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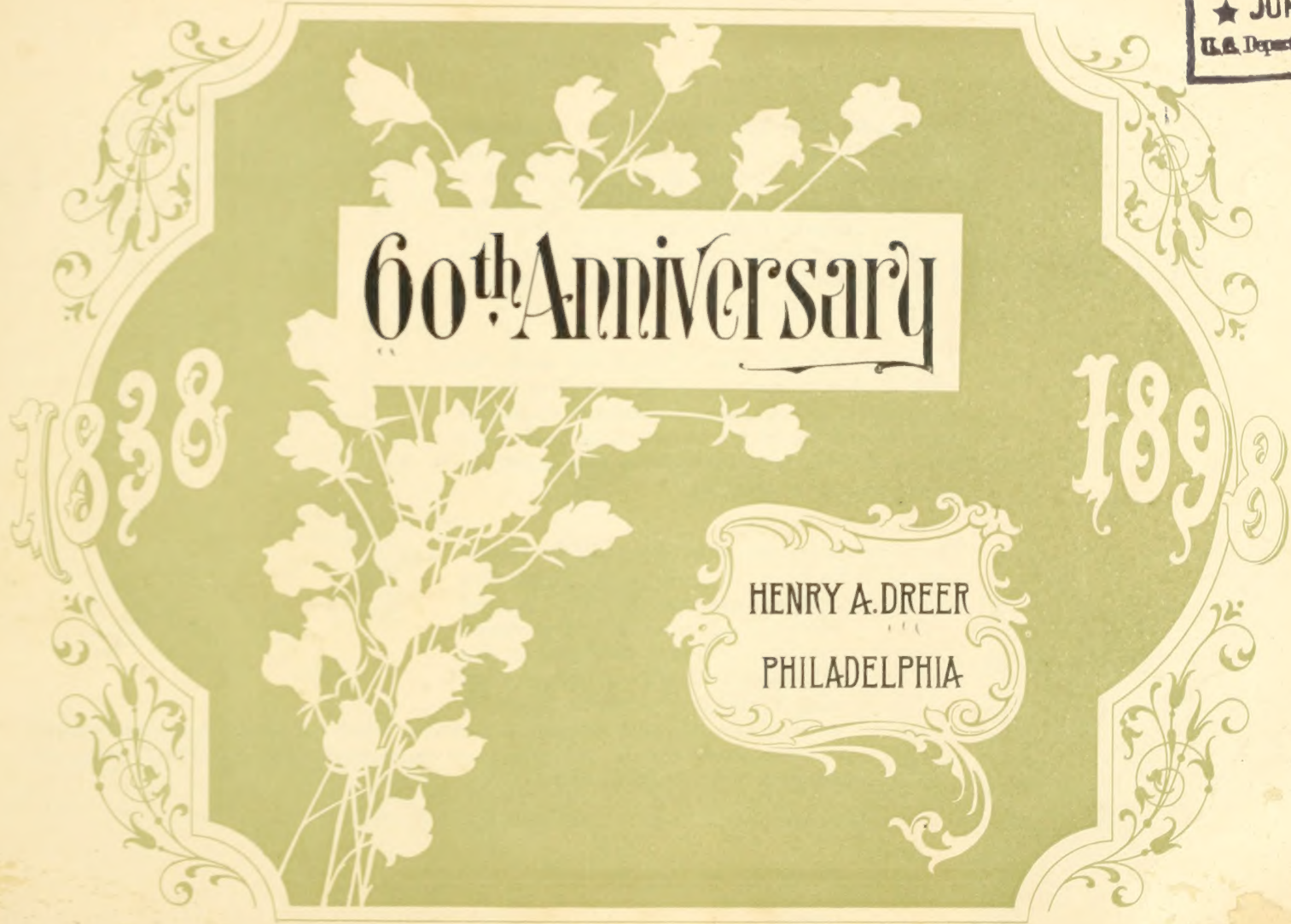
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# 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

