

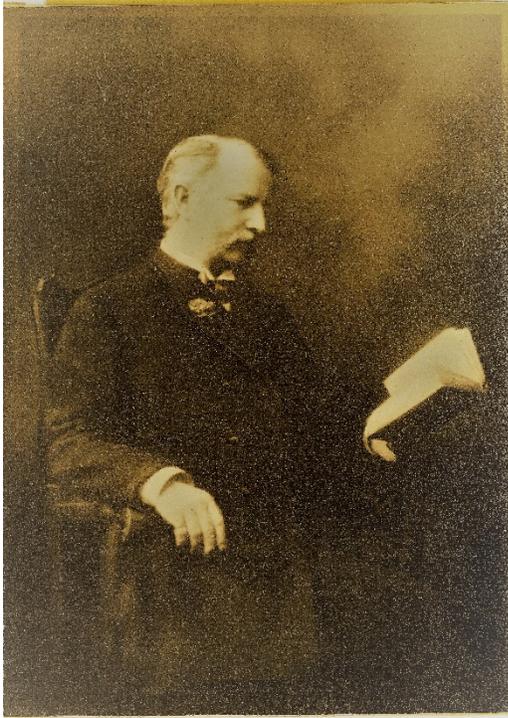
To Be of Service to Flower Lovers

William Plum, his lilacs, and their influence on
horticultural studies past and present



*I am establishing an exceptionally large private collection of
lilacs, about 250 varieties already and want to add to it
hoping to eventually be of service, not for profit, to flower
lovers ~ William R. Plum*

January 18, 1923 to the U.S. Department of Agriculture



William R. Plum. Courtesy of Lombard Park District

*'It is lilac time in Lombard and a Mystery unseen
Has changed the brown of yesterday to lavender and
green,
There's a robin on a swaying twig, a catbird calling
near,
And their chorus makes the heart beat high to know
that spring is here.
In the house a curtain rustles and a fragrance fills each
room;
For it's Maytime now in Lombard and the lilacs are in
bloom'*
Lilac Time in Lombard – poem by Ralph Chaplin

Ralph Chaplin, a prominent labor activist who had once been imprisoned at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for his anti-war protests, wrote this poem to express his feelings about his adopted home and used it when he spearheaded a publicity campaign to promote the first spring festival at Lilacia Park in Lombard. William Plum, the collector of lilacs, might have been amused to know that his beloved plants inspired such feelings of tenderness in a rough and tumble man. This paper intends to show how William Plum, the collector of lilacs, influenced and continued to influence not only his community but also horticulturists studying lilacs as species and its cultivars. It also will show why his estate which became a public park is as unique as William Plum was for choosing to collect as many varieties of the lilac instead of creating his own cultivars.

William R. Plum was born in Ohio in 1845 to Henry Plum and Nancy North Plum. Will, as he was often called, was fourth in the family of nine children. He left school and began work as telegrapher in the local office, which eventually led to his service as a telegrapher for the Union Army during the Civil War. Will loved being out in the woods and many of his notes about his military service include observations about plants and nature. After the war, he attended Yale Law School in New Haven, Connecticut where he met Helen Williams, a young New York



The Plum House in Lombard
Courtesy of Lombard Historical Society

woman who was attending ladies school in New Haven. They had a common interest in nature, and in 1867, the young couple married. Will graduated from law school and they moved to Chicago so that he could start his practice. They did not want to live in the city so Will traveled the train route looking for property for sale that wasn't too far of a commute. He discovered the Widow Harris home for sale in the small settlement called Babcock's Grove which was only an hour away from the city. They began building

their lives there, establishing a big white house on a hill with a garden below to the west. Will became involved in civil activities, helping incorporate the settlement into the town of Lombard. He became known for his apple orchard but he also planted pears, cherries, and a big vegetable garden. Helen planted flowers and was known for her dwarf marigolds as well as her involvement with ladies' groups such as the missionary society at the First Church of Lombard, the Baby Friendly Society, and in 1915, becoming a charter member of the Lombard Woman's Club.

In 1911, the Plums traveled to Europe and made a stop at the renowned Lemoine Nurseries in Nancy, France. William said that Helen was the one who wanted to see the lilacs and he bought two cultivars, a Mme Casimir Perier, which is a white double bloom, and a Michel Buchner, a purple double bloom. Both

of these lilacs were planted in the Lombard garden and before long, William Plum began to purchase more lilac cultivars from Lemoine Nurseries as well as other nurseries in the United States and Europe. He kept ledgers and notes about his garden, organizing them by the type of plant, bloom color, floret type, and began to note the condition of the plants. He also gave important clues to where he planted specific lilacs but one hundred years later, it takes researchers a little leg work to decipher the clues left behind. Whenever a visitor came to see Plum's lilacs in these early days, William would lead them to see his first two cultivars as if the visitor was coming to see a royal couple (*Quiney, 1923*).

