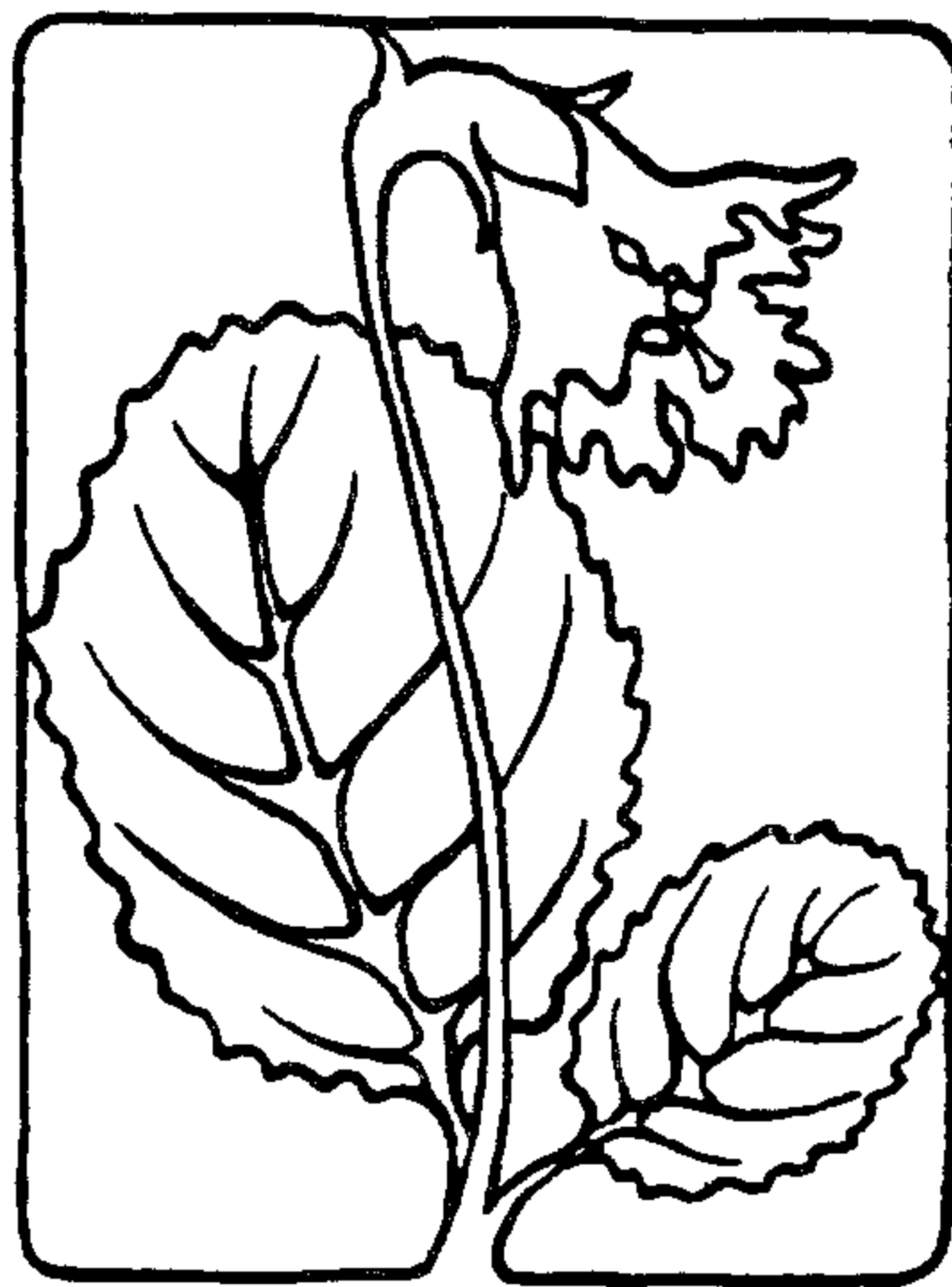


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

WINTER 1993-94



ELTON and ALINE HANSENS
Editors

FROM THE PRESIDENT.....Dorothy Rathmann

It's not easy to "think Spring" while we're experiencing the first frosts of Autumn. But that's what the Program/Schedule Committee has been doing. Look for your copy of the new Schedule in January.

One of the important actions at the annual meeting in January will be the election of Officers. The slate will be presented by the Nominating Committee of Bill Verduin, chair, and Sam Childs.