1838

1898

HENRY A. DREER  
PHILADELPHIA





# A Greeting

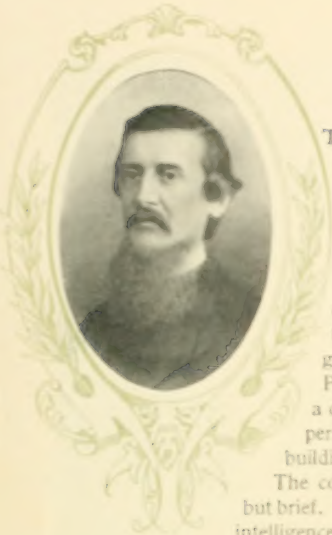
The rounding of six decades in the history of an establishment which has grown from small beginnings to an extent far beyond the ideals of its founder, affords a proper occasion for both reminiscence and forecast. It may be compared with the acorn buried in kindly ground which has become a beneficent oak, the finest type of endurance and usefulness.

If, as we are told, that man is blessed who causes two blades of grass to grow where but one grew before, certainly he is a benefactor of humanity, in the highest sense, whose daily task it is to put into the hands of the tillers of the soil the means to wrest from nature the choicest products of her fields.

The corporation engaged in business under the honored name of the late Henry A. Dreer presents the following anniversary pages to its numerous and widely scattered patronage, as a supplement to the annual catalogue for the year 1898, confident that this souvenir will be found interesting and that it will prove a friendly agency in securing to a still larger degree that confidence which the concern has so long enjoyed among its great army of customers, whose varied requirements it is always the highest ambition of this house to serve.



Prepared by  
FRANK H. TAYLOR,  
Artist and Publisher,  
Philadelphia.



HENRY A. DREER.

**THE FOUNDER.** The founder of this industry, a native of Philadelphia, commenced business in company with Mr. Henry Hirst at the age of twenty years. The first store occupied by the firm was located at 97 Chestnut Street (old style of numbers). The site is now covered by the handsome building of the Bank of North America. The illustration upon the next page, from an old print, gives a quaint and interesting glimpse of the Philadelphia business centre of more than half a century ago. The changes of the intervening period have been so great that not one of the buildings shown in the picture now exists.

The connection of Mr. Hirst with the enterprise was but brief. Mr. Dreer continued to push the business with intelligence and vigor.

**THE STORY OF A SUCCESS.** Within the period embraced in the existence of the house of Henry A. Dreer as a firm and a corporation, the number of the stars upon our national flag have increased from thirty to forty-five; the population, which in 1838 was 13,000,000 souls, of whom nearly 70 per cent. resided in the states bordering the Atlantic Ocean, has been multiplied five hundred per cent., and the City of Philadelphia has grown, within that time, in a like ratio as regards population and to a far greater extent in material wealth and power.

In the initial year of this business the first steamship crossed the Atlantic Ocean from Great Britain. The canal-boat and stage-coach represented the chief available facilities for travel as the lumbering Conestoga wagon typified the movement of freightage.

Coincident with the marvelous changes wrought by the progress of these years all over the land stand the histories of thousands of successful business enterprises devoted to a great variety of specialties which have

come into being within the period named, none of which may properly claim a more uniform or substantial ratio of growth than that of the Seed, Plant and Bulb House of Henry A. Dreer.

**THE PRESENT STORE AND WAREHOUSE.** In 1848 the store was removed to No. 59 Chestnut Street; in 1858 to No. 117 Chestnut Street (new number, 327), and in 1863 the present roomy and attractive building, No. 714 Chestnut Street, was bought and adapted to the needs of the rapidly increasing business. Thus for sixty years the house has been located on the principal business street of Philadelphia.

Mr. Henry A. Dreer died in December, 1873, leaving to his son, Mr. William F. Dreer, the task of developing the Seed and Nursery Establishment and of fostering the valuable trade created by a lifetime of patient and conscientious effort.

The quarter century which has since intervened has been full of busy years, and the illustrations which depict the present magnitude of this establishment bear witness of the faithfulness with which the trust has been fulfilled.