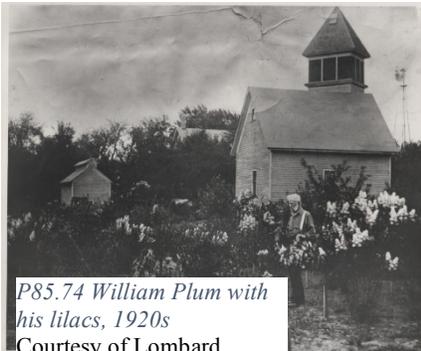


S. vulgaris 'Michel Buchner' top and *S. vulgaris* 'Mme. Casimir Perier' bottom



S. vulgaris 'Mme. Casimir Perier' EE32-27May03

The word "Lilacia" was made up by William Plum after he threw himself into establishing his lilac collection in Lombard. Before this, there is no recorded name for the Plum estate on record or in the Plum family papers. During the spring, William encouraged people to visit his gardens to see the shrubs during peak bloom time which usually is in May. He also sold established cuttings of his lilacs, creating a catalog of available plants. He also sent lilacs to his friends and family. One of these recipients was his niece, Daisy Lodge Wolcott, of Kent, Ohio. She opened her own gardens to the public with her lilacs from Uncle Will and the property, while privately owned, is open to the public every May during bloom time. (*Plum, W. R. (1924, December 31). Lilac Bushes offered William R. Plum, Lombard, Illinois*). Newspaper articles published in the 1920s support evidence that Plum, indeed, did have one of the largest private collections of lilacs in the United States at the time, stating that by 1923 he had at least 11 American cultivars in



P85.74 William Plum with his lilacs, 1920s
Courtesy of Lombard Historical Society

his garden with the rest comprised of plants from France (Lemoine cultivars), Germany, and Asia. The Asiatic lilacs were most like species lilacs such the Argentea (properly in Latin *Syringa reticulata* 'Argentea'), a Japanese tree lilac that has been identified as one of the older plants in the park.

Helen Plum died in 1924 from a heart ailment that had confined her to her home during her later years and then in 1927, William passed away at age 82 after surgery. When Helen died, William considered selling the estate and moving the lilacs either to Ohio or to Lisle, Illinois



M72.6 1 William & Helen Plum, 50th Wedding anniversary 1917. Courtesy of Lombard Historical Society

where Joy Morton was establishing a new arboretum on his farm, Thornhill. It has been said (but not verified) that Joy Morton was the person who told Plum that his lilacs belonged to Lombard. However, the seeds were planted, William turned to fellow Lombardians and lawyers Samuel Norton and Charles Hamilton to set up his will. Simply stated, the will called for the Plum's home to become the new library named in honor of Helen Plum and a library board to be established and the Plum's gardens with the lilacs to be a public park and a new park district board to be created. Both items went on the ballot as separate entries for the town residents to vote upon the issues. Both ballot items passed with a majority vote and the town went to work, following Will's decree.

The new park district board began to interview landscape architects to change the grounds from estate to park and another group, calling themselves The Lombard Lilac League formed to catalog the lilacs and begin publicity for a lilac celebration, complete with a pageant and the crowning of a Lilac Queen. The picture on the left shows one of the pages for the 1933 Lilac Festival which details the formation of the group and their charter members. The booklet also contains artwork on the cover drawn by Charles Medin, a Lombardian and commercial artist, as well as a biography of William Plum and a description of the year's Lilac Pageant with a list of the cast and crew. One of the most important parts of the booklet (at least for studying lilacs) is the catalogue of lilacs found in the park. The catalogue contains not just the common name of the cultivated lilac but the Latin names when appropriate and also a description of the plant with flower color and type.



Lilac Festival 1933, booklet Courtesy of Lombard Historical Society

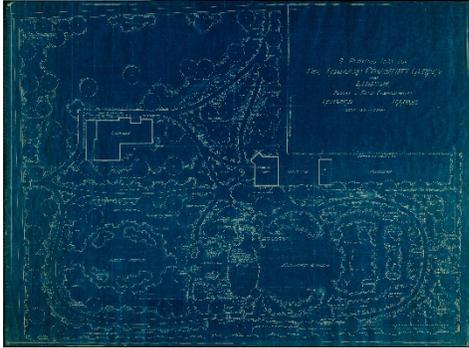
The Lilac League only lasted for about a decade before disbanding but during that time, the group promoted Lilac Time as well as serving as fierce defenders of the site. One of their disagreements with the Lombard Park District came about when the Lilac League believed that the lilac collection was not being maintained properly, with only one man serving as caretaker of the collection (*LOMBARD LACKS MONEY TO TEND FAMOUS LILACS. (1936, Mar 11). Chicago Daily Tribune*).