As a Club, we'll start celebrating the holidays at our Cookiefest on December 3 where we'll have a surprise slide show, a bit of caroling and, of course, lots of goodies. I hope to see you then.

May the year to come bring you health and happiness!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR ---- CHANGES IN JANUARY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

In response to Dr. Bir's request his talk on ericaceous plants has been rescheduled. So we'll start January as follows:

January 7: R. Bir - IDENTIFICATION OF ERICACEOUS PLANTS OF WESTERN NC -- Meet at Mt. Horticultural Crops Research Center at 2:00 PM.

January 14: L. Orbison -- FLOWERS OF TREES -- Meet at Mt. Horticultural Crops Research Center at 2:00 PM.

FRANK BELL Sr. 1898-1993, A TRIBUTE.....by LARRY KENYON

At this time when positive role models are so rare yet so necessary, Frank Bell met that need. Known as Chief to hundreds of young people in his camps, Mondamin and Green Cove; known as a civic leader and educator; known as a friend and supporter of nature, Frank Bell made a great contribution in his long life.

Every Botanical Club member who hiked on the Bell property, everyone who enjoyed the hospitality of a Bell barbecue or a glass of hot cider and cookies in his home benefited by the opportunity to know and work with Frank. He had a positive philosophy of life, with an emphasis on cooperation rather than competition. Who can forget his homely illustrations of great truths? He must have been a great one at a campfire, inspiring the young campers and counselors to higher thoughts and actions.

We are all better persons because we knew Frank. We honor his memory, and thank his wife Calla for all they have done for us and hundreds of others whose lives they touched. His work and philosophy will continue through his family, his friends, his campers. We will miss you, Frank.

In 1989 Frank was honored with Life Membership in the Western Carolina Botanical Club.

The Black locust, Robinia pseudo-acacia, is a familiar tree with an interesting history. Originating in the southern Appalachians of America, it was first noted by early English settlers who found this readily available tree to be exceptionally strong and durable for building their simple cabins. In fact, news of its superior qualities spread and in 1601 Jean Robin and his son Vespasien, herbalists to King Henry IV of France, introduced this tree to Europe and raised a healthy stand in the Royal Botanical Gardens. Soon the black locust became extremely popular with the general public as an introduction from the New World. To recognize and honor the work of these two men, Linneaus named the genus of this tree Robinia.

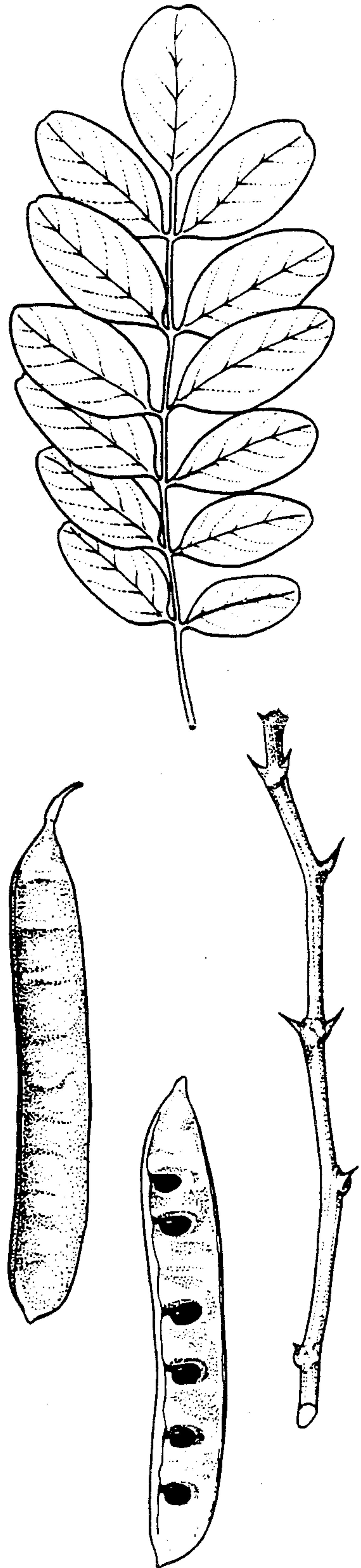
The black locust, sometimes called yellow locust, is a member of the family Fabaceae (legume family). This impressive tree grows to 80' tall with a trunk 3' to 4' thick and deeply furrowed bark. In May it is decorated with tassels of white, fragrant, pea-like flowers. Its pinnately compound leaves and open branches spread fern-like foliage high above other trees. The paired $\frac{1}{2}$ " thorns at the base of the leaf stalk are deciduous in the fall; the leaves turn a pale, clear yellow. The fruit, a smooth thin bean-like pod with 4 to 8 dark orange seeds, ripens in the fall but remains on the tree through the winter.

