

The Food Explorer Presentation McKee April 1, 2023

Thank you all so much for coming. It's a thrill to see your faces out there. I want to acknowledge my gratitude to the landscape architect David Sacks, who helped revitalize McKee more than 20 years ago to follow the original plan for the garden. He was very generous to me with his time and documents. He loves this garden.

Marion de Vogel is in the audience today and I want you to know if there are any hard questions or anything about the McKees, she will be available afterwards.

We're here today to talk about David Fairchild, a handsome, courageous, traveler who changed the way America eats by searching the world for new foods and crops for the American farmer. But before we launch into Fairchild, I need to tell you about two other courageous fellows who made their mark on the local landscape and contributed a great deal to the community. They knew each other and corresponded.

The first is Waldo E. Sexton, my grandfather, who worked tirelessly in Indian River County from the time he was a young man until he died at age 82. Vero was young when he arrived from the midwest with a degree in agriculture from Perdue University and a few sales jobs on his resume. That's the short version. He arrived in 1914 and by 1917 had planted 10,000

citrus trees. He created a grove maintenance company and a packing house to process and ship fruit. He experimented with developing new varieties and helped organize the IR Citrus League and served as the first President. Sexton started many businesses a new small town needed: a dairy, an insurance agency, and a real estate agency still operated today by the current generation of his old partner McWilliams. He raised beef cattle and developed property like Dogertown as the spring training camp of the Brooklyn Dodgers who we all know later became the LA Dodgers and even later left us the bums. Today we still enjoy popular Vero Beach Sexton landmarks such as the Ocean Grill and the Driftwood Inn. Other venues have closed but had their moment as the Patio Restaurant and the Turf Club. The amazing McKee Botanic Garden where we are gathered here today got its start as the McKee Jungle Gardens in 1932. He never stopped promoting Vero Beach as a fabulous place to vacation or live.

The second man is William Lyman Phillips who Sexton hired to be the landscape architect of the McKee Jungle Gardens. I will tell you about him in some detail so you can understand his contribution to Vero Beach and to Florida. Phillips made a reputation for himself as a premier landscape architect in Florida beginning with the Mountain Lake Colony and Bok Tower at Lake Wales where he was the Supervising Manager for

the Olmsted Brothers who had an important national reputation. Later he moved to the Miami area where David Fairchild had owned property in Coconut Grove since 1916.

Fairchild was highly regarded as a botanist with special knowledge of tropical species. He loved the tropics all around the world. Fairchild sent my grandfather tropical plants and later employed Phillips to design his personal property in Coconut Grove, FL. Sexton and Fairchild were correspondents for many years, I guess mostly about plants although some about promoting the Driftwood. Sexton never stopped promoting the Driftwood. Phillips worked with both men and the three of them made history in FL. The three men were of the era before the turn of the century, Sexton and Phillips were both born in 1885 and Fairchild was born 16 years before them in 1869. They were all educated, ambitious and shared a philosophical outlook they would make the world better.

When you look outside at the view from this room you see exactly what Phillips drew and described in a report to Sexton on June 4, 1931. The expanse of grass was called the Greeting. Those Royal Palms are the original trees planted and are now about 90 years old. The pond with the stone bridge is as he drew it and is a Phillip's signature element. When you arrived here today, the entrance pergola is a re-creation in the original

location to achieve Phillips's plan for the introduction to be a dark and densely planted corridor for a dramatic opening into sunlight at the expanse of the Greeting with a view of jungle beyond. If you go walking on the main jungle trail, the first 250 feet and the stream alongside it are as the original was.

That trail is worth thinking about twice as an example of Phillips' genius in design. First, it looks pleasing and welcoming. Second, he wrote in his recommendation that the winter visitors have a powerful fear of snakes and the paths should be wide so they can see there aren't any snakes — and the plantings should be kept back and low so no bugs get on them as they walk along the trail.

One example of WLP's excellent writing skills is the #1 item on his recommendation for the project. **“The first problem and perhaps the most important of all, is to stop people who are driving down the open highway at sixty miles an hour. We have to catch their attention, to intrigue their interest and finally to reward their interest.”** Could it be said more clearly? I don't think so.