Jens Jensen, undated Courtesy of Lombard Historical Society

Jens Jensen submitted a bid for designing Lilacia, the Plum estate, into what was initially called Plum Memorial Park or Lombard Community Gardens and Library. He only charged \$600 for the work which has puzzled researchers. At that time, Jensen was a nationally recognized landscape architect who commanded hundreds of thousands of dollars for projects. He was a Danish immigrant who came to Chicago and worked for the nascent Chicago Park District. As he became more established, he designed landscapes for many estates along the North Shore of Lake Michigan in Illinois and for the Henry Ford estate in Detroit, Michigan. He

also spoke to community groups about gardening with native plants, consulted on projects, and was a passionate defender of green spaces such as what became the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. New research indicates that Jensen knew of Lombard as early as 1913 when he was asked to design gardens for a Morton family in town but he also came to Lombard in 1922 speaking to the Lombard Woman’s Club nature studies group. Coincidentally, Helen Plum was a charter member of the club and a founder of the nature studies group. Jensen also had Chicago connections to several Lombardians so he may have been aware of the lilac collection and may



The 1928 blueprint, drawn by Jens Jensen, of the Lombard Community Garden and Library, later renamed Lilacia Park.

Courtesy of Lombard Historical Society

have spent time at the Plum estate before being hired to landscape the property for a public park. Because of its small size and primary focus on lilacs, the setting provided a challenge for Jensen. He focused on setting the lilacs along walking paths and planted in native plants that would bloom around the same time as the lilacs. During the construction, Jensen and his family took up residence at the Plum house and he created a work space for himself and his staff in the old coach house, which still stands in the park. Jensen also planted tulip bulbs for maximum spring impact and the park superintendents have followed this idea since. In the 1950s and 1960s, the park staff created elaborate designs with tulips, including a clown face and a giant star. At the end of the tulip blooms, the staff would remove the bulbs and sort them by color and have a bulb sale in the park district garage for the public. The other change park staff wrought to the park was to install electric lights for night visitors and a large elevated platform so that visitors and photographers could get a bird’s eye view of the park in bloom. Currently, the staff plants tulips but rather than competing with the lilacs bloom, they choose bulbs that highlight and emphasize the shrubbery.



Syringa reticulata ‘Argentea’
This may be one of the oldest lilacs at Lilacia Park



What sets Lilacia Park apart from the arboretums and Highland Park in Rochester, NY, is that it is an urban space with the lilacs living in mulched and planned beds. It’s also a very small space, initially starting out at about 5 acres and presently holding at about 11 acres. The northern edge of the park is bounded by a busy road and major interurban railway, the western and southern edges are private property and a public library. To the east is another street, a big parking lot, and Lombard’s Main Street, a major arterial throughway. In arboretums, a visitor strolls across lawns to interact with the lilacs and usually have some removal from a busy urban setting. Jensen took Plum’s lilacs from their estate arrangement and began creating a new public park. He was known for his admiration

for the native landscape and for his dislike of a forced space. In P.H. Gobster’s article (*Gobster, P. H. (2001). Visions of nature: Conflict and compatibility in urban park restoration. Landscape and Urban Planning, 56(1-2), 35-51*), he writes “But they are also seen as *places* (and places within places), landscapes that by design or happenstance provide people with unique experiences as a result of the natural and cultural features present and the social communities that gravitate to them. Thus, one of the greatest challenges to urban park planners, landscape architects, and managers is to

balance the tension between providing for the diverse users and values of park space and preserving and enhancing the unique qualities of place.” Gobster’s statement here, while referring to large urban spaces in Chicago and New York City, could also reflect on both Plum’s use of his estate and Jensen’s conversion of the estate to an urban park. Plum saw his estate as benefitting himself, his family, his neighbors, and visitors who came to experience his lilacs in bloom. Jensen, the master gardener, saw the challenge of creating a small urban park that would allow visitors to choose their experience of the blooming lilacs, whether it was to use the park for hobby such as photography or to enjoy the theatrical pageants staged in the park.

