

Lantern Slides

French Broad River Garden Club Coloured Slides and Photographs Collection (M2010.02; OS2010.02)

During 1935 and early 1936, the French Broad River Garden Club engaged in a major project called "Native Plants of the North Carolina Mountains Suitable for Naturalization." The goal was to create a presentation to be rented by garden clubs throughout the U.S. The rental included color lantern slides of wildflowers, accompanied by a typed book of descriptions to be read with the showing of the slides.

Another component of the project was a large portfolio (19 inches tall by 13 inches wide) with each textured brown page having an attached 8 x 10 inch print of the same image used on the slides, with a printed common and scientific name for the plant on the lower portion of the page. The folio has fewer pages than the number of slides since not all the images had prints made. The folio's title page states:

"Most of the photographs in this Collection were taken by Mr. E. M. Ball of The Plateau Studios, some by Mr. Elliot Lyman Fisher, and others from the prints left by Mr. George Massa [sic], all of Asheville, North Carolina."

The committee for the color slides project was headed by Mrs. James G. K. McClure, Jr. The extant correspondence¹ shows the great care taken by Mrs. McClure with her insistence on accurate cropping of the images along with precise coloring of the wildflowers.

The steps for making a lantern slide include:

- Use a photographic negative to expose the sensitive photographic emulsion on a glass slide.
- Develop the exposed glass slide to show a "positive" black and white print on the glass.
- Apply watercolor paints to the glass to modify the image so that it becomes a color print.
- Create a sandwich of the exposed, colored glass slide with a second piece of glass,
- Use black gummed tape on the four edges of the sandwich to produce the finished slide.

Locally, some slides were produced by Ewart M. Ball, Sr. and by Elliot Lyman Fisher. They were sent to Edward Van Altena in New York for him to apply the requested coloring. Some of the slides could be successfully used by the colorist. Others needed to be re-done. The creation of a lantern slide requires a particular exposure of the negative and development of the image on the glass. Ultimately, Mrs. McClure obtained the negatives from the photographers, sent them to New York and Van Altena made the slides from the borrowed negatives.

Mrs. McClure wrote the following to Edward Van Altena on October 21, 1935:

"The collection, if true and exact as to coloring, will go over the entire country, possibly to all the member clubs of the Garden Club of America. It will be a very important collection. Very few of the plants photographed appear in any wild flower books. None have ever before been photographed in their natural habitats, - on the slopes of the Blue Ridge in the Carolina Mountains and in the Great Smokies."

¹ *French Broad River Garden Club Coloured Slides and Photographs Collection (M2010.02; OS2010.02)*, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville 28804

The slides commissioned by the French Broad River Garden Club are a standard 4 x 3.25 inches. The colorist did a marvelous job of accurately showing the plant's colors—the flowers, the leaves and any background foliage or rocks.

To enable the colorist to do her work so well, the Committee shipped live blooms in the spring of 1936 to New York. They also encouraged the colorist to visit the Flower Show in New York on March 18, 1936. Although they had considered using a book's colored plates as source material for the coloring, the Committee rejected that idea saying the plants' drawings seemed lacking in vitality.

How and when the slides have been used

Horticultural Committee Meeting [of Garden Clubs of America Annual Meeting] on May 21, 1936 in West Point, New York.

Attendance of over 250 members was noted. A transcription was created for that meeting.

French Broad River Garden Club meeting of June 12, 1936.

Minutes of the meeting state: "Mrs. McClure showed the slides and gave a most interesting description of the plates - describing the flowers in detail."

French Broad River Garden Club meeting of November 13, 1936.

Minutes of the meeting state: "Mrs. McClure gave a report of the Slides and the various clubs ordering them. So far the Slides have been ordered by 22 garden clubs at the rate of \$10.00 ea. plus [shipping] expenses." Also: "The Board recommended that the Club give a public showing of the slides sometime after the holidays."

French Broad River Garden Club - Ways and Means Committee Report for 1936 - 1937

"The Ways and Means Committee since October 1935 has put on three Garden Tours and one Slides Lecture. All have been financially successful.

