

THE REVIEW OF THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

Volume 2, Number 2

October 19, 1965

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Editor:	Eleanor Westmeyer, 60 Gary Rd, Stamford, Conn. 06903
Nominating Committee	
Expire 1967:	William Oweneel, Terre Haute, Indiana
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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The weather has been so variable this year that an accurate report is not possible at this time. Drought in the eastern part of the country caused large losses in plant population, no reports from the western area as the Robins, for one reason or another, are late and only one early report from the southern section which sounded like a good year there. The north did fairly well and staged

another successful show. In this area the rainfall was timely and adequate. Mr. Payne never had to water at all and I watered once. William Ouweneel has his planting around the edge of a pond and water is not a problem. We are properly thankful for our blessings.

Early bloom was the finest that I have seen in the area as a whole. The two-year plants at Payne's were considerably taller than usual, probably due to the timely moisture and somewhat more than ample manure that was applied before planting. It was a real show with many of the newer kinds striving to outdo the rest of the patch. This is written on August 8th and there is still a scattering of bloom in his patch. The planting around Ouweneel's pond was superb. In partial shade and with all of the moisture that they could use his plants went "all out." I have never seen them better than this year. My own patch was about average but one more thing was learned. Last fall I continued to dig and replant after the last plant was mailed. The fall was an 'open' one. The wind said, "Plant on." I planted. Winter came. Many plants were not well rooted. More than I like to think of died. Scarce ones and good. Like Wenonah, I had listened to the wind.

Japanese irises led the list of registrations of others than tall bearded irises in 1964, with 71. Others then increased to over 43% of all registrations to prove that interest in them is increasing fast. As a result I feel that the Sections have proven that they have a demand right to more consideration than they have had in the past. Our own Section has been one to suffer from neglect in the matter of possible Honors. Two years ago we were promised that the judges' ballot would carry a 'tear-off' portion that could be used by the judges to vote for Japanese irises until August 15, due to the later bloom season. This was not done and I took exception to it at Chicago and later, at Memphis. Mr. Nelson advised that he would insert a notice in the July bulletin to that effect, which he did. This does not cover the fact that we do not have an award at the level of A. M. and that all Japanese irises properly qualified should have been listed in the past and must in the future be listed as eligible for Award of Merit. There was no mention of Japanese irises in the list for judges' choice, just received, although there are three with HMs from last year. Complaint is being filed over these omissions.

This area was visited by many new interested growers this year and we hope that we made them properly welcome. Our patches are always open. We gained over a dozen new members since the start of the year and from the number of inquiries, interest is increasing as more people learn more about Japanese irises. Spread the word. Without advertisement even the 5&10 would fold.

Max Steiger registered a number of his Care-Higo strain that are claimed to be alkaline tolerant. If this proves true, it will allow the growing of Japanese irises in the heavily alkaline southwest and through Colorado where the soil pH is 7.5 and above. Several others registered plants and as interest continues to grow there should be a 'ready market' for the GOOD ones.

Some complaints have been heard as to the quality and condition of several spring shipments this year and one that arrived here was in very poor shape as to roots and size and most of them died. Spring shipment is not too desirable as roots seldom form before bloomtime. I decline all orders for spring delivery.

It is with deep regret that we learn that Mr. Payne will soon retire as a hybridizer. A matter largely of health and inability to secure adequate qualified help. He will continue to grow "a few." (Hundreds?)

For the next issue of the Review we want more reports. I have seen no report in the papers that the Congress has abolished the "West Coast," but the lack of news from there causes me some sleepless nights. I know that there are

those out there who can write as I have letters to prove it. Pretty PLEASE.
Just once? You all have ideas. Let us hear them.

Yours in hope,

C. A. Swearingen

PHOTOGRAPHING JAPANESE IRISES

W. A. Payne

By far the greater number of flower photographs, excluding those made under controlled conditions by professionals, are snapshots made of plants growing in the garden. Occasionally color slides made in such manner are fairly satisfactory. The photographing of individual flowers at its best, however, is really flower portraiture quite the same as photographic portraiture of the human subject and in such pictures portrayal of the character of the flower is important if they are to be of value for educational or promotional purposes. Revealing the character of the flower is not always an easy accomplishment and this is especially true of Japanese irises which possess a wide variety of forms. Form is the most important characteristic of the Japanese Iris therefore when photographing the plant in the garden it is essential that the view be taken from a position which reveals the flower shape to the best advantage. True color rendering also is of prime importance and all too frequently it is elusive, as a consequence for best results the quality of the light on the subject and its effect on the color film should be taken into consideration. Accurate timing of the exposure, too, is essential for the nearest approach to the actual color of the flower.

Relative to the photographic equipment, the most desirable camera for making 35 mm slides of flowers probably is one of the reflex type in which the exact image of the subject is visible on a ground glass finder. Such a finder facilitates careful composition of the picture and the resulting picture is always the same as the image viewed on the finder. An 85 or 90 mm lens is about the right focal length to allow setting the camera back a sufficient distance from the flower to a position where the image rather well fills the frame and the perspective of the flower is not distorted. This generally is about the distance at which the flower is viewed in the garden. A lens of shorter focal length, such as cameras for general photographing are equipped, may give a distorted appearance to the flower when the image is thrown up to the desired size in the picture.

