

Researching a 1922 Diary



Karen Urbec, MLIS, CA
Archivist and Digital Collections Specialist
Archives Day 2020



Liquor
F

INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER COMPANY
OF NEW JERSEY, INC.
MANUFACTURERS OF THE
"CHAMPION" "DEERING" "McCORMICK" "MILWAUKEE" "PLATO"
"OSBORN"
HARVESTERS AND OTHER LINES OF MACHINERY

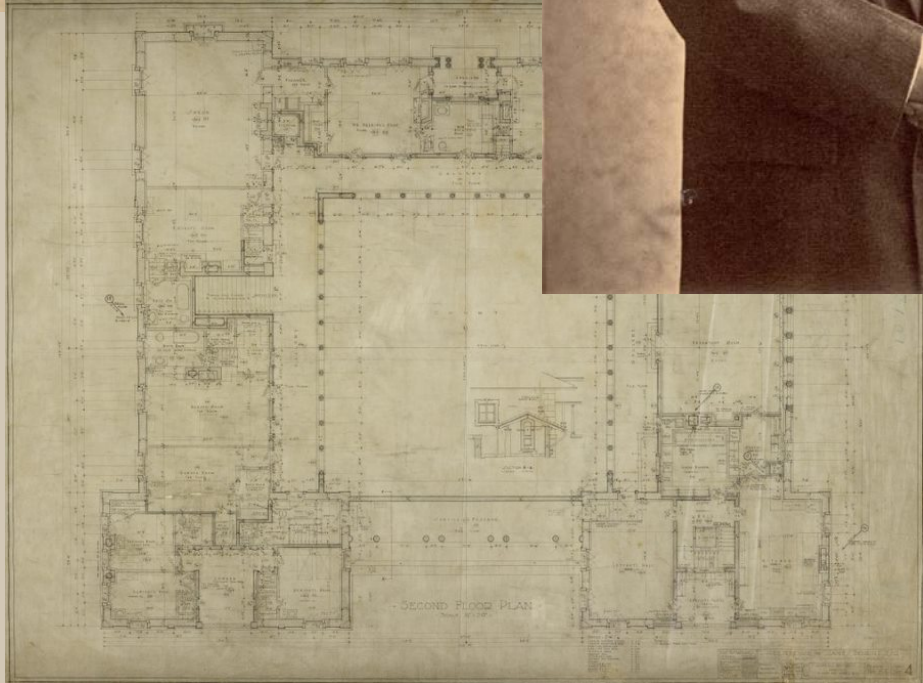
OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT
HARVESTER BUILDING
CHICAGO. May 16, 1916.

Dear Mr. Chalfin:--

I am assuming from the fact that I saw and heard nothing of Mr. Koons in New York that he is remaining in Florida and that he is attending to the matter of the moist storage vault. I feel so sure that when he does this, now or later, he will revise the list so that it will correctly show the actual facts that I should be ashamed to write you regarding the matter were it not for my great anxiety concerning it.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Paul Chalfin,
432 Fourth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.