The so-called "sleep of the leaves", a phenomom of true acacias, also affects the locust. At night the leaflets droop and seem to fold up, a mechanism explained as loss of sap pressure in the leaflet stalks.

Subject to damage by the locust borer, the wood of this tree has limited value. However, the extensive fibrous root system and ability to add nitrogen to the soil make the locust tree invaluable for soil reclamation and erosion control.

The largest known black locust in the Smokies National Park is an impressive giant located on the Big Locust Nature Trail off the Chimneys Campground area.

BLACK LOCUST



GRASSES, GRASSES, GRASSES.....BESS SINISH

WHAT ABOUT GRASSES? Poets have written odes to them. Composers have written music describing them. Authors have written of them to create atmosphere. Artists have painted them. Yet children ask, "What is a grass"? Grasses have subtle beauty, tiny flowers, and remarkable diversity. Their greatest virtue is their usefulness for both man and beast.

Most warm season grasses reach their showiest stages in the spring or in the fall. Fields of grasses glow and sparkle in the sunshine and may be at their most spectacular when wet with morning dew. Look for the tiny flowers tinged with rose or purple and with the yellow stamens hanging below.

The grass family (modern name Poaceae) encompasses the largest number of species world-wide in a single plant family, some 10,000, nearly 1000 of these species in the United States.

Ecologically from early in the world's history grasses have been important as soil binders, sending their roots far and wide to form turf which holds in check destructive forces of wind and rain and gives secure anchorage not only to herbaceous plants but also to trees and shrubs. Undoubtedly, of all flowering plants, grasses are the most important to man--rice, corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, and sugar cane. In turn these are important in the production of meat and milk products. Except for grasses vast herds of grazing animals would cease to exist.

Grasses too are the source of spices, paper, perfume, oils, and timber (bamboo). Varied form and texture adapt them for many uses. Common grasses of the northeast have been made into ropes, paper, baskets, and many plaited articles. A few grasses have been used medicinally. In warmer climates the great bamboos are used to shelter, clothe and feed the people.

In prehistoric times animals and plants probably evolved simultaneously. Numerous fossils of grass-like leaves have been found. Since earliest times when tribes chipped rude implements for cultivating the soil or making war, grasses increased in importance to mankind. Grasses are the most widely distributed flowering plants; innumerable are the ways in which they serve mankind.

Future articles in Shortia will deal with details of structure of grasses and with recognition of species.

Sources:

The Book of Grasses, Mary Evans Francis, Doubleday, Page & Co. 1920.

How to Know the Grasses, Richard W. Pohl, Wm. C. Brown Co. Revised

Grasses--An Identification Guide, Peterson Series, by Lauren Brown, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979.



Cunila origanoides

It was a pleasant winter morning in 1993 when Ken Hulick, Superintendent of Carl Sandburg National Historic Site and Warren Weber, Resource Management Chief, invited Anne Ulinski and me to become "Volunteers in the Parks" to do a biological survey of the Sandburg Site. Observations of three areas - the trail to Big Glassy, the rock outcrops, and the Lake trail - officially began in February 1993.

On almost any day throughout the year, joggers, hikers, and strollers may be seen along the trail to Big Glassy. One day each week two nature-oriented volunteers could be seen observing and recording their observations. This will continue at least through the winter months to complete the cycle of a year.

To date, 250 herbaceous plants, trees, and shrubs have been identified. Birds, several animals, fence lizards, skinks, a toad, and 3 kinds of snakes have been documented.

Each day has been marked by at least one new discovery. Among the familiar plants along the Lake trail are Solomon's plume (*Smilacina racemosa*) and Pinxter flower (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*). Along the shore was a plant new to us - the hedge hyssop (*Gratiola viscidula*).

It was in October when the dramatic yellows of the chestnut oaks, the rich golden yellows of the hickories, the brilliant reds of the black gums and sourwoods confirmed that the woodlands through which the trail to Big Glassy climbed was an oak-hickory habitat. The other trees, shrubs, and herbaceous layer are typical of the vegetation associated with such a habitat.

