

FRIENDS OF FOREST HILL PARK

The Forest Hill Park Post



July 2019—Extra

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Meet a Park Snapper

Patricia Wood

We are publishing this **extra** issue of the July newsletter because our best efforts at researching the turtle on the first page of the original issue led us to conclude that it was a chelydra serpentine, a snapping turtle. Though the carapace was covered in mud and legs and feet weren't visible, we missed the yellow coloring on the head. The turtle Carol Ridderhof saw in the park was an eastern river cooter (we're pretty sure.) We offer our apologies and will share interesting facts about the cooter in our August issue. In the meantime, since our article was about snapping turtles, we have inserted a photo of a snapping turtle below. Notice the snapping turtle has no color on its head.



The snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) is a large freshwater turtle. Its favorite habitats are shallow streams or ponds such as the lake in Forest Hill Park and Reedy Creek. That ecological fact allowed Carol Ridderhof an opportunity to observe a female snapper in process of laying eggs in the park in early June.

These turtles can grow to be quite large with shells up to 20" in length and body mass up to 85 pounds. Snappers continue to grow throughout their life. Their maximum life span is more than 100 years. Their diet consists of plants and animals such as fish, frogs, snakes or un-

wary birds.

Mating occurs from April through November with peak egg laying season in June and July. Females often travel quite a distance from water to find soil in which to lay their eggs. After the female digs a hole, she deposits between 25 and 80 eggs and uses her hind feet to refill the hole. At that point, her maternal job is complete and she returns to her watery home.

Incubation ranges from 9 to 18 weeks. Turtle eggs and hatchlings are subject to predation by skunks, crows, foxes, raccoons, bullfrogs, herons, hawks, snakes and more. Imagine hatchlings' arduous journey from the nest across the distance to water with so many predators looking for them. A leading predator of adult snapping turtles is man, who hunts them for the main ingredient in turtle soup.

The species is not considered to be endangered; however their numbers have declined sufficiently due to hunting, the pet trade and habitat degradation causing Canada and several U. S. states to enact stricter conservation measures.

If you're lucky enough to encounter a snapping turtle in the park, don't attempt to touch it but rather enjoy its presence as one of Mother Nature's wonders in Forest Hill Park.



Snapping turtle hatchlings represent tasty treats to many predators. Their journey to home waters can be harrowing or fatal.

Janine Martin

New Park Resident

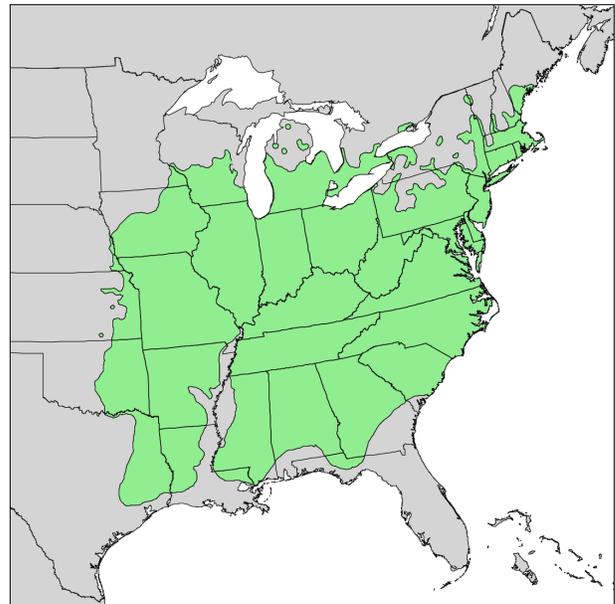
One of the newest additions to Forest Hill Park is a black oak seedling (*Quercus velutina*,) planted by volunteers in early March 2019. The black oak is a stately oak that was introduced to commerce as early as 1800. The black oak's common name refers to its nearly black bark. It can reach a height of more than 100 feet and can have a life span of 200 years.

Black oaks grow best in moist, rich and well-drained soil and the volunteers hope they found a good spot for the seedling to grow into a tree. Acorns of black oaks are an important food for squirrels, white-tail deer, mice, voles, wild turkeys, and other birds. The tree's fall foliage is yellow or red, making it a beautiful addition to the landscape. It has an unusually long taproot, though, which makes it difficult to transplant successfully. Not many nurseries sell black oaks for that reason.

The park's 12" seedling has a lot of growing to do to reach full maturity. Volunteers will continue to keep an eye on it and record its progress.



There are high hopes for this black oak seedling.



The green area is the black oak's habitat.



Black Oak acorns.

1940s–In and Near Forest Hill Park



Semmes Avenue, February, 1949

Dunlop Mills fire (south end of Mayo Bridge) , March, 1949



Stone House,
September, 1942

A Walking History Tour Attraction

One of the houses included in the Forest Hill Walking History Tour is on 41st Street near Dunston Avenue. An early occupant was Michel de Tarnowsky along with his family.

Michel de Tarnowsky was born in 1870 in Nice, France. His father was a medical doctor and his mother was an artist. When his father died in 1886, Michel decided to become a doctor, but a case of typhoid fever left him suffering with severe headaches, so he pursued his artistic ambitions instead.

He entered the School of Decorative Arts in Nice and enrolled in architecture and modeling classes, but he expressed his preference for sculpture when he wrote, “As early as 1890, within 3 months, I made 26 plaster busts, marble and brass medallions.”

By 1891, Michel was attending l’ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Within three years, he was exhibiting his work at the Salon de Artistes Francais and International Society of Painters and Sculptors in Paris. At the turn of the 20th century, he taught sculpture at the New York School of Arts. Information about his stay in this country is scarce, but we do know that he was asked by the National Society of American Sculptors to hold an exhibition at Madison Square Garden.

During 1905-1906, Michel and his family lived on 41st Street. An ad dated April 1, 1906, in *The Times Dispatch* reads, “Mr. de Tarnowsky, most favorably known to Richmond people through his studio work with Mr. E. V. Valentine, and his most agreeable personality, has consented to lecture before the Richmond Art Club Thursday evening, April 5th, at 8:30 o’clock, on “Houdon.” Several ads appear during 1905 in the newspaper referring to classes at the Art School at 304 S. Third Street where Mr. Michel de Tarnowsky and Mrs. Harriotte L. Taliaferro gave instruction.

Michel de Tarnowsky returned to France in 1909 or 1910 where he was contracted to decorate the front of Hotel Negresso in Nice during 1912. He served in World War I as Interpreter and Liaison officer to the British and was highly commended for his courage and composure. He received the Two-Star Croix de Guerre, the Military Cross, the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Legion d’Honneur.

Following the war, Michel sculpted war memorials in Cannes, Nice, Moirans and other cities. The Great Depression began in 1929 and a second depression in 1936 in France, both making life unstable for artists, particularly sculptors.

When World War II erupted in 1939 in Europe, Michel was working on a bust of Maurice Mignon, the Head of the Centre Universitaire Mediterranean, and on a drawing for the pediment of l’Ecole Normale Supérieure in Nice. Once again, he devoted his linguistic skills to the Armies, but sadly lost his vision. He died in 1946.



Michel de Tarnowsky and his family lived in this grand home on 41st Street in the early 1900s. This was one of only three structures that stood on 41st Street between Forest Hill and Dunston at that time.



Mark your calendar for the next Walking History Tour, September 21st, to hear about more intriguing properties and their occupants. Meet at 9:30 at the Stone House to look at vintage photos. The tour begins at 10:00. \$15 per person, no charge for members of Friends of Forest Hill Park.