I'd like to tell you a little bit about how Phillips came to be the most important landscape architect in Dade County and possibly the state of FL. There is a wonderful book by Faith Reyher Jackson titled **Pioneer of**

Tropical Landscape Architecture — William Lyman Phillips in Florida¹. She worked for the Miami Herald and hired Phillips to design her personal residence. She liked him so much she spent about ten years researching and writing this book.

Phillips was academically gifted from the beginning, drawing detailed town plans from an early age, like 7 or 8. He was quiet, read voraciously and depended on his siblings for creating social activities. His social skills were never strong although he was a good negotiator. He received a classical education at the Sommerville MA Latin High School where he studied foreign languages, math, rhetoric, composition, science, history, drawing, music and art. He excelled at mathematics, sang in the chorus and played the cello. The MA Latin High Schools were highly regarded as a college prep, they were showcased at the Paris World Fair in 1900 and the St Louis World Fair in 1904 as exemplars of American public schools². Phillips and his fellow students expected after high school to go out and do important things. When WLP began his studies at Harvard he could read the technical literature in French, German, Italian and Spanish. He rowed crew, graduated magna cum laude and continued for two more years in the newly

¹ Pioneer of Tropical Landscape Architecture William Lyman Phillips in Florida by Faith Reyher Jackson

² Jackson pg 8

created graduate school for landscape architecture. Frederick Law Olmsted Jr was instrumental in developing this program and taught. FLO as he signed all his business papers, had a fifty-year relationship with Phillips.

FLO thought Phillips was the best student he ever had at Harvard and hired him to work at the Brookline Olmsted Brothers office. Many of the Harvard landscape architect graduate students were hired by FLO. It was the Olmsted policy that all work was signed FLO no matter who created it which, of course, wouldn't suit every personality. Not everyone stayed employed there for a long time.

Phillips' lifelong good friend, Prentiss French, who worked with him in the early days of the Brookline Olmsted office said of him, **“Over the years, working with him from time to time, corresponding and seeing his works, I concluded that he knew more about the many facets of landscape architecture than anyone I have ever known. Design, engineering, planting, execution of work—he was excellent at all phases of any project or size. He had a fine analytic mind and a wonderful memory. He could quote at length from authors in English, French and Spanish. FLO once said to me that he wished he could write as well as Philips.”**³

³ Pg 56, 57

Landscape architects working on the Panama Canal after Phillips departed said, “the only good landscaping we found is the road system laid out by a fellow named Phillips. I don’t know who he was, but he was a master.”

Phillips told David Fairchild in 1926 that he was the only one who knew all the facets of landscape architecture, but now in 1946, there are numerous people who do.⁴ He might have been referring to the fact that techniques he invented had become industry standards.

He worked on many Olmsted projects in Europe such as the Cemetery Memorials to fallen soldiers of WWI in France, the Panama Canal, and Palos Verde, California (an exclusive housing development) before he was assigned to the Mountain Lake Colony project in Lake Wales, Florida in 1925. Olmsted had begun work on Bok Tower and the Colony around 1916.⁵ Phillips and his family lived in Mountain Lake for seven years as the supervising manager of those projects. He took on other projects as an independent consultant which Olmsted allowed as he didn’t want to lose him. The relationship had its frictions over the years as employer relationships do. FLO was known to ask for free consultations on two points and those two would turn out to be the whole project’s plan drawings

⁴ Pg 100

⁵ Pg 72

and plantings list. He volunteered Phillips to work on projects without consulting him when he wasn't even employed by Olmsted such as Highland Hammock Park in Sebring, FL. In 1938 FLO reviewed photos of the Mountain Lake Colony and wrote him, "The more interesting pictures, however, were all or nearly all of places where I had contributed very little to—that might indicate that the work you did with little or no interference from me produced more "photogenic" results."⁶ Have you ever had a boss compliment you like that?