A rigid tripod is necessary for holding the camera in a fixed position and often for holding it in a position enabling one to get a picture not possible by a hand-held camera. It also permits the making of minor changes in the picture such as excluding undesired objects from the view and observing the results of the various changes in the finder after the general arrangement has been determined and the camera in focus.

Inasmuch as color film gives the best color rendering only by accurate timing of exposures and the latitude of exposure is rather narrow, an accurate exposure meter is indispensable. Bracketing the exposures insures the best results in timing. This consists of making three exposures of the subject giving the same time for all three shots. The first exposure is given the indicated time for the lens stop used, the second one-half stop above and the third one-half stop below that of the first exposure. Since the light intensity often varies, due to passing clouds during this procedure, it is sometimes necessary to wait for the correct light before exposing. One good color slide is well worth the two extra frames of film and occasionally this method may result in two good slides of the subject.

In general a slightly overcast sky seems to give more pleasing effects than bright sunlight. The lighting is softer and the shadows are not so dense. Dark violet colored flowers when photographed under this light condition are generally well rendered and the blue color of the sky is not reflected in the pure white flowers as often happens on a clear day. Photographing the blue-tinted whites is generally more successful when the sun is obscured by clouds or by taking the picture in shade. The warm whites are better if a skylight filter is used over the lens or the picture may be made in early morning or late afternoon when the light is less blue. The lighter shades of purple also generally are more accurately reproduced by the use of the skylight filter and the rich, dark, velvety, red-purples are well brought out by using two skylight filters. One should always judge the quality of the light for each subject and work accordingly to get the best color values.

The matter of using a plain colored background set up behind the plant or taking it in its own environment is a matter of preference. Personally I like the natural background as the effect generally seems more pleasing. In either case the background should not be obtrusive or distract in any way but should tie into the composition and complement the subject. It adds to the value of the picture to show, when possible, the more important features of the subject such as plant habit, bloom stalk with the number and length of branches, its manner of branching and the poise of the flower on the stem. Such painstaking efforts as have been suggested to obtain the best possible representation of the variety may require considerable time but the result definitely is worth the extra trouble.

JAPANESE IRISES IN CALIFORNIA

F. T. Maddocks

My interest in Japanese irises began about 25 years ago after a visit to the Lloyd Austin Gardens near Placerville, California. As soon as I saw the breathtaking beauty of these flowers, I realized that I must try my hand at growing and hybridizing the lovely things.

About two dozen divisions of named varieties were purchased from Austin. These, together with a few seeds I acquired from an Eastern distributor, were the start of a long-time hobby.

Our gardens are located on a knoll in rolling country on the eastern edge of California's Central Valley, about 15 miles east of Sacramento. Summers are usually quite warm, averaging between 90 and 100 degrees; winters are mild, rarely much below 30 degrees.

The irises are planted in raised beds which can be flooded. In sloping terrain, planting is done in ditches. Several weeks prior to planting, a 4 to 6 inch layer of humus is spread over the bed, together with the proper amount of an acid fertilizer, and 1 or 2 pounds of soil sulphur per 100 square feet. This mixture is dug under thoroughly. The beds may be planted several weeks later, spacing optional, but allowing plenty of room for expansion for each clump.

Seed pods are allowed to mature to a dry condition just prior to top cracking, and then harvested. The seeds are planted soon after in the ground or in seed boxes. When planted in the fall, seed will usually sprout in the spring. However, some seed may remain dormant for a year or more before germination takes place.

When the seedlings are two inches high, they are transplanted 8 inches apart in rows 12 inches apart. When the blooming stage is reached, a selection

is made of the most promising seedlings. These are transplanted 18 inches apart in rows 24 inches apart. The remainder is discarded.

My purpose in pollenizing varies; sometimes it is to improve branching; to improve coloring; to improve petal substance. An attempt has been made to produce a miniature plant, without much success. In one location I seem to have succeeded; in another, the plant grows high, wide and handsome.

For this locality, I personally prefer a medium sized flower, for the petals on a large flower have a tendency to droop in hot weather.

If a few simple rules are followed, I have found this iris to be easily grown. It demands an acid fertilizer, an acid soil, and plenty of water during the blooming period, for Japanese irises require wet feet at this time. Soil sulphur at the rate of 1 pound per 100 square feet and an application of acid fertilizer are given yearly.

During the past two years, the Melrose Gardens at Stockton, California, have become interested in several of my seedlings. These have been named and catalogued.

YOU, TOO, CAN PUT ON A SHOW

Frank Foley

This is a diary of the events that happened in Davenport, Iowa this year when we attempted to put on our first Japanese Iris Show.

Ford Grant was chairman and I was his helper. We have six growers here and had our show with the help of Art Hazzard and his lovely wife.

As you know we had high water here and the room that we had engaged for the show was under two feet of water. The Lend A Hand Club gave us a better room and we finally knew we were to have a show.

Next came the printing of our Show Schedule, which was late because of the uncertainty of getting the room at the Lend A Hand Club.

Two of the growers in this area have large assortments of Japanese irises that they grew from seed. We planned to use flowers from these two growers for our arrangers, after the specimens had been picked for the show by them for two commercial classes. Mr. and Mrs. Jess Hepner, who live in Davenport about two blocks from the River, grow four rows of Japanese irises, 200 feet long. I called them just before we left for the Memphis Convention and the plants were growing nicely at that time. One week before the show we checked and learned that disaster had hit them. Their irises had been under two feet of water and all were lost. We were surely two sick guys at this time.

