



“Dr. Hosack has departed this life...” ***The Mather Connection to David Hosack***

This June 2nd the Homestead will be graced with a presentation by Victoria Johnson, the author of *American Eden*, the acclaimed biography of David Hosack. David Hosack was the attending physician at the Burr-Hamilton duel, but his greatest legacy was as founder of the country’s first botanical garden. Today Radio City Music Hall sits on the footprint of Hosack’s conservatory and his land is home to Rockefeller Center.

In *American Eden*, Victoria Johnson gives mention to Michael Floy Jr.. Michael Floy Jr. was the great-uncle of Jane Thacker Floy Mather who was the wife of Stephen T. Mather. Johnson writes...

“On Christmas Eve, local nurseryman Michael Floy Jr. noted in his diary that his beautiful scarlet camellia was finally in bloom. This was Floy’s *Camellia hosackia*, named a decade earlier for the man who had done so much for the city’s nurserymen through the New York Horticultural Society.”

Michael Floy Jr.’s diary entries for December 23 and 24 1835 as written were:

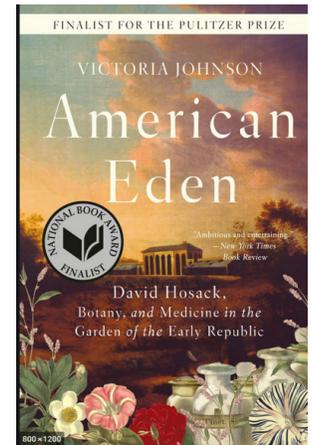
- 23 W. Clear and cold. Dr. Hosack has departed this life. Anyone reading this may if so disposed look at the page opposite Jan 22nd 1834, where they will find more concerning said Dr. Hosack...”
- 24 T. Cold and hazy today. Camellia Hosackia in bloom, but the Camellias do not look very well since the frost has been in...”

And what was it that Michael Floy Jr. wrote in 1834 concerning Dr. Hosack? It appears that among New York’s horticulturists there may have been some reservations—or jealousy--concerning Dr. Hosack’s apparently unfettered ability to pursue his interests.

The entry in the diary, actually from January 21, 1834, reads...



David Hosack 1769-1835



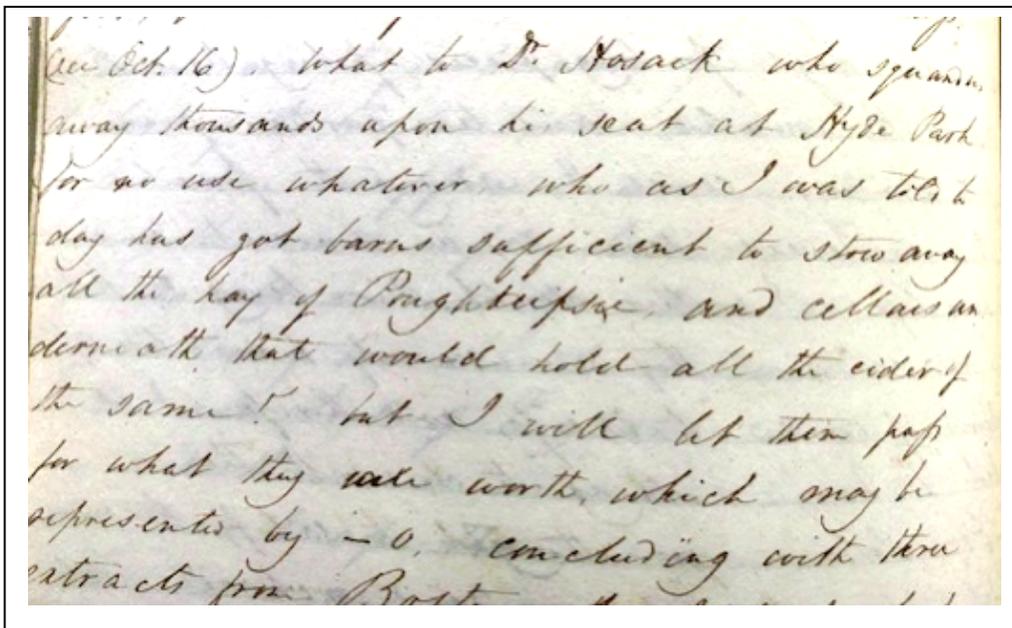
Author Victoria Johnson will be at the Homestead 12 noon June 2, 2021

21 t. "...What to Dr. Hosack who squanders many thousands upon his seat at Hyde Park, for no use whatsoever; who as I was told today has got barns sufficient to stow all the hay of Poughkeepsie and cellars underneath that would hold all the cider of the same? But I will let them pass for what they are worth which may be represented by—O."

Interestingly, despite such feelings toward Dr. Hosack, the Floys did continue to raise and sell the Camellias which had been named in Dr. Hosack's honor. This from the December 31st 1836 entry in the diary...

"...Henry came down twice a day for dung. At Harlaam; arranged cactuses or, as a learned man once said, the Cacti. Sold a Camellia Floyi, C. Hosackia, C. fimbata, C. Harrisonia, for \$31..."

Perhaps no Eden is ever untroubled. It will certainly be interesting to learn much more about the life and legacy of Dr. David Hosack on June 2nd.



"What to Dr. Hosack..." January 21, 1834 entry in Michael Floy Jr.'s diary

As noted in an earlier Mather blog, the original three volumes of *The Diary of Michael Floy Jr.* are currently stored in the Homestead attic.