The four-story warehouse, with two extra floors in half stories, is filled from roof to cellar with stock used in the business, besides potatoes and onion sets carried in cold storage. The first floor is devoted to the retail sales and sample rooms and shipping department on the rear street. An electric elevator carries one to a half floor of miscellaneous stock, then to the first floor. The general and private offices are in the front, while the rear is used for the storage of Flower and Vegetable Seeds. Another half story is then reached, loaded with goods of all kinds. On the third floor the work of filling seed bags is done by a corps of girls: large and small





CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA, BETWEEN THIRD AND FOURTH STREETS, SIXTY YEARS AGO, SHOWING LOCATION OF ORIGINAL STORE.

packages are put up in quantities ready for spring orders. Everything is prepared months in advance of the busy season that no delay may occur when the rush of Spring business commences. A complete printing office is located on this floor where all the seed bags and boxes used are printed upon presses run by electricity. The seed cleaning machinery, run by the same power, is located in the rear. The seed to be cleaned is elevated to the floor above and gravitates through the machines to the lower floor.

The most essential part of the work, after the quality of the seeds is assured, is to have them clean and of heavy weight. Picking and sorting is looked after with great care.

In the Autumn season, the people on this floor are busily engaged in executing the Bulb Orders. The fourth floor is filled with general seed stock and grass seeds.

The front roof is covered by a seed testing Greenhouse, heated by hot water. This is for the germinating test of Vegetable, Flower, Grass, Clover and all farm seeds. Being immediately under the hourly observation of the seed tester no chances are taken in determining those that are of good germinating quality and those to be discarded.

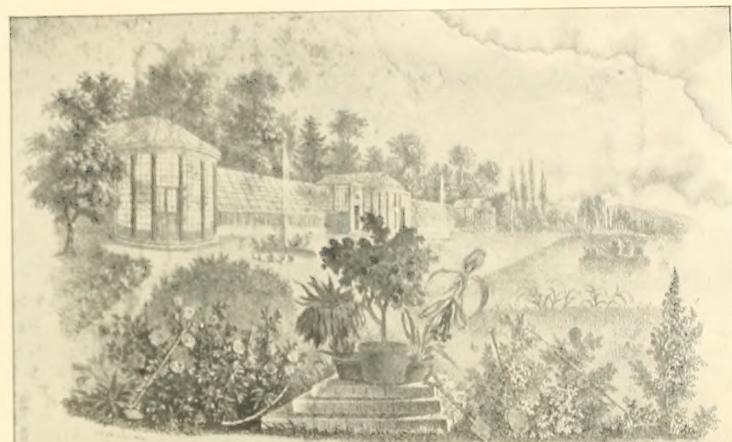
The cellar is devoted to the packing department and the storing of miscellaneous goods.

#### THE DREER WINDOWS.

Philadelphians have learned to watch the display windows of the 714 Chestnut Street Store for something new constantly: something to interest everyone, from the humble possessor of a single geranium pot to the proud owner of a private conservatory: from the owner of a few square yards of suburban lawn to the man who has a hay mow to fill, always a rich display of specimens from the Nursery or Trial Grounds, representing color and form pleasing to the eye and appetizing to the lover of table delicacies.

#### SEED PRODUCING.

AUXILIARY SPECIALISTS.—An interesting fact, not generally understood outside of the trade, is represented in the system in vogue with this House under which numerous specialists, resident not only in nearby sections, but as distant as California and Europe, devote their attention to the perfection of a single class



## HIRST & DREER Seedsmen & Florists

37  
Chestnut St.

above 37th St. and to Bank of North America.

Keep constantly on hand a large Assortment of  
Warranted Garden-Grass, & Flower- Seeds.

FRUIT & ORNAMENTAL TREES

Green & Hot House-Plants.

A SUPERB COLLECTION OF BULBOUS ROOTS.

Silk, Agricultural & Floral Publications.

FARMING AND GARDEN TOOLS.

BIRD-SEEDS & BIRDS OF APPROVED SONG.

Attached to the Store is a large Collection (daily increasing) of Paintings of all the finest Bulbous-root Flowers, Green & Hot House-Plants, Shrubs and Annual Flowers found west of the size of life forming a catalogue to select from at any season of the year.