24,000 Pieces of Correspondence
3,000 Architectural Drawings
3,000 Photographs



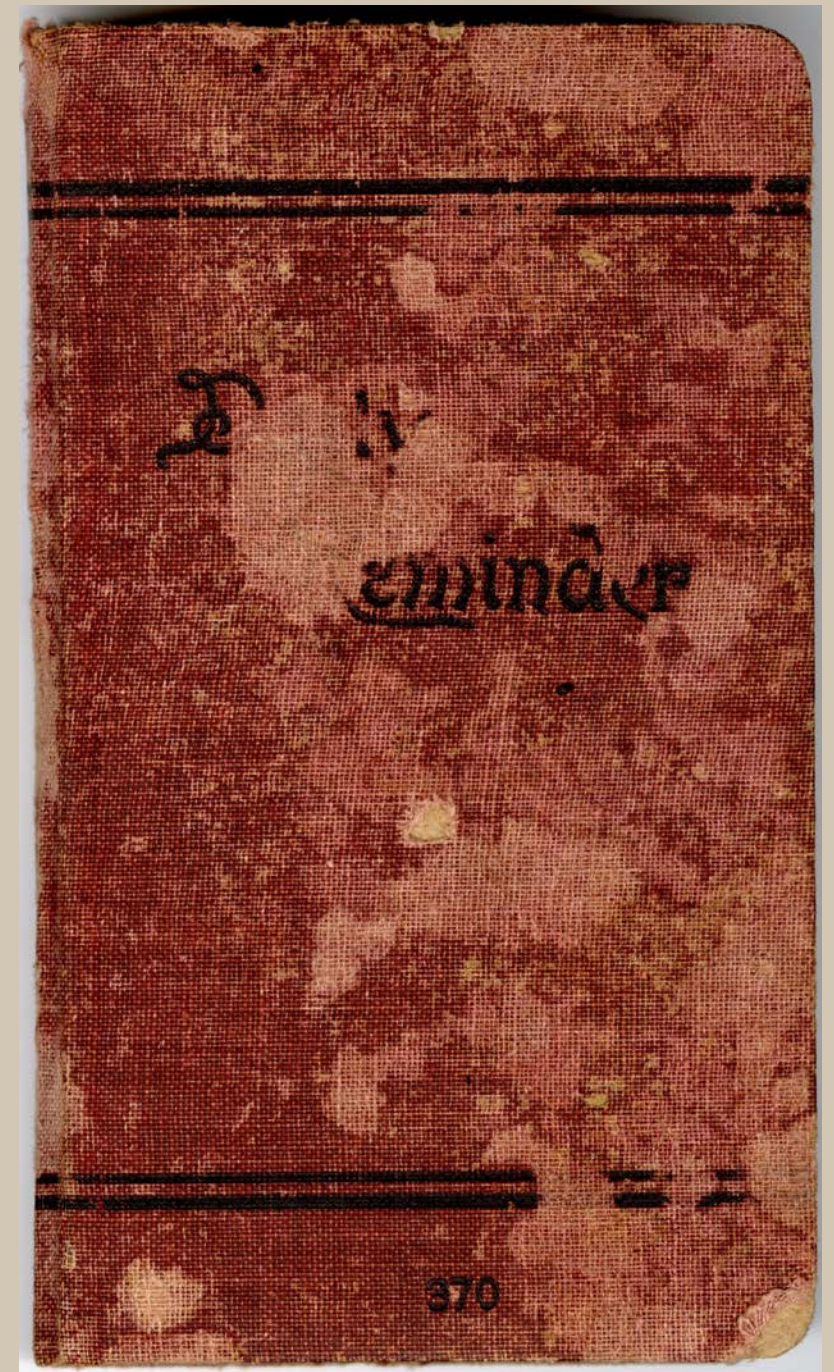
Initial Information

- Daily diary of the Head Gardener in 1922
- Legacy item
- Attributed to I. N. Court
- Tons of great garden information