Little did we know that we were in for more bad news when we visited Mrs. Erie Wielander's. Mrs. Wielander had leased her land to the Moline Park Board with the stipulation that they were to keep the weeds cut. They did this by hiring high school boys to cut the weeds. The boys cut three rows of Japanese irises, 150 feet long, thinking they were tall grass. At this time we almost panicked and called off the show. The things that saved the show were:

1. The fact that this was a National Show.
2. I talked our organization into picking up the bills for everything.
3. Visitors were coming from out of town to see the show.
4. Ford said, "If 100 people come in, there are 100 people who have never seen a Japanese iris."

In spite of all the pitfalls, we went on with the show. I forgot to mention that we had kept a record of peak bloom for two years and our first bloom was always on the 18th of June; but this year, the Japanese irises started blooming on the 13th of June.

Since Ford and I had to have specimens plus extra bloomstalks for the women who made the arrangements, we stripped every stalk down to unopened buds and prayed for a miracle. Our prayers were answered.

This was our Show and it filled our room at the Lend A Hand Club. We had 37 specimens competing, 22 commercial specimens and 15 arrangements. Art Hazzard brought the commercial arrangement with him when he and Mrs. Hazzard came from Kalamazoo, Michigan. Art was really a blessing for setting up the show.

Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Helt came from Sioux City, Iowa. Mr. Helt is RVP for Region 21 of the American Iris Society. He said we had a nice show and would make his report. We are waiting now to read it.

Mr. Art Rowe from Mason City, Iowa judged the show and was delighted that we went on with it in spite of our adversities. Mrs. Ralph Kay was our arrangement chairman and did a wonderful job. The ladies, bless them, of the Davenport Horticultural Society took the challenge for the arrangements. They never had worked with Japanese irises before but they really outdid themselves.

We had a hot windy day and it was 86 degrees, but over 400 people came to see the show. Most were surprised, some were confused. Many had never seen a Japanese iris. Many people had been confusing Siberians and Spurias with Japanese irises.

We talked with the people who asked questions about where to get Japanese irises and how to grow them. This made us feel that all of our effort was worth it.

Now that the show is over, many people are saying, "Why not have a show every year?" We just get a cold chill and make no comment.

In spite of obstacles, a good Japanese Iris Show is possible. You, too, can put one on.

PROGRESS WITH TETRAPLOIDS

Eleanor Westmeyer

Although progress in producing tetraploid Japanese irises is slow and the breeders who are engaged in this project are not yet ready to make a scientific report, it is interesting to note that some breaks have been made.

It was my pleasure to visit Orville Fay's garden on July 9th when his Japanese irises were in bloom. I was thrilled to see a treated Japanese iris seedling which appears to be a tetraploid in bloom. The single, white-veined violet flower was enormous — larger than any other Japanese iris blossom I have ever seen, and several inches larger in diameter than other Japanese irises in bloom nearby. The substance was leathery. Stalks were thickened, sturdy, well-branched, waist-high and taller than others nearby. It was my understanding that the chromosomes of this plant had not been counted yet, but the flower had been selfed and 11 seedlings were lined out from this seed. A study of these seedlings should indicate whether or not the parent plant is a true tetraploid. Mr. Fay also has 31 treated Japanese iris seedlings in addition to these. The small, stunted ones were most apt to be tetras, I was told. Unfortunately, Japanese irises do not like the soil, pH 7, in this area and many that look fine in the spring develop scorch during the growing season.

Dr. Shuichi Hiraw has been treating Japanese iris seedlings with colchicine in Japan. He reports many failures on 24, 48 and 60 hour treatments but has been successful in getting survivals with 12 or 15 hours of treatment. He uses 0.05% colchicine plus 1% agar in a petri dish and places the iris seedlings into the solution, upside down, so that the growing tip is immersed. He is interested in hearing from anyone who has had experience in using Naphthalene acetamide on Iris as this chemical has been reported as being very effective on peonies.

Others known to be working to produce tetraploid Japanese irises are Max Steiger, of Germany, Dr. Currier McEwen and our President, Bob Swearengen. It is hoped that more progress reports will be available after another season.

* * * * *

THE MILWAUKEE CONVENTION

The American Iris Society Convention is to be held in Milwaukee in 1969 and one of the main features of it will be the new Horticultural Conservatory of the Milwaukee County Park Commission. This Conservatory along with its other features is composed of three large climatically controlled conical domes. One of these is for exhibition purposes, and the other two shall feature arid and tropical plantings.

The Milwaukee County Park Commission is cooperating with the Wisconsin Iris Society to present a Convention that it is hoped will become historical and long remembered. As a primary feature, Mr. Howard Brossman, Botanical Supervisor has agreed to bring into bloom under controlled culture all the various types of irises that are provided and present them for Convention viewing in the Exhibition Dome in proper settings along with the tall bearded bloom and artistic arrangements show.

The various Societies are being approached directly so that the Society and the type of iris will receive the credit derived from such a project. Each iris will bear an identifying tag giving the name of the variety and hybridizer. The responsibility will be that of the Society to provide the varieties that they would best like to have seen by the many thousands of people who will view this exhibition. Adjacent to the Domes is a beautiful garden wherein will be planted the irises that the Milwaukee County Park Commission may retain. Such plantings would be made after full use of them for the Convention and a further presentation of them the following year.

