since Henrietta Stout last worked in the gardens. There are almost no remnants left. In fact, in the slide collection of the gardens in the archives of the Smithsonian Institution, each slide is marked "The garden was demolished." It is hoped that Virginia Stout boxed up all of Henrietta Stout's papers, photographs, slides, artwork and artifacts and passed them on to her son, Merrell Stout. Who hopefully guided them down through the generations and that in some basement, somewhere, a descendent of Henrietta Stout has stored the boxes and is wondering what to do with them. Should that heir ever read this, he or she should consider donating the boxes to an horticultural library. The Mertz Library at the Bronx Botanical Garden would be a great choice.

Yetta Stout was a special lady. In stitching together the arcs of her life, it was easy to track her movements and record her successes. It was not so easy to determine her motives and understand why she did what she did. There is this insight she offered that is most telling.

"Here, away from the throbbing city, little green things are poking their noses through the soil. The maples are in bloom; snowdrops fleck the ground, and here and there an adventurous tulip has unfurled its wondrous beauty. Daffodils cover the hillside with a sheet of yellow. A cardinal and his brown wife are

nesting in a laurel bush under my window. They tell me that his song is glorious but though I cannot hear it, his plumage is enough to make it a pleasure to have him with us.

We are busy in the garden. Strange vegetables grown from seed sent last year from China and Siam, are reaching a prodigious size in the cold frames, promising a treat from time to time on the dinner table. Peas are up in spite of the long delayed of the coming of Spring. Sprouting tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, etc., form lines of green fur in the hot beds. Hundreds of wee Dahlia seedlings are smiling in the 'flats,' ready to be 'pricked out,' these the result of study, of pollinating by hand, and of tender care in ripening and harvesting of seed last year. The mellow soil must be turned and loosened, that these babies may have every advantage to grow and develop their wonderful flowers.

So I dig, and the blood tingles through me, and wonder why everyone else is not doing the same. I know that for the deafened, horticulture in all its branches is an ideal occupation. We need intelligent workers on the land - the schools and colleges which teach these subjects demonstrate that. Growing things have a language all their own, and we need no ears to hear and understand. The love of flowers breaks down barriers and quickly brings warm friendships into being.

He who thinks that horticulture begins with the melting of the snows, and lasts only until the dropping of the leaves in the Autumn, knows not. The greenhouse needs constant attention, and this is ideal work for a deafened person. Besides, the harvesting and winnowing, the packing and storing of roots and fruits, the repairs of tools, the pruning and spraying of trees, the checking of records, and a thousand 'chores' left undone because outdoor work had claimed our time, these may now be attended to.

And as I dig and think these things I wish that my friends in the League (for Hard of Hearing) might share the music in my heart, for it drowns the bedlam in my ears, and *I know* that there is health as well as maintenance in the garden."⁸⁶

A memorial was written and read by an anonymous member of the Short Hills Garden Club on the occasion of the Club Meeting following the death of Henrietta Maria Schroeder Stout. After recounting many of Mrs. Stout's accomplishments, this was the penultimate line. "And finally it should be noted that Mrs. Stout was unable to hear without mechanical aid."⁸⁷

¹ Morris, Ellen P. - *Mrs. Charles H. Stout, "The Dahlia Lady," Founding Member Of GCA*; Garden Club of America Bulletin, Garden Club of America, New York, NY Apr-May 2012 p11

² Wheeler, Candace - *Yesterdays In A Busy Life*; Harper Brothers, New York, NY 1918 p245

³ *Stout-Schroeder*; New York Times, The New York Times Company, New York, NY May 28, 1899 p7

⁴ "Charlecote," *the Residence of C. H. Stout, Esq.*; American Homes and Gardens, Munn & Co. New York, NY, May, 1906 pp309-311

⁵ Hartshorn, Cora - *A Little History of Short Hills*; Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society, Short Hills, NJ, 1946 (Cora Hartshorn was also a Nine of Spades)

⁶ Stout, Mrs. Charles H. - *The Short Hills Dahlias*; Gardeners' Chronicle (of America), Vol. XXII, No. 4, The Chronicle Press, Inc., New York, NY April, 1918 p110

⁷ Sunshine photo courtesy Ellen P. Morris

⁸ King, Frances - *Dahlia "Sunshine,"* Bulletin of The Garden Club of America, No. XIII, Lake Forest, IL, Mar. 1916, 10th unnumbered page.

⁹ Ibid; 11th unnumbered page

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ John Scheepers & Co, 2 Stone St., NY Tubers \$5 each, Green Plants, \$3 each. Bulletin of the Garden Club of America, No. XIII, Lake Forest, IL Mar. 1916 unnumbered page

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