Many of Jensen’s key elements designs can still be found in Lilacia Park. There are three curved seat walls at intersections to offer a visitor a place to sit and view the plants. Another visitor may discover flagstone steps near Plum’s *Syringa peginensis* (Chinese tree lilac) leading

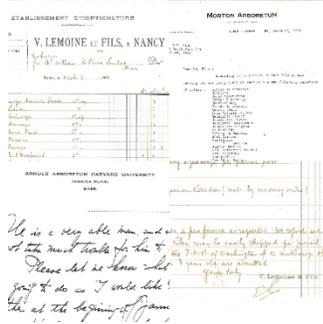


A seatwall created by Jens Jensen at Lilacia Park

up to the council mound, a raised point overlooking a choice view of lilacs and the little pond. The players green, flanked by flowering crabs and tulips, still offers the best sight to see the crowning of the Lilac Queen on the upper deck, once a little open lawn known as the upper player’s green. The Lombard Park District maintains the original paths, changing only the surfaces as needed to fulfill modern safety standards. Gobster continues “In this research I found that landscape “icons”-natural or cultural features in the park landscape that hold important symbolic value

to certain groups of people-played a central role in constituents’ attachment to the place I was studying.” This statement can reflect on Plum’s role as a collector of lilacs and how those lilacs became “icons” for the residents of Lombard. The residents and the park district still market the park’s lilacs as a must see and preserve and protect those plants so that all visitors can enjoy the beauty of the park. Jensen’s design allowed a visitor to choose their experience by following a “plantsmans” walk around the outer part of the park or to follow pathways that led down the hill into the park. He also created a council mound, reached only by a small narrow path leading up a flagstone paved stairway. Each path led a visitor to a new experience and a discovery of a sweet lilac in bloom.

Plum’s collection of lilacs did not go unnoticed by people working at much larger arboretums. Letters in the 1920s from Plum to Clarence Godshalk, the supervisor at Morton Arboretum, and from Plum to Henry Teuscher, the botanist at Morton Arboretum, show that plants went from Plum’s estate to the newly created arboretum in nearby Lisle, Illinois. One letter, written by Godshalk, includes a handwritten list of lilacs to get from William Plum. It’s also interesting to note that the Morton Arboretum was designed by O.C. Simonds, a contemporary and friend of Jens Jensen, the designer of Lilacia Park. Furthermore, both Clarence Godshalk and Henry Teuscher were recommended for their positions at Morton Arboretum by Charles Sprague Sargent, the director of Arnold Arboretum in Boston, Massachusetts. The Arnold Arboretum had a well established lilac collection by the 1920s and their plants brought many visitors in every spring to see the blooms.



A sample of the correspondence Courtesy of the Lombard Historical Society and the Sterling Morton Library at Morton Arboretum



Syringa vulgaris
'President Lincoln'

Another outstanding lilac collection in the United States can be found at Highland Park in Rochester, New York. The park was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, a landscape architect associated most often with Central Park in New York City. John Dunbar, the horticulturist, not just maintained the collection but also worked on creating his own cultivars. One of his creations was *Syringa vulgaris* 'President Lincoln', which Plum purchased to plant at Lilacia. Plum was very fond of this lilac, saying that it was like its namesake, "True Blue". There are other Dunbar cultivars found at Lilacia Park but many visitors come during Lilac Time in Lombard to visit Plum's favorite.

In 1928, Susan Delano McKelvey published her study of *Syringa* species and cultivars in a book titled *Lilacs: a monograph*. She spent almost a decade prior establishing herself at Arnold Arboretum as a serious horticulturist and traveling around the United States and the world, collecting and observing lilacs in arboretums, private gardens, and in the wild. Her book is still considered by many scholars to be the first scholarly study of lilacs and she covers a wide array of topics within its cover. She also created a color chart, describing the array of colors of lilacs, that resembles a painting chart. An article published by E.A. Schofield (Schofield, E. A. (fall 1987). A Life Redeemed: Susan Delano McKelvey and the Arnold



Arboretum. *Arnoldia*, 47(4), 9-23. doi:50.233.194.34) describes McKelvey's work "It was in *Syringa*-the lilacs-that she would make her first significant contribution to botany, a monograph on the genus *Syringa*." He continues further down the page, explaining "Over the next seven years she would visit lilac collections in the United States, Canada, England, and France, gathering information for her book." Susan Delano McKelvey not only visited nurseries and herbariums, she also studied journals and catalogs to amass her knowledge of the shrub. Because of the Arnold Arboretum's close ties to the director and botanist at Morton Arboretum in Lisle in the 1920s, McKelvey most likely visited there. If she went to France, it was very possible that she would have gone to the LeMoine Nursery in Nancy, France as it has been and still is considered one of the finest sources of lilac cultivars. True, without proof, these places are suppositions but if she only went to one of these places, she would have heard about the great collector of lilacs, William R. Plum. A letter was recently discovered where McKelvey wrote to Plum, requesting information for her book. In it, she references a questionnaire that she enclosed which was not found with the letter. Unfortunately, the letter was not sent until 10 months after Plum's death.

