Journal

of the Transylvania Botanic Garden

Begun 15th March 1825

By C. S. Rafinesque

1825

March 15. Engaged James Stuart as gardener for a month at $20.

David Meade sends us Billy an able black man for labourer. I engage board for him at $5 for one month.

I set them at work to pull corn stalks.

M. 16. Bought 2 Spades, 2 hoes, 3 Rakes & 2 lines for the gardeners.

I try in vain to get a Cultivator through to plough.

3 Acres of the Garden, & to buy for 1000 Young trees in the woods.

We clear the ground in front of the garden, mend fences &

I write to Mr. Garden of New Orleans, Mo.
March 17

We dig holes for the Locust tree

We trace the main Walk & the Serpentine Walks of the garden. Patches prepared.

March 18

We begin to plant Cherry tree, Raspberry, Weeping Willow, Cotton tree, Weihrauch point at Foster's. 1 dozen wild plants.

March 19

Continued to plant Suckers & the steps prepared to

Sent Billy to Mr. Meade with orders to bring

Cast load of Cuttings, trees & seeds from his

pleasure grounds. — New Chemnitz E.

March 21

Billy does not come back, I hire a black man for a

Week at $4. We burn the Corn, lay walk &

March 22

Billy comes back with a Cast load of Suckers and Cuttings from David Meade, we begin to plant them.

Began to plough 2 1/2 Acres of ground.

March 23

We continue to plant, plough & — I buy many

Seeds from Mr. Stickney. Some given me by Mr. Ward.

Made a bargain with Wm. to bring Ten Suckers

from the Tubbs at $1 63 for 100 trees or roots &

March 24

Mr. Fillingham buys 100 trees of Woen for $73, which

I had refused to take.

We plant the Serpentine Walks & the main alley.

We discover two Snails in the Garden.

March 25

We pull Corn, Grab, plant tree, begin to narrow

Wm. brings us 850 Young Locusts &

other trees, at $2.35 for 100. We plant Ashes.

March 26

We plant Locust in front. And in the main

Alley, grow Sage & Ashes $1.91. Having so many

trees to plant, I engage William for another week.

Five from s & one tale were broken & have been

rended this week.

Bargained with Mr. Browne to plough & Tammar

for $3 per Acre.

March 28

Easter Monday. — I lay out the Meridian line and Walk N. We plant Trees &

March 29

Began to plough. — I buy seeds from Mr.

Stickney. — We lay out the main Walk.

March 30

The G was named the Shaking. Mr. Ballance

bring me $10 of Fresh & roots on account of

our contract for which I gave him a receipt &

am to be paid in things from the garden.

And I pay him $6. 67 for feed. All ween eggs.
M. 31. Planted Lucast all around—I make a bargain with William to dig for ditches, pits, ponds, grading etc at 75 Cents per 100 cubic feet—he beg to work with 2 men.

April 1. We continue to plough, harrow, grade & plant trees—Begin to graft.

April 2. Completed the Lucast work—we lay out the Garden & begin to sow 100 kinds of Garden seeds.

April 4. Easter Monday—Billy is sick.
I lay out the Central Circle.

April 5. Bought Vines & Posts from Wm Fowler.
Received Many Plants of seeds & plants from Mr. Ward, Fowler, Clay, Norman, Magowan &

April 6. Billy is better & walks.—We go on in the kitchen garden—1st load of plants to come.

April 7. We sow Beans, Pulse, and early seeds.
I pay William for the job 25 Cents for 100 yards paling.

April 8. Finished the digging at present paid 2 18/26 Soledow—found water in 2 places—one place will stand.—We spend 100. Bought shoes for Billy.

April 9. Warsaw brings fifteen hundred Trees, Shrubs & Roots from the knobs—I pay him for 1300 only $20—Stewart is again drunk.

April 11. Planted the trees & of Warsaw.
Stewart again drunk, & is to be dismissed at the end of this month.

April 12. Continued to plant trees. Stewart wants his money saying his month is out which happens only the 14th. He has had $12 on account & he is in debt for the remainder $8 which I keep. He does mischief in the garden, steal shrubs, keep seeds & and comes to threaten me, being drunk all the while—I am compelled to get a warrant against him.