Another example that demonstrates the nature of the relationship: Phillips was very busy working in 1946 in Miami with his wife suffering from Tuberculosis and two teenage kids at home he had to deal with in the evening. FLO who was then 86 years old wanted him to come and assist him on a road trip in California for six months to make a general survey of park properties. Due to the scarcity of motels they, including Mrs. Olmsted, would be camping on the side of the road with all the supplies in the back of the station wagon. FLO was surprised, annoyed he refused the trip.

Phillips early FL clients were all wealthy with winter homes in places like Palm Beach and the Mountain Lake Colony. The severe depression in the 1930s was very hard on the Olmsted business all across the country and eventually even dried up the landscape design work in Mountain Lake,

⁶ Jackson pg 111

where no one thought the depression could touch. Phillips volunteered to take himself off the Olmsted payroll and he moved to West Palm Beach to start his own firm and ended up with a job supervising 200 CCC workers. The Civilian Conservation Corps was created by President Roosevelt to put men to work creating parks for the public good. The men came from far away and had no idea that the work was back breaking in horrible heat, frequently in deep water with sawgrass that chews up skin, an unimaginable amount of mosquitos and dangerous with alligators.

Welcome to Florida! WLP taught them all how to survey so they could take a skill home wherever they lived. He ended up working for 40 years in the Miami area for several different agencies. His list of projects runs for 8 pages in small type. A few of those projects include:

Greynolds Park, Crandon Park, Mathieson Hammock Park, Overseas Highway to Key West, and the Fairchild Botanic Gardens. He also worked on private residences, churches, clubs, hotels, cemeteries, hospitals, airports, residential developments, and public buildings.

[The Principals of all WLP projects:](#)

Open Spaces such as ponds, paths, and lawns are essential to creating views, assuring light for trees and growth. The open spaces are

equal to the rooms in an art gallery where the walls display the art — which in a garden are the plantings.

Variety in all elements so there is no repetition or monotony. The visitor is constantly seeing a new view that propels him forward to see more.

Contrasts such as large and small, sunny, shady and the use of colors.

Consistency means every aspect looks natural, not man made.

Water features appear in every project in the form of ponds, lake, waterfalls, or streams.

That's kind of a long introduction to WLP at McKee. But I hope you see from my overview the man, his education, and the enormous quantity of work he produced show he transformed a great deal of Florida and made a unique contribution to Vero Beach with the McKee Jungle Gardens.

Let's Get Back To David Fairchild

The Food Explorer tells the story of David Fairchild, a botanist and world traveler written by Daniel Stone. This book and the man David Fairchild appeal to me on every level. Fairchild changed the way we eat in America. I'm a lifelong food enthusiast; I love to cook, to read and to write about it. I love travel the same way. I read, I go, and I write about it. As you

know I do all that in my series of novels about love later in life, *The Cooking Class* in Kuala Lumpur, *San Sebastian* and *Budapest*. I have read Fairchild's memoir, **The World Was My Garden**. It's a delightful reading experience. His character is apparent on every page—he is a good human being. To me he was one of the last of the guys in a white hat, meaning he had integrity and good will for all.

I think to understand the man, it's helpful to know a bit about his beginnings. Fairchild was born in 1869 and died in 1954. The early settler Fairchilds were academics employed by education, not farming. But the colleges they were involved with were mainly land grant colleges created to improve agriculture. David's grandfather was the founder of Oberlin College. His three sons all became college presidents, one of them was the president of Oberlin for 25 years. Oberlin had liberal leanings in some concepts such as educating women and later black people, but the stand on religion was inflexible. Fairchild grew up and studied on the college campus of Michigan State until he was ten years old, where his father was a professor of English and then at Kansas State where his father was the president. There were two buildings and the president's house on the Kansas state campus at that time and no trees. He lived with the same strict Protestant rules of thinking and conduct that his father had grown up with.

The intellectual future of the country was the primary mission. There were many debates about politics and philosophy — but no music, dancing, card playing, theatre, swearing or drinking. Until his Aunt Sue from New Jersey, who had classical music in her fingertips, visited when he was a teenager, the only music Fairchild had ever heard was the church choir. Aunt Sue wanted to read aloud David Copperfield to the five kids which horrified his father because of Charles Dickens use of caricature was not Christlike. He permitted her to read out of politeness to a house guest. David Copperfield remained one of Fairchild's favorite novels.