William Plum did reference an earlier book, published in 1917, in his collection of garden ledgers and notes archived at the Lombard Historical Society. Many of his notes, written on stationery and scraps of paper, may indicate that he too was considering publishing a book on his collection. The book, *Aristocrats of the Garden* by E.H. Wilson, published by Doubleday, Page, and Company, contains a chapter on lilacs but it is written for a gardener rather than a scholar. Nevertheless, Wilson does write in his epilogue for the book: "Now, in gardening and in the full

and proper development of its spirit, there are four elemental forces: the Amateur, the Gardener, the Trade, the Press. Their respective spheres of usefulness are self-evident. They are co-equal and interdependent and each, by itself, can accomplish nothing.” Wilson seems to understand that home gardens, especially for the middle class, had begun to shift from being strictly utilitarian spaces to a necessary and wanted feature for recreation and pleasure. As Plum’s collection of cultivars increased during this time, he began to see that he could supply the home gardener with plants that provided him such pleasure.

The International Lilac Society grew from the roots established by Wilson’s book and Susan McKelvey’s monograph. The first group, calling themselves the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboretums debuted in 1940. There was a committee that studied lilacs across the United States, surveying gardens known for their lilac collection and publishing the results of their surveys. The chair of that committee was John Wister, a Pennsylvania horticulturist, who became known for his

Wister Color Chart	
White	I
Violet	II
Blue	III
Lilac/Lavender	IV
Pink	V
Magenta	VI
Purple	VII

simplified version of McKelvey’s color chart, which is known as the Wister color code as well as many meaningful contributions to horticulture. The Wister chart is seven colors, ranging from white to deep purple, which are given Roman numerals. These numbers will appear on the tag a nursery puts on lilacs so that a gardener can pick the color they desire. The catalogs published by the International Lilac Society in 1941 and 1943 contained information assembled by nurseries and arboretums around the United States. The horticulturist at Lilacia Park provided information for these catalogs, receiving

acknowledgement for the collection. These publications, along with the catalogs published by the Lombard Lilac League in the 1930s, provide historic record for modern horticulturists at Lilacia Park.

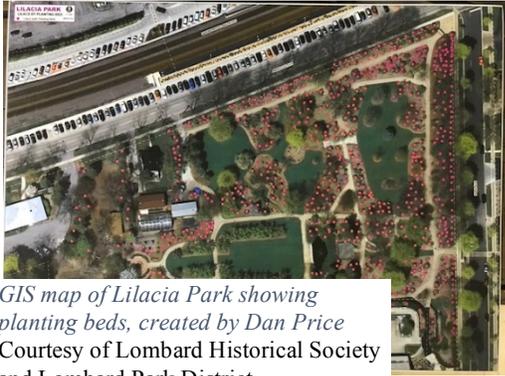
Over the years, benign neglect and a misunderstanding of horticultural needs to tend to lilacs took its toll on Lilacia Park and during the 1970s the International Lilac Society as well the Morton Arboretum noted the poor condition of the collection. Park superintendents believed that letting shrubs grow large and full of blooms would make the best impression on visitors. The increasing number of visitors along with the park being used year-round, rather than just

seasonally, began to impact the collections. Changing weather patterns over the last one hundred years has altered the collection as did the demolition of the Plum’s home and several construction projects forced the removal of lilacs to other parts of the park. The lilacs that were moved either lost their nametags or had never been identified properly so there are shrubs that may be at the park that are considered extinct because there is no way to properly identify the unnamed shrubs.



P74-343 Lilacia Park,
Curteich 9B-H1680, A Path
of Beauty,
Courtesy of Lombard
Historical Society

In 2009, Mary Mae Meyer, a Lombardian, volunteered to create a database of lilacs in the park. She worked with the park horticulturist and the Lombard Camera Club to identify planting beds and species and cultivars, and had the plants photographed during the stages of bloom. This is important because lilacs have a range of color, from bud break in the early spring to bloom fade at the end of the cycle. After Meyer created the database, Dan Price, the GIS technician at the Village of Lombard, took that data and using his GIS skills, created aerial maps of the park



GIS map of Lilacia Park showing planting beds, created by Dan Price
 Courtesy of Lombard Historical Society and Lombard Park District

showing locations of planting beds and bloom times. Meyer's work led to the International Lilac Society returning to Lombard in 2011 where her work on the park and her passion for lilacs were noted not just by the Society but also by Lombard officials when the Village of Lombard's President, William Mueller, issued a proclamation announcing the International Lilac Society 2011 Convention Days held in Lombard where Meyer's work was lauded and then another proclamation named Meyer as the Grand Marshal of the Lilac Parade. Both proclamations recognize

Meyer's passion for Lilacia Park and her hard work as a volunteer, learning how to identify lilacs and learning how to create a working database for the Lombard Park District staff.

