



United States Department of Agriculture

CAROLINE DORMON

The South's Exceptional
Forest Conservationist and Naturalist



James P. Barnett and Sarah M. Troncale

AUTHORS

James P. Barnett, Retired Chief Silviculturist and Emeritus Scientist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Pineville, LA, 71360.

Sarah M. Troncale, Science Teacher, Rapides Parish School System, Alexandria, LA, 71302.

PHOTO CREDITS

Front and back covers: Carrie Dormon at Briarwood with her dog. (photos from Northwestern State University Archives)

Unless otherwise noted, the photographs are from the collections of the U.S. Forest Service. Those cited as “Northwestern State University CGHRC” are from the Caroline Dormon Collection, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, LA. Those cited as “Library of Congress Archives” are from the Briarwood: The Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve collection, Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/la0496/>].

The uncaptioned decorative illustrations are all by Carrie Dormon from her books *Flowers Native to the Deep South*, *Natives Preferred*, and *Bird Talk*.

DISCLAIMER

The use of trade or firm names in this publication is for reader information and does not imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture of any product or service.

April 2018



Forest Service
Research & Development
Southern Research Station
General Technical Report SRS-231



Southern Research Station
200 W.T. Weaver Blvd.
Asheville, NC 28804
www.srs.fs.usda.gov

CAROLINE DORMON

**The South's Exceptional
Forest Conservationist and Naturalist**

James P. Barnett and Sarah M. Troncale



ABSTRACT

Caroline C. “Carrie” Dormon was a renowned forest conservationist and one of the most influential American naturalists of the early 20th century. In an era when women had no role in forestry, she led the effort to establish the Kisatchie National Forest, developed forestry education materials for schools, and promoted support for forestry among civic and community leaders. In addition to her passion for forestry, Carrie advocated education and support for indigenous peoples, wrote important books and articles on native plants, promoted highway and landscape beautification using native plants, cultivated and hybridized native irises, and led the establishment of a State arboretum.

Keywords: American Indians, Briarwood, forest conservation, forestry education, iris hybridization, Kisatchie National Forest, longleaf pine, Louisiana State Arboretum, native plants.

HOW TO CITE THIS PUBLICATION:

Barnett, James P.; Troncale, Sarah M. 2018. Caroline Dormon: the South’s exceptional forest conservationist and naturalist. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-231. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 44 p.

CONTENTS

I	PREFACE
2	OVERVIEW
2	The Dormon Family
5	Education and Teaching
6	The Role of Carrie's Sister Virginia and their Return to Briarwood
9	Involvement with Artists at the Melrose Plantation
11	FOREST CONSERVATION
11	Advocacy for Forest Preservation
12	Advocacy for State Parks and Transition to Statewide Education
14	Forestry's First Woman Education Specialist
17	Recognition for Forestry Accomplishments
20	AMERICAN INDIANS
21	Pottery and Basket Artwork
23	De Soto Expedition Commission
25	NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS
25	Louisiana Iris Study and Hybridization
27	Botanical Inspirations and Publications
29	Carrie's Love for Birds
31	IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC SPACES
31	Highway Beautification Program
32	Landscaping Grounds of State Facilities
35	Louisiana State Arboretum
36	CARRIE'S LIFE
37	Her "Gift of the Wild Things"
37	Her Knowledge
39	Her Financial Struggles
40	Her Health and End of Life
42	FITTING MONUMENTS
44	REFERENCES



PREFACE

AT A TIME WHEN FOREST MANAGEMENT, CONSERVATION, AND preservation were concepts new to Louisiana and the Nation, Caroline C. “Carrie” Dormon made significant advancements in these fields. Her pioneering forestry and conservation education programs in Louisiana schools and her appreciation and protection of the State’s native plants and animals are among the many outstanding achievements of this multi-faceted woman.

After a decade of active promotion of the preservation of Louisiana lands, Carrie’s efforts finally brought Louisiana its only national forest and gave her the title “Mother of Kisatchie.” Carrie was one of the first women in the Nation to be employed in the field of forestry and the first person to serve as the Education Specialist for public schools for the Division of Forestry, Louisiana Department of Conservation.

As a respected authority on American Indians in the Southern United States, Carrie served as the Louisiana representative to the De Soto Commission appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935. She also advised on various archeological and historical preservation projects and documented many aspects of American Indian culture, language, and lore that were rapidly being stifled by the influences and pressures of the 20th century.

Throughout her life, Carrie generously shared her knowledge, talents, and insights related to natural science with both experts and the public through the avenues of literature, art, and educational programs. She addressed the need for practical and scientifically accurate information on the area’s plants, trees, and birds by writing and illustrating numerous publications and by enthusiastically lecturing across Louisiana.

From early childhood until her death at the age of 83, Carrie thoroughly immersed herself in her surroundings and gained a unique and profound understanding of nature. As was aptly noted by her biographer, “Caroline Dormon lived the most extraordinary life through the most ordinary of things – birds, flowers, trees, people” (Johnson 1990). This document explores the origins, development, and ultimate intimacy of her lifelong relationship with nature.



Throughout her life, Carrie generously shared her knowledge, talents, and insights related to natural science with both experts and the public through the avenues of literature, art, and educational programs.



OVERVIEW

IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, THE PRACTICE OF FORESTRY IN America was in its infancy. Its proponents were strong-willed men, and there were very few opportunities for women in the profession. It would be many decades before women would become involved to any significant degree. Yet, it was in this environment where Caroline C. “Carrie” Dormon became involved and aggressively pursued her interests.

Although a quiet and unassuming individual, Carrie never shied away from advancing her conservation views. As a pioneer conservationist, forester, botanist, illustrator, and native plant enthusiast, Carrie has been recognized as one of the eight individuals who have significantly influenced America’s natural history (Brown 2017). How and why this woman so significantly influenced forest conservation and many other areas of natural science in the South is a remarkable story that should be more widely known and appreciated.



It was the forested Briarwood site that Carrie would long regard as her beloved home.



The Dormon Family

CARRIE DORMON WAS BORN ON JULY 19, 1888, TO JAMES Alexander Dormon and Caroline Trotti Dormon at the family’s summer home, “Briarwood.” Briarwood is located on plantation land near Saline in northern Louisiana that belonged to Carrie’s grandfather and was named after his home in South Carolina. The Dormons cherished their traditional six-week vacation every year at Briarwood, which offered the family a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the serenity of the forest and wildlife of the area. Most of the year, the Dormons resided in the town of Arcadia in Bienville Parish. Yet, it was the forested Briarwood site that Carrie would long regard as her beloved home (Troncale 2016).

Carrie was blessed to have an exceptional family. Her mother Caroline emphasized reading and studying, enjoyed literature, wrote poems and stories, and even published a novel entitled *Under the Magnolias* (Dormon 1902). Caroline had a good knowledge of flora, maintained a formal rose garden, and taught her children to garden and to identify birds by their songs. According to Carrie’s biographer, Fran Holman Johnson, “Carrie admired her mother’s good sense and vivid personality” (Johnson

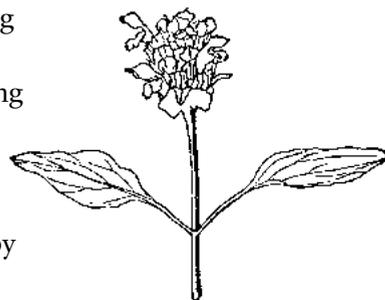


1990). Caroline instilled in her daughter Carrie a sensibleness and disinterest in material things as well as a love of writing. A precocious child, Carrie could write at age three and was a voracious reader throughout her entire life (Haag 2002).

Carrie's father James was a well-respected lawyer and was reputed have been one of the ablest men of the Louisiana Bar. He supported his family in comfort and gave them all a good education. He also insisted that all of his eight children, including daughters Virginia and Carrie, attend college.

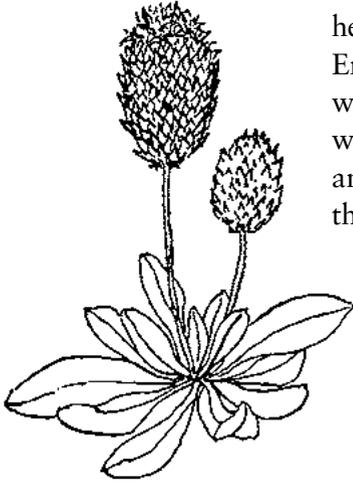
James trained his children in the ways of a naturalist, teaching them to appreciate nature at an early age. During camping trips into the woods, he would point out all sorts of animals, flowers, and trees and gave the children both the scientific and common names. If he did not know a name, they would find it by researching the unknown plant or animal in their home library.

Entrance gate to Briarwood, used for summer excursions for the Dormon family and later as home for Carrie and Virginia. (photo from Library of Congress Archives)



James never tired in his study of nature, and he encouraged his children's interest in the subject.

During their vacations, Carrie's parents encouraged her and her siblings to explore the Kisatchie Wold ("wold" is an old English term for a forest or a high, rolling, open countryside), where they developed a deep, abiding connection to the natural world. The area of the Kisatchie Wold begins east of Natchitoches and runs westward to the eastern regions of Texas. Carrie wrote that (U.S. DOI National Park Service 2003):

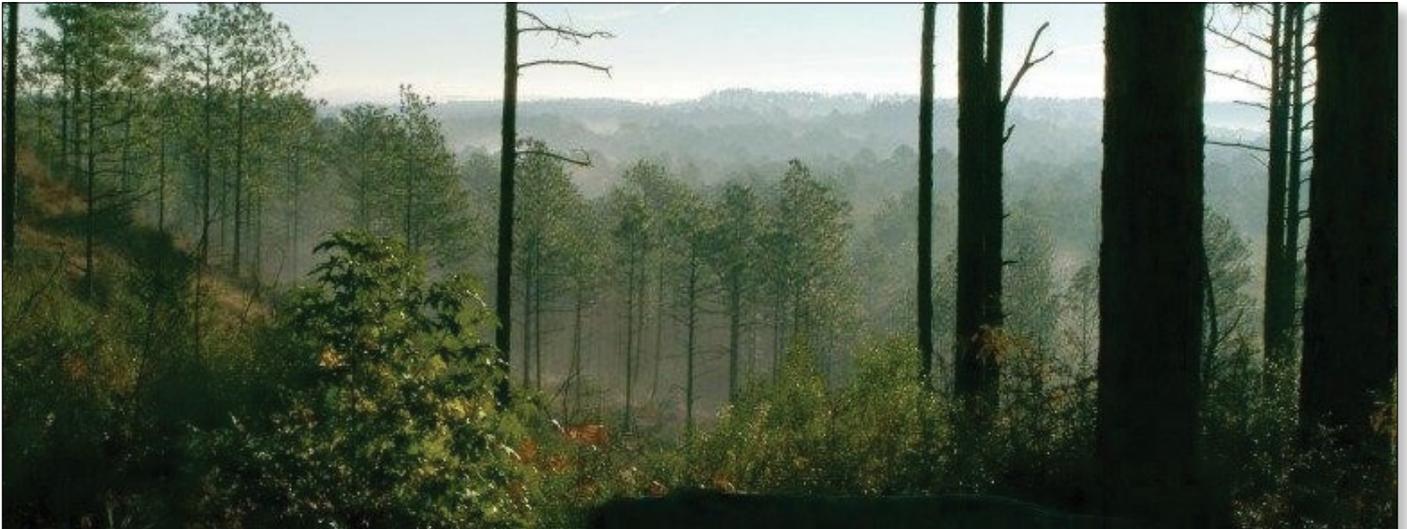


...it was a range of great sand hills, with occasional rugged out-cropping of grey sandstone. The creeks—and the streams are many—are swift, clear and beautiful, tumbling over rocks in cascades and small falls, and forming long banks of snow-white sand. Along the streams there is a very fine and varied growth of hardwoods (which have not yet been cut for lumber). There are great springs gushing out of the rocks, some with mineral properties.

To Carrie, the Kisatchie Wold was also special because it was covered with magnificent longleaf pines (*Pinus palustris*).

The Dormon children thoroughly explored their natural surroundings and were considered *wild* by friends and neighbors. They built treehouses, played in the creeks, and spent hours spying on birds to see where they were carrying their nest-building materials. Carrie's brother Ben "...was known to have the most wonderful bird-egg collection... . Securing the eggs

The Kisatchie Wold—longleaf pine forests in the rolling hills and ravines of northwest Louisiana. Much of it is now part of the Kisatchie National Forest. (photo from Library of Congress Archives)



required ingenious equipment and unusual climbing ability. To reach nests... which were at the end of long limbs, the children constructed rope swings. Carrie was held in high esteem by her brothers because of her climbing ability.”