"The showing of our slides on June 4th [1937] with the kind cooperation of the Biltmore Forest Country Club was both a revenue project effected by a well-salted silver offering and the achievement of our wish to have others here see the lovely wildflower slides Mrs. McClure has sent to so many Clubs and which may be regarded as a large part of our conservation work. Announcement cards (180) sent to a mailing list - which will be a permanent addition to the Club's equipment - resulted in a good attendance."

Color lantern slides project summary

74 color lantern slides (Edward Van Altena): \$94

Wooden box for slides (Eastman Kodak): \$6

Photo prints and negatives, including shipping to New York: \$148

Portfolio—with mounting of prints on folio pages and an enclosing case (Gollifox Press²): \$35

500 "Native Flower" folders with envelopes—to promote the slides: \$23

Total project cost per hand-written record: \$307

² Burnley Weaver created and owned Gollifox Press which was based in Tryon during this time period. For more information about Weaver and his work as a graphic designer, see <https://www.tryonhistory.org/biography/burnley-weaver.html>.

The French Broad River Garden Club members had previously approved spending up to \$200 for the lantern slides (April 2, 1936) and up to \$20 for insurance on the slides (July 10, 1936). Mrs. McClure indicated in various letters to Edward Van Altena that she would personally be paying a portion of the cost of the slides.

Total project cost as reported to the Board of the French Broad River Garden Club: \$207
Insurance for slides: \$15

Total income from renting lantern slides to other garden clubs and interested groups: \$382

Analysis of lantern slides and photographers used

I found existing negatives for many of the lantern slides. An analysis of the slides and their original negatives is included here as Appendix LS-1. The original negatives were made:

- by George Masa when he owned Plateau Studios in 1920-24;
- by George Masa during 1924-32;
- by Ewart M. Ball, Sr. when he owned Plateau Studios (1924-1937).

In 1935, the George Masa negatives from 1920-24 were in the possession of Ewart M. Ball, Sr. who had purchased Plateau Studios from Masa in mid-1924.

The George Masa negatives from 1924-1932 were in the possession of Elliot Lyman Fisher (purchaser of Masa's negatives after his death in 1933) who would have provided them to the French Broad River Garden Club Committee in 1935.

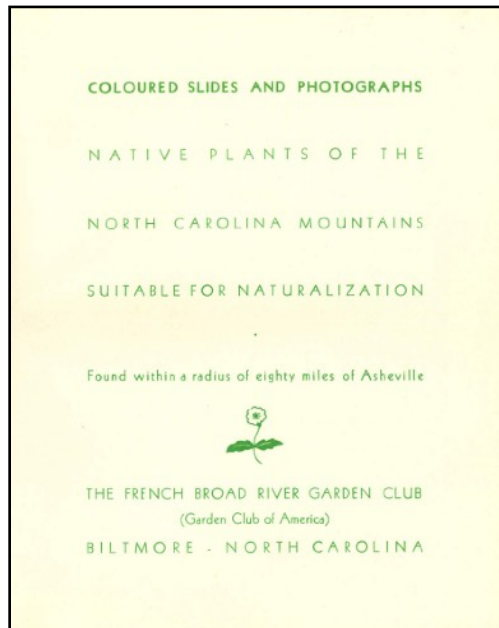
Of the nine Masa images made into lantern slides, some were taken with the 5 x 7 inch format and some were 8 x 10 inches.

The Ewart Ball negatives are 3.75 x 4.75 inches. The Ball Collection³ contains 148 negatives of wildflowers (N5922 through N5926). Of these, 33 were used for the lantern slides.