Most of these varieties do not have the large rhizomes of the tall bearded and should easily lend themselves to pot culture. Pots large enough in size will be used so as to permit development large enough to make a good showing.

Mr. Brossman will accept varieties as early as you would decide to send them so that good growth will have been made and proper timing developed. This will be a completely new undertaking to have all these types of irises blooming at one time at a Convention in surroundings such as these and under the capable direction of Mr. Brossman, we can anticipate success of the project.

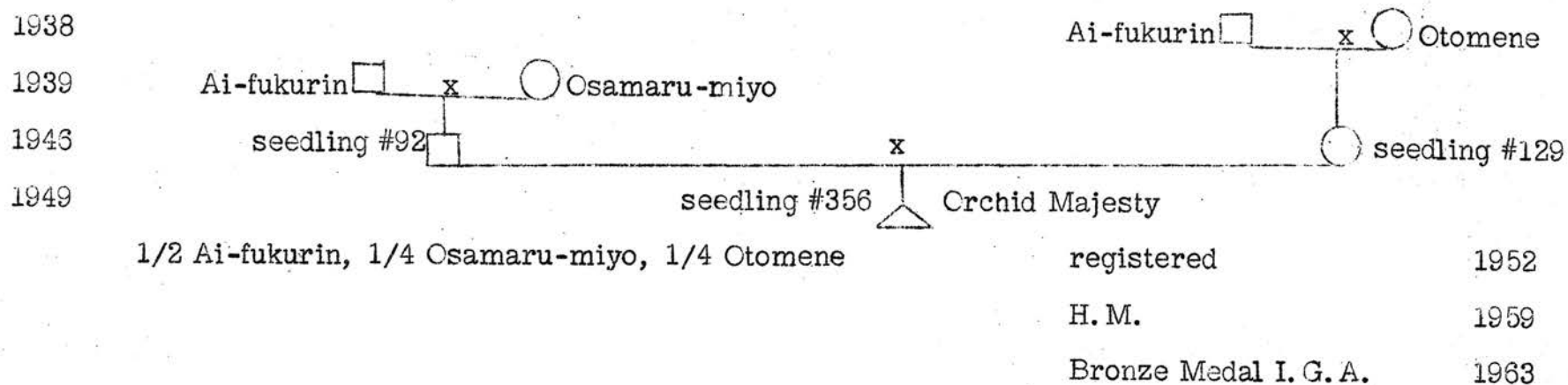
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Editor's Note: Bob Swearengen is planning to send some Japanese irises for this project. Other members of the Society who wish to contribute plants may do so by sending them directly to the Convention Chairman: Mr. Clarence Protzmann, 400 East Van Norman Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207.

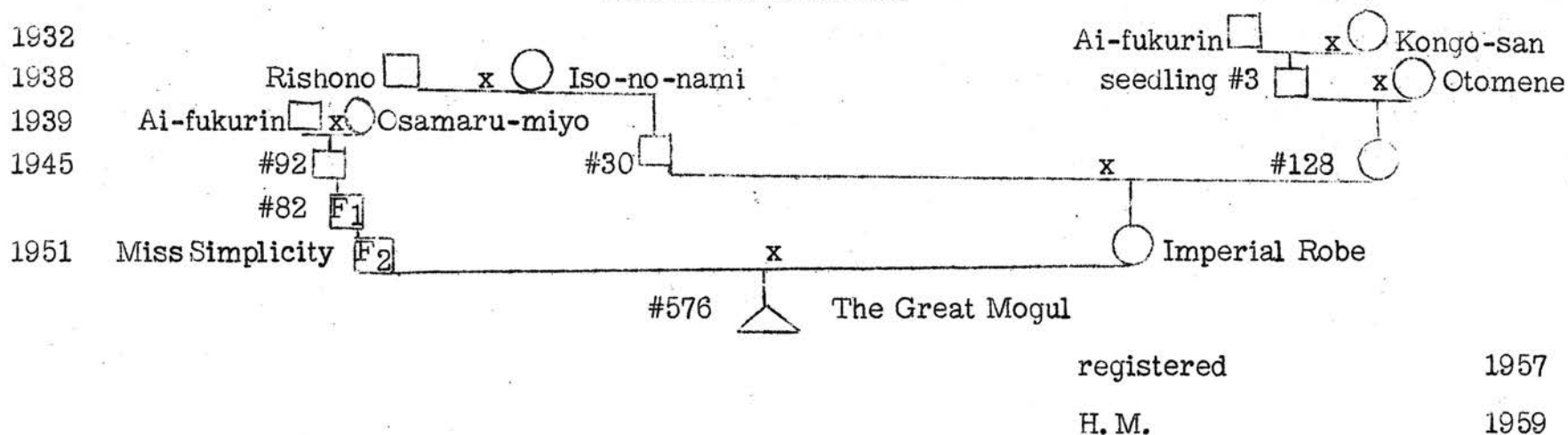
Members living in Japanese beetle quarantine areas need to have Federal inspection before shipping. Contact the Department of Agriculture Extension Bureau in your area for plant inspection.