PRESENT STORE AND WAREHOUSE  
714 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA

of vegetables or flowers grown from stock seeds supplied from the Riverton Establishment. Thus, the most potent soils together with the greatest experience, are both placed under contribution for the benefit of the buyer.

These varied seeds are procured from experts engaged in growing for the best markets and are sent to regions in which the climate conditions have been found to produce the highest results.

#### FLOWER SEEDS.

The growth of this part of the business has kept pace with the other branches, and where ounces were needed a few years ago, pounds are now necessary to supply the ever increasing demand. Our constant aim is to procure the very best strains obtainable, both of home and foreign growth, and the question of quality is never lost sight of

by one of price. Ten years ago, Europe furnished nine-tenths of all the Flower Seeds used, but we now have grown for us, by specialists in this country and in our own grounds at Riverton, nearly one-half of the entire quantity used, and many seeds which were imported a decade since, notably Sweet Peas, Verbena, Canna, etc., etc., are now exported in large quantities. In the trial grounds at Riverton, during the past season, over four hundred different species were tested, which included all of the European novelties. This is done each season to guard against the possibility of inferior varieties finding their way into our list.

Under this head is included the Spring flowering or Dutch and BULBS. French Bulbs, Bermuda, Japanese and other Liliiums, the Sacred

Narcissus from far-off China, Lilies of the Valley from Germany, Black Callas from the Holy Land, and the host of Summer flowering sorts grown in this and other countries, each variety being brought from places where they grow to their highest perfection. The number sent out each year is steadily increasing, and from the few thousands which were sufficient for our wants sixty years ago, it required over three millions to fill our orders in the past season, which were made up of three-quarters of a million each of Hyacinths and Tulips, three hundred thousand each of Lilies and Narcissus and one and one-quarter millions of miscellaneous bulbs, such as Crocus, Snowdrops, Scillas, Amaryllis, etc., etc. Many factors have contributed to this vast increase, the low price at which they are now sold being one of the foremost, bringing the choicest varieties within the means of the humblest flower-lover. As an instance of the great reduction in cost, we recall that when *Lilium Auratum* (The Japanese Golden Banded Lily) was first offered in 1865, it sold at \$5.00 per bulb, whereas, the same peerless variety is now offered in our 1898 Catalogue at six cents. The export trade in Bulbs is steadily growing, and nearly half a million of American grown Bulbs are now sent to Europe annually.



FERNS





INTERIOR OF PRESENT STORE

**GRASS AND CLOVER.** Every year, with more intense farming operations, the demand increases for strictly choice grass and clover seeds. We procure the best from home and foreign sources, with which, after they have been re-cleaned in our establishment, no fault can be found, as to grades. Several carloads are sold during the year to critical farmers and gardeners.