Questions Soon Began to Arise

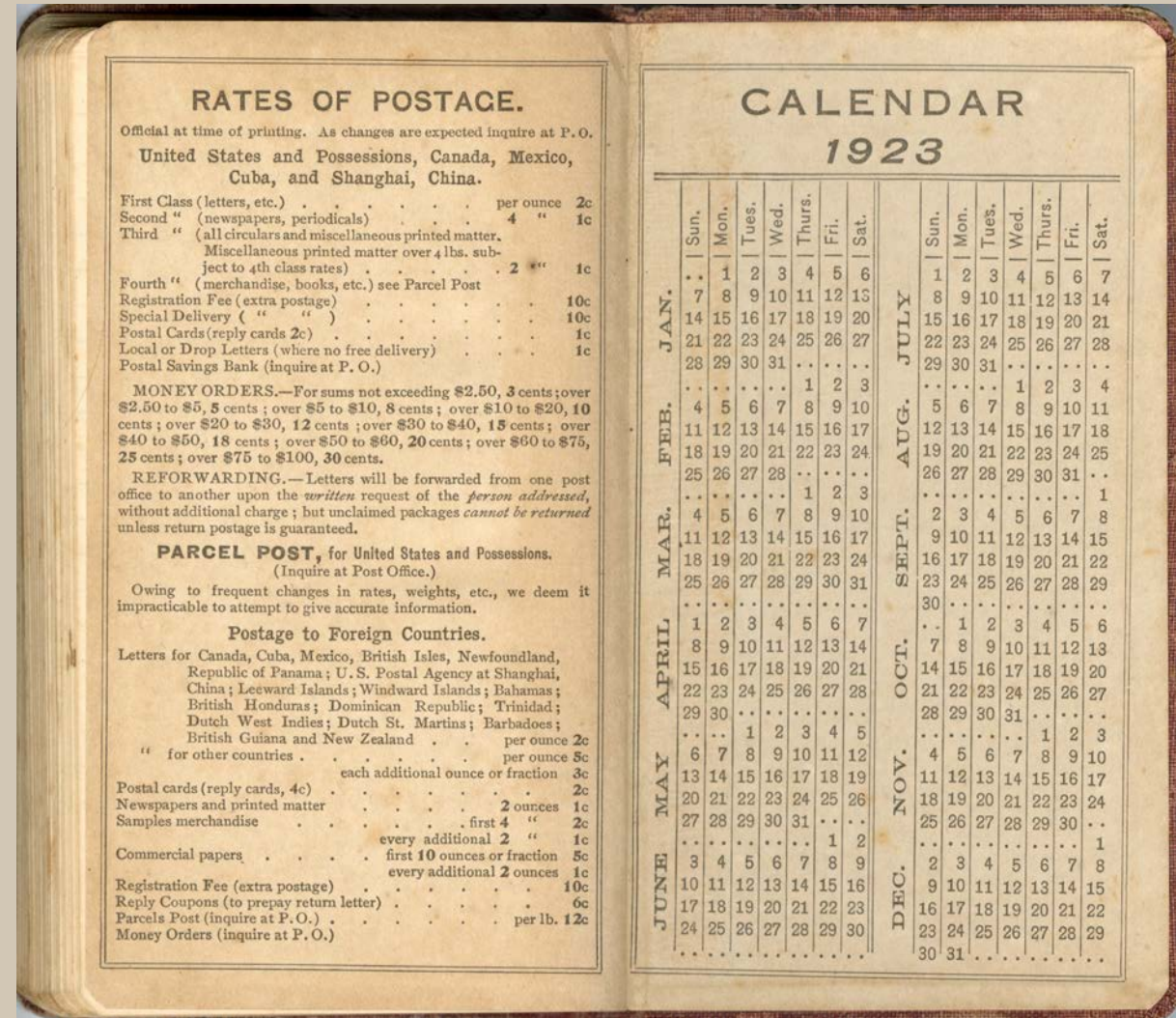
- I. N. Court was difficult to find in the historic record
- He quit/was fired in 1916
- Court worked for F. Burrall Hoffman, Jr., so probably an architect
- Diary includes more than just garden information