William Plum wrote in 1923 on a form for the United States Department of Agriculture when asked why he was importing lilacs from France that he was amassing a large collection of lilacs to be of service to flower lovers. He enjoyed opening his gardens in the spring to visitors and loved to share and sell cuttings from his plants. Like E.H. Wilson describing the elemental forces in gardening, William Plum embodied the spirit of the 'Gardener', being interdependent on the horticulturists at Morton Arboretum and other arboretums, and also on the cultivators like Lemoine Nurseries and John Dunbar. His lilac collection has transformed a town from being more than a bedroom community in a major urban area to a place for garden tourists to visit and enjoy the beauty of lilacs blooming in the spring. Plum's lilacs have also established a realm for scientists to study how plants can bloom and thrive in an urban setting and a place for technicians to employ current trends in mapping. Whether Lilacia Park is an oasis of calm, a lab



The Players Green at Lilacia Park, undated.
 Courtesy of Lombard Historical Society

for scientists, or a canvas unfolding for artists, one thing is clear. Because Helen Plum urged her husband to visit Lemoine Nurseries at Nancy, France and he bought two of their French lilacs to plant at the Plum gardens in Lombard, Illinois, a collection was born that thrives today and our Lilac Time in May transforms our little town into a lavender and green fragrant oasis of beauty.

Annotated Bibliography

HP 601 – To Be of Service to Flower Lovers

4th Annual Lilac Pageant [Pamphlet]. (1933). Lombard, IL: Lombard Lilac League.

This pamphlet contains artwork by Charles Medin, a brief biography of William Plum, a listing of the cast and crew of the Lilac Pageant, advertising for local businesses, photographs, and a biography of the Lombard Lilac League

The American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboretums. (1941). *Lilacs for America: Report of 1941 Survey Conducted by the Committee on Horticultural Varieties of The American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboretums* [Pamphlet]. Swarthmore, PA: Arthur Scott Hoyt Horticultural Foundation.

This pamphlet, published in 1941, was one the first national catalogs for lilac breeders and growers. It contains lists of lilacs and where they can be found as well as a recommended list of lilacs to plant. It contains many references to William Plum's lilac collection and where specimens from his garden may be found in the United States. Some of the lilacs listed are now considered extinct by horticulturists.

The American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboretums. (1953). *Lilacs for America: Report of 1953 Survey Committee of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboretums* [Pamphlet]. Swarthmore, PA: Arthur Scott Hoyt Horticultural Foundation.

This publication is similar to the 1941 Survey. In the preface, written by John Wister, Chairman of the Survey, he addresses the need for space to have an outstanding lilac collection and has suggestion for members to improve their plantings. The pamphlet also shows recommended lilacs using the Wister Color Code for lilacs and does list the superintendent of Lilacia Park as a contributor.

Faust, J. L. (1982, December 29). John C. Wister, 95, Horticulturist. *The New York Times*. Retrieved July 09, 2018, from <https://nyti.ms/29R1irl>

This is the obituary for John Wister, whose horticultural work laid the foundation for the International Lilac Society. Wister was affiliated with Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, working as the first director of the Arthur Scott Hoyt Horticultural Foundation, a public garden at the college campus that encompasses 240 acres. Wister designed and implemented a garden with the goal of having hardy plants that didn't need high maintenance for eastern gardens. His work establishing guideline for lilacs and other garden plants has been noted not just in the United States but also in Europe.

Gobster, P. H. (2001). Visions of nature: Conflict and compatibility in urban park restoration. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 56(1-2), 35-51. doi:10.1016/s0169-2046(01)00164-5 “But they are also seen as *places* (and places within places), landscapes that by design or happenstance provide people with unique experiences as a result of the natural and cultural features present and the social communities that gravitate to them. Thus, one of the greatest challenges to urban park planners, landscape architects, and managers is to balance the tension between providing for the diverse users and values of park space and preserving and enhancing the unique qualities of place.”

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“The central feature of the plan was a large meadow enclosed by multi-layered masses of wildflowers, shrubs, and trees, with openings that created views to the lake and the park landscape beyond the point. The meadow was mowed to facilitate passive recreational use, and a path around the perimeter of the point provided access to a swimming beach and a breakwater-beachfront promenade.”

