

## Mother Dearly Loved Flowers: The Beale Memorial Garden at Hollins University

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### The Inspiration

Lucy Preston Beale and her youngest daughter, Lucy Beale Huffman, direct descendants of William and Susannah Preston, distinguished themselves during their lifetimes and beyond as devoted supporters of Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. In the seasons following her mother's passing in 1928, Lucy Beale Huffman pondered how to honor her. Shortly before the first anniversary of Lucy Preston Beale's death, on cream-colored notepaper from her Manhattan hotel residence, Beale Huffman penned an offer of a garden for Hollins as a memorial. The gift combined two things in which both women shared a great passion: gardens and Hollins. Lucy Beale Huffman had the support of her husband, Oscar Caperton Huffman, who blended his knowledge of the botanical and business worlds to guide the creation of the garden.

Upon completion, Hollins welcomed the newly created Beale Memorial Garden as a place of beauty for the campus. Seventy years later, Hollins partnered with the Garden Club of Virginia to rejuvenate the Beale Memorial Garden landscape. The recent restoration of the garden celebrated the generous gifts of the Huffmans in honor of Beale.

Lucy Preston Beale adored and supported Hollins. A final gift of volumes from her personal library attested to her commitment. Fifteen days after her death, Joseph Turner, the Hollins business manager, wrote in *The Roanoke Times* that Beale

had told us of a little plan she had made. She loved good books and had collected quite a library. A large number of these, which she thought would



Lucy Preston Beale, circa 1907,  
from *The Richmond Times*  
*Dispatch*.

be useful to the college, she had collected and put in a large bookcase. "All of these," she said, "are to go to the library of the college, where I spent the happy years of my school life; but these in this smaller case are to go to a special section of the library. These are the books that my dear friends at Hollins through the years have given me. I love these books; they are my friends; I want to give them back, with the added interest of my love, to my friends.<sup>1</sup>

Library accession records reveal over one hundred seventy-five titles in her gift.

On February 6, 1848, Lucinda Redd Preston, wife of William Ballard Preston, delivered their daughter, Lucy Redd Preston, at Smithfield Plantation near Blacks-

burg, Virginia. Lucy grew up primarily at the Preston homestead but also spent time in Washington, D.C., and at boarding schools in Richmond and Staunton, Virginia.

She counted early patriots of the United States on both sides of her family tree. Her grandfather was Virginia Governor James Patton Preston. Similarly, her maternal and paternal great-grandfathers, John Redd and William Preston, respectively, served as colonels during the American Revolution.<sup>2</sup> In their honor, she held membership in the Colonial Dames and Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R). She served as the D.A.R. vice president general from Virginia in 1893.<sup>3</sup> In tribute to her father's service, Beale sponsored a Navy destroyer in his name that was commissioned in the summer of 1920.<sup>4</sup>

Lucy Preston spent one session at Hollins. Registration records show that she studied English, Latin, instrumental music, moral science, drawing, and composition.<sup>5</sup> In 1863, while she attended Hollins, "one hundred girls filled every room, and seventy-five applicants were turned away.... Sequestered snugly in the mountains, no Institution in the country suffered less from the demoralization of the [civil] war. Families driven from the areas of invasion sent their daughters to the haven of its seclusion."<sup>6</sup> The

daughter of a classmate recalled for Hollins' President Dr. Bessie Randolph an anecdote from Lucy's 1863 session. The classmate's mother "wrote of a petition 'all girls signed, asking Mr. Cocke (Hollins' president) to take half our provisions and send to the soldiers.'"7 Although Cocke declined the request, the idea behind the petition showed the students' collective generosity. After leaving Hollins, and at the age of 18, Lucy Preston married William Radford Beale. They lived in Buchanan, Virginia, in homes called Tressalia and Pendleton. The Beales are buried at the Fairview Cemetery in town in the same plot as their daughter and son-in-law.

Lucy Preston Beale distinguished herself through many generous acts that took a variety of forms. She was a poet, organizer, ardent advocate for education, and civic leader among women in Virginia. She encouraged her family's altruism as well. For example, the Huffmans and the Beales made a joint early twentieth-century gift of a new organ to Trinity Episcopal Church in Buchanan.