April 13. Stewart leaves the town & cleans off—at $5 in due to him, claimed by several.
We plant and sow.
   Finished the Meridian Walk.
   Bought 6 loads of manure at 25¢ a load.

Apr. 15. Laid off the level plat in front.
   Planted garden seeds. Made a hotbed.

Apr. 16. Sowed Marshmallow in all the borders
   of the level plat — Medical plants &c.

Apr. 18. Laid off the base of the hill.
   Planted St. John's Camomilla, 400 seeds.

   Received 200 valuable fruit trees and
   Shrubs, 67 pots, from Mr. Longworth.

Apr. 20. Planted all the trees & Shrubs of Mr.
   Longworth in the 2 orchards &c. Hired a
   man Isaac to help us in that. Almost
   all were growing but with cotiledon sprouts.
   One of the pots broken — sent to Mr. Lewis
   2 Boxwood & 1 Rose in pots. 65¢ my labor.
   2 Roses & 1 Garnet. 2 farming inputs.
The public library in Lexington was established in 1796 and during its more than one hundred years of existence it has accumulated many books and papers of great value and interest. While going through some of these old papers I came across some manuscripts, more than eighty years old, which suggested the writing of this article. Lexington in the early part of the nineteenth century seemed to have taken the lead in everything that happened west of the Alleghanies. Here John Bradford set up the first printing press and started the first newspaper west of the mountains. Western literature had its birth here, for John Filson wrote his History of Kentucky, while a schoolmaster in Lexington, and also wrote down from Daniel Boone's dictation the only narrative of his life with the old pioneer's sanction. The first library, the first lunatic asylum, the first college in the West were in this old town; and that college grew into the first University beyond the mountains, and in spite of its struggles with the rabid sectarian spirit, which was one of the sad features of the religion of those times, was itself a pioneer.
In the introduction of many new things—some of which I shall mention later on—it is a little hard for us to realize that Lexington was the leading manufacturing town in the West in the early part of the century, but such was the case. Mr. Rineck says in his History of Lexington that there were ninety-seven manufactories here then and that people came from far and near to buy. Old Lexington was at the zenith of her commercial prosperity in 1810, but Robert Pelton’s invention, which was patented in 1809, struck a death blow to her as a distributing center; from the time the steamboat appeared on the Ohio river, the doom of inland towns was sealed, and the star of river towns like Cincinnati and Louisville, rose. But another star than that of commerce was to rise here—that of education—and make Lexington proudly and justly wear the title of “The Athens of the West.”

**Founding of Transylvania.**

This golden educational era began about 1816 and it is of this period that Lexington could claim for her citizens men whom the nation delighted to honor. The tall and stately figure of Henry Clay was a familiar one on her streets; he was then about forty years old, and honor after honor had already been showered on him, but they were only forerunners of more brilliant honors yet to come. His great rival, that splendid lawyer, orator and statesman, William Taylor Barry, also lived here; his monument stood in a corner of the court house yard until the old court house was burned down. Another lawyer, Matthew Jenett, had made his home here, but the voice of Art calling, “Arise and follow me,” sounded so imperiously and irresistibly in his ears that he closed his law office forever the year before and went to Boston to study under Gilbert Stuart, the painter; he was back in a few years, and the Lexington of that day saw portraits painted that artists of today compare to Velasquez, Robert Wickliffe, John J. Crittenden, John Cabell Breckinridge, Dr. Benjamin Dudley, and many others whose names are interwoven with the history of the State and its streets then. And in the fall of this year of 1816 came that brilliant scholar, Dr. Horace Holley, of Boston, to be president of Transylvania University. He was in the prime of life, of handsome and distinguished presence, always careful and elegant in dress, and possessed of great social charm. He had a beautiful voice, and was a finished public speaker. His coming marked a new era in the history of the University; during his administration it grew from a comparatively small institution to a center of learning for the whole Mississippi valley—in the last year of his presidency 418 pupils were in attendance, and during the nine years he was here 538 graduates went forth from its halls.