BREEDING DIAGRAMS OF AWARD WINNING PAYNE INTRODUCTIONS

ORCHID MAJESTY



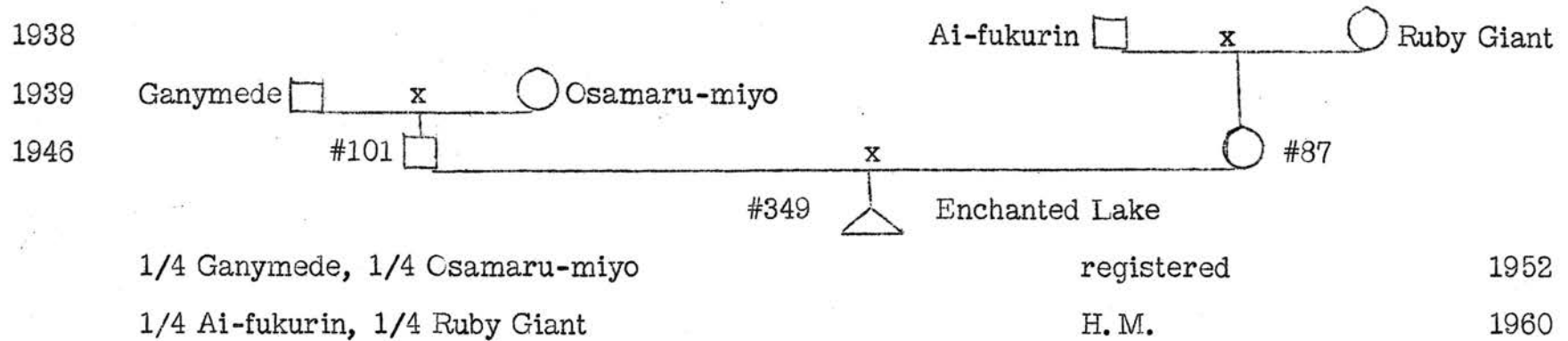
THE GREAT MOGUL



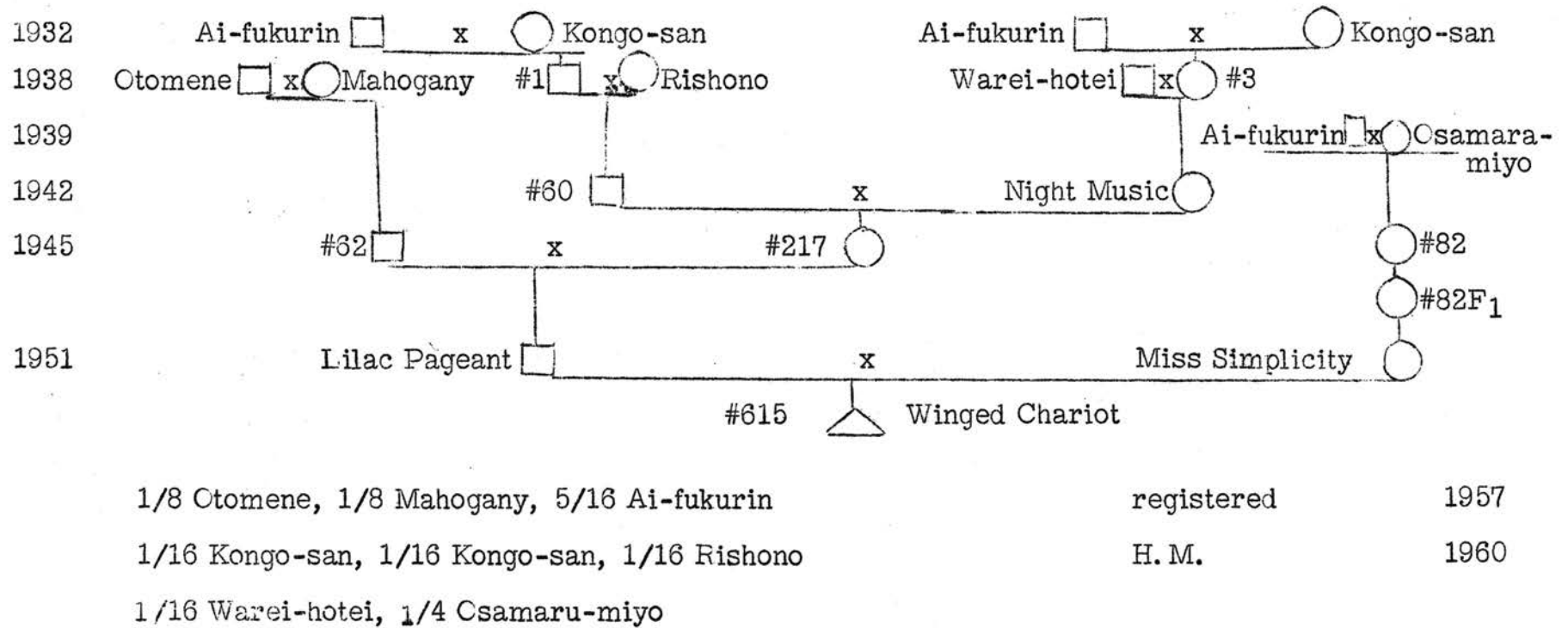
5/16 Ai-fukurin, 1/4 Osamaru-miyo, 1/8 Rishono

