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The Garden Club of America Collection - Alice Lockwood's Lecture American Gardens of the Southern States

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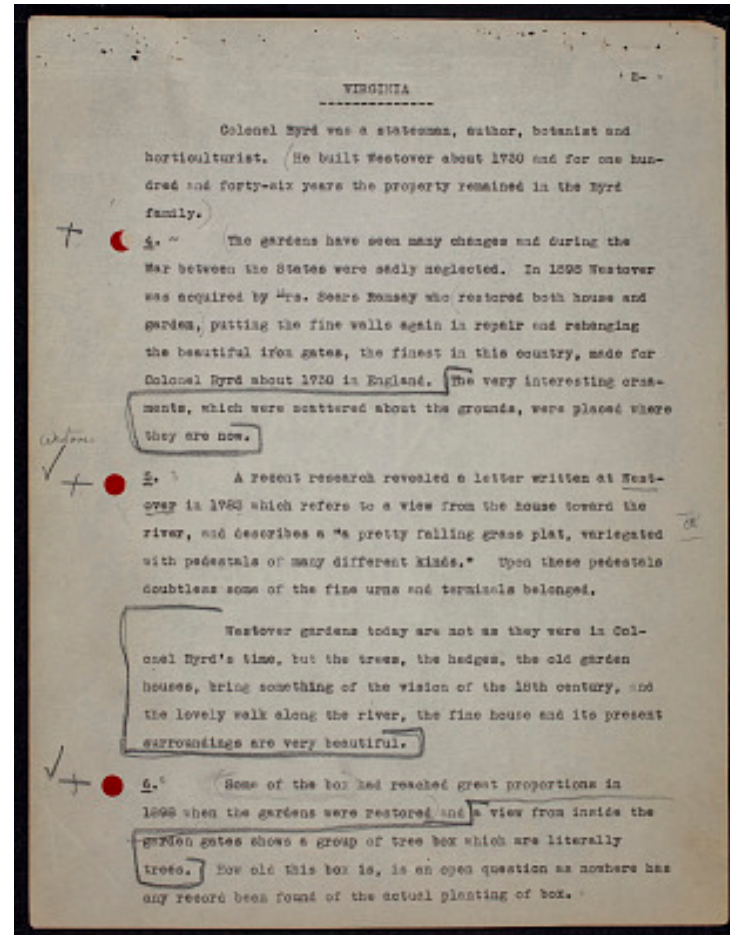
Colonel Byrd was a statesman, author, botanist and horticulturist. He built Westover about 1730 and for one hundred and forty-six years the property remained in the Byrd family.

The gardens have seen many changes and during the War between the States were sadly neglected. In 1898 Westover was acquired by Mrs. Sears Ramsay who restored both house and garden, putting the fine walls again in repair and rehanging the beautiful iron gates, the finest in this country, made for Colonel Byrd about 1730 in England. The very interesting ornaments, which were scattered about the grounds, were placed where they are now.

A recent research revealed a letter written at Westover in 1783 which refers to a view from the house toward the river, and describes a "a pretty falling grass plat, variegated with pedestals of many different kinds." Upon these pedestals doubtless some of the fine urns and terminals belonged.

Westover gardens today are not as they were in Colonel Byrd's time, but the trees, the hedges, the old garden houses, bring something of the vision of the 18th century, and the lovely walk along the river, the fine house and its present surroundings are very beautiful.

Some of the box had reached great proportions in 1898 when the gardens were restored and a view from inside the garden gates shows a group of tree box which are literally trees. How old this box is, is an open question as nowhere has any record been found of the actual planting of box.



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