Cranefly orchid (*Tipularia discolor*) and rattlesnake plantain orchid (*Goodvera pubescens*) leaves are quite abundant in these woods. At the appropriate time the leaves withered and the flowering stalks appeared. New leaves will be seen all winter. There were only a few flowering stalks of the white milkweed (*Asclepias variegata*) and starry campion (*Silene stellata*). One of the latest blooming of the flowering plants was dittany (*Cunila origanoides*), in nice patches along the upper section of the trail.

In an island-like pocket of soil in the Big Glassy rock outcrop grows a grouping of fringe trees (*Chionanthus virginicus*). On the way up to Big Glassy, the woods surround and extend far out from and almost obscure several other rock outcrops. Primarily dry due to lack of soil as well as exposure to wind yet with crevices and seepage zones which retain moisture, these rugged sloping rock surfaces create habitats for unusual plants in distinct microsites.

In crevices, fringe trees, several species of pines, and red cedar create islands of tall vegetation. Accumulations of mineral or organic soil in pockets or depressions in the large expanse of rocks harbor such rare plants as Greenland sandwort (*Minuartia groenlandica* v. *glabra*), outcrop St. John's-wort (*Hypericum denticulatum* v. *acutifolium*) and pink fumewort (*Corydalis sempervirens*). Other special plants are a mint (*Pycnanthemum flexuosum*), a disjunct; divided-leaf groundsel (*Senecio memmingeri*); a rushfoil (*Crotonopsis elliptica*); a meadow-beauty (*Rhexia mariana* v. *mariana*); and fameflower (*Talinum teretifolium*).

The most amazing plant was Michaux's saxifrage (*Saxifraga michauxii*). It began blooming in late May and put forth its last flowers at the end of October. This plant which is at home on moist slopes or seepage slopes such as those on the Blue Ridge Parkway, somehow survived the summer and fall droughts.

The joy of discovery is renewed as we return again and again along the trails at the Sandburg National Historic Site to observe nature's progress as life is renewed, grows, ripens its seeds, then rests during the winter months.

RECORDER'S REPORT - AUGUST THROUGH OCTOBER.....ERIKA S. PARM

After a rainy spring and a hot and dry summer we were rewarded with a glorious autumn. Those of us who have lived in the area for 15 to 20 years agreed that it was one of the best, if not the best, for brilliant and long lasting color. I am once again sitting looking out at the mountains. Is this last day of October an omen of things to come? It is a blustery, cold and partially clear day in the 30s with the clouds covering the mountain tops, but parting occasionally to give me a glimpse of SNOW.

The effects of the summer drought were particularly noticeable at Sugarloaf where we found the summit meadow to be covered with almost completely dried herbaceous plants and only a few blooms. In spite of this we found 75 species, most at the three stops along the road. The Lake Issaqueena trip was notable for a dozen or so species that are rarely seen in the mountains. It was a beautiful day for the Blue Ridge Parkway trip which, despite many confusing composites, culminated in a spectacular display of grass of parnassus at Wolf Mountain Overlook's rock face. A cold gray day on Oct. 1 at Holmes State Forest did not deter about 30 members from enjoying a covered dish picnic. Several stalwart members earned their lunch by hiking the long trail. Don and Kay Herrman entertained us at their home, Ramblewood, on Oct. 8. Members who arrived early watched the fog dissipate from the valley and hills opening up a glorious view of the mountains. The comical and imaginative signs and figures along the trails enlivened the flower walk. The Carter's Creek, Whiteside Mountain and Jones Gap trips measured up to their usual beauty. On Oct. 29 Dean Crawford was leader on Long Branch Road. Except for the late flowering Ladies Tresses very few flowers were still in blossom, but the colorful foliage and a hillside adorned with Christmas fern and witch hazel delighted everyone.

The only cancellations during this period were the Frying Pan Gap trip on Aug. 6 and the Beidler Forest two day trip. The overnight was cancelled because the swamp was almost dry and very few of the characteristic plants were available to be seen.

There are some fascinating programs on the winter schedule, so let's all try to be in Hendersonville on Friday afternoons.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU.....ALINE HANSENS

Heimbinder, Verna and Larry: 81 Squirrel Trail, H'ville, NC 28739. (704) 891-2614. Located in Sweetwater Hills. Recently moved to NC from Long Island. An avid interest in plants led to membership in WCBC. Verna's hobby is machine knitting.