Once, Carrie found a nest of blue-grey gnatcatcher eggs, a type her brother did not have in his collection at that time, so she carefully retrieved one highly desired egg. Holding the egg in her mouth to keep both hands free to maneuver, she climbed down the tree. Carrie was so excited about her find that “she ran all the way home” to show her brothers the prized egg (Johnson 1990). Such were the adventures of egg collecting as experienced by the Dormon children.

Education and Teaching

CARRIE HAPPILY LIVED AS A TOMBOY, EXPLORING THE OUTDOORS until the age of 16 when she went to Judson, a private college in Marion, AL. Her lack of interest in social amenities concerned her father, and he determined to place her on something resembling a more traditional path in life (Haag 2002). At first, Carrie felt uncomfortable among her Judson schoolmates, but later she gained more self-confidence and later recalled, “I did not have to be pretty, I did not have to have beautiful clothes! I could just be myself” (Johnson 1990). A consummate student, she would question, observe, research, and explore her subject matter.

Both her teachers and her classmates recognized her thorough knowledge and awareness of the natural world (Johnson 1990). In a walk with her science teacher, Carrie heard a bird sing and commented “Isn’t that wren sweet?” The teacher asked where the wren was because she had not seen it. Carrie explained that she had recognized the bird by its song. The teacher was impressed and asked to be taught (Johnson 1990).

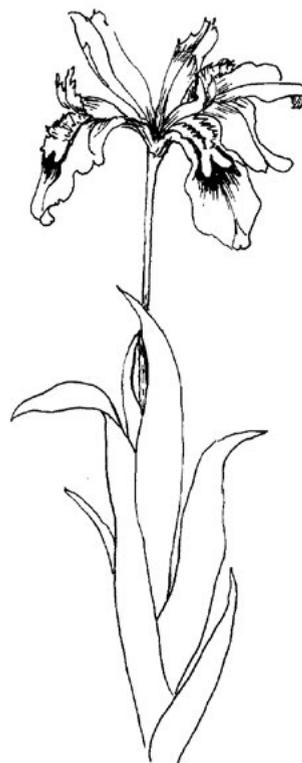
Despite her scientific aptitude, Carrie’s formal education focused on literature and art. Graduating from Judson in 1907, she earned a teaching certificate and taught primary classes and, later, high school singing and art. Her students recall her leading field trips and nature outings. But, society’s norms seemed empty to Carrie, and much of what she learned at Judson remained a veneer. Later, she noted, “I still belonged to the wild” (Johnson 1990). A friend described Carrie as a young woman as (Snell 1972):

...tall and sinewy—all whipcord and piano wire—with fresh earth on her hands and apron. There would be a

.....

The Dormon children thoroughly explored their natural surroundings and were considered *wild* by friends and neighbors.

.....





Carrie early in her career wearing her customary wide-brimmed hat. (photo from Library of Congress Archives)



Carrie's teachers and classmates recognized her thorough knowledge and awareness of the natural world.



cocklebur or two caught on the hem of her skirt, and bits of leaves and pine needles or wisps of cobwebs and cocoons stuck to her shoulders. Her complexion was fair. Her hair—braided into a crown or pulled back severely into a bun—was the color of straw. When you were closer you could see that her eyes were the green of chlorophyll and had a quickness about them, like the eyes of a squirrel, conditioned to detect the barest flicker of movement... .

Her happiest hours during these years were spent in the woods, where she discovered for the first time such priceless treasures as yellow violets, bloodroot, and hepatica (Haag 2002).

Carrie frequently suffered from flu, arthritis, and heart problems. Because of her poor health, she petitioned the superintendent to assign her to a school system in the nearby piney woods instead of Lake Arthur in south Louisiana where she had been teaching (Troncale 2016). She was assigned to the rural Kisatchie School closer to Briarwood. She boarded with a family near the school and made the 20-mile trip from her home at Briarwood in a wagon pulled by stout mules. On these commutes from home to boarding house, Carrie noticed more than dirt roads: “Over the rolling hills we wound, through mile after mile of majestic longleaf pines. I was in heaven” (Johnson 1990).

The Role of Carrie's Sister Virginia and their Return to Briarwood

IN 1918, CARRIE SUCCUMBED TO THE PRIMAL ATTRACTION OF the pine forest of her birth and retired to private life. Chronic ill health and an unconventional upbringing made it difficult for her to hold a standard wage-paying job (Lee 2011). Her parents, too, had passed away. Her mother had died about the same time Carrie graduated from college and her father had died about two years later. The family home in Arcadia burned soon after James Dormon's death; also lost in this fire was the extraordinary library the family had inherited from Carrie's grandfather (Dormon 1935).

The year before her “retirement,” in 1917, Carrie and her sister Virginia Dormon Miller had built a cabin at Briarwood from timber that Carrie had hand-selected. Only 30 years old, Carrie planned to “put into usable form the store of information which I had been gathering all my life.” There her interest in native plants thrived. Carrie never married, devoting her life to



the preservation of the natural world and traditional cultures around her. She once stated regarding marriage, “I didn’t want any old man digging in my flower garden.” “One boy was very much in love with me. He took a piece of grass and measured my finger and the fool went out and bought a ring and wanted to put it on me. I said, ‘No!’ I wasn’t in love with him” (Burns 1969).

When Virginia, who was 12 years older than Carrie, had married, Carrie had gone along on the honeymoon trip. The marriage did not last long. The Dormon women were intelligent, independent, and strong-willed, so it is understandable that marriage for them did not fit the norm of the time. After her marriage failed, Virginia moved to Briarwood and supported Carrie by doing most of the housework and bookkeeping since Carrie preferred to be outside. Virginia also provided support and loyalty. She accompanied Carrie to many of her lectures and often drove for her.

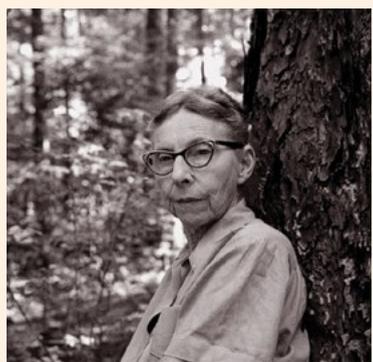
Virginia, who Carrie called “Sister,” held the reputation of being one of Louisiana’s outstanding teachers. She also spent three years as a pioneer Home Demonstration Agent in Natchitoches Parish (Miller 1944). Virginia was reported to have written

A second cabin built at Briarwood in the 1950s served as Carrie’s home until the end of her life. In the spring, she would take the window screens off so wrens could build nests inside. (photo from Library of Congress Archives)



Carrie succumbed to the primal attraction of the pine forest of her birth and retired to private life.





TOP: Carrie in a reflective pose near her home on the Briarwood estate.

BOTTOM: Carrie (right) with her sister Virginia Dormon Miller. Virginia was a gifted writer and speaker. (both photos from Northwestern State University CGHRC)



The Dormon sisters were described as the “smartest two women in the state” by one friend.



numerous historical sketches and other articles for the newspapers and was a popular speaker (Miller 1944).

The Dormon sisters were described as the “smartest two women in the state” by one friend. Their knowledge ranged from subjects such as politics and current events to the health and care of cattle (Johnson 1990). Both had no hesitancy in expressing their political disagreements with the Huey Long family, which caused them difficulties. Both later lost jobs following Long’s election as Governor (Dormon 1935).

To help provide financial resources, Virginia practiced some farming at Briarwood. Her efforts focused on an orchard and vegetable garden. She also raised chickens and a cow; all were kept close to the house. Although a teacher by training, Virginia was also a home extension agent and was willing to try commercial ventures. She ran the Briarwood Camp for Girls in the early 1930s and briefly sold canned vegetables under a Briarwood label. She collaborated with her sister-in-law Ruth Dormon in a business selling native and cultivated plants (U.S. DOI National Park Service 2003). Years later, Carrie was greatly affected by Virginia’s poor health following a car accident. Virginia died in 1954 because of her injuries (Johnson 1990).

Briarwood became a sanctuary for Carrie. Here she could focus on her delight—her natural surroundings. Burns (1981) described her as:

...a living legend in the early decades of this century [20th] and an internationally recognized botanist, taxonomist, author, and artist... often pictured as a recluse, preferring her rustic log cabin deep in the forest to the bustle of civilization. There in the quiet of her woods she observed and protected her beloved wildflowers, trees, and wildlife, recording them with her artist’s skills.

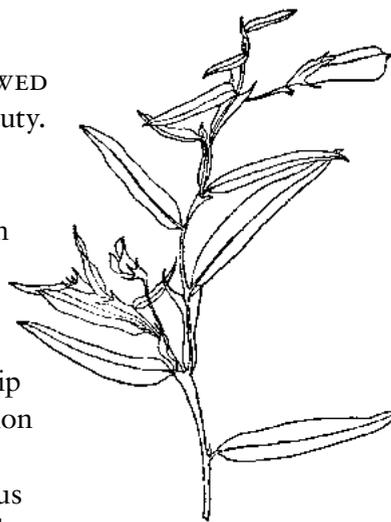
Involvement with Artists at the Melrose Plantation

CARRIE CHOSE NOT TO PURSUE A FORMAL CAREER BUT FOLLOWED her passionate desire to study, share, and preserve nature's beauty. She did, however, enjoy visits to the Melrose Plantation near Natchitoches where she met with notable artists and painted native plants. Cammie Henry, owner of the Melrose Plantation and Carrie's good friend, was a patron of the arts, and the plantation became a retreat for visiting artists and a center for creativity during a period of artistic revival known as the 'Southern Renaissance.' Carrie developed a long-time friendship with artists and writers such as Lyle Saxon and Francois Mignon (Johnson 1990).

When occupied with painting, Carrie would lose any focus on time. Mignon told the story of Carrie's visit to Melrose when she found some irises in bloom and decided to stay a day or two to capture them with paint and brush. Cammie told friends (Johnson 1990):

I never saw anyone so intent on their work... . Unmindful of food or raiment, she came in to dinner only when summoned, and at night after she had gone to bed exhausted, I would gather up her clothes, ... have them laundered during the night and laid them out fresh and tidy on Carrie's chair before she got up in the morning. Carrie was utterly oblivious to these nocturnal efforts, but after a week, actually it was eleven days, she remarked I simply must go back to Briarwood today and get me some fresh clothes since I haven't changed these during the whole past week.

Cammie often scolded Carrie for not concentrating on one money-making prospect, admonishing Carrie for being "so scattered brain" (Johnson 1990). Cammie was sure Carrie could profit nicely from her paintings if she would only focus her efforts as an artist and not involve herself with so many other endeavors. Yet Carrie was never satisfied to limit herself to one field—forestry, botany, horticulture, conservation, ornithology, archeology, ethnology, literature, art, education, or preservation. She wanted to do it all, and she did! Constantly working, she kept herself "busy as a bee in a tar bucket" (Johnson 1990). One frequent visitor recalled:



.....
 Carrie was never satisfied to limit herself to one field. She wanted to do it all, and she did!



Carrie sketching a native plant at the Melrose Plantation. (photo from Northwestern State University CGHRC)

.....
Carrie chose not to pursue a formal career but followed her passionate desire to study, share, and preserve nature's beauty.

.....

The overpowering list of Caroline's accomplishments becomes more believable if you'd ever heard her lament over the shortness of time! ... She was so busy, there simply wasn't enough time to run into town for her mail except occasionally, and even then, the precious time couldn't be spared for appearance, so more than likely, she'd simply [go] in black rubber boots and whatever garment that was handy when she'd run out at dawn to sketch the latest arrival to her bird sanctuary.

There were many causes and issues that drove Carrie's intense interests and work, but a few of the more significant ones will be discussed in the following sections. One of her great passions was to preserve a portion of the virgin longleaf pine forests in northwestern Louisiana.



FOREST CONSERVATION

LUMBERING BECAME ONE OF THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES THAT drove the economic recovery of the South following the Civil War (Barnett and Carter 2017). The early 20th century was the heyday of lumbering in Louisiana and the South, with the vast virgin longleaf pine forests being cut at an unbelievable rate.