1/8 Iso-no-nami, 1/16 Kongo-san, 1/8 Otomene

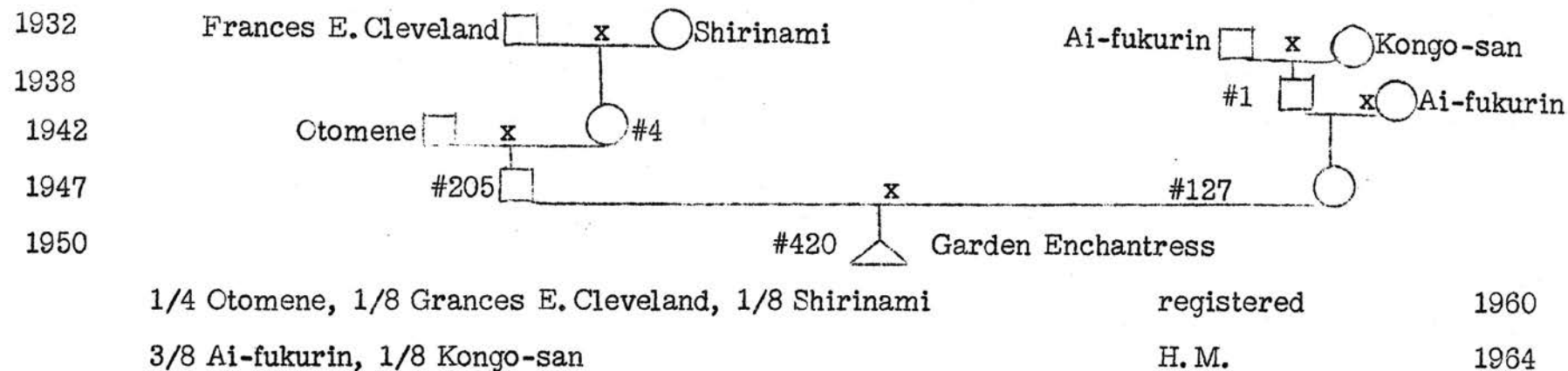
ENCHANTED LAKE



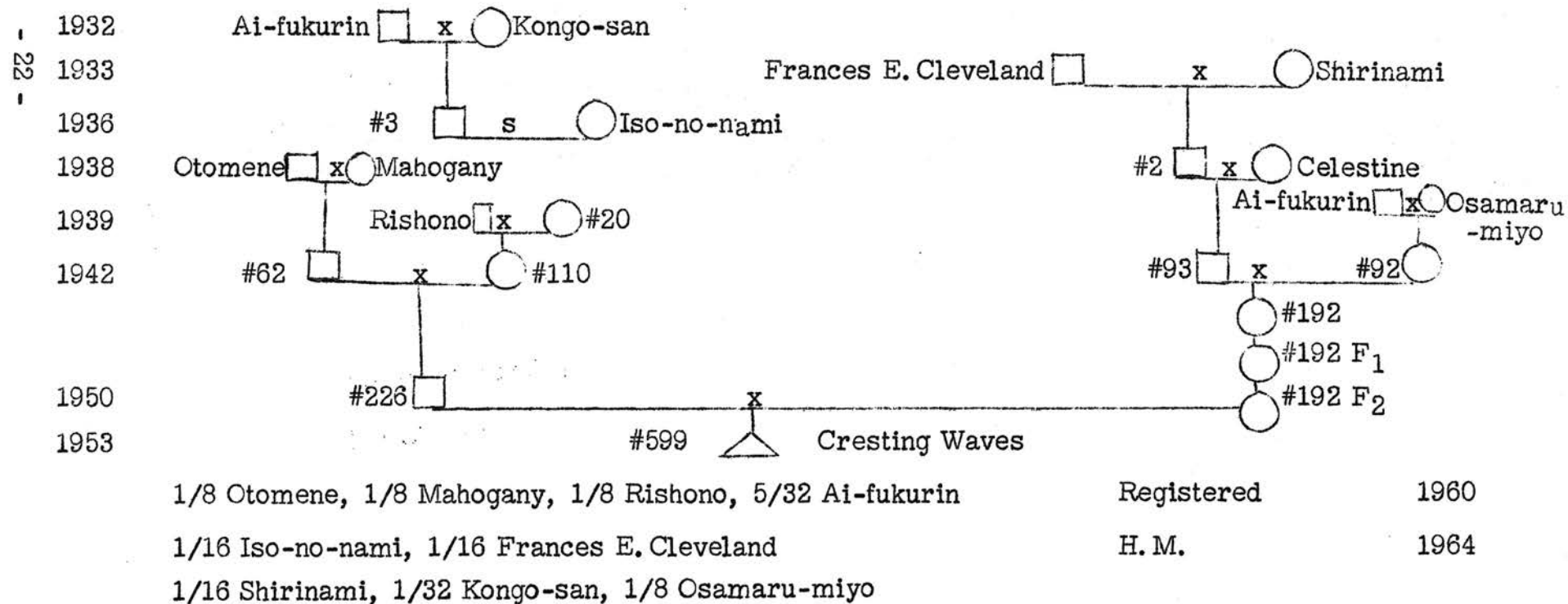
WINGED CHARIOT



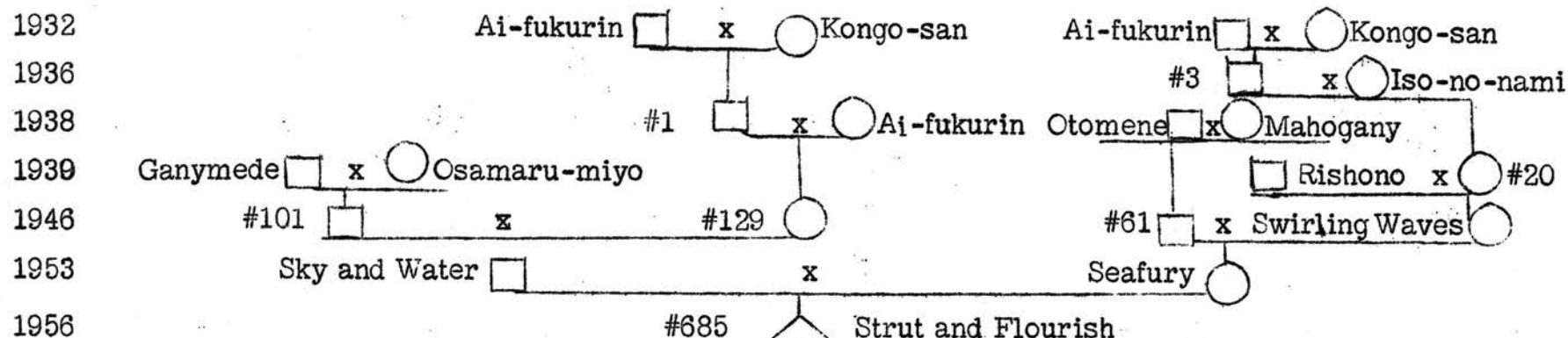