The buildings of the University were insignificant when President Holley came. Soon afterward a handsome three-story brick building was erected which cost thirty thousand dollars—a large sum in those days. The University at this time consisted of the regular grammar school and academic department, the department of law of which Mr. Clay had been a professor for two years, and the Medical College—which seems to have been the most successful of the three; it had five professors then, and in a few years was to be ranked as the second college of medicine in the United States, both in the number of its students and the reputation of its professors. The degree of Doctor of Medicine had been conferred the year before in 1817, for the first time in the West. These professors of the gentle art of healing sometimes inflicted wounds as well as cured them. The town was still talking of a duel between two of its prominent professors—Dr. Dudley and Richardson—in which Dr. Rich-
would have bled to death but for the
skill and magnanimity of his antago-
nist, who arrested the hemorrhage by
the pressure of his thumb on the crit-
ical point until the frightened surgeon
in attendance could make a ligature of
the artery.

Each of the three departments of
the University had its own special li-
brary.

A Chair of Botany.

A few months after President Holley
came a new chair was started—that of
botany and natural history. This
seems very simple now, but it was a
most progressive step for those ear-
ly days. That was the time of classi-
cal education, pure and simple, and
there was no interest in any other
roots than those of Greek and Latin
origin.

Constantine Samuel Rafinesque was
called to this chair and became the
first resident professor of Natural Sci-
cence in our State. And now a word to
show how this old world student had
drifting to this far Western town—for
so Lexington seemed in those days.
Rafinesque was a foreigner, but he
might more truly have been called a
cosmopolitan; his father was a French
counting merchant, his mother a
German, born in Greece, he himself
was born in Constantinople in 1783,
where some of his father’s mercantile
adventures had placed the family tem-
porarily; his other homes had been in
southern France, in Italy and in Sici-
ly before he came to America. His
father died when he was young, and
he seems to have largely followed his
own heart in his education. He was an
accomplished linguist and wrote
books and articles in French, Italian,
German, Latin and English. From a
child he was a student of nature; he
says he first became conscious of ex-
istence in the spacious grounds of
one of the beautiful country seats
around Marsailles, and then began to
enjoy life, and became a botanist.

When a little fellow, he made himself
a garden in a remote place so as to
study plants; he arranged a herbari-
um, began collections of shells and
crabs, studied and drew fishes and
birds, and spent all the time usually
spent by boys in play in studying the
great book of nature. He was an em-

accusing reader, and among those of his
own choice. If his immense capacity
for hard work and immense love of
all natural life had been based on an
education guided by some wise master
hand, he would have been one of the
world’s great naturalists, but the lack
of system in his early mental training
was a serious drawback to his work,
for he lacked those habits of close
application and patient research which
characterize the labor of the best men
of science. He followed a number of
avocations during the years before he
finally came to America, but seems to
have failed of success in practical af-
fairs. At last, when he was in Phila-
delphia, he met that accomplished
gentleman and enthusiastic scientist,
John D. Clifford, of Lexington, who
seems to have recognized his great
talents and who persuaded him to come
West and try his fortunes. It is sup-
posed that it was through Mr. Clif-
ford’s influence that the professorship
in Transylvania University was ten-
dered to him. Rafinesque seems to
have been all but penniless then, so
he gladly consented to come to Ken-
tucky. He went to Pittsburg and made
the journey down the Ohio in a flat
boat, traveling by day and resting by
night. He spent the time in the conge-

dal study of the flowers, the fishes
and the mollusks of this new region.
Here and during a visit to the village
of Louisville he gathered the materi-
als for his book, "The Fishes of the
Ohio River," which was written while
he was in Lexington and first publish-
ed in a periodical issue here at that
time, The Western Review; this book,
while containing errors from hasty
and incomplete observations yet remains the groundwork of the leithyological literature of the great valley of the Mississippi. From Louisville he went by the river to Henderson and visited Audubon, who lived there at that time. Audubon's description of him under the title of "An Eccentric Naturalist" is none too kind, and some think none too true. Rafinesque tramped through southern Kentucky on foot and finally landed in Lexington in the summer of 1819 and was most kindly received by his good friend Clifford.