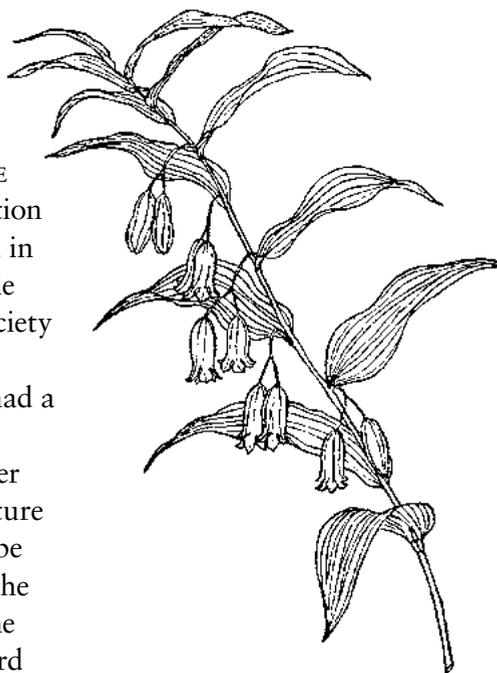
As the longleaf pine forests of the Kisatchie Wold through which Carrie had driven her wagon to teach school were threatened by lumbering, she was “at once impressed with the idea that here was the ideal location for a national forest, and for a state park, the latter to preserve some of the unusual beauty spots.” The sparsely populated countryside, Carrie insisted, would lend itself to hosting a national forest, as the “land will grow pine trees” but little else (U.S. DOI National Park Service 2003). Immediately she began exploring the region and the idea was born: “all this beauty must be preserved for future generations to enjoy.”

Advocacy for Forest Preservation

CARRIE BEGAN TO LOBBY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE parks, for an arboretum in Louisiana, and for Federal protection of the longleaf pine forests. Moreover, she made herself heard in political circles, despite the gender barriers of that time. Carrie was an educated woman, but she was neither a traditional society lady of the early 20th century nor one whose money inspired acceptance of her cause. She gained recognition because she had a passion for protecting the virgin forests.

Determined to save some of these forests, she and her sister traveled in a Model T Ford identifying possible areas for a future national forest or State park. When Carrie read there was to be a Southern Forestry Congress held in New Orleans in 1918, she attended and proposed preservation of some of the forests. She made a positive impression on the foresters and soon afterward was invited to attend a forestry meeting in Jackson, MS, where she met men like Henry Hardtner, a lumberman advocating reforestation; R.D. Forbes, Louisiana's first State Forester; M.L. Alexander, Louisiana's Commissioner of Conservation; and Colonel William Greeley, the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. They shared Carrie's enthusiasm, but indicated that the work

•••••
The early 20th century was the heyday of lumbering in Louisiana and the South, with the vast virgin longleaf pine forests being cut at an unbelievable rate.
•••••





TOP: Carrie met with Forest Service representatives and, while traveling through the area, suggested interesting places which she believed might be ideal for the establishment of a national forest or park. (photo from Northwestern State University CGHRC)

BOTTOM: Longleaf pines on lumber company land provide an impression of the beauty of the open forests that Carrie loved. (Barnett and Carter 2017).

ahead would try her perseverance. Carrie indicated, “I am not doing this in execution of a duty thrust upon me, but voluntarily, joyously, for the pure fun of it” (Johnson 1990).

Chief Greeley agreed to send his representative, W.W. Ashe, to meet Carrie in Natchitoches (Barnett and Troncale 2017). Ashe, a noted Forest Service botanist, was responsible for locating areas in the South that were possible locations for national forests. He became a friend and an advocate for Carrie’s proposal.

Greeley and Ashe determined, however, that Louisiana did not have an enabling act that would allow the Federal Government to purchase land in the State. Carrie became frustrated with the lack of progress because more and more of the virgin forests were being harvested. With the help of one of her lawyer brothers, she wrote an enabling act and sent it to Henry Hardtner, then a State Senator, who included it in a forestry bill he was presenting to the Louisiana legislature. It passed and became law.

It was several years, however, before the Federal Government provided funding to begin purchasing land for the national forest. The longtime U.S. Representative from Carrie’s district, James B. Aswell, did much to obtain congressional support for the creation of the national forest. He also became a strong supporter of Carrie’s efforts.

In 1929, the Federal Government purchased the first unit of national forest land in Louisiana, though most of the virgin timber had already been harvested. Because of her influence in the establishment of the national forest, Carrie was asked to suggest its name. She chose “Kisatchie”—an Indian word meaning “long cane” and also a name the Kichai Indians (part of the Caddoan Confederacy) of the area called themselves. Ashe promoted her choice to the appropriate officials in Washington, DC, and the Kisatchie National Forest came into existence.

Advocacy for State Parks and Transition to Statewide Education

CARRIE HAD BEGUN TO DRAW AND TO WRITE ABOUT NATURE because she *simply loved it*. Her personal studies of birds, flowers, and trees caught the attention of Mrs. A.F. Storm, President of the Louisiana Federation of Women’s Clubs. In 1919, Mrs. Storm persuaded Carrie to serve in the unsalaried position of State Chairman of Conservation and Forestry. In this capacity, Carrie gave countless lectures to clubs, schools, churches, Scouts, and other youth and adult groups. She learned that in working with

wives of influential men rather than appealing to the men directly, she was sometimes more successful in persuading others to join her cause.

Using her position, Carrie continued her efforts to obtain commitments that would lead to setting aside areas to become State parks. In one of her reports, she stated, “At the solicitation of the Louisiana Federation of Women’s Clubs, I am making this report of favorable sites for the location of state parks. I have practically covered the State in a car, making careful observations, and keeping in mind all factors that should be considered. Some of the features are natural beauty of the landscape, recreational possibilities, and historical or scientific value” (Dormon 1928). From this effort, Carrie published possible locations for parks for different regions throughout the State (Dormon 1931).

In a bold move, she sent letters to owners of major lumber companies both to educate them on the possibilities and benefits of parks and to solicit their support. The following paragraph from one of her letters (Dormon 1920) illustrates the nature of her appeal:

Our plan is for a park of a thousand acres, at least six hundred and forty of which shall be primeval longleaf pine forest. We want it located where at least one stream will flow through it... . Will you sell to the Federation such a piece of timbered land at an average of \$100.00 per acre? Of course, we realize this would be a great concession on your part; but this is in no way a business proposition. We are simply appealing to you, for the sake of all that is beautiful and uplifting in a rather sordid world, to do this thing for the people of the State in which you have vast land holdings... .

Although some lumbermen responded in a positive manner, apparently none committed their companies to provide land in response to her requests. However, Carrie’s deep interest in forestry continued to be noticed. In March 1920, R.D. Forbes, as Secretary of the Louisiana Forestry Association, wrote to Carrie to inform her that Henry Hardtner, now President of the Association, had appointed her to the Legislative Committee of the Louisiana Forestry Association (Johnson 1990). In that role, she planned for and promoted forestry education programs to the State school districts; her efforts were emulated in other States.



.....

Carrie learned that in working with wives of influential men rather than appealing to the men directly, she was sometimes more successful in persuading others to join her cause.

.....



As the State Chairman of Conservation and Forestry for Louisiana Federation of Women's Clubs, Carrie devised a competition for the Boys Reforestation Clubs of Louisiana. Colonel W.H. Sullivan of the Great Southern Lumber Company, whose idea sparked the Clubs, provided \$500.00 for funding prizes. The contestants, boys between 10 and 18, were to plant commercially valuable trees on one acre of land or scientifically care for three acres of tree seedlings, protecting the growth from fire, disease, and insects so that plans could be made for growth of a new forest (Johnson 1990). This competition publicized the value of planting and protecting trees.

Carrie also undertook an effort to increase funding for the Louisiana Department of Conservation's Division of Forestry. In 1928, she began a letter writing campaign to the Women's Club chapters throughout the State to express concern about inadequate funding for fire protection and production of seedlings for distribution. She asked chapter members to also express their concerns in letters to their State congressional representatives.

Forestry's First Woman Education Specialist

IN 1921, COMMISSIONER M.L. ALEXANDER OF THE LOUISIANA Department of Conservation was so impressed with Carrie's work that he found a place for her in the Division of Forestry. She was assigned to handle publicity as an Education Specialist. In this role, Carrie initiated an aggressive forestry education program in public schools. She developed a suitable tree-study program for the Superintendent of Education's evaluation and, with his approval, made copies of her program available for use in schools.

She also prepared Arbor Day programs, wrote tree books, conducted teacher workshops, prepared bulletins and art work, and established long-lasting programs in conservation across the State. Describing her assignment, she stated (Dormon 1935):

I got up all the forestry bulletins during my employment there. Also, posters, and programs for Arbor Day..., and made an outline of study to be used in public schools. Also, during this time, I wrote "Forest trees of Louisiana and how to know them." It was adopted as the standard text for Louisiana, and was used by the men of the U.S. Forest Service working in this region. I painted several posters in color. Also, made an oil painting of fire in southern pines which was adopted by the U.S. Forest

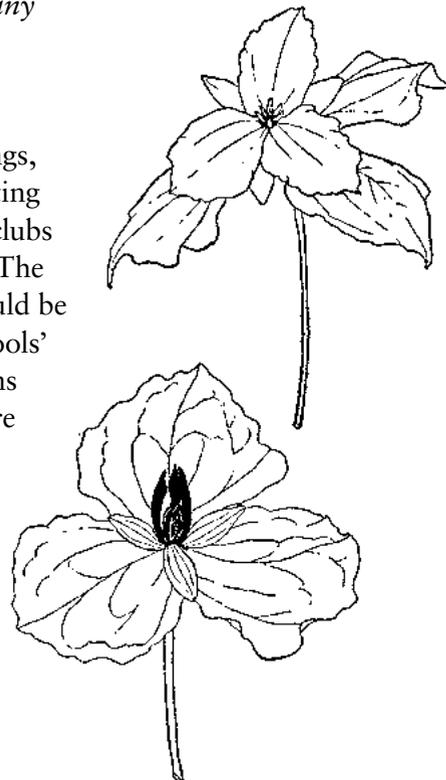


Carrie beside her favorite tree, a huge longleaf pine on her Briarwood estate. She named the tree "Grandpappy" because "my very soul lives in that beautiful old gnarled and weather-beaten tree. Oh, my, the tales he could tell of his rugged survival through the storms of life" (Johnson 1990).

Service as a design for a "scene-in-action-picture." Many of these scenes were made, and are still in display in different parts of the South... .

For Arbor Day programs, Carrie created a booklet with songs, poems, and dedicatory remarks to be used for the tree planting ceremonies. Booklets were printed and sent to schools and clubs that had received over 40,000 trees to plant on Arbor Day. The booklet offered a complete outline of forestry study that could be included in geography or civics classes. As a part of the schools' Arbor Day celebrations, Carrie devised a contest of questions whose answers were names of Louisiana trees. Students were allowed one minute to answer riddles such as:

- A game fish and something a tree produces
- Good to chew
- To languish, or long for
- A small body of water partially surrounded by land
- A long green vegetable
- Name of a flying machine
- Left when wood burns





Not the younger
A part of a cow's head and a timber used in building

[The answers to the tree riddles are: basswood, sweet gum, pine, bay, cucumber tree, plane tree, ash, elder, and hornbeam] (Johnson 1990).

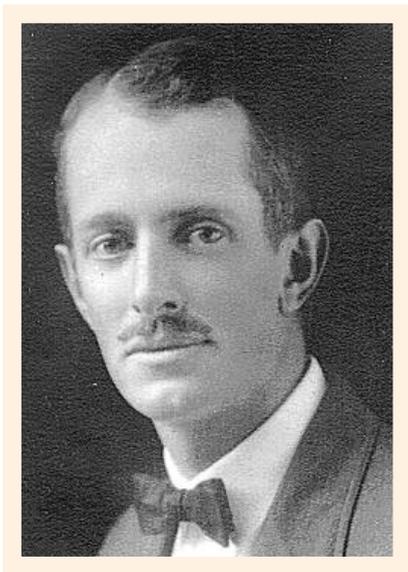
During this period, a favorite teaching method was called "blueprinting" in which the bright blue *blueprint* or *cyanotype* process was used to record herbarium specimens without benefit of a camera. The specimens were placed directly against sheets of paper impregnated with chemicals and exposed to light. Carrie had refined this method for learning about leaves, fruits, and flowers in a fashion simple enough for elementary school children.

Unfortunately, her position as Education Specialist ended after two years when she resigned in frustration. Her supervisor, State Forester V.H. Sonderegger, who had graduated from the Biltmore Forest School's one-year program, had difficulty supervising anyone with more education—particularly a woman—though *American Forests* magazine did recognize Carrie as the only woman employed in forestry in the United States in 1922 (Barnett and Troncale 2017).

Carrie's accomplishments were so impressive that she was asked to return to the position in 1927, after Sonderegger's term as State Forester ended. His replacement, W.R. Hine, rehired Carrie and asked her to develop a more comprehensive book on forest trees of Louisiana. Within a year, however, Huey Long was elected Governor and all the employees of the Division of Forestry were fired and replaced with generally less qualified individuals. Sonderegger returned as State Forester. Carrie continued to work on the book, *Forest Trees of Louisiana* (Dormon 1941), but on her own time.