GARDEN ENCHANTRESS



CRESTING WAVES



STRUT AND FLOURISH



1/8 Ganymede, 7/32 Ai-fukurin, 3/32 Kongo-san

registered

1960

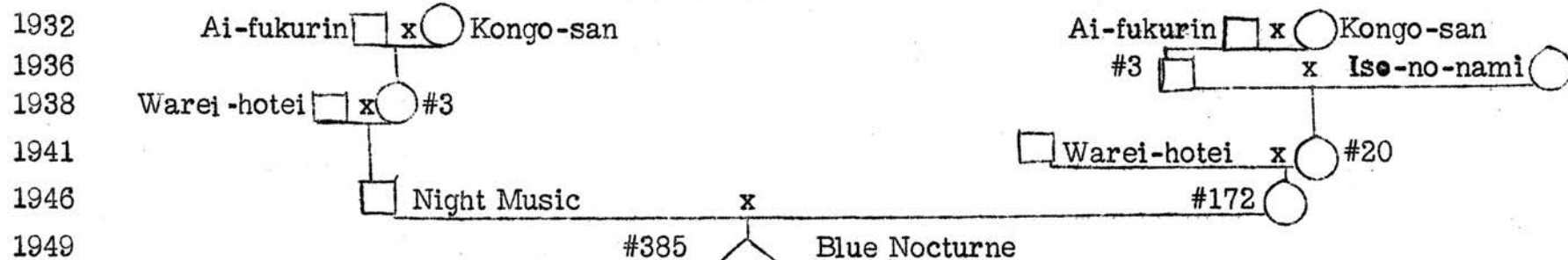
1/8 Otomene, 1/8 Rishono, 1/16 Iso-no-nami