Rafinesque in Lexington. Here he spent seven full and busy years. He was at this time about thirty-six years old, of medium size, with dark eyes and long black hair, and with something in expression and carriage that marked him for a foreigner. He had a room in the college building which was filled with butterflies, insects, flowers and all sorts of specimens. I infer he was not a great success as a teacher; his queer foreign ways, his abstraction and absorption in his theme were irresistible challenges to the mischief-loving students, and they played many tricks on him; and then he stood for a science which was new and counted of the little importance in those days. A well-known naturalist wrote not long ago that Rafinesque's misfortune was to have been a half century ahead of his associates; and he was in advance in the method as well as in the matter of his teaching; he was the first object teacher in Kentucky, illustrating his lectures with exhibitions of specimens and thus introduced a method which now obtains everywhere among competent instructors. In addition to class room duties, he gave lectures on various lines to which not only students but the people of the town were invited. One who attended some of these lectures writes of them as having been most instructive and entertaining. He also had classes in French, Italian and Spanish, to which citizens were allowed to come, and is said to have been the pioneer in the West in teaching modern languages. The first scientific society in the State, the Kentucky Institute, was organized about this time, of which Dr. Holley was president and Rafinesque was secretary; before this our naturalist read many scientific papers. But while a teacher in doors, he was the same indefatigable student of out-door life in Kentucky he had been all his life. He seems to have tramped over all accessible parts of the State—from South Kentucky through Eastern Kentucky as far as Cumberland Gap, and even over into Tennessee, and made extensive studies and collections in all branches of natural science found there. There is probably not a nook or corner of interest within ten miles of Lexington which he did not explore, always traveling afoot and carrying a pack at his back for specimens. He seems to have taken special interest in exploring and mapping out the antiquarian remains which were then plainly visible around the town; he claimed to have found distinctly defined fortifications of an ancient city in the neighborhood and his map and plate of those old remains are now among the Smithsonian contributions. He planned a book and started it while here called "Ancient Annals of Kentucky," but never finished it. But he did complete an immense amount of literary work during his residence here; in addition to the book I have mentioned, "The Fishes of the Ohio River," 73 articles are enumerated in his bibliography as having been written and published while he was in Lexington.

The Botanic Garden. After he had been here about five years he inaugurated another project which showed how far he was in advance of his associates; that was to start a botanical garden in connection with Transylvania University. The old name I mentioned in the begin-
We see here a prophecy of experiment stations in connection with our State colleges.

The old subscription book is very interesting because the autographs of many well-known names are found there. Most of the subscribers only take one share ($50), but Rafinesque is down for five shares. Dr. Benjamin Dudley five, Robert Wickliffe six, Henry Clay two, William Barry one. We find many names of non-residents among the list: John J. Crittenden of Frankfort, Gen. Taylor of Newport, Major Short of Hopkinsville and Nicholas Longworth of Cincinnati, who subscribes six shares, to be paid in trees, plants and seeds, he being a nurseryman.

Mr. Picklin seems to have been president of the Transylvania Botanical Garden Company and Rafinesque secretary. By the following fall enough money seems to have been paid in to justify them in the purchase of property, for we find this entry in the minutes of September 24, 1824:

**The Garden is Planted.**

"Unanimously resolved to purchase the lot of Joseph Megowan on East Main street, of about ten acres, for $1,908, payable in five years."

The following January Rafinesque was made superintendent and was empowered to take preliminary steps to carry the garden into operation. By March one thousand dollars of the stock seem to have been paid up and the new superintendent began active work. His journal in his beautiful handwriting tells of the energetic and skillful way this enterprise was started, and pictures to us one happy spring month from the past of Lexington. I will give some of the entries, which will be found interesting by any lover of gardens:

"March 15.—Engaged James Stew art as gardener for $20 per month. David McColl and Billy, an able black man, for labor. I set them to work to pull corn stalks."
"April 1.—Easter Monday. Billy is sick. I lay out the central circle.

"April 5.—Received many presents of seeds and plants from Messrs. Clay, Ward, Powise and Morgan.

"April 6.—Billy is better and works. We go in the kitchen garden. First load of plants comes.

"April 7.—We sow beans, pole and early corn. I pay William by the job—25 cents for 100 yards of spading.

"April 8.—Finished digging for the present; paid $18 to Solomon. We make and sow. Bought shocks for Billy.