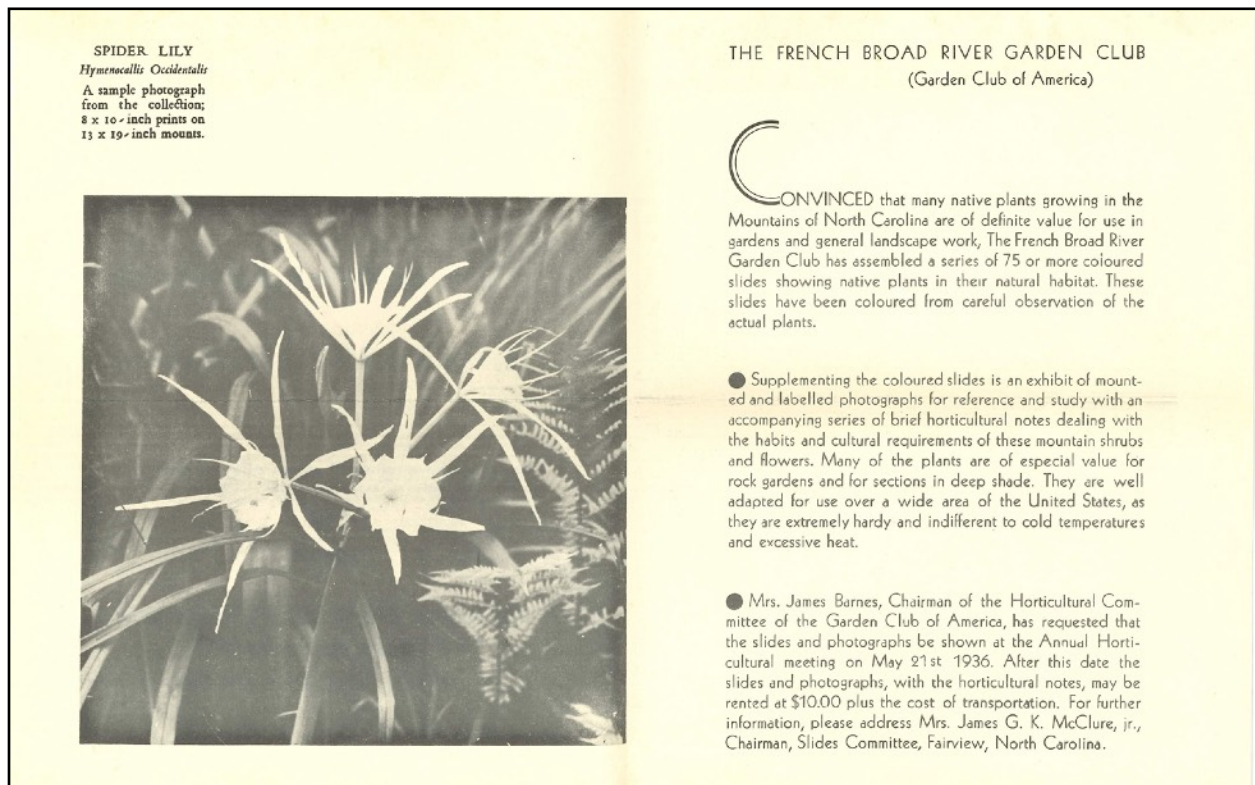
There remain 31 images for which no negatives have been found. Therefore, no attribution can be made to the actual photographer.

³ *E. M. Ball Photographic Collection (1918-1969)*, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville 28804

Note Card Announcement of Wildflower Lantern Slides



exterior of folded announcement



interior of folded announcement

Sample Page from Portfolio



ROSE BAY LAUREL

Rhododendron Maximum

25-30-feet

FRENCH BROAD RIVER GARDEN CLUB : : BILTMORE, NORTH CAROLINA

Appendix LS-1: French Broad River Garden Club Coloured Slides and Photographs Collection MM2010.02 ; OS2010.02