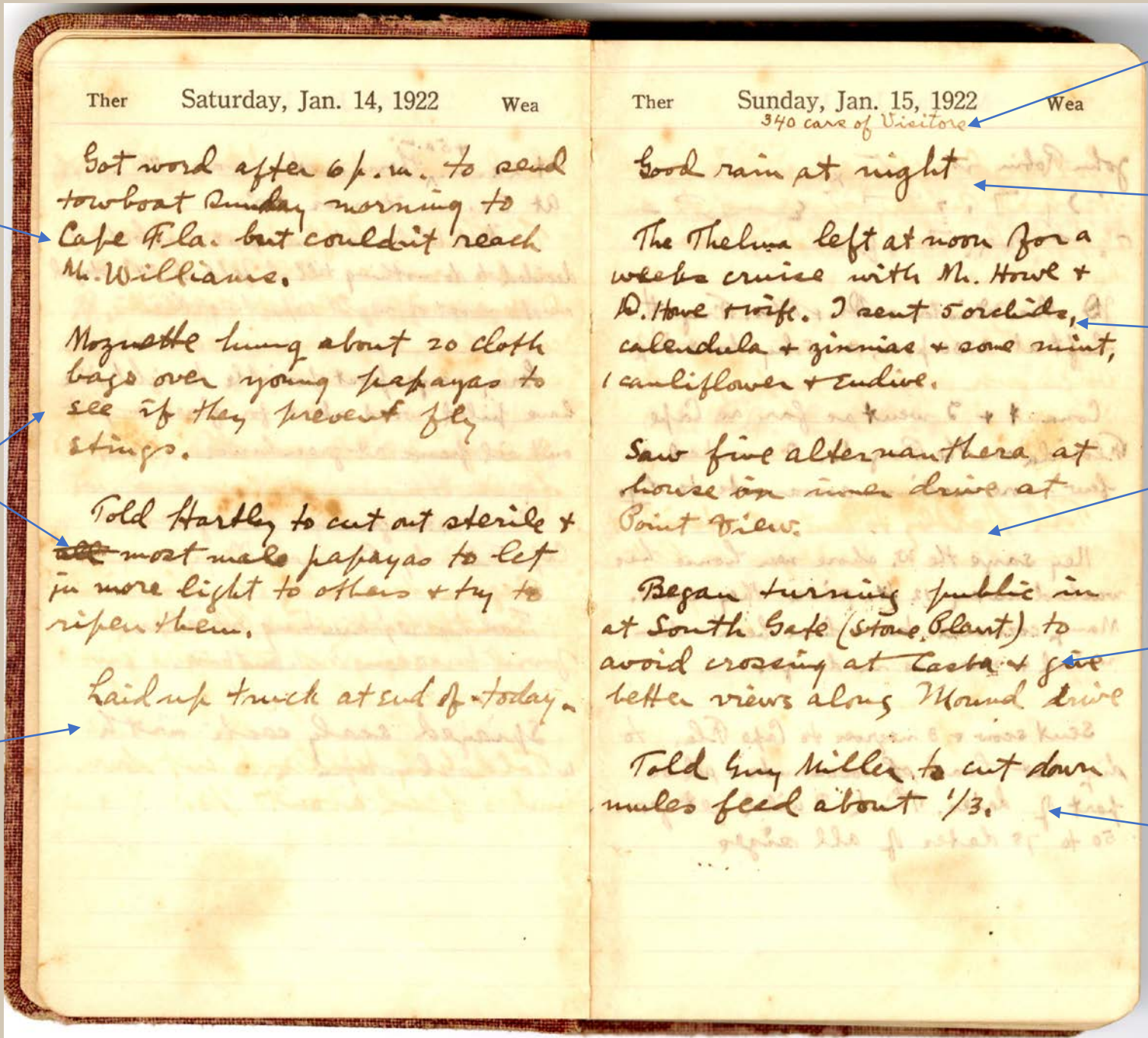
Clearly the diary of a superintendent or estate manager,
but who could that be?



What we learn from the 1922 diary

- Who worked at or interacted with Vizcaya (social history, staff life)
- What was grown here, when was it in season? (climate change)
- Weather patterns (3 active systems in Atlantic on Sept. 22, 1922)
- Fees, salaries—financial details
- How many cars drove through to tour the estate
- Life during Prohibition (employee bailed out of jail for alcohol possession on March 7, 1922)
- James Deering and friends, travels and time in residence
- Details of running a large, self-sufficient estate





Ther Saturday, Jan. 14, 1922 Wea

Got word after 6 p.m. to send
towboat Sunday morning to
Cape Fla. but couldn't reach
Mr. Williams.

Mozette hung about 20 cloth
bags over young papayas to
see if they prevent fly
stings.

Told Hartley to cut out sterile +
~~all~~ most male papayas to let
in more light to others + try to
ripen them.

Laid up truck at end of today.

Ther Sunday, Jan. 15, 1922 Wea

340 care of visitors

Good rain at night

The Thelma left at noon for a
week's cruise with Mr. Howl +
D. Howl + wife. I sent 5 orchids,
calendula + zinnias + some mint,
1 carniflower + endive.

Saw five alternanthera at
house on inner drive at
Point View.