Fairchild and his boyhood friends were fascinated with natural history from a very early age. They knew the names of all the plants and trees. A little microscope and the world it revealed was their favorite pastime. He knew all the professors and sometimes they accompanied the kids on expeditions into the fields, the streams and a culvert they loved to play in. It is hard to keep kids out of the ditches in every era! That was a favorite place to play when we were kids in Vero. As a boy the blights that attacked the surrounding wheat fields were of great interest.

David's father traveled to Washington DC in 1887 to help push through legislation to get funding for Federal Experimental Stations at the

land grant colleges which was memorable to Fairchild as it brought powerful microscopes into his life. His uncle Byron was a botany professor at Iowa State. David went to live with Uncle Byron and Aunt Sue in Iowa to study botany and later moved with them to New Brunswick, NJ to do more postgraduate work at Rutgers College when his uncle got a teaching job there. He loved living with them. With Aunt Sue's interests in music and literature and his uncle's in botany, it was such a different life than Kansas. He saw the Atlantic Ocean for the first time which was a profound experience. Within a year of studying at Rutgers, David was invited by a friend of his uncle to join the Department of Agriculture in Plant Pathology in Washington DC for one thousand dollars a year salary. He was 20 years old. In the first year of that job, he gave an illustrated presentation on plant diseases to the Horticultural Society of Western New York. The gray bearded crowd was stunned to see a youth arrive with a roll of starched cotton cloth with charts and colored drawings labeled in Latin. When they kept him for another hour after the lecture to answer questions, he realized he was an authority on a new science. Looking back at his life as an older man, he said that becoming a botanist was predestined by his heredity and environment, although he wandered into it all by himself.

What America Ate Before The 1900s

The food of the early settlers was bland and beige. Due to the short growing season on the plains, apples and grapes were the most common fruits and a few root vegetables were grown. Porridge began the day and bread, cheese, boiled pork or beans made lunch and dinner. The popular thought at the time was that spices and condiments should be used sparingly or else cause indigestion. Pork was the preferred livestock because pigs would eat anything and drank little water while providing substantial calories. The graham cracker was developed to control unseemly sexual urges. In the 1880s Kellogg developed peanut butter, granola and soy milk. Even though they didn't know it, Americans needed more colorful items in their diet.

Fairchild Began Traveling The World In 1893

You had to be brave, hearty and resilient to travel in those days. Fairchild was giddy over his good fortune to make his first trip across the Atlantic by steamship. Only the rich could afford to do this and it was beyond the wildest dreams of most people. His strict upbringing held him in good stead for the rigors of travel in those days. He never complained about anything. He learned early he got seasick, never got over it and almost never mentioned it. He remained selfless throughout his life. He

often got the worst accommodations on a ship, shared a room with strangers, sometimes even slept in chairs. Despite all that he loved the ocean crossings because it gave him time to write and think. It was easy enough in warm, sunny Corsica to ride a donkey when that was the only choice for trying to find a citron. However, crossing the Andes Mountains from Santiago to Buenos Aires, was a 12-day trip in those days, did you catch that 12 days on a donkey with no rest plaza facilities? David's donkey slipped in the ice and barely avoided falling off the narrow trail straight down a thousand feet. The donkey's heroic effort to scramble back on the path to save his own life with David clinging precariously to the animal, rocks and mud, made his traveling group speechless for a full minute but no one remarked on it. David was silently grateful for being alive. When they reached Buenos Aires, his traveling companion Mr. Lathrop insisted they take a boat to Rio de Janeiro, no more land travel.

I know eating can be iffy on the road. I am so careful in certain places to peel fruit and choose cooked things. I pass on street food that smells divine when there's no way the vendor's implements could be cleaned. I don't know how David Fairchild spent almost ten years on the foreign back roads without poisoning himself, except common sense. On a boat that was

quarantined for a week he noticed the filthy hands of the boys cooking and declined the meals offered and ate only boiled onions.