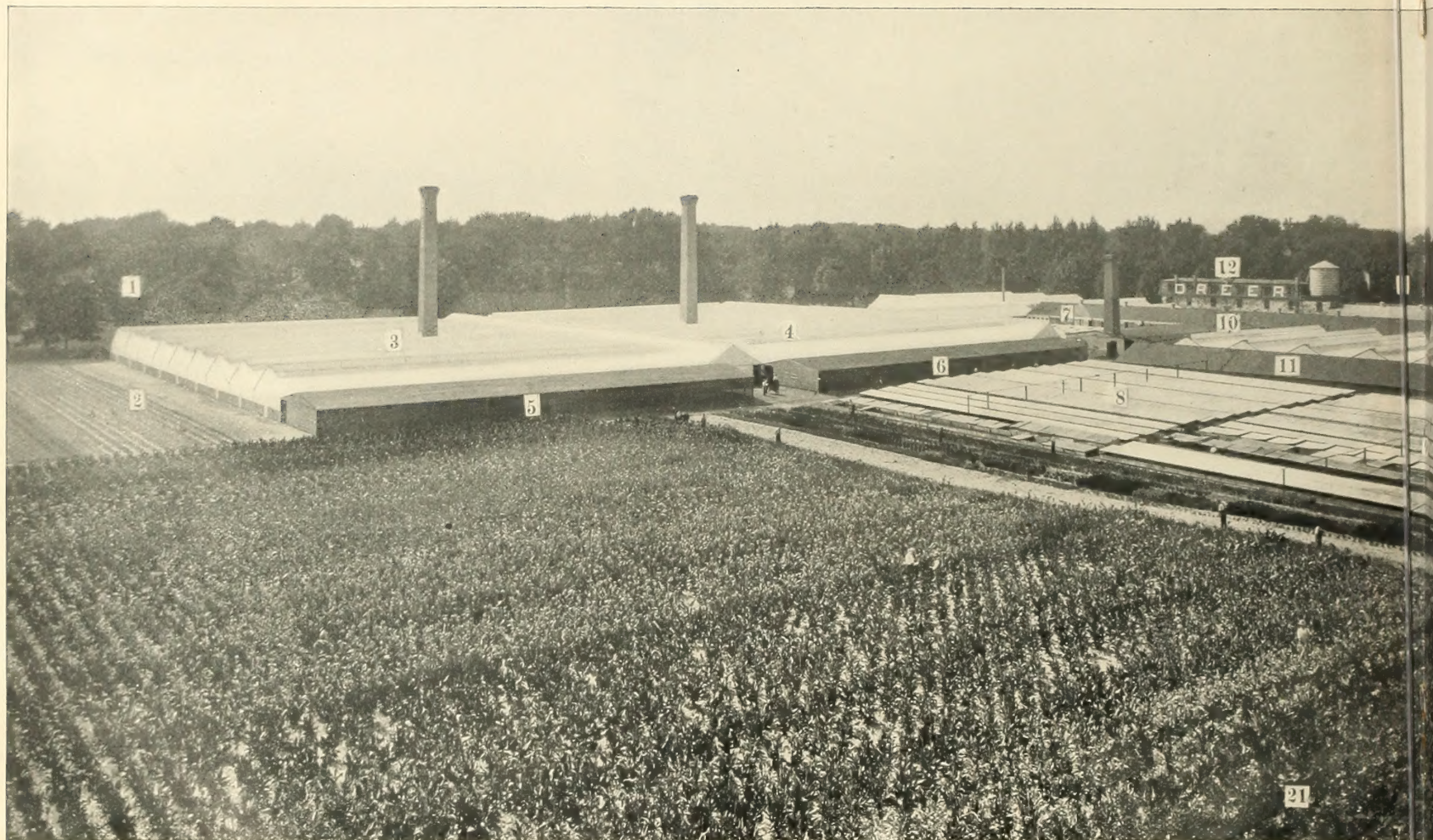
**LAWN AND PASTURE GRASS SEEDS.** We are the introducers of the Fairmount Park, Evergreen, Dreer's Permanent Pasture, Willow Grove Park and Putting Green Mixtures, all adapted to different soils and locations.

**POULTRY SUPPLIES.** Insecticides and Fertilizers are supplied of the best and purest qualities.

**GARDEN AND FARM IMPLEMENTS** And everything for the Garden, Greenhouse and Farm are furnished of the best, and prices are the lowest consistent with quality. To prove this we are pleased to furnish samples and quotations on large or small lots.

**INSPECTION OF GROWING CROPS.** It is very necessary to keep in touch with the seed-growing specialists to insure proper "roguing" during the growing season. Mr. W. F. Dreer, having spent a season with the largest German Seed House in their principal seed growing district, and another with the largest French Seed House in Paris, is peculiarly fitted to make these tours of inspection, while journeys to distant lands are often made by him, as in the case of a trip to Japan, through which important business connections are made and novelties secured. Annual voyages are also made to Europe by one of the managers in quest of novelties and to keep in touch with the latest methods in growing. Nearby crops are inspected regularly by the managers of the seed and plant departments.

**CATALOGUES.** From a single sheet in 1838 with an edition of a few hundred, our Catalogues have kept pace with the growth of business through the successive years, until this season our Garden Calendar of 168 pages (issued with this Souvenir); Mid-Summer List (issued in June); Bulb Catalogue, issued in September, and various smaller lists sent to florists, will reach a total of nearly 250,000, requiring 50,000 pounds of paper, and entailing an outlay of nearly four thousand dollars for postage.