HARRY LOGAN, PLANTSMAN SUPREME.....ELTON & ALINE HANSENS

One Sunday afternoon I visited Harry Logan and he showed me one of his most prized possessions--the 10 volume Encyclopedia of Horticulture by Thomas Everitt, Horticulturist at the N Y Botanical Garden. I was intrigued by the page which was inscribed "To My Good Friend of More than Fifty Years, Harry Logan, Plantsman Supreme" That simple tribute describes Harry Logan to perfection.

A gentle warm friendly person, Harry is always eager to share his knowledge and great love of plants. At 87 he still tends and cares for his large garden perhaps "not as well as he used to", he is quick to point out. Plants are his life and rarely does a visitor leave without a gift from his garden. Many, like us, share bits of his garden and readily tell friends that a shrub or clump of interesting flowers was from Harry.

Harry Logan arrived in this world on Jan. 21, 1906 at Bernardsville, NJ. During his early years the family moved a number of times including to Eastport, Long Island and Westchester County, NY. At 13 Harry was the oldest of seven children and had already decided to be a horticulturist. In his later teens, Harry left school to help with the family. His mother died when he was 18. After that he attended Mount Hermon School for nearly two years. Of far greater importance were the succession of jobs which followed. Harry gained very broad experience in ornamental horticulture and landscape design. He was employed by F. R. Pierson in Tarrytown, NY and later at their nursery in Scarborough, at Yonkers Nursery and at Roman Landscape Contracting Co. The years of the great depression were upon him and times were tough. In 1929 Harry decided to establish a business of his own in Bronxville. He could earn \$6.00 per day 5 days per week. As the economy improved his business grew and prospered. Harry knew how to do many things and his insatiable quest for technical and practical knowledge of plants gave him an edge on many plantsmen. In addition he participated in horticultural and botanical organizations, accumulated books for his library, and increased his appreciation of plants and the out-of-doors with many field trips and meetings. Along the way he also courted Florence May Cole and married her on April 23, 1942. This was indeed a most important event in his life.

Harry's first trip to Carolina in 1936 was a botanical expedition with the Torrey Botanical Club to Roan and Grandfather Mountains. In July 1967 Harry visited the Hendersonville area and the next year the Logans moved to Grimesdale and Harry purchased property for nursery stock. He shipped three large trailer loads of plants and transplanted them to his land.

Unfortunately, his wife had a stroke which left her paralyzed. Harry rose to the occasion, caring for her until her death in 1970. The following year he visited May's relatives in England and toured the country. Previously in '61 and '66 he had toured Britain and extended his explorations to the grandeur of the Swiss Alps and the antiquities of ancient Greece. On all of these trips he sought out famous gardens and botanized.

HARRY LOGAN cont'd

In Carolina Harry has expanded his activities in new directions. After taking a wildflower course in '72 he suggested a group be formed to study wild flowers in interesting places. This resulted in the Western Carolina Botanical Club and Harry led the first field trip. He taught courses at Blue Ridge Community College 3 terms a year for several years and also organized field courses for Opportunity House, visiting noteworthy gardens. Since '81 he has written the "Mountain Gardener" for the Men's Garden Club. Harry landscaped the new Opportunity House. The Men's Garden club awarded him the Second Wind Hall of Fame in '84. The WCBC named him an Honorary Member in '86.

Remember, Harry celebrates his 88th Birthday Jan. 21, '94 and the WCBC Annual Meeting is on that day. Let's help Harry celebrate!!!

BOOK REPORT.....LOWELL ORBISON

RED OAKS AND BLACK BIRCHES by REBECCA RUPP Published by Storey Communications, Inc. Pownal, VT 1990.

If it were not for Bill Verduin's interest in books on trees and Elton Hansens' request that I review "Red Oaks and Black Birches" I probably would not have read this interesting book even though it has an intriguing title.

The author, Rebecca Rupp, describes 19 genera of trees and their native and foreign species. She has presented the usual information about the characteristics of each species and the similarities and differences among them. But what makes the book much more than a guide to these selected genera is the wide ranging cultural vignettes and historic and economic facts related to each. There is a (bonus) chapter, too, entitled 'Christmas Trees' which not only describes the trees that have been used for Christmas celebration but also the ways that celebration has changed over the centuries. The use of Christmas trees has increased so much that 80 million trees are planted each year for the future Christmas trade.

Beyond all these interesting facts is the author's exceptional facility with language and her delightful wit. It is a book well worth reading both for its information and the pleasure it gives.

