Fort Humboldt soldiers were required to cultivate garden plots to supplement their food supply. Most soldiers were not farmers and the climate was harsh, so many of these plots went to weed unless tended by their wives or servants.

Some of the surgeons stationed at the Fort learned to use native plants and herbs for medicinal purposes from local Yurok and Wiyot people. Cultivation of traditional plants by local tribes continues to the present day. This garden would have also contained non-native ornamental flowers that were popular in the 19th century.