But when a fresh fruit and vegetable market appeared, Fairchild fearlessly tasted everything to decide if it was worth saving the seeds. If he ever got sick, he didn't mention it. As a humorous aside he once recommended eating 200 dates in one day to change your life.

The heat of the tropical jungles in Java, Malaysia and Panama were debilitating to many travelers. Fairchild said, after growing up in Kansas, no place seemed too hot to him.

During a typhoon with the ship rocking so violently people sitting in furniture were flying around, he told funny stories to distract the other passengers from their terror of imminent drowning.

Hostile natives were occasionally ready and willing to kill our hero. Fairchild managed to be friendly with the cannibals of Borneo but did not linger. He respectfully reported to Washington DC that the Filipinos and the Hawaiians were not ready to discuss plant exploration and even a military escort wouldn't help.

The Important People in Fairchild's Professional World

Barbour Lathrop

Mr. Lathrop as Fairchild called him in the early years and later Uncle Barbour, was a rich gentleman's gentleman. His club in San Francisco was the Bohemian Club for men unfettered like himself with family and houses. He kept the penthouse apartment above the Bohemian club for his rare visits to his adopted home city. He traveled continuously around the world, mostly by boat where he sat at the Captain's Table and slept in the First Mate's Cabin reserved for VIP guests. He loved to hold court and tell embellished tales of his travels. He met Fairchild on the steamship of David's first trip to Europe and made a note to himself to run into him again. Eventually he offered to pay Fairchild's Department of Agriculture salary and travel expenses for exploring the world for plants to send to the office in Washington DC. Lathrop's generosity was not viewed that favorably by the Secretary of Agriculture then or ever. Fairchild had to browbeat them at the end of Lathrop's life to give him any little recognition for his service to the country. They traveled for three years on the first trip and ultimately spent eight years on the road together tasting fruits and vegetables and sending plants and seeds back to Washington DC. Aside

from funding their travels, Lathrop walked behind Fairchild in the markets and contributed his highly developed palate to approve of food selections. They were friends for 35 years and Fairchild named one of his daughters Barbara Lathrop.

Alexander Graham Bell

Famous for creating the telephone and the Bell Telephone Company in the United States, Bell was an inventor and entrepreneur who immigrated to America from Scotland. He was the central part of the science community in Washington DC, ex-president of the National Geographic Society. He heard Fairchild speak in August of 1903 at the Society about his recent trip to the Persian Gulf and finding the fruit date in Bagdad, Iraq that would become the parent of every date you buy in the grocery store today. Fairchild stressed his usual message about the importance of the government investing in plant introduction to educate the farmers about new crops that could make the agriculture industry powerful, financially successful and create significant jobs. Bell was so impressed he invited Fairchild to a 'Wednesday Evening' which was an elite weekly gathering of 25 or 30 scientific friends for dinner and conversation at Bell's house. It was considered prestigious to be invited. All that meant

nothing to Fairchild as he hadn't been in town in for five years and knew very few people. By some accounts he was happy to have a free dinner. He was comfortable in the presence of scientists. Bell seated Fairchild next to his daughter Marian who was about 21, educated, sophisticated and interested in art. Within two years they married and formed a lasting partnership devoted to plants and gardening with their last great project, the Kampong in Coconut Grove, FL. The stunning acreage on Biscayne Bay came about the same way as their property in Chevy Chase MD when they were newlyweds. When they found the perfect acreage to develop for the house, garden and trees they wanted, Marian said, "I'll call mother." Chevy Chase was far away from DC those days, so the Bells gave them a car for her to drive him to work and for a government employee who had next to nothing, a substantial dowery of \$50,000.

The Fairchilds traveled every year with their three children to the Bell summer home in Nova Scotia with 12 bedrooms so all the grandchildren could be there. The summer home was yet another laboratory for Bell who stayed up all night every night doing calculations and research on his new inventions for testing the next day, one of which was an airplane. Fairchild felt very fortunate to have enjoyed a long, close relationship with Bell and his wife.