A unique feature of the book which should not be overlooked is the bibliography of 167 references; it is truly an invitation for further exploration. The range is from Hortus III, Scientific American, and Civilization to The Violin and the Fungus, Pines for Eating, The Hangover Handbook, A Book of Country Things, Country Arts in Old American Homes, Martha Washington's Book of Cookery, Mystery Behind the Magi's Gift and Every Day Life in Massachusetts Bay Colony. The bibliography is an extensive work of scholarship.

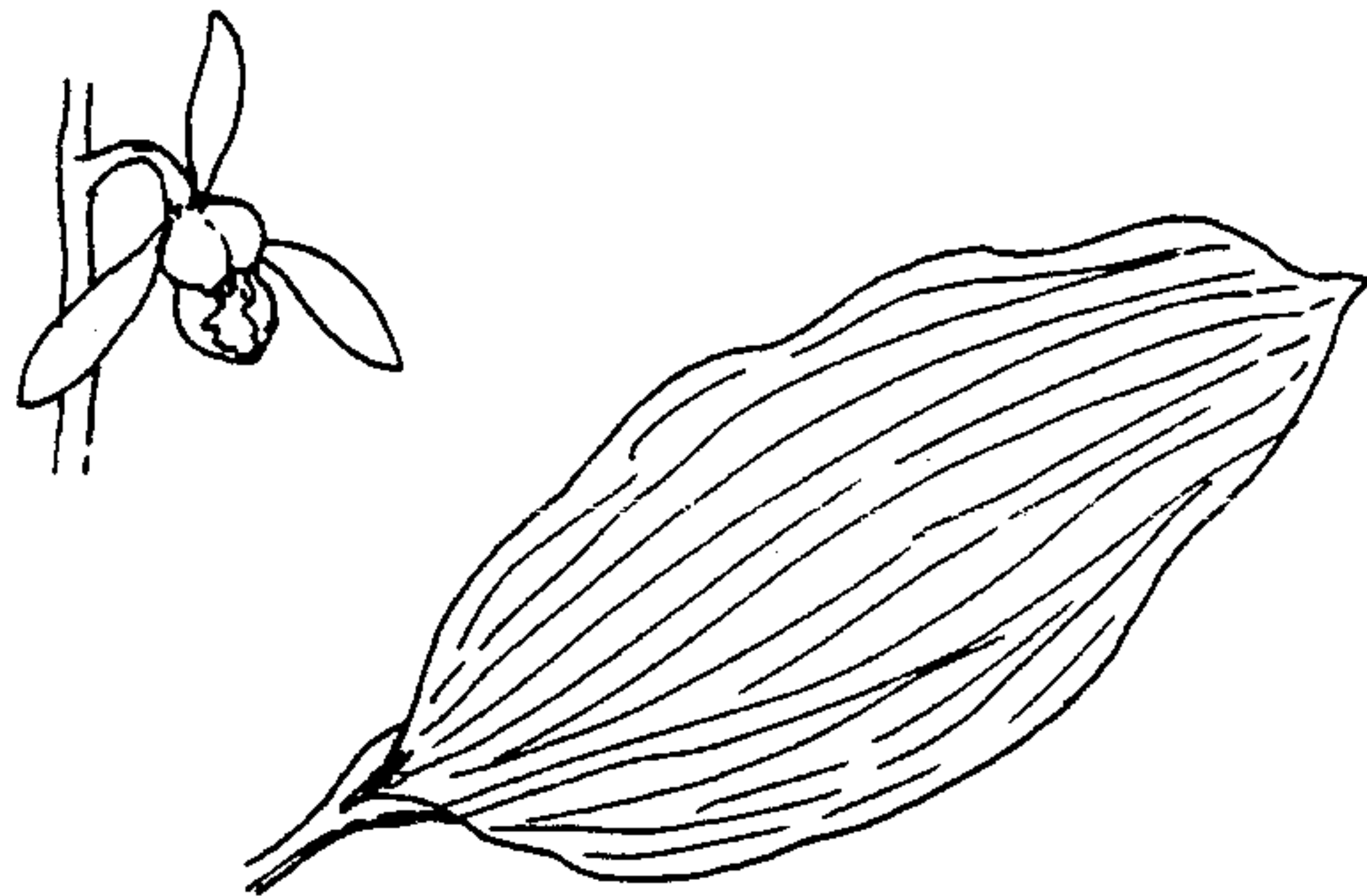
Editor's Note: This book is in the Library in Hendersonville and was a gift from our Western Carolina Botanical Club.