"April 9.—Wason brings 1,500 trees, shrubs and roots from the Knobs. I pay him for $39—only $20. Stewart is drank.

"April 11.—Planted trees, etc., brought by Wason. Stewart again drank and is to be dismissed at the end of his month.

"April 12.—Stewart wants his money saying his mouth is out—which happens only the 14th. He has had $12 on account and is in debt for the remaining $8, which I keep. He does mischief in the garden, steals shrubs, keeps seeds and threatens me, being drunk all the while. I am compelled to get a warrant against him.

"April 13.—Stewart leaves town and clears off. Five dollars is due him, claimed by several. We plant and sow.

"April 14.—Planted an acre in castor oil bean. Finished the meridian wall.

"April 15.—Laid off level plat in front. Made a hot bed.

"April 16.—Sowed marsh mallows in all the borders of the level plat. Saved medical plants.

"April 18.—Laid off the base of the hill. Sow canons/e, unised, etc.

"April 19.—Spade borders. Received 200 valuable fruit trees and shrubs and 27 pots from Mr. Nicholas Longworth.

"April 20.—Planted all Mr. Longworth's trees. Hired a man, Isaac, to help. Almost all growing, but with
etiolated sprouts. One pot broken. Sent Mr. Leary two gardenias, one rose, and to Mr. Holly two roses, one geranium and two jasmine in pots.

The Journal ends here and I find no further note of the progress of the garden until the following June, when Rafinesque seems to have gone to Washington and wrote a letter to Mr. Fieldin just before he left. There is a spice of sarcasm in one sentence in the letter where he says: "The managers can attend to the garden during my absence by walking there occasionally in the cool of the mornings and evenings." He appended to the letter fifteen explicit instructions for the men engaged to work in the garden.

**Its Short Life Is Ended.**

Rafinesque appears to have been absent the rest of the summer; in the meantime the garden seems to have failed into financial difficulties. The only entry in the minutes during the following fall was one to the effect that the superintendent had called several meetings, but no one came. Finally in March, 1838, a meeting was secured, when it was resolved, "That it is expedient to suspend further proceedings towards establishing the Transylvania Botanic Garden, and that the property be sold and the proceeds divided proportionally among such shareholders as have paid their installments."

Thus ended this enterprise, and we need not be surprised that a movement so far in advance of the spirit of those early days should come to a speedy termination. Doubtless it was only carried on as long as it was by the sheer enthusiasm and impetus of the remarkable man who conceived it.

Rafinesque left Lexington of his own accord shortly afterward. Whether disheartened by the collapse of his garden, or whether other things led him to go away, we have no means of knowing. He seems to have had a serious rupture with Mr. Holly about this time. We can readily understand his long illness, and absence.

From school rooms duty were a trial to the soul of the president. In one of Rafinesque's letters after he returned to Philadelphia he writes:

"When I returned to Lexington I found my rooms had been broken open, one of them given to a student, and all my effects, books and collections thrown in a heap on the floor. I was deprived of my position as librarian and of my board in the college. I took lodgings in town and carried away all my effects—thus leaving the college with curses on it and Holley—who were both reached by them soon after, since he died next year at sea of yellow fever and the college has been burned with all its effects." Our poor naturalist was certainly vindictive. He led a struggling existence for several years in Philadelphia—poor in pocket, poor in health and with failing mental powers, and finally died alone in a miserable garret, of cancer of the stomach.

A man of great energy, of indomitable will, of unbounded enthusiasm, it might be said of him as it was said of Rosetti: "He was eaten up with the impatience of genius."

IDA WITHERS HARRISON.
# MULTIPLICATION TABLE.

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## TABLES OF FEDERAL MONEY.

**The Denominations are,**

- 10 mills = make = 1 cent
- 10 cents = dime = 1 dime
- 10 dimes (or 100 cents) = dollar = 1 dollar
- 10 dollars = eagle = 1 eagle

**Note.** Dollars × 100 produce cents
Cents ÷ 100 produce dollars

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## TABLES OF MOTION.

**The Denominations are,**

- 60 seconds make = 1 minute
- 60 minutes = 1 degree
- 30 degrees = 1 sign
- 12 signs = 1 revolution
  - or circle.

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