Her work gained respect across the South. After she lost her Education Specialist position with the State of Louisiana, the State Forester of Mississippi offered her a similar position at a pay scale which she would establish. Carrie was also offered a position with the U.S. Forest Service under W.W. Ashe as a dendrologist (she could not be hired as a forester because she did not have a forestry degree) (U.S. DOI National Park Service 2003). She declined both offers because she did not want to leave Louisiana and her study of native plants.

R.D. Forbes, a graduate of Yale, was Louisiana's first State Forester and then became the Director of the Southern Forest Experiment Station.



R.D. Forbes, Louisiana's first State Forester and later first Director of the Forest Service Southern Forest Experiment Station, said of Carrie's teaching methods (Johnson 1990):

...she visited the schools of the state regularly and instructed the school teachers in the teaching of simple forestry lessons. Her methods were dictated by sound common sense... . She showed the teachers how forestry material could be used to illustrate and enliven other courses of study... . She did not ask teachers to teach forestry in addition to all their other work, but showed them how it might be woven into existing studies... .

Carrie's education efforts in forestry were remarkable. Her schedule had been filled with personal appearances, speeches, and writing. In one year as Education Specialist, she made over 26 talks to various organizations and schools. She stated, "I put our stereopticon and slides in a Ford car and I am ready to carry forestry in a visible form to every school" (Johnson 1990). She worked long hours, always looking ahead to reach more people and teaching more forestry and other nature subjects.

It would be decades before any Education Specialist even came close to achieving the things that she accomplished in only three years in the position.

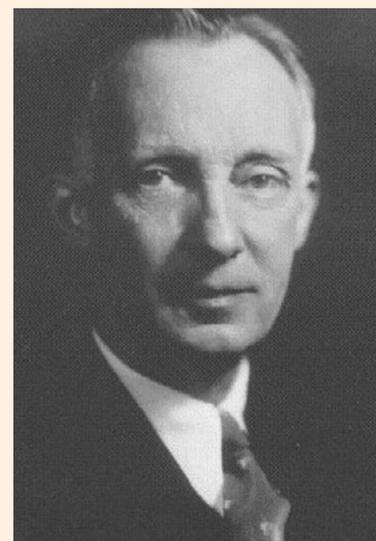
Recognition for Forestry Accomplishments

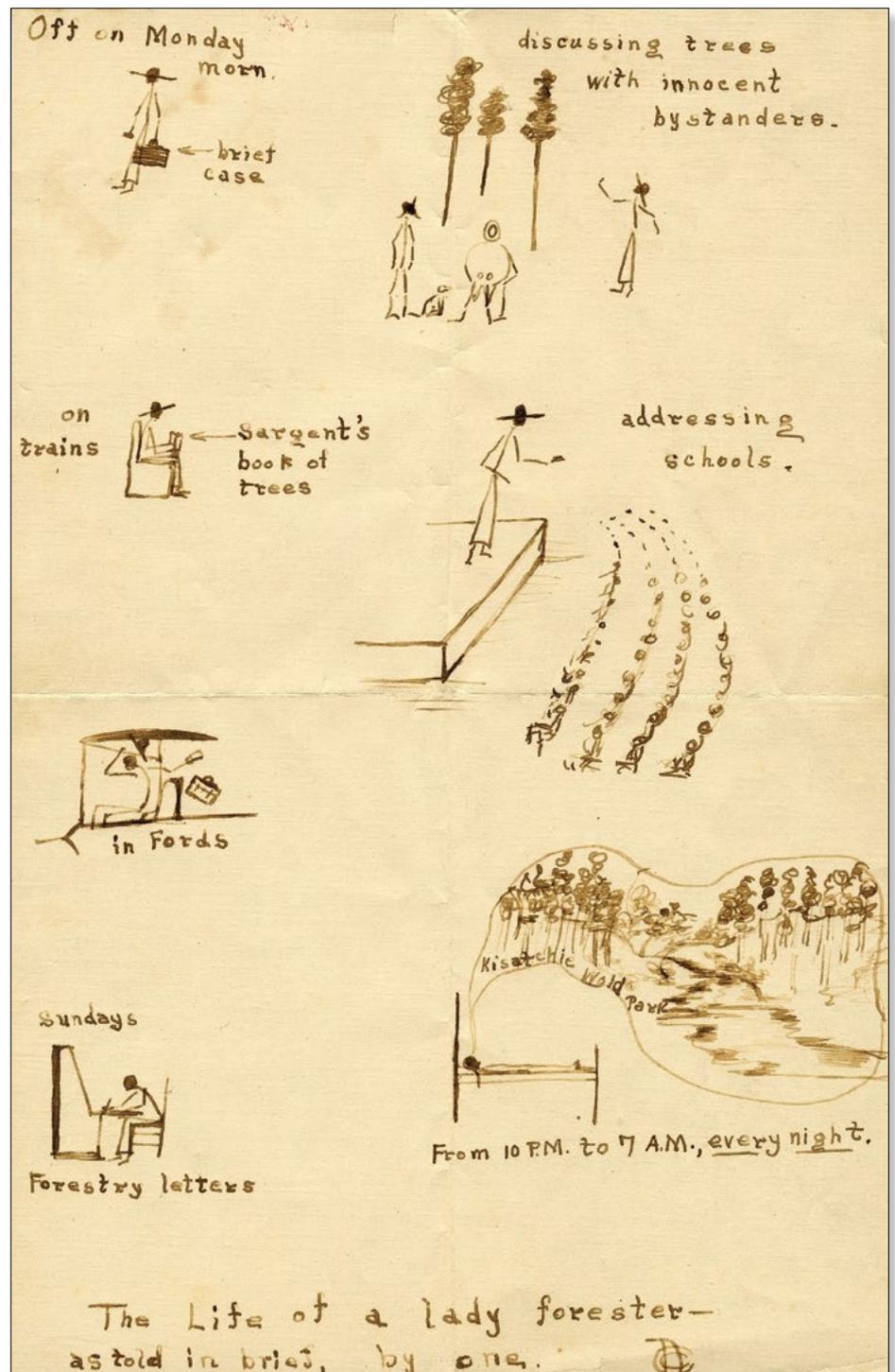
PROBABLY THE MOST IMPRESSIVE RECOGNITION CARRIE RECEIVED for her forestry efforts was election, in 1930, as an Associate Member of the Society of American Foresters (SAF). She was not eligible for full membership because she had no forestry training, and election into the SAF also required sponsorship from prominent foresters. Apparently, W.W. Ashe proposed her to be an Associate Member and organized the support needed for her election. Carrie had made a strong impression on Ashe, who learned vast amounts from her on their many trips to the Kisatchie Wold. Ashe's respect for Carrie found form when he named a new variety of hawthorn tree she had discovered *Craetaegus aestivales dormonae*.

Carrie described her reaction as the first woman elected to SAF membership (Dormon 1935):

.....
 It would be decades before any Education Specialist even came close to achieving the things that Carrie accomplished in only three years in the position.

W.W. Ashe, a noted forester and botanist, became a friend and supporter of Carrie. He died in 1932, soon after Carrie's election into the Society of American Foresters.





Carrie Dormon's depiction of her life as a forester. Note that she always is shown wearing a wide-brimmed hat and is always dreaming of creating a "Kisatchie Wold Park." (photo from Northwestern State University CGHRC)

...the forester who proposed me for membership sent me some of the letters he received from other foresters all over the Eastern United States about my work. It was the only time in my life I ever had the swell-head! No, truly, it astonished me so that I felt unusually meek and humble and undeserving. The trouble with most of my work is that very few persons know anything whatever about it.

She also stated:

Mr. Aswell [her U.S. Representative], did something once that I thought was so nice. He made a speech here at our high school—and how do you suppose he greeted the audience? By saying that he was “glad to be here, because this is where Caroline Dormon lives!” He gave a regular “testimonial”, and ended by saying that scarcely anyone knew now what I was doing; but that someday Louisiana would appreciate me and my work!! I could actually hear jaws dropping open about me among my sand-hill neighbors... .

Their attitude is delightful—I mean the neighbors—now. At first they strained their minds trying to understand what it was all about... a woman that spends all her time foolin’ with bushes and weeds... . At last they have just given me up as hopeless. They know I am crazy, but harmless, so anything I do is all right. A really happy state of affairs... .

Carrie’s forestry interests were not her only passions. As a naturalist, she was passionate about studying and learning about all her natural surroundings—the chief of these being native plants—but also American Indians, which began with her experiences as a young girl.

.....

As a naturalist, Carrie was passionate about studying and learning about all her natural surroundings—the chief of these being native plants—but also American Indians, which began with her experiences as a young girl.

.....



AMERICAN INDIANS

AS A CHILD, CARRIE AND HER TWO BROTHERS NEAREST HER AGE roamed the woods and lived much like Indians. Carrie recalled, “We were rather delicate children, of a nervous temperament; so... our parents made it possible for us to spend every moment we were outside the schoolroom in the woods... . And we didn’t play Indians, we were Indians” (Lee 2011). She and her brothers followed all Indian rules of woodcraft (Dormon 1937):

.....
 “Our parents made it possible for us to spend every moment we were outside the schoolroom in the woods... . And we didn’t play Indians, we were Indians.”

We even made it a tacitly accepted rule that we walk in single file in the woods—I, the female, bringing up the rear! Our parents obtained scientific bulletins on Indians available at the time, and we children pored over them by the hour. Our bows and arrows were correctly made. We spent days in the woods selecting a young ash from which to make a bow. My brothers would shoot arrows out of sight. We built houses in the woods (sometimes in the trees), as nearly as possible as aborigines would have done, cooking food, etc. We made pottery from native clay, burning it in kilns which we dug out of a bank. This pottery would hold water, and was useable... .

These early experiences had a lasting effect on Carrie. James Dorman had taught his offspring that *Indians are children of nature* and encouraged them to read scholarly and government publications exploring the history and diverse cultures of ancient peoples, as well as the myriad problems faced by a contemporary American Indian population in transition. While the available literature on Indians had mostly a western focus, Carrie made a special study of southern Indians. She read every bulletin on the subject, and combed every available old document and map for further information. She began to learn there were remnants of these tribes in the South, many of whom had retained much of their ancient lore.

To document this lore, Carrie began an effort to visit every old Indian she could find in Louisiana. From this effort (Johnson 1990), she:

...found a rich store of lore. I am happy I did this, for some of the old Indians are now dead. As I found facts which had never been published, I began corresponding with Dr. John R. Swanton of the Smithsonian. He came down, and together we visited some of the Indians again. Swanton has been numerous times since, and I have had the benefit of his wide knowledge of our primitive peoples.

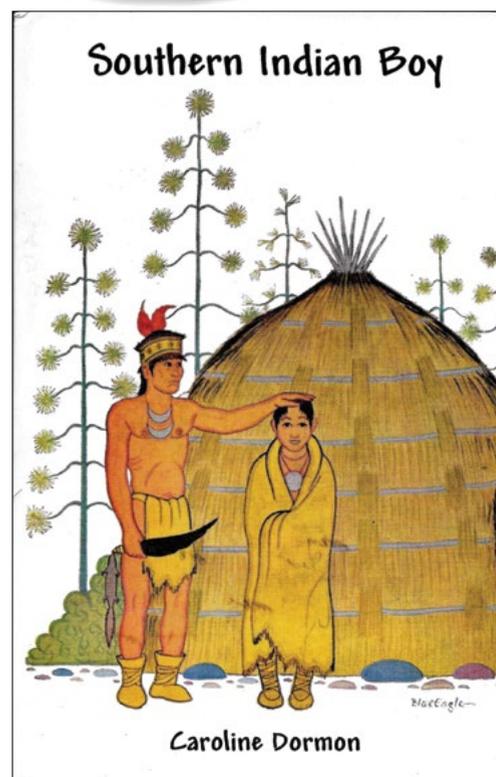
Carrie's interest in American Indians and conversations with tribal members led her to write a number of stories about Indian children. Two of these stories were published in her book *Southern Indian Boy* (Dormon 1967). Her intention was to publish more of these stories, but time and finances limited this effort.

Pottery and Basket Artwork

CARRIE FOUND THAT THE SOUTHERN INDIANS WERE DIFFERENT from tribes in other regions and poorly known, and she worked to better understand their culture. In her searches for different native plants, she would find potsherds with distinctive drawings of intricate patterns. As an artist, Carrie was intrigued by the pottery artwork and began to study how the designs could be related to specific tribes. She made drawings of these and compared them to material in collections. From this effort, she published an article in *Art and Archaeology* about Caddo Indian pottery.

Her efforts were further documented in a later article about Caddo Indian pottery designs (Dorman 1965b). The Caddo name was a contraction of a longer name meaning "the Chief's People." They were leaders of a confederacy of several tribes with each making their own laws and handling all internal affairs. Their pottery was characterized by intricate and beautiful designs, largely made up of spiral forms.

