

ist Ralph E. W. Earl. She exchanged seeds and plants with friends, including Sarah Dougherty Rodgers McGavock at Carnton plantation near Franklin, Tennessee. Jackson filled flower beds with new and rare plants her husband brought back from frequent trips to Philadelphia, home of the famous Bartram Gardens that, from 1810–1850, were managed by Ann Bartram Carr (1779–1858), daughter of John Bartram, Jr., who carried on the family business of international trading in seeds and plants. However, many Nashville gardeners continued receiving plant materials through foreign agents. John Thompson ordered tulip, narcissi, daffodil, and hyacinth bulbs from Holland in 1837 for his flower garden at Glen Leven, a few miles south of Nashville.⁹ These were planted in a traditional formal design, with a circular bed in the center of a square infilled with smaller geometric beds. While these and many other garden models existed locally, the formal grounds surrounding Belmont were notably larger in scale and more extensively ornamented. Plant specimens were carefully chosen for the colorful enhancements and unique or exotic touches they introduced into the visual environment.

Scholarship by garden historian James R. Cothran offers an informative two-part study that identifies distinguishing features of antebellum gardens in the deep South from 1840 to 1860 and profiles the plant materials available to gardeners prior to 1861.¹⁰ Belmont's gardens incorporated French-hedged parterres joined by sinu-

ous tree-lined pathways for people and carriages, rare as well as familiar plants, and classical statuary into its overall design that aligned it with the same tasteful, yet conservative, aspects Cothran associated with the broader planter culture of the colonial and coastal South.

Local gardens of the antebellum period with which Adelia Acklan was acquainted varied in size as well as design. Acklan grew up in Rokeby, the home of her father Oliver Bliss Hayes, situated amidst open fields, pastures, and forest lands. However, near the residence there were picturesque features including a vine-covered gateway and flower gardens.¹¹ Characteristically, there were no plantings girding the foundations of Rokeby, a trend that would not become fashionable until later in the nineteenth-century. The gardens Acklan oversaw at Belmont reflected a combination of the familiar and fashionable in terms of design, and local as well as exotic in terms of plant materials, but the grounds were exceptional; exceeding those of Rokeby in both charm and scope. Therefore, it is more enlightening to consider Acklan's gardens within a broader geographical and cultural context.

Gardens of country villas were viewed by nineteenth-century patrons as extensions of the architecture of the house, and the grounds surrounding the Belmont mansion aligned with this ideal. In a July 1853 article on "Garden Furniture" published in *The Horticulturist*, the garden was referred to as the "country parlor" and,

like their indoor counterparts, outdoor parlors were well-appointed with furnishings and decorative objects.¹² Statues produced by American and European artists were available to consumers as decorative objects for gardens by the last decade of the eighteenth-century. In Philadelphia, a 1796 advertisement read: "To be sold... Six elegant carved figures, the manufacture of an artist in this country, & made from materials of clay dug near the city, they are used for ornaments for gardens... they are well burned and will stand any weather without being injured... they represent Mars, and Minerva, Paris and Helen."¹³ In the mid-nineteenth century, Janes, Beebe & Co. of New York advertised villa decorations stating that "the natural beauties of a country place can be increased by hundred-fold by proper disposition of a few vases, fountains, and figurines." The growing demand for objects to create fashionable ornamented landscapes was satisfied by agents who produced, imported, and distributed a variety of objects for private and public gardens. Ornate garden benches, statuary of allegorical figures, gods and goddesses, a menagerie of dogs, deer, rabbits and other animals, either cast in metal or carved in marble, were on offer. There was also a market for Grecian urns, fountains, ornamental balustrades, hitching posts, decorative chimney tops, gazebos used as summerhouses, and even orangeries, often echoing European models but produced and consumed in the United States.

Visitors to Belmont often remarked upon the amount of outdoor art. An account, which appeared in the August 1860 volume of *Debow's Review*, described the setting as a "perfect paradise" and noted "the resources of art have, at the same time, been exhausted upon it."¹⁴ A list of the garden statues known to have been placed in the Belmont garden shows a preponderance of iron versus marble statuary ranging across biblical, classical, allegorical, and animal subjects. Animals comprised a popular thematic category. One example is a statue, *Reclining Greyhound*, from Horatio Greenough's 1839 sculpture titled *Arno*, a marble effigy of his beloved pet that the artist created during an extended stay in Italy. Statuary and even gazebos from Belmont can be traced to the trade catalogues of the J. L. Mott Iron Works, Janes, Beebe & Co. and its successor Janes, Kirtland & Co., J. W. Fiske Iron Works, and other manufacturers of garden furnishings of the period. A hitching post in the form of a black youth standing on a bale of cotton is the only signed example of cast iron by Wood and Perot of Philadelphia in the collection, and it is the earliest documented example of this figure in the antebellum period. A similar hitching post was illustrated as No. 547 in the 1870 Wood & Perot catalog titled *Portfolio of Original Designs of Ornamental Ironwork of Every Description*.

Casting technology involved making and assembling multiple components. In 1853, an article in *Godey's Lady's Book* offered a detailed account of the process