Although Gobster is referring to a case study made at Montrose Point in Chicago, a landscape designed by Jensen protégé Alfred Caldwell, he could be looking at Lilacia Park in Lombard. Plum planted his estate in groupings and when Jensen converted the estate to the park, he planned strolling paths and a large “players green” where people could gather and watch the Lilac Festival pageant playing on the hill above.

“Surrounded by multi-layered masses of flowers, shrubs, and trees, the meadow is to be experienced as a “room” enclosed by “walls”. The meadow is mown and uniform in color and texture so as to provide an uninterrupted path leading the eye toward another Prairie School aesthetic device called “the long view”.”

As Plum's collection of lilacs grew, he planned his estate garden as an orchard and working space. But Plum also layered his shrubs and trees as if he was plotting the bloom times, especially those sections nearest his home. This careful planning would allow a wave of color and scent across his estate. Jensen's reworking of the estate also involved a layering effect and included long views and open areas which encouraged visitors to walk further into the park to discover new experiences.

Jensen, Jens, and Mertha Fulkerson. "Jensen to White." Received by Mr. Stanley White, Post Graduate Institute of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois.

"A curved line is poetic-it is romantic-it is mysterious, and is a part of our life. A straight line is forced and dominating, but whether it is a curved or a straight line it must be fitting. A snakey line is an insult to a beautiful curve. Do not get mixed on a snakey line and a winding line. A snakey line is seen its whole length, a winding line is only seen to the next curve. If a straight line is the fitting thing, use it, and I will not make a curve for the sake of making it. Whatever we do in any of the arts must be fitting, or it is not art."

This excerpt of a letter from Jens Jensen explains his ideas towards creating his landscapes. The person he is writing to, Mr. Stanley White, was a professor of landscape architecture at University of Illinois, Champaign from 1922 to 1959. It reinforces the underlying design concept behind Lilacia Park in Lombard, Illinois and how William Plum's lilac collections became the "paint" for Jensen's design.

Library-Park Election Confirmed by County Judge Rathje Monday. (1927, September 27). *Lombard Press*.

This article, photocopied from the Lombard Press, contains a detailed description of the Plum house and gardens. The gardens are listed as being 5 1/2 acres in size, containing a lilac collection of 348 named varieties, most coming from France and other European countries. There are over 400 bushes, mostly about 12 to 14 years old but there is an old lilac from when the Plums purchased the property. The article also mentions three outstanding trees: a Schwedler Maple from the Black Forest of Germany; a ginkgo tree; and a silver poplar. The maple and the ginkgo are still on site while the silver poplar, known as Mother's Tree, died about 50 years ago.

LOMBARD LACKS MONEY TO TEND FAMOUS LILACS. (1936, Mar 11). *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963)* Retrieved from <https://0-search.proquest.com.sierra.helenplum.org/docview/181749044?accountid=39668>

Maloney, C. J. (2008). Chapter 3. In *Chicago Gardens: The Early History*(pp. 148-151). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Maloney writes a brief description of Lilacia Park and of William Plum discussing the start of his estate, the establishment of his lilac collection and his growing role as collector and

influencer on the collections on major horticultural collections. She also includes the description Plum wrote when he considered selling his estate after the death of his wife, Helen.

McKelvey, S. D. (1928, February 09). Request for Information [Letter to William R. Plum]. Boston, Massachusetts.

Schofield, E. A. (fall 1987). A Life Redeemed: Susan Delano McKelvey and the Arnold Arboretum. *Arnoldia*, 47(4), 9-23. doi:50.233.194.34

This letter from Susan McKelvey to William R. Plum, dated 09 February 1928, accompanied by the article about McKelvey underscore the important role Plum played as collector of lilacs. Unfortunately, the enclosed questions McKelvey refers to in her letter has not been found. This letter does show that McKelvey was reaching out to people regarded as experts in lilacs as she was preparing to write a book that many lilac scholars consider the first important scholarly study of lilacs and their cultivars.

In Schofield's article on page 13, he writes "It was in *Syringa*-the lilacs-that she would make her first significant contribution to botany, a monograph on the genus *Syringa*." He continues further down the page, explaining "Over the next seven years she would visit lilac collections in the United States, Canada, England, and France, gathering information for her book." Susan Delano McKelvey not only visited nurseries and herbariums, she also studied journals and catalogs to amass her knowledge of the shrub. Because of the Arnold Arboretum's close ties to the director and botanist at Morton Arboretum in Lisle, McKelvey most likely visited there. If she went to France, it was very possible that she would have gone to the LeMoine Nursery in Nancy, France as it has been and still is considered one of the finest sources of lilac cultivars. True, without proof, these places are suppositions but if she only went to one of these places, she would have heard about the great collector of lilacs, William R. Plum. The sad part of the letter requesting information from William Plum is that Plum died 10 months prior to McKelvey's letter.