Carrie also had an interest in needle baskets. In 1931, she published an article on the baskets of south Louisiana's Chitimacha Tribe in *Holland's, the Magazine of the South*. [The magazine was published from 1876 to 1953. It was a women's magazine which published recipes, fashion tips, gardening tips, sewing patterns, non-fiction, and short fiction. It was known for being a vehicle for social change.]



TOP: A traditionally made pot with the type of spiral designs used in Caddo Indian pottery. (photo of "Bell Dance Red" courtesy of Jeri Redcorn, www.redcornpottery.com)

BOTTOM: The cover of a book Carrie wrote featuring Indian children's stories (Dormon 1969).



Beautiful baskets made from cane by the Chitimacha Tribe of south Louisiana. (photo from National Museum of the American Indian)

Carrie supported the Chitimacha with anthropological fieldwork and pressured the Office of Indian Affairs to build a school for the tribe. The school embraced the effort to revitalize indigenous crafts after a long period of government suppression of American Indian culture (Usner 2015). The Chitimacha Tribe is now known worldwide for their wonderful, expertly crafted baskets. This art has been passed down through tribal families for thousands of years.

No doubt Carrie would have published more of her vast collection of information related to American Indians were it not for two significant problems—a lack of time and of money. In a 1942 letter to the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in New York City, she pleaded for financial assistance to complete several projects related to southern Indians. Little financial help was forthcoming, however, and Carrie continued to struggle with publication issues.



De Soto Expedition Commission

HER INTEREST IN SOUTHERN INDIANS AND HER WORK WITH Dr. John Swanton of the Smithsonian Institution led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to appoint Carrie to the De Soto Expedition Commission. The Commission was created in 1935 to make a thorough study of the route of Hernando De Soto and his Spanish soldiers during their travels through the South in the mid-1500s.

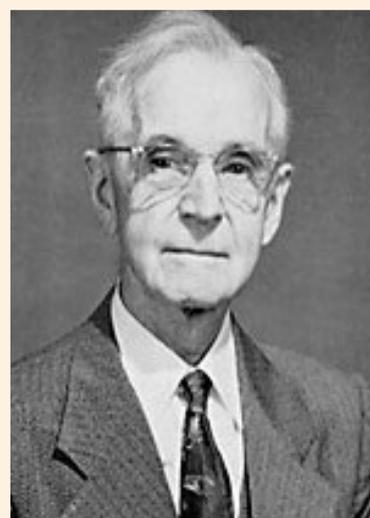
The Commission's goal was to report to Congress on their findings, and provide recommendations for a celebration on the 400th anniversary of De Soto's travel. Dr. Swanton chaired the Commission, which consisted of representatives from Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, and Louisiana. Carrie represented the State of Louisiana and was the only woman on the Commission.

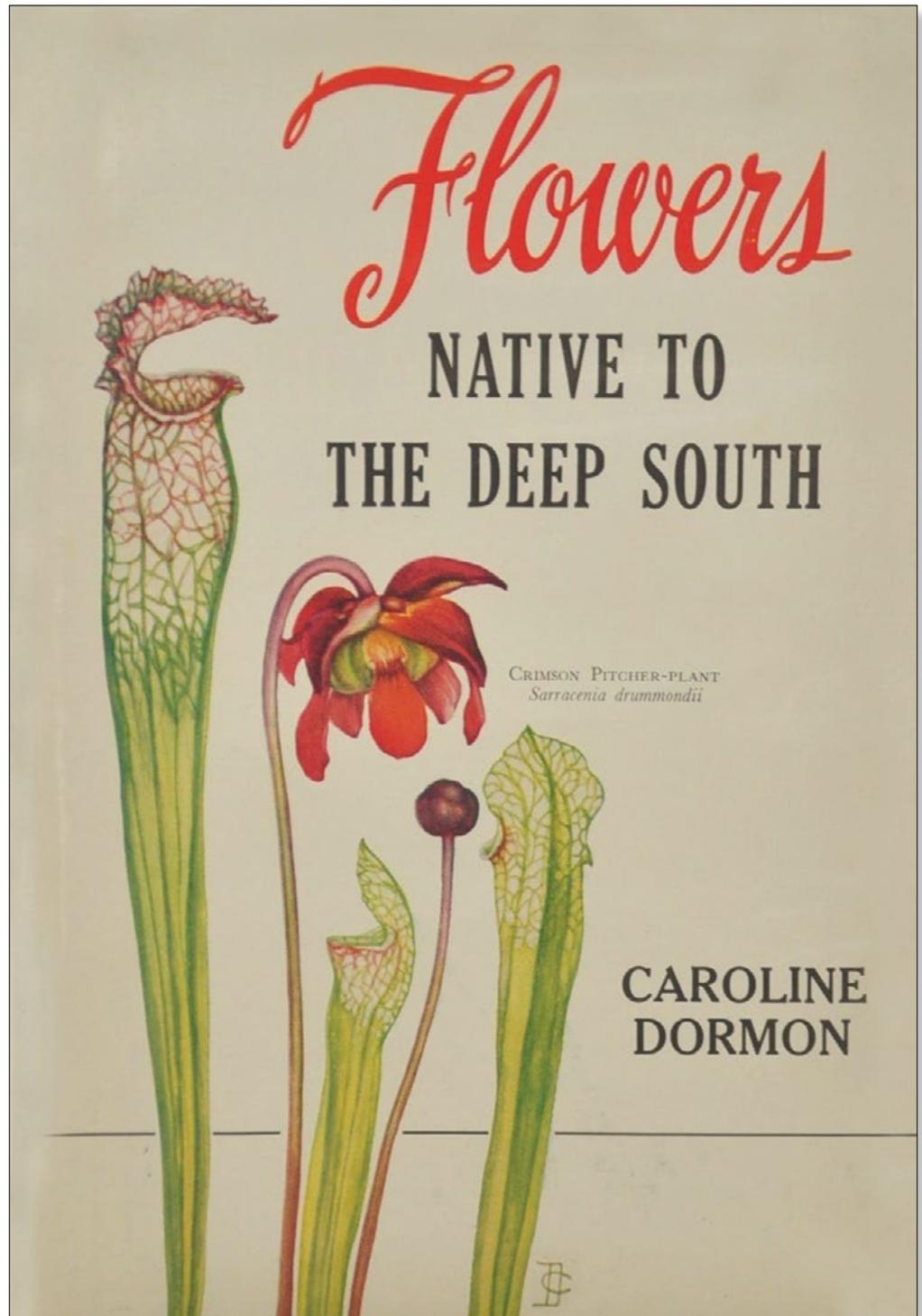
Unfortunately, the Commission was politically charged; its members had differing agendas, and localities vied for recognition as part of De Soto's route. Their findings remain controversial and were largely refuted in later 20th century examinations. One of the Commission's recommendations was to place dubious historical markers of what were thought to be significant events of De Soto and his men along the route. One such erroneous marker was placed along the highway at Jonesville, LA, where it remained for many decades. It was removed recently only because of highway construction.

At Dr. Swanton's urging, Carrie began writing the story of De Soto's march through the South. She stated that "as this is the 400th anniversary of De Soto's death, this is the psychological time for such a book. But, because I am forced to work for a livelihood, I have not had time to complete the book—nor several others on which I have been engaged." Carrie's financial situation remained a constant problem in completing many of her projects.

Letterhead on paper used for correspondence by members of the De Soto Commission. The Commission functioned between 1936 and 1939 during the Great Depression—400 years after De Soto's death.

Dr. John R. Swanton of the Smithsonian Institution, an expert on southern Indians, became Carrie's good friend and advocate.





Carrie's painting on the cover of *Flowers Native to the Deep South* captures her artistic view of native plants.

NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS

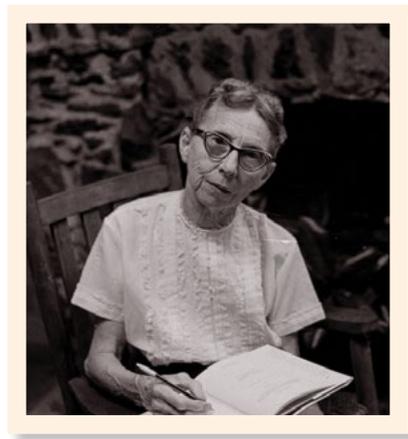
CARRIE'S "LOVE OF NATURE" WAS TRULY A "LOVE OF A lifetime"—she never wearied of viewing and investigating the plants and animals around her. Everyday experiences in nature brought immense delight to her. She once wrote, "Today, I put on my galoshes and slushed down to the Beech Garden, and there were real buds! This is joy unalloyed—to watch the graceful stems lift taller by day each tipped with a slim green promise."

Carrie employed all her senses in her enjoyment of nature. She told a columnist how much she enjoyed the sweet smell of witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), which she identified as "the very spirit of the woods." She confessed, "I walk through the woods in winter and sniff like a hound." She cherished the sounds of nature from the peeps of frogs in springtime to the "different sounds of the winds." Carrie also relished the warmth of the sun on her skin, the feel of the wind in her hair, and the sensation of soil on her hands (Burns 1969).

Louisiana Iris Study and Hybridization

ALTHOUGH CARRIE LOVED ALL OF NATURE, THE BEAUTY OF IRIS flowers was particularly special to her. During a 1920 trip to south Louisiana, Carrie noticed multi-colored irises growing in the black muck-bogs and swamps along bayous. She wrote of her introduction to the "gypsy" beauties (Johnson 1990):

No wild flower can ever quite match my excitement of seeing them for the first time... when I spied masses of giant iris growing in the ditch-banks. There were enormous flowers of various shades of lavender-blue, violet, and royal purple on stems four to five feet tall. Not only had I not seen such irises, but I had never heard of them! When I got home, I rushed to my botanies—but no such species was described. At the time, the only irises credited to Louisiana were little rush-red Iris fulva, Iris hexagon, with blue flowers over topped by foliage, and Iris caroliniana... .



Carrie, late in life, signing one of the numerous books she wrote. (photo from Northwestern State University CGHRC)

.....

Carrie employed all her senses in her enjoyment of nature, and everyday experiences in nature brought her immense delight.

.....



LEFT: Drawing by Carrie of two varieties of Louisiana irises hybridized and grown at Briarwood (Dormon 1958).

RIGHT: Louisiana irises in a Briarwood bog. Carrie hybridized these to produce plants of beautiful appeal and commercial demand.

.....
 It was through Carrie's efforts that Louisiana irises were recognized internationally.

Thus began Carrie's interaction with Dr. J.K. Small, curator of the New York Botanical Garden and noted botanist. In 1926, he began exploring south Louisiana for the irises and collected hundreds of different forms. At the time, he visited Briarwood and was surprised to find that the irises Carrie had brought back from her 1920 excursion were flourishing in her north Louisiana bogs. Dr. Small gave Carrie a sack of rhizomes, good varieties of blue and violet, and suggested that she contact Mrs. B.S. Nelson, who had a collection of white and red forms.

With contributions from Mrs. Nelson and others in south Louisiana, Carrie expanded her collection and began her study of the Louisiana irises, which eventually provided the scientific basis for the nomenclature needed for the expanding distribution of the plants. Some varieties right from the wild were so beautiful that they were given horticultural names and put on the market. Although the irises came from swamps and bogs, Carrie determined that they would grow successfully in many garden situations. She began hybridization efforts that resulted in colors and forms that attracted a great deal of commercial interest.

It was through her efforts that Louisiana irises were recognized internationally, and demand for them grew far beyond her Briarwood gardens. She received many awards and acclaim for her

dedication and leadership. Briarwood became a mecca for those interested in the irises—so much so that Carrie had to limit the number of visitors that she could accommodate. As recognition for her efforts continued to grow, she received four medals from the American Iris Society for the development of outstanding hybrids of Louisiana irises. As quoted in Johnson (1990):

Caroline has not grown irises for award or for praise, and she had not planted her gardens for a “show place.” She had simply wished to share with the world the natural beauty of Louisiana irises. She succeeded. In her own words: “No longer is the Louisiana iris a wild gypsy beauty, to be searched out among bogs and water moccasins. Our swamp debutante has become a horticultural queen.”

Botanical Inspirations and Publications

CARRIE CALLED BRIARWOOD A WILD GARDEN, FOR ITS WOODS were more idyllic than ideal as a horticultural showplace. She insisted that she did not have a garden—just a hundred acres of wild woods, with lots of natural bogs filled with native irises. “And like my distinguished predecessors, Thoreau and Burroughs, I live in a shack dropped down among the pines.” At Briarwood, she nurtured native Louisiana plants and those she collected from throughout the Southeast United States. Carrie also experimented with the American species she propagated as well as the specimens she acquired from far-flung corners of the globe (U.S. DOI National Park Service 2003).