LOOK AGAIN !

Many wildflowers retain at least some of their leaves throughout the winter--a property that helps us to keep track of the plants until the time comes for them to bloom. There are a few, however, whose foliage is slightly less persistent and, in fact, has the unsettling habit of vanishing just when it would have become most useful as a locator.

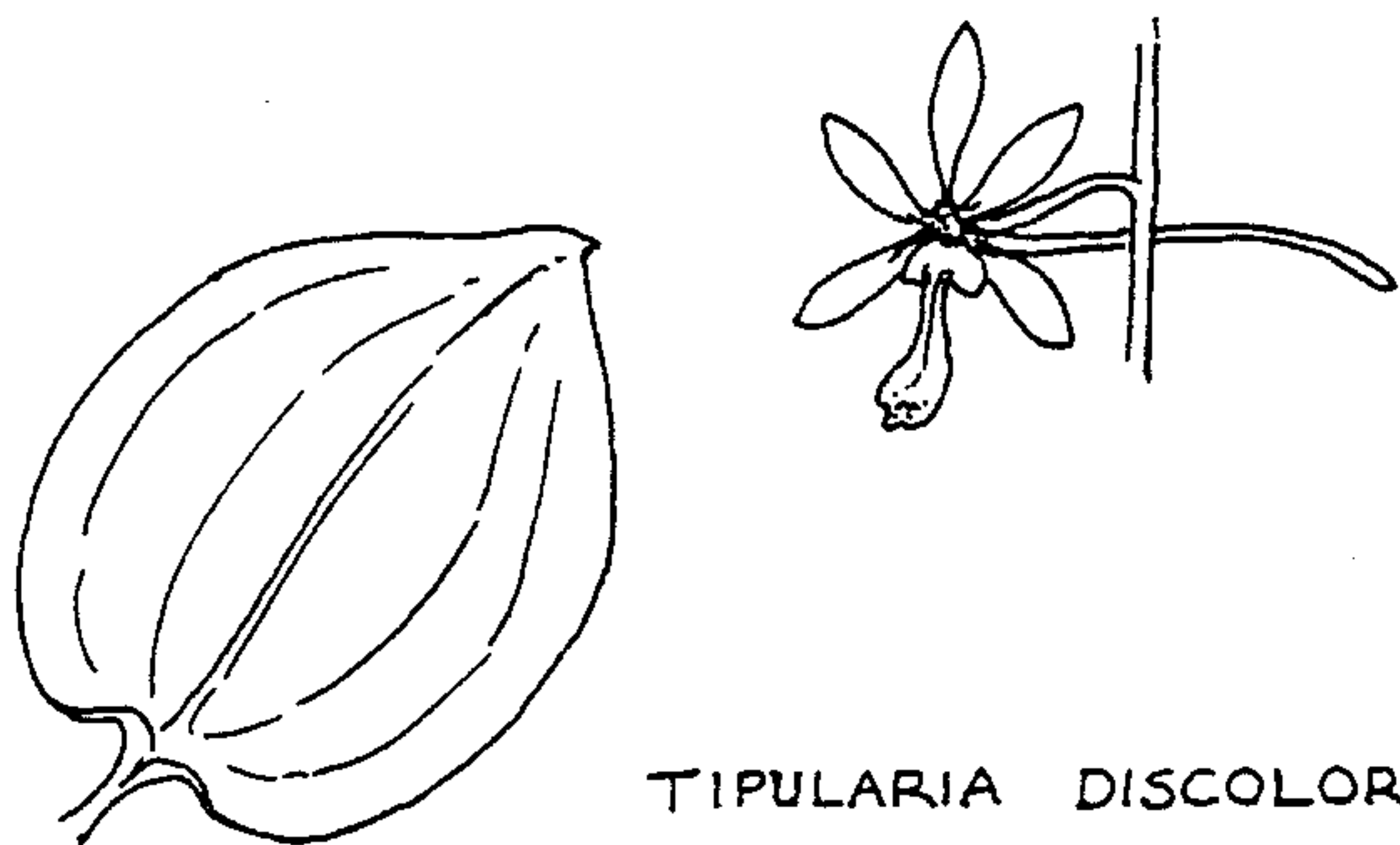
Two species that come to mind are native orchids: Aplectrum hyemale, known as Puttyroot or Adam-and-Eve, the only member of its genus; and Tipularia discolor, the Crane-fly Orchid, which has only two close relatives, both of them Asian.