Began turning public in
at South Gate (stone blant) to
avoid crossing at Costa + give
better views along Mound drive

Told Guy Miller to cut down
mules feed about 1/3.

Managing workers
at Cape Florida

Papaya management

Vehicle maintenance

Keeping track of visitors

Weather notes

Pleasure cruises,
and supplies

Scoping out new plants
for the gardens

Visitor traffic management

Animal husbandry



New head gardener

Condolence flowers

Sourcing water plants

Assigning painters

Finances

Ther Wednesday, Feb. 1, 1922 Wea
216 cars.

Broomfield came on today as head gardener

Sent a large box of flowers to McCormick funeral.

Realty Securities Co. - T. O. Wilson - by Mr. Strand gave me permission to take all ferns + water plants we want from 5th St Jungle.

4 Ther Thursday, Feb. 2, 1922 Wea

R. Roberts began as painter. Put him on Osceola road house.

Jack Brant finished paying up notes.

Wrote letter consenting to assignment by Miami Engineering Wks. of 850⁰⁰ bal on unfinished gondola job to Bank Bay Biscayne. Have letter from them guaranteeing satisfactory completion.

At this point, it is clear that this was not I. N. Court's diary.

Clearly, it's not the diary of the head gardener, either, since the author just hired a new one.

Also, he's managing many aspects of the estate.

Time to look for other suspects!



My first hope: William Dunn Sturrock (1891-1931)

- Vizcaya's first superintendent
- Very involved in Village design
- Later owner of Exotic Gardens



Our records have him at Vizcaya from 1914 to 1917 as Superintendent, then through 1921 on a consulting basis. So, maybe! But, alas, no.

Other possible suspects:

Joseph A. McDonald, construction supervisor from 1913-1916

Gilbert A. Murtagh, 1915

George Pearce, 1918-1919

A. Kaye, assistant superintendent from 1913-1919

William MacLean, 1915-1918



And then I found Frank Landon McGinnis!

- Worked at Vizcaya prior to 1919
- Selected by James Deering to be property manager in May 1919
- Clashed with several others on staff at first, but was still property manager in the 1930s