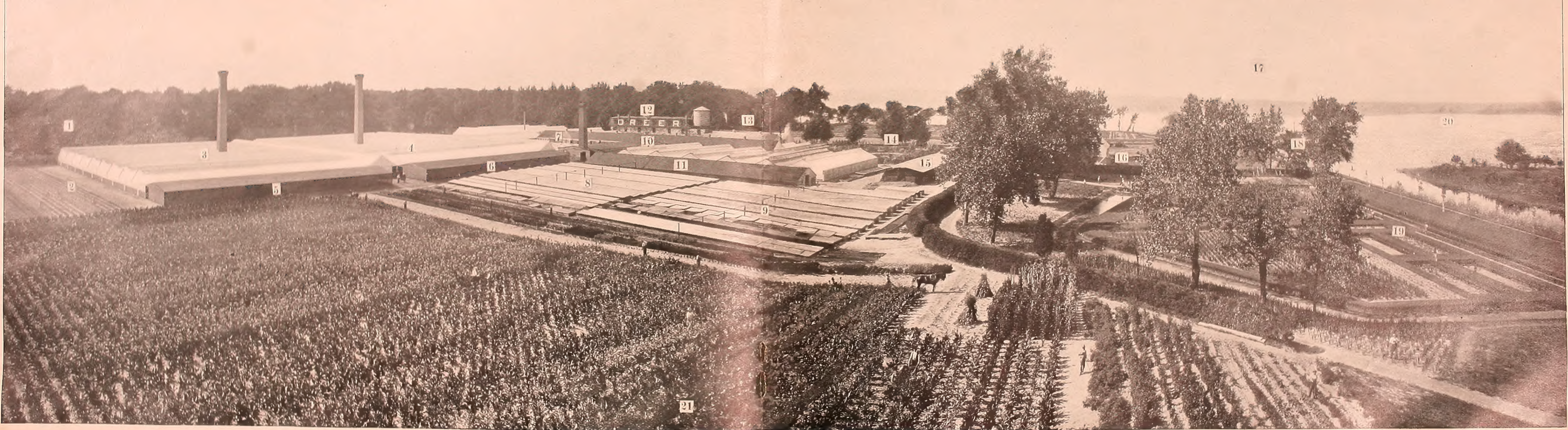


- GENERAL VIEW OF THE STRAWBERRY
- |  |                               |                                    |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Fulton St. (5 minutes' walk from R. R. Station or Steamboat Landing). | 2. Strawberry Beds.           | 3. One Acre House Erected in 1896. |
| 10. Packing House.   | 11. Cold Storage House.       | 12. Original Stone Building.       |
|  | 17. Holmesburg, Philadelphia. | 18. Coal Wharf.                    |