Aplectrum produces a solitary leaf in late summer or fall, and it decays in early spring before the flower stem emerges in May or June. The leaf is 4 to 6 inches long, elliptic, with wavy margins and a great many impressed whitish longitudinal veins that give it a corrugated appearance. The inflorescence is a raceme of up to 15 flowers with sepals and petals about 1/2" long, the lip white marked with violet, otherwise varying to yellowish or greenish with magenta markings.



APLECTRUM HYEMALE

Tipularia discolor also emits a single leaf, but it is ovate with a depressed midvein and 2 to 6 prominent side veins, dull green above and glossy purple beneath. A slender scape appears in late summer bearing a raceme of many delicate, slightly nodding flowers; the floral parts are 3/8" long except for the much longer spur, and usually are pale purplish but vary considerably in color. By that time the leaf has disappeared.



TIPULARIA DISCOLOR

Dick Smith

S H O R T I A

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Editors: Elton and Aline Hansens Distribution: Ruth Hoerich

Please submit contributions (articles, Letters to the Editors, notes, etc.)
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Place, Hendersonville, NC 28739.

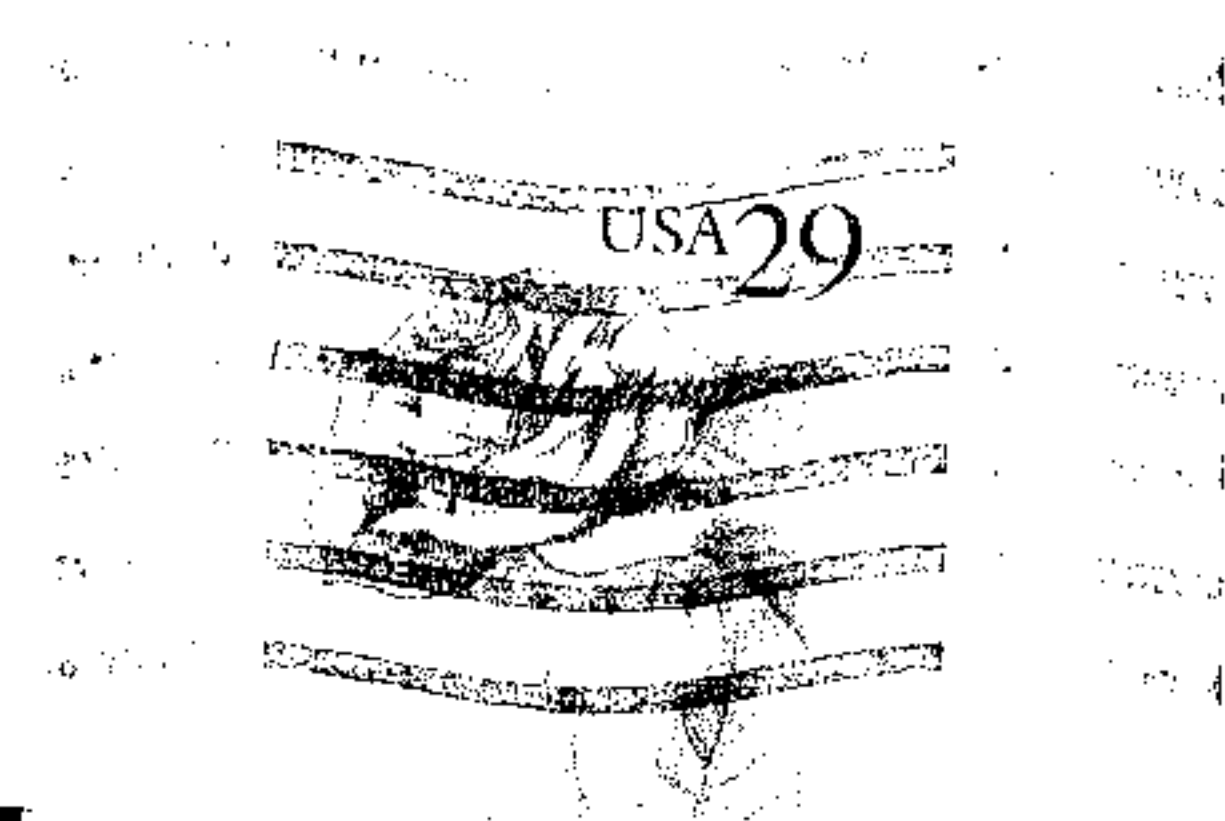
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