All this from a 2005 research in our correspondence by a Collections intern

Code word: Ruby

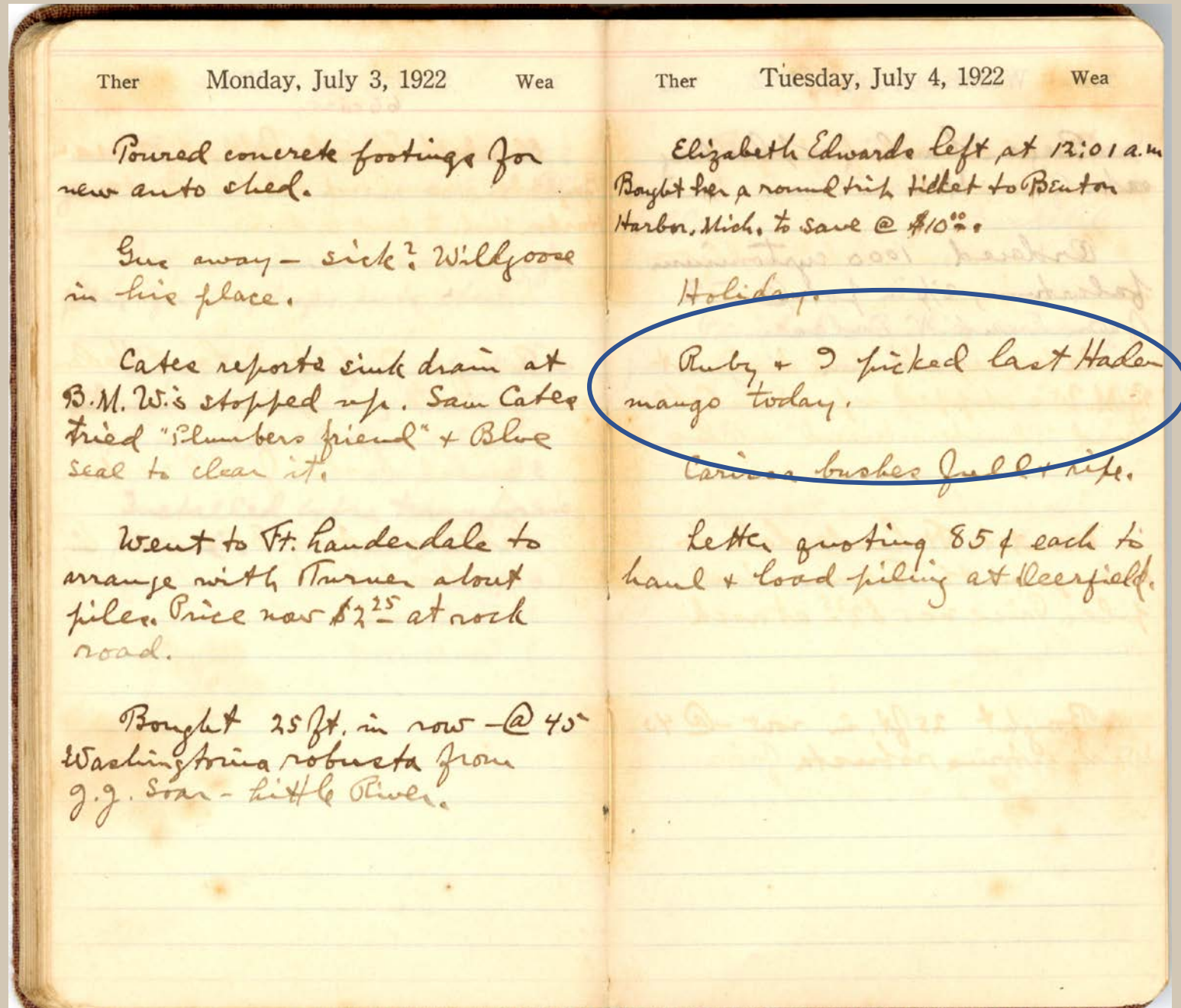
Vizcaya records heavily favor McGinnis as the diary's author

But who is Ruby?

Perhaps his wife's name?

Possibly another gardener's last name?

If it's Mrs. McGinnis, it is the only personal item mentioned in the entire diary!



How to know for certain?

When in doubt, look 'em up on Ancestry!

Winston Burtram	M	Head	M	W	57	M		
McGinnis Frank L.	M	Manager	M	W	31	S		
Essau Francis	M	Secretary	M	W	33	S	1912	al

1920 U. S. Census: 31-year-old McGinnis is unmarried and living at Vizcaya, working as Manager.

3251	21	24	Malpica, Hannah	Head	R	150.0	yes	M	W	42	M
			McGinnis, Frank L.	Wife	R		yes	F	W	30	M
			Ruby L.	Wife	R		yes	F	W	30	M

1930 U. S. Census: McGinnis is still at Vizcaya, now with his wife, Ruby McGinnis.

Form 1 2000 REGISTRATION CARD No. 1

1 Name in full: Frank Landon McGinnis, 30

2 Home address: 4736 Shadyside Road Chicago Ill

3 Date of birth: May 15th 1887

4 Are you (1) a natural born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? Natural Born

5 Where were you born? Bowling Green Kentucky

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? Citizen

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? Stenographer

8 By whom employed? Kaestner & Hecht Comp's

9 Where employed? 500 South Throop Street

10 Married or single (which)? Single Race (specify which): American

11 What military service have you had? None

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

Frank Landon McGinnis

12-2-27-A

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

1 Tall, medium, or short (specify which)? Steel 3"⁴ Slender, medium, or stout (which)? Slender

2 Color of eyes? Brown Color of hair? Brown Build? No

3 Has present arm, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)? No

I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

Minnie St. Pangs

Precinct: 45th 25th ward

City or County: Chicago

State: Ill

5/11/1917 (Date of registration)

World War I Draft Registration Card, signed June 5, 1917

Frank Landon McGinnis—Quick Facts

- born May 15, 1887, Bowling Green, Kentucky
- married Ruby Larmon (b. October 25, 1899) on August 25, 1920
- no known children from the marriage
- died September 13, 1966, aged 79 years
- Ruby Larmon McGinnis died January, 1986 in Miami, Florida



U.S. Passport application dated April 10, 1924

Image at lower right is the only picture I have of Frank and Ruby McGinnis

These signed photographs of the applicant must accompany the application. The photograph must be on this paper, should have a light background, and be not over three inches in size.