H. M.

1964

1/8 Osamuru-miyo

BLUE NOCTURNE



1/2 Warei-hotei, 3/16 Ai-fukurin

registered

1959

3/16 Kongo-san, 1/8 Iso-no-nami

Gold Medal IGA

1963

FASHION MODEL



SJI MEMBERSHIP LIST

Adams, Mrs Charlotte M, 7620 Machrea St, Tujunga, California 91042
 Allen, Dr R C, Director, Kingwood Center, PO Box 1186, Mansfield, O. 44903
 Alpahr Gardens, 5080 Allison St, Arvada, Colorado 80002
 Allen, William T, 10 Kemper Ave, Newport News, Virginia 23601
 Bahret, Mrs C A, 16 Germantown Road, Danbury, Conn. 06812
 Bauman, Mrs Nathan, 3622 Lakeview Rd, Memphis, Tennessee 38116
 Brandrith, Mrs F J, 5162 - 12th Ave, R R 2, Ladner, B C, Canada
 Brinker, Walter F, RD 1, Box 405, Valley City, Ohio 44280
 Cammer Iris Gardens, 311 Cottage Ave, Williamsport, Pa. 17705
 Chambers, Mrs William E, 282 Forrest Road, Merion Station, Pa. 19066
 Cleaves, Mrs Edith S, 676 Downing Street, San Jose, California 95128
 Connecticut Iris Society, 38 Antonio Ave, Meriden, Connecticut 06450
 Conrad, Violet, 412 South Cross Street, Seattle, Washington 98108
 Crist, Mr and Mrs J A, Route #5, Box 45, Franklin, Indiana 46131
 Danielson, Henry A, 4629 Northwest Blvd, Davenport, Iowa 52806
 Dinsen, Mr and Mrs Harry H, Route 2, Box 409, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889
 DuJardin, Mrs Victor, Route 1, Glen Ellyn Rd, Addison, Illinois 60101
 Edwards, Mrs J W, Box 14, Pipecreek, Banders Co, Texas 78063
 Fay, Orville W, 1775 Pfingsten Road, Northbrook, Illinois 60062
 Fischer, Hubert A, 63d Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521
 Foley, Frank B, 1419 Marquette Street, Davenport, Iowa 52804
 Garvan, Mrs Francis P, 308 Bellaire Drive, Hot Springs, Arkansas 71901
 Goett, John E, Route 111, RFD 1, Monroe, Connecticut 06468
 Grant, Ford L, 2125 Sturdevant Street, Davenport, Iowa 52804
 Harder, Larry, Ponca, Nebraska 68770
 Hayes, Mr and Mrs Andy E, Jr, Route 1, Troy, Tennessee 38160
 Hays, Robert W, 418 N Harvey Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois 60302
 Hazzard, A H, 510 Grand Pre Ave, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007
 Heacock, Mrs S L, 1235 South Patton Court, Denver, Colorado 80219
 Helt, Mrs Floyd, 509 West 19th Street, Sioux City, Iowa 51103
 Henize, Mr Beryl, 310 Diehl Drive, Lawrenceburg, Indiana 47025
 Hidden, Mrs J R, 9911 Finney Drive, Baltimore, Maryland 21234
 Hirao, Dr Shuichi, 186 Yamanone, Zushi, Kanagawa Prefect, Japan
 Hobbs, Mr and Mrs B E, RR 1, Box 127B, Noblesville, Indiana 46060
 Hooker, Lerton W, 117 West Greenfield, Lombard, Illinois 60148
 Horinaka, Akira, 17 Kitamomodani, Minami-ku, Osaka, Japan
 Isle, Russel, R 3, Box 250, West Terre Haute, Indiana
 Jackson, Mrs Mary Jane, 1909 26th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79411
 Kenney, Mr and Mrs C E, 30 East Woodrow Place, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74106
 Kamps, Louis A, 1315 Western, Northbrook, Illinois 60062
 Lofton, Mrs Leona Glee, 3279 South Franklin Street, Englewood, Colo. 80110
 Lowe, Royce Jr, 1205 Kavanaugh Blvd, Little Rock, Arkansas 72205
 Lowrey, B E, PO Box 168, Mansfield, Louisiana
 MacKendrick, W Harry, Boxerly, 2038 Lakeshore East, Oakdale, Ont., Canada
 Marx, Walter, PO Box 38, Boring, Oregon
 McClintock, Mrs J E, 5541 Fitch Road, North Olmsted, Ohio 44070
 McConnell, Mrs J B, 1916 East 35th Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 74105
 McEwen, Dr Currier, 5441 Palisade Ave, Riverdale, The Bronx, NY 10471
 Miller, Mr and Mrs Ronald F, 6065 North 16th St, R 6, Kalamazoo, Michigan
 Molseed, Elwood W, Botany Dept, University of California, Berkeley 4, Calif.
 Monnie, Ray, 383 Chicora Road, Butler, Pennsylvania
 Neidinger, Joseph W, 932 East 50th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60615
 Newhard, William C, 26 West Zion Hill Road, Quakertown, Pennsylvania 18951
 Och, Mrs William R, 3591 Templeton Road, NW, Warren, Ohio 44461
 Ouweneel, William E, RR 5, Box 344, Terre Haute, Indiana 47803
 Parker, Edwin K, R 2, Box 35, Astoria, Oregon 97103

Payne, W A, 7001 Dixie Bee Road, Terre Haute, Indiana 47802
Poole, Mr Lyle R, 500 Edson, Lombard, Illinois
Reid, Mrs Lorena M, 2280 Roosevelt Blvd, Eugene, Oregon 97402
Reynolds, Mrs Maiben C, 1253 Alford Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama 35209
Rich, Mr and Mrs R A, 3501 Sunrise Avenue, Citrus Heights, California 95610
Robinson, Mrs L L, 6705 East Ridge Drive, Shreveport, Louisiana 71100
Rogers, Willard I, 109 Twin Falls Road, Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922
Rose, Darrell E, 405 West Bundy Avenue, Flint, Michigan 48505
Rowe, Arthur E, Jr, RFD 4, Mason City, Iowa 50401
Sargo, Mrs Vay B, RFD 7, Box 72, Hot Springs, Arkansas 71901
Schneider, Paul, PO Box 783, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16603
Scholz, Victor F (Dr), 7530 South Western Ave, Los Angeles, California 90047
Sensenbach, Cloyd F, 612 Berwick Street, White Haven, Pennsylvania
Shinkle, Mrs Herbert, 3227 Old Salen Road, Dayton, Ohio 45415
Siegling, Mr and Mrs E M, 3071 Brownlee Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43227
Squires, Mr and Mrs Coulson H, Nortontown Road, Rt 1, Madison, Conn. 06443
Steiger, Max, 856 Lauf/Pegnitz, Postfach 128, Germany
Stephenson, Mrs Charles I, Box 3004, Westville Station, New Haven, Conn 06515
Swearengen, C A, R 3, Box 136, Terre Haute, Indiana 47802
Tiffney, Mrs W N, 226 Edge Hill Road, Sharon, Massachusetts 02067
Van Treese, Harold W, R 10, Box 301, Indianapolis, Indiana 46239
Wagner, Eugene H, 125 Franklin Ave, Newark, Ohio 43056
Walther, Mrs F P, 474 Upper Mountain Avenue, Upper Montclair, NJ
Warburton, Mrs F W, Rt 2, Box 541, Westboro, Massachusetts 01581
Westmeyer, Eleanor J, 60 Gary Road, Stamford, Connecticut 06903
Whitsett, Gale D, 125 Franklin Ave, Newark, Ohio 43056
Williams, Mrs Pauline G, Stonewall Station, Box 6065, Charleston, W Va. 25302
Wilson, Mrs Howard O, R 1, Box 125, Bangs, Texas 76823
Winkler, Mrs Alexander, Spring Valley Road, Woodbridge, Conn. 06515

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