

# Longview—A Proposed Club Project

by Paul Hoffman, President

Almost a century ago, the 30-year-old editor of the *Progressive Farmer* arranged for the construction of his new 4900 square foot residence. The site, located three miles southeast of his office in downtown Raleigh, was a small hilltop on 800 acres of open farmland. The home would be constructed from stone quarried on the property.

This young editor was a great reader with an eager and questioning mind even though his formal education never went beyond the first year of high school. Starting work at the *Progressive Farmer* at age 16, he was named editor two years later. He would hold this position until his passing in 1964. He acquired the farm to put into practice

the principles he was advocating in the magazine related to the production of dairy, poultry, tobacco, and cotton.



The young man named his new estate “Longview.” Wanting to combine beauty with practicality, he designed and installed a “long view” - a 400 foot long, 8 foot wide garden walk leading south from the rear of his mansion. An original plan drawn in 1925 still exists showing a stone path with identified locations for dogwood, crepe myrtle, lilacs, lilies, spirea, hollies, butterfly bushes and other plantings along each side of the walkway.

The editor was Dr. Clarence Poe. The “Dr.” came from five honorary degrees granted over the years in recognition of his work in agriculture. The farm is now the site of Wake Med Hospital which he was instrumental in founding. The home is the Poe house, sitting behind Wake Med and serving as the headquarters of the Wake Med Foundation. The garden walk with many of the original plantings is still there, but hidden in an overgrown forest entangled with brush, vines, and small trees.

This hidden walk, lying unused now for forty or fifty years, represents an opportunity for us as the Gardeners of Wake County. In addition to meeting together, eating together, and selling azaleas together, our group in the past has had a history of digging together – meeting to work on public gardening projects in order to enhance our friendships and bring beauty to our community. Working with our Projects Committee, consisting of Jessie Jackson, Sharon LaRusch, and Lynn Swanson, the Wake Med Foundation has extended an invitation to renew our Club tradition of working together for the good of the broader community. This is an opportunity for our Club to be part of the hands-on labor force that restores this historic garden walk.

I encourage everyone to keep a close eye out for future announcements about this project. The Projects Committee will be organizing work days, probably beginning around the end of January. We will be working in stages. The first goal is to clear the brush from the path to make it walkable again. We don't have any deadlines, but everyone's enthusiastic participation, when possible, will make all the difference, assure success, and provide an asset to the staff and patients of Wake Med and the citizens of Wake County. That's the kind of service our Club is all about.