Do not think that the copy of this application is a copy of the applicant's photograph. It is necessary to the use of this form by my office in connection with the filing of an application for a passport or in connection with the filing of an application for a passport or in connection with the filing of an application for a passport.

A woman's application must state whether she is married or not, and a married woman must state whether her husband is a native citizen.

The rules should be carefully read before making the application in the Department of State, Division of Passport Control, Washington, D. C.

(FORM FOR NATIVE CITIZEN.)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
PASSPORT
MAY 7 1924
ISSUED
WASHINGTON

STATE OF Florida
COUNTY OF Dade

I, Frank Landon McGinnis, a NATIVE AND LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, hereby apply to the Department of State, at Washington, for a passport.

I shall be accompanied by my wife, Ruby McGinnis, who was born at Alvaton, Kentucky, on September 18, 1888. The date of my marriage to her was August 25th., 1920.

I solemnly swear that I was born at Bowling Green, Kentucky, on or about the 15th day of May, 1887, that my father, A. A. McGinnis, was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and is now residing at Bowling Green, Kentucky.

That he emigrated to the United States from the port of London, England, on or about 1840; that he resided in the United States from 1840 to 1845, at London, England; that he was naturalized as a citizen of the United States by the Court of London, England, on 1845, as shown by the accompanying Certificate of Naturalization; that I have resided outside of the United States at the following places for the following periods: Never resided out.

and that I am domiciled in the United States, my permanent residence being at Miami in the State of Florida, where my occupation is State Manager. My last passport was obtained from Washington, D. C. on June 1, 1906, and was destroyed.

I am about to go abroad temporarily, and I intend to return to the United States permanently with the purpose of reading and performing the duties of citizenship therein; and I desire a passport for use in visiting the countries: Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Holland.

I intend to leave the United States from the port of New York, N. Y. sailing on board the Agritania on May 20th, 1924.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

Further, I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion: So help me God.

Swear to before me this 10th day of April, 1924.

Deputy Clerk of the U. S. Dist. Court at Miami, Fla.

3058

FEE RECEIVED
MAY 5 1924

* A person born in the United States should submit a birth or baptismal certificate with his application, or if the birth was not recorded, affidavits from the attending physician, parents, or other persons having sufficient knowledge to be able to testify as to the place and date of the applicant's birth.
† If the applicant's father was born in this country, lines should be drawn through the blanks in brackets.

Age: 36 years. Mouth: small
Stature: 5 feet, 4 inches, Eng. Chin: small
Forehead: medium Hair: brown
Eyes: hazel Complexion: pale
Nose: straight Straight Face: oval
Distinguishing marks: Small scar on left side of chin.

IDENTIFICATION.

O. W. Pittman May 1st, 1924

I, O. W. Pittman, solemnly swear that I am a native citizen of the United States; that I reside at Miami, Fla.; that I have known the above-named Frank Landon McGinnis personally for 2 years and know him to be a native citizen of the United States; and that the facts stated in his affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

O. W. Pittman
Commissioner of the U. S. Dept. of State


Swear to before me this 1st day of May, 1924.

Deputy Clerk of the U. S. Dist. Court at Miami, Fla.

Applicant desires passport to be sent to the following address:
Mr. Frank Landon McGinnis,
P. O. Box 4188,
Miami, Florida.

mat

A signed duplicate of the photograph to be attached hereto must be sent to the Department with the application, to be affixed to the passport with an impression of the Department's seal.






Thank you!

And please write your name in your books!

Karen Urbec, MLIS, CA Archivist and Digital Collections Specialist

Vizcaya Museum and Gardens Karen.urbec@vizcaya.org