The author of this book interviewed one of the grandchildren, who at 81 still had lots to say about these lively family trips to Nova Scotia. One of my favorite anecdotes of these trips in another era was that Fairchild gave the grandkids a quarter for every interview they conducted with a stranger where they learned something new. I was shocked. All I could think was that gas stations were more civilized in those days —and there were obviously no helicopter moms on these trips. But I read on that he wasn't completely throwing them to the wolves, he also advised on how to back away when they realized there was nothing to be learned. He always reminded them to never be satisfied with what they knew, keep looking to learn more.

Frank Meyer

When his choice of marriage and family life ended Fairchild's full time traveling days it was hard to find employees to replace him who had what he knew it took to be a plant explorer: "the burning curiosity for newness, the instinct to feel around in the dark and stumble headlong toward the unknown." The most important plant explorer he hired was a Dutch horticulturist, an eccentric with odd dressing and poor hygiene

habits who loved to walk. That made Frank Meyer perfect for exploring China which had no roads and could only be traveled on foot or in a chair carried by men. In his first 3 years of exploring, he introduced the Meyer lemon with his name that helped the lemon growers of CA, he sent thousands of fruits, plants, shrubs and bamboo species. Meyer's finds of special note include asparagus, soybeans, and Manchurian spinach. Fairchild took him to Long Island to meet President Teddy Roosevelt to show Meyer's photos of the "mountain east of Beijing, where he had witnessed such devastating deforestation that it triggered landslides that cut off rivers, suffocated farmland and washed away entire villages." The president got Meyer's permission to show the photos to Congress. Through his frequent correspondence with the office in D.C. his thrilling adventures in China were repeated in newspapers and made him quite well known. Fairchild and Meyer corresponded as dear friends until death.

Charles Marlatt

In every office or career there are challenges of personality and ambition. It is my feeling that working in Washington DC with politicians and bureaucrats while enduring regular negotiations for the budget of the department to do a better job of spreading the new plants and seeds around

the country, Fairchild ran into many more difficult situations than he felt like recording. His most prominent nemesis that he mentions with frustration, but not too much vitriol is Charles Marlatt, a boyhood friend from Kansas. Marlatt was a few years older and a insect expert, not a plant expert. He was Fairchild's best man at his wedding as the two first choices were out of the country. Marlatt had some sour grapes from the beginning of their careers because of the early jobs Fairchild got through friends and family. After Fairchild married the Bell Telephone heiress, Marlatt was not able to afford to get married for another four years. He honeymooned in China to save money while doing Department of Agriculture work and his new bride got sick and died in China. That was rotten luck. All the publicity of Frank Meyer's death defying adventures in China inspired him to look very closely at what bugs and vermin these Chinese plants were introducing into American soil. Thus began a long, loud, public campaign to close the country to Immigrants and immigrant plants. Marlatt had seeds and plants that had taken years of exploration work to find and carefully package for travel overseas, burned as soon as soon as it was unloaded in the US. He even named a new evil Chinese insect after Frank Meyer.

Fairchild's Spectacular Successes

There are three steps to introducing new foods: first is finding and bringing a food or plant across the ocean. The second is getting farmers to plant it and then the consumers to like it.

Although Fairchild had tasted many avocados, perhaps 200 varieties, a black skinned one with a buttery consistency from Chile was superior to varieties in other countries. It was a huge success for CA farmers but through an unlikely series of events, a man in CA filed a patent for Fairchild's avocado naming it Haas after himself.

Examples of other plants that established a solid popularity with farmers and the public in the US include:

Kale from coast of Austria-Hungary —we call Croatia today

Hops from Bavaria —Fairchild became fond of beer

Red Seedless Grapes from Italy

Dates from Iraq

Alfalfa from the Andes

Wheat from Spain

Nectarines from Afghanistan

Papayas from Ceylon

Peaches from China

Flowering Cherry trees from Japan that ended up beautifying WA DC, which needed it

Mangos from Vietnam

Citron from Corsica

Pomegranate from Malta

Cotton from Egypt

Soybeans from Indonesia

Watermelon and avocados from Chile

Dwarf Pineapples from South Africa

Failures

Quinoa: Fairchild liked it and thought the Incas who made it the center of their diet were smart but it seemed like another grain and in 1898 there was no equipment to measure the nutritional content to learn it was a protein with all nine amino acids the human body can't produce. Quinoa wasn't labeled a superfood until 2005.