slide #	Description	Negative by George Masa	Ball Collection #	date of negative	size of negative	Negative by E. M. Ball, Sr.	Ball Collection #	orientation of lantern slide when posted online *
fbr001	Arbutus [Trailing arbutus] (<i>Epigaea repens</i>)							
fbr002	Bloodroot (<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>)	57-98	N3117.04	1920, ca.	5 x 7			
fbr003	Oconee Bells (<i>Shortia galacifolia</i>)							
fbr004	Oconee Bells (<i>Shortia galacifolia</i>) growing above brook					X	N5926.05	
fbr005	Dutchman's Breeches (<i>Dicentra cucullaria</i>)							
fbr006	Anemone - yellow stamens (<i>Anemone thalictroides</i> ?)					X	N5923.20	upside down
fbr007	Anemone - purple stamens							
fbr008	Virginia Saxifrage (<i>Saxifraga virginensis</i>)					X	N5923.13	
fbr009	Mountain Lettuce [Brook lettuce] (<i>saxifraga micranthidifolia</i>)							
fbr010	Snow Trillium (<i>Trillium nivale</i>) with Saxifrage (<i>Saxifraga virginensis</i>), etc.					X	N5926.01	
fbr011	Mountain Lettuce [Saxifrage]					X	N5925.14	
fbr012	Purple Trillium [also known as Wake-robin, red trillium, Beth root or Stinking Benjamin] (<i>Trillium erectum</i>)					X	N5924.25	
fbr013	Purple Trillium [also known as Wake-robin, red trillium, Beth root or Stinking Benjamin] (<i>Trillium erectum</i>) with Snow Trillium (<i>Trillium nivale</i>)							
fbr014	Yellow Trillium (<i>Trillium luteum</i>)					X	N5924.21	
fbr015	Yellow Trillium - <i>Discolus</i>					X	N5925.08	
fbr016	Trillium - <i>Simile</i> [Jeweled wakerobin] (<i>Trillium simile</i>)					X	N5926.13	
fbr017	Trillium - Painted Lady (<i>Trillium undulatum</i> ?)	X		before June 1932				
fbr018	Trout Lilly [sic] [Eastern Troutlily - (<i>Erythronium americanum</i>)					X	N5922.41	
fbr019	Showy Orchid (<i>Galearis spectabilis</i>)					X	N5926.25	
fbr020	Showy Orchids (<i>Galearis spectabilis</i>) and Canadian Violet (<i>Viola canadensis</i>)					X	N5923.14	
fbr021	Toothwort [Cutleaf Toothwort] (<i>Dentaria laciniata</i>)					X	N5926.26	
fbr022	Spring Beauty [Broadleaf Spring Beauty ?] (<i>Claytonia virginica</i>)					X	N5923.12	
fbr023	Long Spurred Violet [Longspur violet] (<i>Viola rostrata</i>)							
fbr024	White Violet (<i>Viola striata</i>)							
fbr025	Foam Flower (<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>)					X	N5923.17	
fbr026	Bellwort [Sessile Merrybells] (<i>Uvularia sessilifolia</i>)							

slide #	Description	Negative by George Masa	Ball Collection #	date of negative	size of negative	Negative by E. M. Ball, Sr.	Ball Collection #	orientation of lantern slide when posted online *
fbr027	Wood Sorrel (<i>Oxalis montana</i>) and Fire Pink							
fbr028	Crested Iris (<i>Iris cristata</i>)							
fbr029	Crested Iris (White) (<i>Iris cristata</i>)							
fbr030	Blue Milkweed (<i>Asclepias purpurascens</i>)							
fbr031	Shooting Star [Jewel Shooting Star ?] (<i>Dodecatheon amethystinum</i>)					X	N5926.36	
fbr032	Blue Phlox [Woodland Phlox] (<i>Phlox divaricata</i>)					X	N5924.12	
fbr033	Yellow Ladies Slipper [Yellow Slipper Orchid] (<i>Cypripedium pubescens</i>)					X	N5926.11	
fbr034	Pink Ladies Slipper [Moccasin Orchid] (<i>Cypripedium acaule</i>)					X	N5923.18	
fbr035	Draba [Whitlow Grass] (<i>Draba verna</i>)					X	N5924.34	
fbr036	Silver Bell Tree (<i>Halesia carolina</i>)	57-486	N990	1921	7 x 5			
fbr037	Silver Bell (<i>Halesia carolina</i>)- Specimen [with Tiger Swallow-tail butterfly]					X	N5924.16	
fbr038	Empress Tree (<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>)					X	N5926.18	
fbr039	Empress Tree - Blossom (<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>)					X	N5924.35	
fbr040	Dogwood (<i>Cornus florida</i>)	57-95	N3117.02	1920	7 X 5			
fbr041	<i>Phlox Ovata</i> [Mountain phlox]							
fbr042	<i>Phlox Ovata</i> [Mountain phlox] on Craggy Mt.					X	N5924.23	
fbr043	False Lilly-of-the-Valley [Heartleaf-Lily] (<i>Maianthemum canadense</i>)							
fbr044	Bluets [Fringed Summer-bluets] (<i>Houstonia ciliolata</i>)							
fbr045	Stuartia [Stewartia] (<i>S. malacodendron</i> , <i>S. ovata</i>) [sic] Portfolio of prints shows this as "Spring Green-and-Gold (<i>Chrysogonum Virginianum</i>)."					X	N5923.11	
fbr046	Sand Myrtle [Mountain myrtle] (<i>Leiophyllum buxifolium</i>) [sic] Portfolio of prints shows this as "Sand Myrtle (<i>Dendrium Prostratum</i>)."					X	N5923.10	
fbr047	Mountain Andromeda [Mountain Fetterbush] (<i>Pieris floribunda</i>)							
fbr048	Carolina Rhododendron with R[hododendron] Maximum	0-4395		1929, ca.	10 x 8			
fbr049	Rhododendron Minus							
fbr050	Purple Rhododendron [<i>Rhododendron Catawbiense</i>]							
fbr051	Rhododendron [Purple Rhododendron] (<i>Rhododendron Catawbiense</i>) on Craggy Mt.	S-166		1932, June 19	5 x 7			reversed horizontally