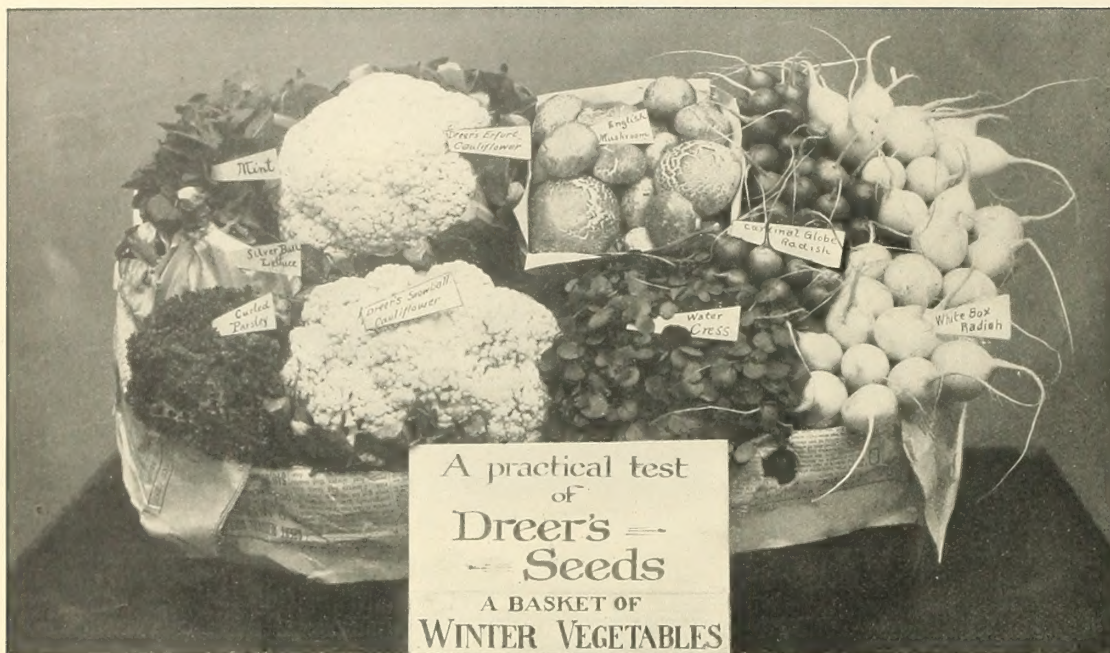
1. The Old Delaware River Bridge  
 2. Delaware River.  
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GENERAL VIEW OF THE ESTABLISHMENT AT RIVERTON, N. J.

- |  |                         |                                    |                                    |                         |                               |                                   |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Fulton St. (5 minutes' walk from R. R. Station or Steamboat Landing). | 2. Strawberry Beds.     | 3. One Acre House Erected in 1896. | 4. One Acre House Erected in 1895. | 5 and 6. Lath Houses.   | 7. Office.                    | 8 and 9. Frames for Ferns.        |
| 10. Packing House.   | 11. Cold Storage House. | 12. Original Stone Building.       | 13. Saw Mill and Box Factory.      | 14. Tropical Lily Pond. | 15. Moss, Peat and Soil Shed. | 16. Partial View of Trial Ground. |
| 17. Holmesburg, Philadelphia.  | 18. Coal Wharf.         | 19. Water Lily Garden.             | 20. Delaware River.                | 21. Canna Field.        |                               |                                   |



were removed to a square of ground upon 35th Street below Haverford Avenue; they consisted of six small Greenhouses heated by flues. The demand for building lots in the course of time necessitated the vacation of this plant, and in 1873 the houses were removed to the present site at Riverton, N. J., which was chosen as the permanent location of the business in 1868.

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT AT RIVERTON.

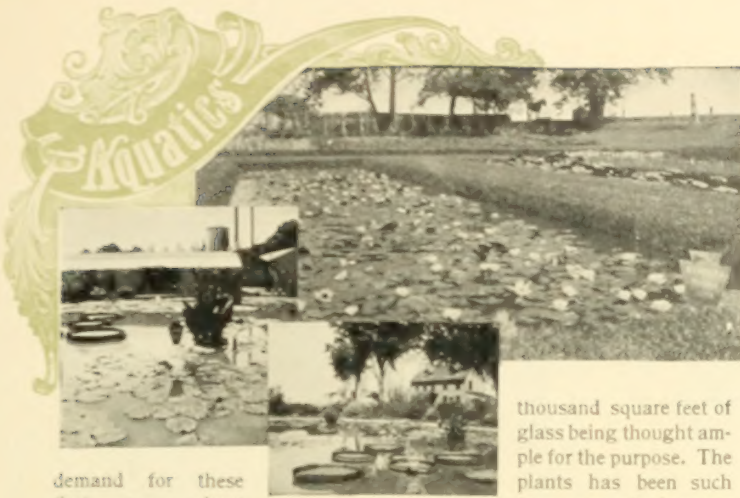
The Riverton Seed and Plant Farm covers one hundred acres. The distance from the City is but nine miles by either rail or steamboat. Several years before the removal from West Philadelphia to Riverton, Mr. Henry

A. Dreer had built there, under the supervision of Mr. C. P. Hayes, a three story stone packing house, protected upon the north-west, and a range of eight glass houses, each having dimensions of eleven by one hundred feet. To this area of eight thousand eight hundred feet of glass surface were added the eleven thousand and two hundred feet brought from the former nursery in 1873.