Cashew nuts: Farmers thought they were too much trouble and took too much water.

Mangosteens: from Java, Indonesia, Fairchild's favorite fruit he called "the queen of tropical fruits with a beautiful white pulp, more delicate than a plum, and a flavor indescribably delicate and delicious." (Pg 190 TFE) and a huge personal disappointment when it flopped with the public.

Chayote: the vegetable pear was uninteresting to farmers and consumers

Dasheen: Is a root vegetable from SE Asia with high nutritional value that became a staple in the Pacific Islands, also known as Taro. It also grows well in the Caribbean.

The Fairchild Legacy

There are several pieces of property that were acquired by friends who put them together and named them the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden to honor him. His homestead, also designed by WLP in Coconut Grove in the Miami area, called the Kampong, Malaysian for village, is now one of the five gardens of the National Tropical Botanical Garden Organization. Although Fairchild said it didn't matter to him what happened to his property after he died because he had enjoyed it in life, the fact that it is alive and prospering 70-odd years after his death is a comment on the quality of the property. A large staff is employed to run the business of plant studies and tourist activities. The laboratory and the origin plants are an important resource for horticulturists around the world trying to correct new diseases or improve their stock. The house is used for offices and storage of Fairchild's correspondence. Thousands of tourists, school kids and gardeners wander, take guided tours, take courses in botany and enjoy the fabulous variety of tropical plants in the landscape. Weddings and parties in these beautiful settings with a view of Biscayne Bay are popular.

You can learn more on the web site of the NTBG.org and watch YouTube videos of garden tours.

Daniel Stone—Author of The Food Explorer

He's young and has a short resume. His website, which is mostly about this book, says he's worked as a journalist, published articles in a few magazines and had a job at National Geographic magazine (which used to be considered the family mouthpiece of the A. G. Bells). Stone has written one other book on the topic of shipwrecks, the men who obsess about finding them and how the ships disintegrate on the bottom of the sea. I thoroughly enjoyed the story which moves quickly. The book is not laden with cumbersome scientific terms. I hope some of you here today will be inspired by my overview of David Fairchild and decide to read the book to learn more. I hope the Food Explorer will launch the author's career.

What I Like Most about David Fairchild

He lived an adventure story set around the globe before all the cultures became homogenized by commerce. Maybe Fairchild got the last glimpse of the old world before it became the modern world. He was filled with wonder at everything he saw. I cringe when I see a McDonalds in Paris littering the famous cityscape with the golden arches and helping the

French people, who have a fine cuisine of their own, to eat bad American food that will ultimately ruin their health. I love the old photographs Fairchild took everywhere he went; his color drawings of fruits are quite good and I admire his clear descriptions of the people who lived in these faraway places. Occasionally, Fairchild was the first American man the locals had seen. Most of the people he met seem genuinely interested in helping him find whatever he was looking for even when they didn't speak the same language. Perhaps he just came across as trustworthy. He entered into lifelong correspondence with many of the people he met while traveling. Corresponding is a dying or dead art. And I think the world is suffering without it. It requires you to stop and think through an issue and have the patience to continue on with the thread of the conversation in progress.

Fairchild makes a great hero on the side of honesty, good manners, and dedication to his enterprise to help the agricultural industry. He is endlessly curious about everything. That's appealing to readers who are looking for a wholesome story that's uplifting. For the armchair traveler, it's a historical experience no one can buy today. You don't have to be a

botanist or a gardener to enjoy the tale of the expeditions. Most readers will fall for Fairchild leading the way and follow him anywhere.

It has been a pleasure talking to you today. Thank you so much for coming. I'd like to ask you a few questions.

Who has visited the Kampong? Who has visited Fairchild Gardens?

Who didn't know that colorful foods were fairly new to our american diet?