In 1893 Beale hosted the Virginia Building (a Mount Vernon replica) at the World's Fair in Chicago, the Columbian Exposition. In the three years leading up to the Expo, Beale officially campaigned for funds and artifacts to "see to it that every industry in which woman is engaged is represented in its most perfect specimen."<sup>8</sup> In a pamphlet published in 1890 she discussed the difficulty the commonwealth had in making a decent showing at the 1876 Centennial Expo due to the effects of Reconstruction. She asserted her ability and expressed her desire for assistance. Beale urged Virginia's women to realize their potential, writing

[W]e see that [in] other states, statistics are being gathered illustrative of woman's help in the moral and intellectual progress of the state, as well as her more material interests. Have Virginia women been idle in these noble fields? Have they not with tongue and pen urged reforms, suggested expedients, educated and encouraged to higher aspiration? Is there nothing in the way of the garden, the dairy, the orchard, or of domestic ordering, that has received special impress at her hand?<sup>9</sup>

Lucy Preston Beale traveled at least as far as Charlottesville and northern Virginia in her efforts to increase the participation of women. A newspaper report credited her with being "an inspiration for the success of the cause she advocates with such zealous, yet discriminating enthusiasm."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, she "saved the state some expense furnishing several

counterparts from the household belongings of old Smithfield.”<sup>11</sup> Also, in support of her mission she “visited the real Mount Vernon the previous summer as she planned its reproduction.”<sup>12</sup>

Beale garnered a positive review for her part in Honor Virginia Day at the World’s Fair. *The Chicago Daily* reported:

[S]everal hundred persons attended the reception. Mrs. Lucy P. Beale, the hostess of the mansion, delegated the work of receiving ... the band furnished music, refreshments were served, not overlooking the traditional beaten biscuit and Smithfield ham, reminiscences were indulged, relationships were traced, and stories were told. At 8 o’clock Virginia Day closed with a display of fireworks. The final piece was a reproduction of the Mount Vernon mansion in lines of dazzling light.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequently, she answered a call from Governor O’Ferrall in 1895 to serve on the Board of Women Managers for Virginia at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta. Of the eight women nominated, Beale was chosen president and treasurer.<sup>14</sup> In preparing for this World’s Fair, she edited a large-format booklet. In it, she expressed her hope for a “new South, the South of the practical, progressive age, awakened from the opulent torpor of ante-bellum days, polished and tempered by the fiery ordeal through which it passed.”<sup>15</sup>

The Tercentennial of Jamestown in 1907 provided a final opportunity for Beale to serve and represent Virginia. In addition to hosting the Virginia Building, the occasion inspired her to write poetry collected in a volume of collaborations from other commonwealth and national contributors. At the Tercentennial, Beale and her daughter Lucy, then 21, worked side by side. Beale earned \$75 per month for her work.<sup>16</sup>

Following the expositions, Beale received high praise. In the *Washington Post* a writer acknowledged:

Mrs. Beale combines rare tact and diplomacy with a fund of sound common sense, and won golden opinions at Atlanta and Chicago, where she piloted and engineered the official functions with diplomatic ease. She recalls perhaps more than any other, the days when Mrs. James Madison, another Virginia woman, the wife of the fourth President of the United States became the first lady of the land and inaugurated a new era of social life in Washington.<sup>17</sup>

In 1922, after many successful years of service, she traveled to inspect the Preston family papers that had been deposited at the Wisconsin State Historical Society. *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* notes that she “had family recollections ... [that] she related for the Society’s benefit” that they preserved.<sup>18</sup> Beale’s colorful oral histories contribute to the understanding of colonial southwestern Virginia.

After she died, Turner declared,

There are many, many persons, but comparatively few personalities. There are many, many individuals, but comparatively few individualities. Mrs. Lucy Preston Beale was a real personality and possessed of a very rare spirit.”<sup>19</sup>

He then cited her achievements in Chicago, Atlanta, and Jamestown “and on numberless other occasions, where she did honor to her family and to her State and Nation.”<sup>20</sup> Lucy Beale Huffman commemorated and continued her mother’s legacy of generous devotion and dedication when she gave Hollins the Beale Memorial Garden.