Plum, W. R. (1924, December 31). *Lilac Bushes offered William R. Plum, Lombard, Illinois* [This is a typed catalog of lilacs, listed by cultivar name, that were offered for sale by William R. Plum. The listings not only were of the cultivar name but many of them also included descriptions of the blooms.]. Plum estate, Lombard.

This catalog emphasizes William Plum's role as a collector, showing the wide variety of *Syringa* cultivars he amassed. His extensive observations of colors and bloom style allows contemporary researchers to gain valuable knowledge about the types and styles of lilacs being planted in the early part of the 1900s

Plum, W. R. (n.d.). *Plum's Garden Journals* [Notes, planting guides, and other ephemera relating to Plum's garden]. Lilacia, the Plum estate, Lombard.

These notes, planting guides, and descriptive notes form the horticultural files owned by Lombard Historical Society. They were created by William R. Plum and are his observations and notes.

Despite other researcher's comments that Plum kept poor notes and that it is hard to lay out his planting charts because of the landscaping changes done by Jens Jensen to turn an estate into a public park, these copious notes and charts form the basis of understanding Plum's role as collector and seller of lilacs. By using modern maps and the Jensen blueprint as well historic photos, Plum's planting charts can be placed and used to show where the original plants were planted in relation to their modern locations.

Plum, W. R. (1926, May 03). Additional List for Lilacs [Letter to Clarence Godshalk]. Lilacia, Lombard, Illinois.

Plum, W. R. (1926, October 23). Reminder [Letter to Henry Teuscher]. Lilacia, Lombard, Illinois.

Teuscher, H. (1926, November 9). I Expect You Are Very Mad on Me [Letter to William R. Plum]. Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois.

Plum, W. R. (1926, November 15). You Surprised Me with Your Kind Offer [Letter to Henry Teuscher]. Lilacia, Lombard, Illinois.

Teuscher, H. (1927, March 26). Plants Being Sent to William Plum [Letter to William R. Plum]. Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois.

Plum, W. R. (1927, March 30). Lilacs [Letter to Henry Teuscher]. Lilacia, Lombard, Illinois.

These letters, primarily over five months of the fall and winter just before Plum's death in April 1927, show the depth of the relationship between the collector and the arboretum. Not only did Henry Teuscher, the head botanist at Morton Arboretum, share cuttings from the Morton Arboretum collection, he also had a list of lilacs that he wanted to obtain from Plum's estate, Lilacia.

Quiney, I. (1923). Old Chicagoan Grows 200 Kinds of Lilac Bush: W.R. Plum of Lombard Has One of the Finest Gardens in U.S.

This article, unfortunately not cited properly by the previous researcher, was found in a collection of articles compiled by early historians at the Lombard Historical Society. The information about Plum's lilac collection notes that he has "over 200 varieties of lilac, with representatives of all eleven of the American species and nearly 200 imported French, German, and Asiatic varieties". This article points out the vast size of the collection which is impressive for a private collection but uses language of her time. There are no species of lilacs native to the American continent but there are cultivars developed by John Dunbar that Plum acquired for his collection. Again, this is a good article that describe the broadness of Plum's lilac collection and why it is so important for horticulturists studying lilacs.

Watts, G. R. (1999). *The legacy of William R. Plum Civil War telegrapher, lawyer, and horticulturist*. Lombard, IL: Lombard Historical Society.

This book covers William Plum's life and his careers both as telegrapher and lawyer. While he did study his lilacs and make noted observations on their flowering cycles, Plum would most likely describe himself as a collector and a gardener. Chapters 21 through 23 cover the start of the lilac collection, the deaths of the Plums, and the transformation of the estate into the public park.

Wilson, E. W. (1917). *Aristocrats of the garden: Illustrated*. Garden City (NY): Doubleday, Page & Company.

Chapter XII, in *Lilacdom*; Epilogue

This 1917 book discusses the history of *Syringa*, its wild habitat, and its use in the garden. William Plum took notes from this book, in addition to his own observations about his lilacs, which may indicate he was considering writing something about lilacs. He had already written books about the Telegraph Corps and the Civil War by this time so another publication about a familiar topic isn't an unreasonable assumption. This book, while descriptive of the history of lilacs, doesn't cover as much horticultural information as McKelvey's monograph written a decade later.