#### SOME LARGE FIGURES.

Since 1886 an increase of one hundred and eighty thousand feet of glass has been added, giving a total of over two hundred thousand square feet, or five acres, with two acres in addition covered by packing sheds, cold storage and lath houses. The heating of the Greenhouses is derived from twelve boilers, having a capacity of seventy-five hundred horse-power, both steam and hot water being used. The consumption of coal in a winter season amounts to about two thousand tons. Over sixteen miles of pipes are used in radiating the steam and hot water. The lumber used in box-making amounts to over one hundred and fifty thousand feet annually, many second-hand boxes and baskets also being used. The steam Saw-Mill is almost constantly busy, and two carpenters are kept at work through the year making packing boxes. Considerably more than half a million pots are bought in a year, to which may be added a large proportion of those repeatedly used.

In 1873 the stock consisted mainly of Bedding Plants, such as Verbenas, Geraniums, Petunias and Roses, with some trees and shrubbery. About fifteen years ago a start was made with Palms and Ferns, about a



demand for these that now about devoted to their cultivation, these two plants being a leading specialty.

thousand square feet of glass being thought ample for the purpose. The plants has been such four acres of glass are

**PALMS.** An idea of the quantity of Palms now growing here may be gained from the fact that in July last, over one million plants were ready for sale and there were in stock a half million seedlings, the varieties being principally the *Areca*, *Cocos*, *Kentia*, *Latania*, *Livistonia*, and *Phœnix*.

America has heretofore drawn upon Europe for supplies of this kind, but this House decided that with its economies in growing plants, coupled with favorable shipping facilities, they could be raised and distributed at Riverton in successful competition with the foreign growers. Two Greenhouses were erected in 1895 and 1896, each covering an acre of ground, both of which are now filled to their utmost capacity with home grown stocks in all stages of development, thus practically proving the success of the experiment. These two houses are heated by seven hot water tubular boilers, from which hot water circulates through nearly nine miles of two inch piping, extending beneath the benches. These houses are each capable of holding 364,500 plants in three inch pots, or 540,000 in two inch pots.

**FERNS.** These, like the Palms, are raised from seeds which are sown in pots, a houseful at a time, three to four times in the season. The seedlings, when large enough to handle, are picked off into boxes, after which they are transferred to small pots. About one million ferns are handled annually, and there are carried in stock about 300,000 in two and three inch pots, and over 1,000 boxes of transplanted seedlings, as well as a houseful of specimen plants.

**ROSES AND AZALEAS** are handled in large quantities. Of the latter over 30,000 plants were imported from Belgium last Autumn.

*Araucarias*, or Norfolk Island Pines, are grown in pots in two large lath-roofed Summer Houses, which contain upwards of 4,000 of these plants. Of *Cycas Revoluta*, or Sago Palms, over 20,000 lbs. of dormant stems were imported this season, in contrast to the 200 lbs. required a few years ago.

About 10,000 Cannas were planted out in the field during the Summer to be used for propagation, and presented, in the season, a mass of color which was extremely beautiful. These comprised the best and most desirable varieties. There were also planted along the edge of this field a trial bed of Cannas, containing over two hundred sorts, including the latest novelties. Here the test was made as to which to hold and which to discard.

About one acre is devoted to the *Petunia* for hybridizing, from which is obtained the famous Dreer's Double Strain, in both seeds and plants. A large portion of the one hundred acres cultivated by this establishment is used in the growing of Hardy Perennials and Herbaceous Plants, Hardy Climbers, Hardy Shrubs, Violets, Strawberry Plants, Vegetable Plants and Asparagus Roots.

**AQUATICS.** The Water Garden, situated on the north-east side of the Nurseries and on the bank of the Delaware River, comprises an area of about five acres of ground, which was previously a boggy piece of waste land, but containing several springs. The central and largest part of the ground is surrounded by a dyke, laid out in



GARDENERS' DAY AT RIVERTON. AUGUST 31, 1897.

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