During the 1940s and 1950s, Carrie once again retired as much as possible from public life and devoted herself to the study of native plants. This was the time when Briarwood was at its peak of scientific activity. For example, she collected specimens of goldenrods (*Solidago*) growing naturally at Briarwood in response to Thomas Edison’s request to her when he was seeking alternative sources of rubber (U.S. DOI National Park Service 2003). In later years, however, her own scientific leanings were defined more by botanical classifying and hybridizing endeavors. Examples of her work are the many varieties of Louisiana irises she continued to nurture, create, and publicize during these decades.

She collaborated with famed botanists, such as Professor Reginald Somers Cocks of Tulane University and Dr. Edgar T.



.....

Carrie insisted that she did not have a garden—just a hundred acres of wild woods, with lots of natural bogs filled with native irises.

.....

.....

In addition to her correspondence with famed botanists, Carrie also maintained a spirited level of correspondence with experts, practitioners, and friends of all her fields of interest.

.....

Wherry of the University of Pennsylvania, to identify species of native plants found at Briarwood; her correspondence with them included seeds and specimens, plus drawings, blueprints, and written descriptions. She also corresponded with and hosted numerous other noted botanists such as W.W. Ashe (U.S. Forest Service), J.K. Small (New York Botanical Garden), Clair Brown (Louisiana State University), Edgar Anderson (Missouri Botanical Garden), and Ira B. Nelson (University of Southwestern Louisiana), most of whom documented her contributions to their publications.

Carrie herself was a prolific writer. In addition to her correspondence with famed botanists, she also maintained a spirited level of correspondence with experts, practitioners, and friends of all her fields of interest. She frequently published relevant articles in newspapers and journals promoting her ideas and agenda. The articles she wrote for gardening magazines were based on her observations of how her garden grew, which she recorded in various diaries and notebooks.

Over three decades, Carrie published numerous books related to her botanical interests. Carrie's first book, *Wild Flowers of Louisiana*, was published in 1934 (Dormon 1934), and an expanded version was published several years later (Dormon 1942). Later titles penned by Carrie included: *Forest Trees of Louisiana* (1941), *Flowers Native to the Deep South* (1958), and *Natives Preferred* (1965a). A talented artist, her illustrations accompanied the pages of her own books and Elizabeth Lawrence's *Gardens in Winter* (Lawrence and Dormon 1961).

Ultimately, in 1961, the American Horticultural Society recognized Briarwood as a sanctuary for trees and wildflowers. Around the same time (1960s), Carrie received the Garden Club of America's Eloise Payne Luquer Medal, which is awarded for special achievement in the field of botany that may include medical research, the fine arts, or education (U.S. DOI National Park Service 2003).



Carrie's Love for Birds

CARRIE WAS A FRIEND TO ANIMALS, BUT THE BIRDS WERE HER favorites. Although Carrie learned to identify birds by their songs as a child, it was not until she and her sister Virginia moved to Briarwood that she had the opportunity to closely study them. Briarwood's native plants attracted birds, but Carrie also maintained feeding stations and bird baths for them. These amenities kept the birds in range so that she could observe and sketch them. She refused to have curtains on her windows because she did not want to obstruct the view of her birds. She "allowed birds to fly in and out of her house. Wrens even built nests in her room" (Troncale 2016).

Carrie even had a "favorite among her favorites," a mockingbird she named Shelley who was often a subject of her journal entries. "How he loves to be talked to! No other bird likes people as well. When I talked softly to him, he turned his little head and looked down at me, then sang sweeter than ever. I know it was meant just for me" (Johnson 1990).

Carrie's sketches and stories about birds originally appeared as monthly articles in the Sunday Magazine of the *Shreveport Times* and were later published in a book entitled *Bird Talk* (Dormon 1969). In the "bird chats" documented in this book, she tells of the unusual facts she had learned about many bird species. One of Carrie's most ecstatic moments was an experience with a nest-building bird. She wrote:

Every year a saucy titmouse plucks hair from the hide-bottomed chair on the porch and gathers shreddy bark from the cedar posts. Today I was sitting very quietly on the log-seat between two of these posts, looking at a book, when a titmouse plumped down on the floor in front of me. He tilted his eye up at me and said, "Chi-cha-cha-cha," in a most impudent manner. Then he flew from post to post, making a survey from every vantage point. Evidently my uncombed and fuzzy hair looked useful, for he planted himself firmly on my head, braced his feet, and began pulling it out by the beakful. Pop! went the roots as they come out of their sockets. I suppose I would be wearing a wig, but I just had to call Sister to come see... .



The mockingbird was Carrie's favorite bird. This is her sketch of "Shelley" (from Dormon 1969).

.....

Carrie refused to have curtains on her windows because she did not want to obstruct the view of her birds.

.....





Carrie felt she had been bestowed a great honor by the titmouse's choosing her hair as material for his nest. The decision of the little bird to perch on her head and remove the hair himself merely amplified the honor. To her, this was pure delight! (Troncale 2016).

Other animals, however, that were natural enemies of birds also benefited from friendship with Carrie. She maintained a cordial rapport with a speckled king snake she named Hezekiah which lived in a flower bed near her porch. A fox also frequented the grounds. "A beautiful fox visits us occasionally and licks up crumbs I put down for the birds. No doubt he licks up birds, too, and probably I should shoot him. But, how can I extinguish that liquid flame" (Johnson 1990).

Even in the last years of her life as her health and, consequently, her mobility diminished, she continued to find comfort in her bird friends. "Alas, my trampling days are over—a bad heart and a crippled hip—but my window by the fire looks out on a beautiful wild woodland where I can sit and watch birds" (Johnson 1990).



TOP: Painting of a red-headed woodpecker by Carrie for the cover of her book, *Bird Talk*.

BOTTOM: This copy of *Bird Guide: Land Birds East of the Rockies* used by Carrie is now on exhibit at the Louisiana State Arboretum.



IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC SPACES

Highway Beautification Program

IN 1922, THE FIRST ARTICLE CARRIE EVER PUBLISHED, “Highways plus trees” in *Holland's Magazine*, was about highway beauty. In the article, she noted the aesthetics of southern highways, but she knew that it had not been done intentionally. “It is a sort of accidental beauty, ...even where the merchantable timber has been cut away, attractive trees are left—where fires have not taken their bitter toll—these add charm to the road” (Johnson 1990).

Roadside improvement became an interest for Carrie. She traveled across Louisiana studying highway conditions, taking photographs, writing articles, and delivering lectures. From this effort, she determined four major needs in planning for highway beautification: save trees and shrubs already growing and keep the areas clean, add additional plants needed to *dazzle visitors*, stop erosion by use of spreading plants, and seek cooperation and support among clubs, agencies, and private landowners.

In December 1940, Carrie sent her highway beautification plan to Prescott Foster, Director of Louisiana Department of Highways. Foster not only agreed with her plan, but asked her to direct its implementation! There was no job title for the new position, but Foster decided on “highway beautification consultant.” However, when the employment forms were sent to the Department of Civil Service, her title was listed as “beautician”! After some effort, a correction was made.

With her typical boldness, Carrie penned resolutions asking the Department of Highways to commit to preserving shrubs and trees, the Forest Service to run double fire lines to protect trees along roadsides, and local governments to forbid dumping on their respective parish roads. She obtained copies of laws which protected wildflowers and other native plants. The response to her efforts was surprisingly positive. She explained the response with a comparison: “...the first time I ever planted an acorn, I got impatient because nothing happened above the surface as quickly



The writer's cabin at Briarwood. It is small, but seems ideal for Carrie's writing sessions. (photo from Northwestern State University CGHRC)



as I wanted, so I dug it up to see what had happened. Lo, it had a fine root several inches long” (Johnson 1990).

Carrie explained her thoughts on native landscaping as: “Perfect landscaping is doing the work in such a way that it appears as if no planting has been done. The finished product closely approximates nature at her best. Nowhere is this so true as in the landscaping of roadsides. They are the most beautiful when they simply become a part of the surrounding countryside” (Johnson 1990).

Because of this vision, groups across Louisiana began requesting Carrie’s advice. An example is the Shreveport Beautification Foundation that wanted her services in making long-range plans for the city, including a project to beautify the drive around Cross Lake. The Foundation planted 10,000 redbud trees as its first official action. To complement roadside landscaping efforts, Carrie also researched zoning laws to determine the legal restrictions that could be placed on businesses as well as the prohibitions against billboard placement.

Not all went smoothly, however. As part of her original improvement plan, Carrie entreated the Department of Highways to “interject itself into more judicious clearing along roads.” Six months later she was still writing and pointing out specific areas where burning and cutting continued to the detriment of the “charm of the road” (Dormon 1966).

Carrie later stated, “I gave illustrated lectures, which were endorsed by Chambers of Commerce, various clubs, etc., but my work was killed by a highway engineer with a head of concrete! I had made recommendations based on many years of study” (Dormon 1966). Frustrated that her efforts were largely ignored, Carrie resigned from the position after two years. About 25 years after Carrie’s highway beautification efforts, Lady Bird Johnson, wife of President Lyndon B. Johnson, began her own highway beautification program for the Nation, which gained greater success from congressional support, laws, and funding.

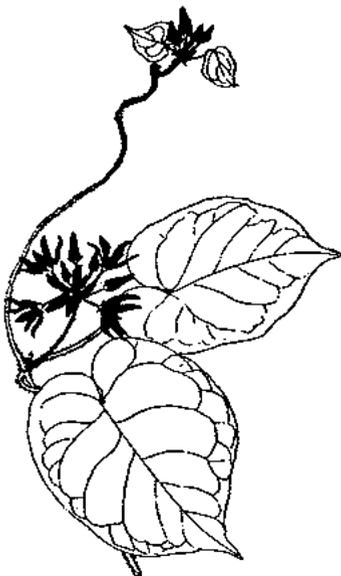
Landscaping Grounds of State Facilities

IN 1938, REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE STATE ASKED CARRIE TO plan and direct the planting of a Louisiana garden on the 40-acre grounds of the Mid-State Charity Hospital, later renamed the Huey P. Long Charity Hospital, in Pineville. Of the appointment Carrie remarked: “For twenty years I have been writing articles

.....

“Perfect landscaping is doing the work in such a way that it appears as if no planting has been done. The finished product closely approximates nature at her best.”

.....



and giving lectures extolling native planting, and now I have my hand called” (Johnson 1990).

For this unique project on the grounds of a State facility, Carrie was asked to define her job. She divided the scope of her work into three areas: planning, cooperation, and inspection. Even before she received her official notice of appointment, she had prepared preliminary pastel drawings of the hospital grounds as they would appear in the spring of 1940.

Much work had to be done to ready the grounds for grass and plants. In July 1939, she reported the progress: “To most people, just the growing of grass sound very prosaic, but greening up the approach to our hospital has taken the proportion of an adventure. You see, everyone said we could not make it grow on clay this time of year. But, we have done just that.”

Her landscaping adventure also included placing cherry laurels and other trees and shrubs on the 200-foot wide approach (Johnson 1990):



Carrie with Mayor Rollo Lawrence of Pineville at the Mid-State Charity Hospital grounds. (photo from Northwestern State University CGHRC)



•••••
 After three decades, Carrie's noble idea for a State arboretum finally came to fruition due to a good and well-placed friend.

She added groupings of hundreds of redbuds, dogwoods, fringe trees, hollies, wild azaleas, magnolias, and wild hydrangeas. She accented the front of the building with semi-formal mass plantings of yaupon, dahoon holly, wild sweet olive, and andromeda. In other areas she planted sourwood, tulip trees, crabapples, winter willow, sloe, and Cherokee rose... .

Politics, however, lessened the adventurous spirit. Budget cutbacks also made the job so difficult that she resigned in the fall of 1940. Carrie had not been allowed to complete the grounds as she had planned, but she was well satisfied with her accomplishment: arranging primarily donated plants into a beautiful native garden for the hospital. According to her own account (Dormon 1939), "So far as we can learn, this is the first large public grounds to be planted entirely in flora native to the state. It is most interesting and exciting, as we even have springs, so we can grow most species successfully (we hope)."

Louisiana State Arboretum

IN THE 1920S, CARRIE SUGGESTED A STATE ARBORETUM, CREATED to educate all Louisianans about the importance of trees. After three decades, this noble idea finally came to fruition due to a good and well-placed friend: Mrs. A.G. "Sudie" Lawton, who became a State Park and Recreation Commission Board member in 1957. J.D. Lafleur, a retired school principal from Ville Platte, made a presentation at a Commission meeting elaborating on the



beautiful, centuries-old trees in Chicot State Park. His speech was so eloquent that Mrs. Lawton, remembering Carrie's idea, asked him to show her this place, for "it sounds like a perfect place for a State Arboretum" (Johnson 1990).