slide #	Description	Negative by George Masa	Ball Collection #	date of negative	size of negative	Negative by E. M. Ball, Sr.	Ball Collection #	orientation of lantern slide when posted online *
fbr052	Rhododendron [Purple Rhododendron] (<i>Rhododendron Catawbiense</i>) on Roan Mt.					X	N5924.22	
fbr053	Rose Bay Laurel (<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>)	0-4374		1929, ca.	8 x 10			
fbr054	Wild Honeysuckle - (<i>Azalea nudiflora</i>)					X	N5925.27	reversed horizontally
fbr055	Shell Pink Azalea - (<i>Rhododendron vaseyi</i>)							
fbr056	Flame Azalea (<i>Rhododendron calendulaceum</i>) with Laurel							
fbr057	Flame Azalea (<i>Rhododendron calendulaceum</i>) with Purple Rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron Catawbiense</i>)	0-1791		1926, ca.	8 x 10			reversed horizontally
fbr058	Pink Laurel	57-1633	N3117.01	1920, ca.	5 x 7			reversed horizontally
fbr059	Snake Mouth Orchid [Goldcrest Orchid] (<i>Pogonia ophioglossoides</i>)							
fbr060	Snake Mouth Orchid [Goldcrest Orchid] (<i>Pogonia ophioglossoides</i>) and Grass Pink (<i>Calopogon pulchellus</i>)							
fbr061	Pink Gentian [Pursh, or Rose Pink Gentian] (<i>Sabatia angularis</i>)							
fbr062	Passion Flower [Maypop] (<i>Passiflora incarnata</i>),					X	N5922.25	
fbr063	Black Snake Root (<i>Cimicifuga racemosa</i>)							
fbr064	Oak Leaf Hydrangea [Oakleaf Hydrangea] (<i>Hydrangea quercifolia</i>)							
fbr065	Carolina Pink [Pinkroot] (<i>Spigelia marilandica</i>)							
fbr066	[Rock Sandwort] <i>Arenaria Stricta</i> (<i>Minuartia michauxii</i>)							
fbr067	Turks-cap Lily (<i>Lilium superbum</i>)							
fbr068	Saxifrage [Micheaux's Saxifrage] (<i>Saxifraga michauxii</i> ?)							
fbr069	Silver Chickweed (<i>Paronymia argyrocoma</i>)							
fbr070	Mountain Sandwort (<i>Arenaria montana</i>)							
fbr071	Spider Lily (<i>Tradescantia x andersononia</i> 'Alba').					X	N5922.02	reversed horizontally
fbr072	Gordonia (<i>Gordonia lasianthus</i> ?) [sic] Portfolio of prints shows "Gordonia (<i>Franklinia Altamaha</i>)."					X	N5925.04	reversed horizontally and upside down
fbr073	Summer Dogwood Stuartia [Stewartia] (P) (<i>S. malacodendron</i> , <i>S. ovata</i> ?)					X	N5925.02	reversed horizontally
fbr074	Summer Dogwood, S.P. Grandiflora (Stuartia [Stewartia] (P) (<i>S. malacodendron</i> , <i>S. ovata</i> ?					X	N5925.02	purple coloring of stamens
	Prints made from negatives in possession of Elliot Lyman Fisher.							