In the 1930s (before Louisiana had established a State Park and Recreation Commission), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) created and built Chicot State Park (Barnett and Burns 2012). The CCC crews were responsible for constructing a 2,000-acre lake and clearing much of it for open water—yet the remaining forested area was wild and diverse. Carrie and Lafleur's aim was to develop a destination for botanists, students, horticulturists, youth groups, and tourists from all over the world. Together, they attracted many organizations from throughout the State to support and fund the establishment of a State arboretum. In 1961, 600 acres of Chicot State Park north of Ville Platte became the Louisiana State Arboretum, which is now the oldest State-supported arboretum in the United States.

Entrance to the Louisiana State Arboretum near the Caroline Dormon Lodge at the Chicot State Park near Ville Platte.



CARRIE'S LIFE

.....

Carrie did not coldly observe nature from a distance; she experienced the natural world—the weather, the elements, the living animals and plants—as a fellow being.

.....

A picturesque site at Briarwood with a foot bridge near one of the ponds. (photo from Library of Congress Archives)

CARRIE'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE WENT FAR BEYOND the enjoyment and appreciation that most people experience. Acquaintances often expressed surprise at her preference to her cabin and life in the woods over a more *social* existence. Carrie wrote about this to a friend, saying that people asked her, "... but, don't you get lonely way out here? I will never get people to believe that I LOVE to be alone! Of course, I'm not really alone—with birds, trees, and flowers—and the different voices of the winds (so different in pines and deciduous trees), and rain on the shining leaves" (Johnson 1990).

Even when Carrie left Briarwood to work, lecture, or socialize, she worried about what was happening at home, like plants sprouting, flower buds opening, and birds singing, while she was away. Here, natural surroundings were not merely an important component of Carrie's life, they *were* her life.



Her "Gift of the Wild Things"

BLESSED WITH A UNIQUE ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE, UNDERSTAND, and share in the intimacies of the natural world, Carrie's sister Virginia described her as having a "...sensitive, tender feeling for helpless things that makes old people, children, and animals love her." Carrie acknowledged this uniqueness, writing, "I was born with something—I call it 'the gift of the wild things'—and because I am simple myself, and have a sympathetic heart, I can understand animals and simple people to an unusual degree." On another occasion, Carrie elaborated:

...the gift... includes so much—hearing a bird note above the chatter of a crowd; thrilling at the way twigs gleam against the sky; seeing a thousand things that no one else sees. And the way birds and animals know me is a part of it. One reason for this understanding is—understanding. I never crowd or push myself on them. I never startle them by sudden or violent motions. I love them.

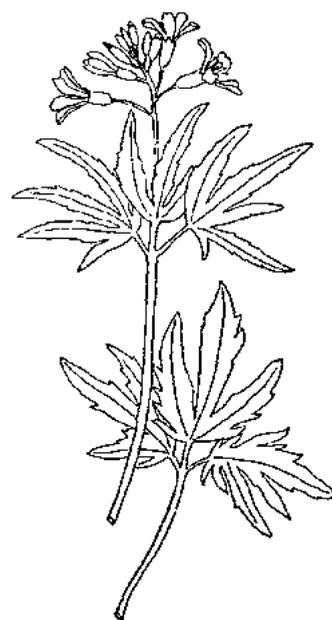
Carrie did not coldly observe nature from a distance; she experienced the natural world—the weather, the elements, the living animals and plants—as a fellow being. This intimate relationship with nature as a coexisting part of it gave Carrie a distinct perspective that was hers alone (Troncale 2016).

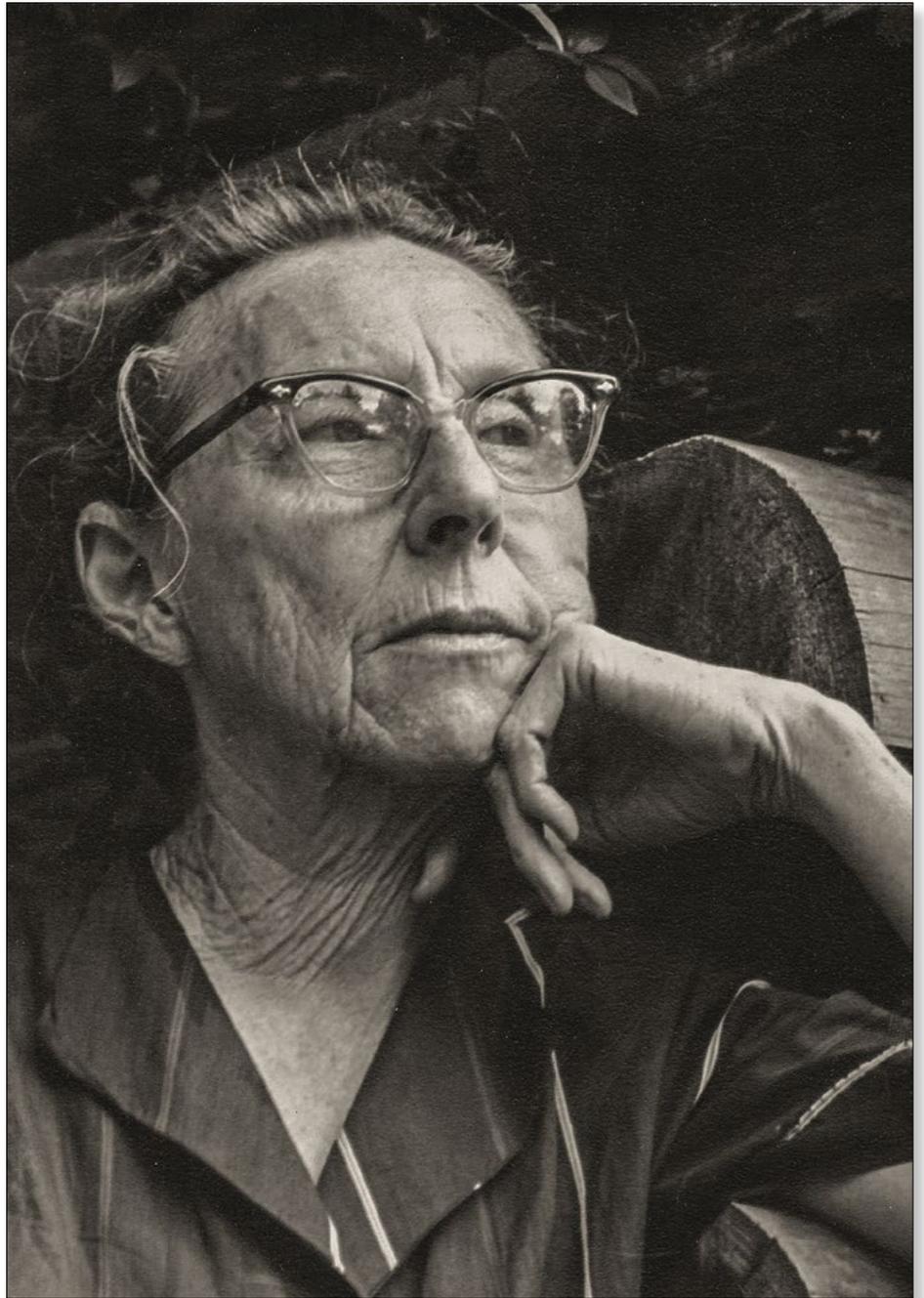
Her Knowledge

ALTHOUGH CARRIE WAS NEVER FORMALLY EDUCATED IN anything other than literature and art, her expertise in many other fields—forestry, botany, horticulture, conservation, ornithology, archeology, ethnology, education, and preservation—was acknowledged by professionals in those professions. Her *lifelong love* prompted diligent study of many varied aspects of nature.

She also had a strong personality, and conflict and tension arising from differences in priorities, bureaucracy, politics, and gender bias affected many of her efforts. As a woman working in male-dominated fields of forestry and conservation in the early 20th century, Carrie refused to be intimidated. Historian Anna C. Burns wrote: "She neither asked for nor expected any special

Although Carrie was never formally educated in anything other than literature and art, her expertise in many other fields was acknowledged by professionals in those professions.





Carrie at Briarwood. (photo from Northwestern State University Archives)

consideration for being a woman, but demanded that her work be judged on its merits alone” (Burns 1981).

When Carrie’s authority on a subject was called into question, she never failed to assert confidence in her knowledge of the natural world, even against credentialed experts in those fields. For example, in a letter to the director of Louisiana State University Press, Carrie defended a manuscript she wrote against unfounded comments (Troncale 2016):

...when it comes to criticisms by your reader, I have to take issue with him on practically every comment. Mercy! Here I thought I had thoroughly established your confidence in me as knowing my ground in the matter of native planting; then you surprisingly turn the whole thing over to this mysterious reader, and accept his opinion as final. Has this reader experimented with the actual growing of plants, as I have, all my life? I thought I had impressed you with the unique value of this volume and that it is the result of actual doing, and not a lot of theories... . This is the sort of hard-earned knowledge I am trying to pass along to my readers. And, I say with some pride, that my word in such matters is usually accepted without question... .



.....

Carrie’s financial hardships were certainly not the result of faulty work ethic or lack of skill, but often resulted from her choice to focus her efforts on *more important matters*.

Her Financial Struggles

LACK OF A STEADY INCOME OFTEN CAUSED STRESS IN CARRIE’S life. Her financial hardships were certainly not the result of faulty work ethic or lack of skill, but often resulted from her choice to focus her efforts on *more important matters*. As noted earlier, she resigned from several of her paying jobs because of bureaucratic and political restraints that prevented her from doing the work she felt her position required.

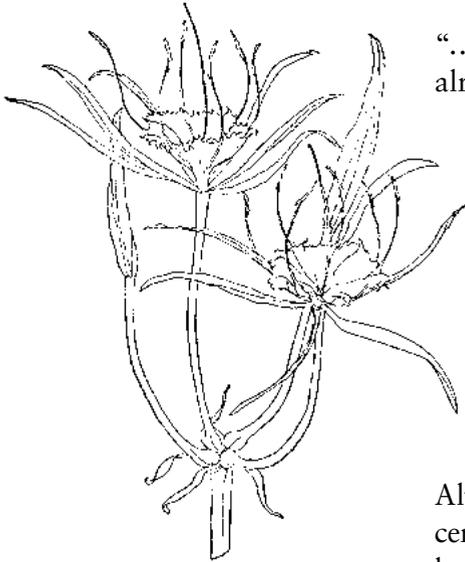
Although her writings offered unique, interesting, clear, and applicable information on the care of flowers, trees, and birds, Carrie often had difficulty getting her work published. Publishers were hesitant, especially during the Great Depression years, to print books without a sure market. Gaining a publishing company’s interest often required Carrie’s agreeing to less-than-ideal business arrangements, which sometimes cost her precious money.

Friends often aided Carrie financially, and she learned to be grateful for their help: “I long ago decided that it was false



pride not to accept things that friends want to do.” At different times, friends gave her a car, home-building materials, and the installation of a water well. She also wrote (Johnson 1990): “I am able to find happiness with so little. I am sorry for poor things who fret and pine for fine clothes and houses and cars. Smug am I? No, just humbly thankful... .”

Those who knew her said of her attitude toward finances, “...if she had money that was alright, if she didn’t that too was alright.” Snell (1972) recalled that:



...a multimillionaire Texan saw one of her paintings and sent her a check—Mignon recalls it was for \$3,000—as a down payment on a commission, promising to buy all the iris paintings she could produce. But Carrie had moved on to a new project, a children’s book about local Indian tribes. “Oh, pshaw! I haven’t got time to be bothered with him!” she said—and tore up the sizable check.

Although her disinterest in money and materialism allowed a certain freedom, stress from lack of finances further harmed her health.

Her Health and End of Life

WHEN UNDER FINANCIAL STRESS, CARRIE RETURNED TO Briarwood and to her fascination with native plants. This involvement did much to reduce stress caused from problems outside of her home sanctuary. However, her health problems were many. In addition to frequently suffering from the flu, arthritis, and heart problems, Carrie also suffered a broken hip. She once wrote in a letter, “...this miserable raw weather just goes on and on and it makes my arthritis terrific... . My shoulder, back of my neck, etc.—ugh.” Along with the physical discomfort, Carrie’s times of ill health were inevitably periods of loneliness and unproductiveness. She once complained to a friend, “...life gets pretty dull when you are tied to a bed all day long... . I am still not allowed company” (Johnson 1990).

These health problems interfered with her writing, artwork, and other endeavors while also affecting her employment. In addition to leaving a teaching position in Lake Arthur in southern Louisiana and transferring to Kisatchie School closer

to Briarwood, she also declined an offer to teach at Southeastern Louisiana University due to health issues.

Despite her frail health, Carrie's strong character was never overwhelmed. Her time with nature took priority over time allotted for attention to personal appearance and almost every other aspect of her life. She was so immersed in the happenings of her natural surroundings that "she never would have eaten at all, as she never seemed to pay attention to meal times or food, except to keep her bird feeders filled." Carrie even claimed that she was too busy to die. She simply had to keep living if for no other reason than to record the results of her hybridization experiments with irises. Carrie also said, "If I [was] on my way to heaven I'd have to say, 'Wait St. Peter, I have to write a few letters.'" In fact, on the "day she went to the hospital for the last time she got a few letters ready first" (Johnson 1990). Carrie died in Shreveport, LA, on November 21, 1971 at the age of 83.

.....
Despite her frail health,
Carrie's strong character was
never overwhelmed.



The interior of Carrie's cabin showing a portion of her library, American Indian pottery and basket work, a painting of a friend, and a case with some of her collectibles.



FITTING MONUMENTS

•••••

Carrie found comfort in the idea that even through death, she would continue always to be a part of the natural world.

•••••



IN 1965, LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY (LSU) CONFERRED AN Honorary Doctorate of Science upon Carrie for her “scientific achievement” and “valuable contributions to knowledge in the fields of botany, horticulture, and forestry” as well as her work in archeology, ethnology, conservation, education, and preservation. This “well deserved degree,” the result of years of exertion and commitment in multiple fields, was a welcomed recognition for Carrie’s impressive work.

This honor came from an outpouring of support and letters from many individuals and organizations. Supporters included Edgar Anderson of the Missouri Botanical Garden; author Elizabeth Lawrence; George Lawrence, director of the Carnegie Institution’s Botanical Library; and University of Southwestern Louisiana President Joel L. Fletcher. Additionally, LSU’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Management faculty unanimously voted its support, and LSU’s College of Arts and Sciences faculty also recommended the honor (Johnson 1990).

This happy state of affairs was lessened by Carrie’s increasing health problems, especially a weak heart. Although physically limited, her mind and pen remained active. However, in the fall of 1970, she suffered an attack of angina. During this time, at the request of her friends, she made provision for the continuation of Briarwood. Shortly before her death in 1971, she donated her estate to a foundation that has become a center for educational purposes in conservation. Today, Briarwood is a nature preserve honoring Carrie’s remarkable contributions to conservation. It is open during summer months and in off season by request.

Another monument honoring Carrie can be found at the Louisiana State Arboretum. At its older entrance, the State Legislature designated the office building the “Caroline Dormon Lodge” in 1965. In addition to housing an exhibit on Carrie’s life and work, this facility still serves as a visitor center, library, and native plant herbarium for the species that grow within the boundaries of the arboretum. Recently, a new visitor center and education complex have been developed.

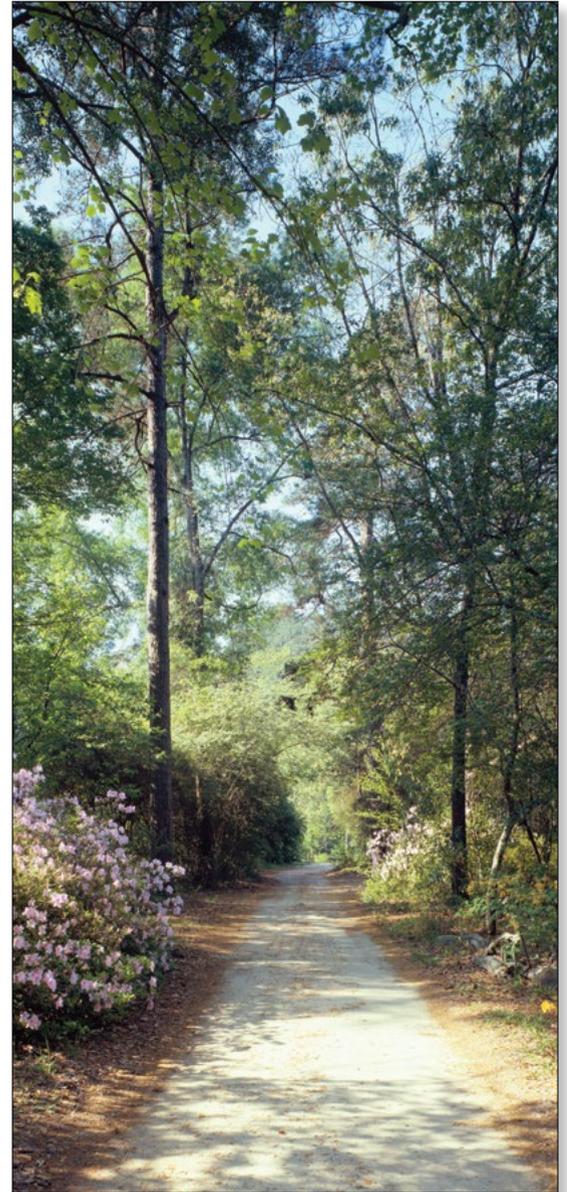
The largest monument to Carrie’s creativity, dedication, and perseverance is the Kisatchie National Forest. Today, the Kisatchie National Forest encompasses over 600,000 acres of managed forest land in central and northern Louisiana and is the

State's only national forest. Carrie would have been particularly pleased when, in 1999, the Forest Service set aside an 8,700-acre area of the Kisatchie Wold as the Kisatchie Hills Wilderness Area. No management practices will be imposed on the area, and it will remain in a completely natural state. To honor Carrie, the Kisatchie National Forest donated land for the establishment of the Caroline Dormon Junior High School and remains an active sponsor of this outstanding public school near Woodworth.

Carrie found comfort in the idea that even through death, she would continue always to be a part of the natural world. She conveyed this concept through a touching poem, in which she requested a special monument of remembrance (Troncale 2016):

*When I am dead,
Will someone plant a tree where I lie?
Then dust shall stir to life again,
Become a party of beauty rich and infinite.
What rare fulfillment to become a tree!
To feel new snow upon my face
And wrestle strongly with outrageous winds;
To hold the sun against my cheek,
And live anew in birth of flowers each spring;
To gather to my breast the birds
That speak for me through lovely throats;
To reach above man's little frets and cares.
Then I shall touch God—
And yet keep hold on to warm sweet earth I love.*

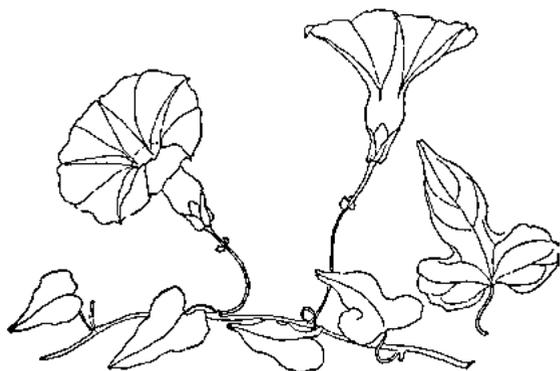
Indeed, her desire was granted. At her grave in Briarwood Baptist Cemetery has grown an elegant flowering dogwood. Thus, even in death, Carrie is not separated from her beloved nature. Through the life of this small tree, she is granted still her “view of the sky, the wind in [her] face, sweet clean earth—, the whirl of wings... and all [her] ‘gift of the wild things.’”



The beauty of Briarwood continues to provide a glimpse into the nature that Carrie loved. (photo from Library of Congress Archives)

REFERENCES

- Barnett, J.P.; Burns, A.C. 2012. The work of the Civilian Conservation Corps: pioneering conservation in Louisiana. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-154. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 101 p.
- Barnett, J.P.; Carter, M.C. 2017. The dawn of sustainable forestry in the South. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-221. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 39 p.
- Barnett, J.P.; Troncale, S.M. 2017. First lady of Louisiana forestry: Caroline Dormon influenced America's natural history. *Forests & People*. 67(4): 4–7.
- Brown, R. 2017. Eight naturalists that changed outdoor history. The CLYMB. <http://blog.theclymb.com/out-there/8-naturalists-changed-outdoor-history>. [Date accessed: June 23, 2017].
- Burns, A.C. 1969. Handwritten notes attached to "One Special Gardener" article. Long Leaf, LA: Anna C. Burns CCC Collection, Southern Forest Heritage Museum.
- Burns, A.C. 1981. Caroline Dormon: early activist. Draft manuscript. Long Leaf, LA: Anna C. Burns CCC Collection, Southern Forest Heritage Museum. 3 p.
- Dormon, C.T. 1902. *Under the magnolias*. New York, NY: C.T. Abby Press. 251 p.
- Dormon, C. 1920. Letter to O.W. Fisher from Miss Caroline Dormon, Chairman of Forestry, Louisiana Federation of Women's Clubs. Long Leaf, LA: Anna C. Burns CCC Collection, Southern Forest Heritage Museum. 1 p.
- Dormon, C. 1928. Report of survey of Louisiana for the location of favorable sites for State Parks. Typewritten report. Long Leaf, LA: Anna C. Burns CCC Collection, Southern Forest Heritage Museum. 3 p.
- Dormon, C. 1931. Louisiana landscape: State parks for Louisiana. *Louisiana Conservation Review*. 1(7): 7–13.
- Dormon, C. 1934. *Wild flowers of Louisiana: including most of the herbaceous wild flowers of the Gulf States, with the exception of mountainous regions, and the sub-tropical portions of Florida and Texas*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Dormon, C. 1935. Inquisition. Typewritten response to Mary Belle McKellar following a request for personal information. Long Leaf, LA: Anna C. Burns CCC Collection, Southern Forest Heritage Museum. 5 p.
- Dormon, C. 1937. Response to queries from a publisher related to manuscripts on Southern Indians submitted for publication. Natchitoches, LA: Caroline Dormon Collection, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University.
- Dormon, C. 1939. Letter to Lyle Saxon dated January 30, 1939. Natchitoches, LA: Caroline Dormon Collection, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University. Folder 564.
- Dormon, C. 1941. *Forest trees of Louisiana*. New Orleans, LA: Louisiana Department of Conservation, Division of Forestry. 87 p.
- Dormon, C. 1942. *Wildflowers of Louisiana*. New Orleans, LA: Department of Conservation. 160 p.
- Dormon, C. 1958. *Flowers native to the deep South*. Baton Rouge, LA: Claitor's Book Store. 176 p.
- Dormon, C. 1965a. *Natives preferred*. Baton Rouge, LA: Claitor's Book Store. 217 p.
- Dormon, C. 1965b. The Chief People: first families along El Camino Real. *Magazine Louisiana*. 1(1): 4–7.
- Dormon, C. 1966. Correspondence with Lady Bird Johnson. Natchitoches, LA: Caroline Dormon Collection, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University. Folder 1131.
- Dormon, C. 1967. *Southern Indian Boy*. Baton Rouge, LA: Claitor's Publishing Division. 52 p.
- Dormon, C. 1969. *Bird talk*. Baton Rouge, LA: Claitor's Publishing Division. 122 p.
- Haag, J. 2002. Dormon, Carrie (1888-1971). *Women in world history: a biographical encyclopedia*. <http://www/encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/dormon-carrie-1888-1971>. [Date accessed: September 21, 2017].
- Johnson, F.H. 1990. *The gift of the wild things: the life of Caroline Dormon*. Lafayette, LA: University of Southwestern Louisiana, Center for Louisiana Studies. 166 p.
- Lawrence, E.; Dormon, C. 1961. *Gardens in winter*. New York, NY: Harper and Brothers. 218 p.
- Lee, D.B. 2011. Caroline Dormon. In: Johnson, D., ed. *knowlouisiana.org Encyclopedia of Louisiana*. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. <http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/caroline-dormon>. [Date accessed unknown].
- Miller, V.R.D. 1944. Ancestors and descendants of Gaspar Joseph Trotti: also, genealogy of McTyeire, Frizzell, Carter, Dale, Sweat and related lines. Saline, LA: [publisher not identified]. 100 p.
- Snell, D. 1972. The green world of Caroline Dormon. *Smithsonian*. 2(11): 28–33.
- Troncale, S.M. 2016. Caroline Dormon: an exceptional lady. Draft manuscript. Long Leaf, LA: Anna C. Burns CCC Collection, Southern Forest Heritage Museum. 17 p.
- U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) National Park Service. 2003. *Historic American landscape survey*. Briarwood: Caroline Dormon nature preserve. HALS No. LA-1. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service. 84 p.
- Usner, D.H. 2015. *Weaving alliances with other women: Chitimacha Indian work in the new South*. Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lecture Series. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 136 p.





In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