The Hollins alumni magazine noted a campus visit by the Huffmans in October 1929.<sup>21</sup> This visit occurred nearly half a year after her proposal to Matty Cocke, Hollins’ president. With a fountain pen in longhand, Lucy Beale Huffman wrote that

[the] vision of the Cocke family towards the education of the women of the south, and also the devoted and earnest work of those who love Hollins is the inspiration to me. I know that if mother were living she would be profoundly interested and an ardent worker toward your goal.

With this in mind I thought that to perpetuate the memory of Lucy Preston Beale, I would like to give a garden to Hollins where she spent many happy days. Mother dearly loved flowers, and I feel that this would express her glorious spirit.”<sup>22</sup>

In a telegram the following day, Cocke acknowledged the gift and concluded that the garden would be “a fitting and beautiful memorial to your mother who was a most loyal and devoted alumna.”<sup>23</sup>

Huffman’s only grandson recollected that she shared that same passion for gardens. In 2008, Benedict Smith recalled that like his great-grandmother,

Granny Huffman also loved flowers! She had many flower gardens at their house .... Granny had a small greenhouse off the dining room where she fixed vases with flowers from the garden.<sup>24</sup>

Lucy Beale Huffman attended Hollins at the turn of the twentieth century, following her mother, sister, and cousins as students there. The \$250 tuition for the 1901 session allowed Huffman to study English, composition, math, history, French, and piano. A small number of preserved letters present additional information about her generous nature. Correspondents thank her for gifts of flowers and money, and brief obituaries from 1949 recount her altruism. One local notice mentioned her gift of “the china and crystal which is used for parties, dinners, suppers, etc” at the Town of Buchanan Community House.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, the Hollins obituary saluted her passion for the school, declaring her “a very loyal supporter and friend of the College.”<sup>26</sup> The brief article highlighted the gift and the popularity of the garden.

Recipients of Huffman’s generosity are varied and many. In addition to Hollins, she contributed to Washington and Lee University, and continued giving her father-in-law’s memoirs to libraries across the country after her husband passed away.<sup>27</sup>

Although Lucy Beale Huffman personally proposed the gift of the Beale Memorial Garden, her husband, Oscar, negotiated and managed the gift. Despite his control of the process, the gift has been referred to historically as a gift solely from his wife. After her proposal, correspondence regarding the garden passed between Oscar and different members of the Hollins staff and their landscape architect. Various letters were addressed to her, but any replies have not been archived at the school. Through these records, Lucy’s desire for boxwoods remains the only indication of her involvement. Oscar Huffman composed clear and concise correspondence about his opinions regarding many details of the garden.

His 1941 obituary from the *New York Times* recounted his success in the tin can business that made him wealthy. Further, according to the obituary, “his hobbies were fruit growing and farming.”<sup>28</sup> Smith agrees that his grandfather’s passion was the fruit trees at his home in Connecticut.<sup>29</sup> The Commercial Club of Cincinnati, Ohio, remembered him in a memorial pamphlet as “kindly, humorous, devoted and loyal to his family, friends, and to the many charities which called on him and which he assisted on his own initiative; in all those with whom he came in contact, he inspired con-



Oscar Huffmann (center left) and Lucy Beale Huffmann (center right) in 1938 at the dedication of the Community House in Buchanan, Virginia. Photograph courtesy of Harry Gleason.

fidence and affection.”<sup>30</sup> Locally, his 1938 gift of a brick building destined to become the Community House for the Town of Buchanan coincided with his wife’s donation of dinnerware for use at the gathering place.

Born in 1876, Oscar Huffman was a native of Augusta County, Virginia, and educated at Washington and Lee University. He married Lucy Beale in the summer of 1907. Various industry-related publications indicate that Huffman was a successful businessman. His factories revolutionized the canning industry during the era between the world wars. By the late 1920s, his United States Can Company “advanced to third in its industry...and [did] an annual business of approximately ten million dollars.”<sup>31</sup> In 1935, *Time* reported his income as \$72,000.<sup>32</sup> An equivalent salary in 2009 would be a little more than \$1,100,000.<sup>33</sup> In 2009 dollars, the garden’s cost would be approximately \$64,500.<sup>34</sup> The gift of the Beale Memorial Garden to Hollins, coinciding with the beginning of the Great Depression, illustrated the importance of memorializing Lucy Preston Beale and the combined generosity of mother, daughter, and son-in-law.

And yet Huffman's participation in the gift goes beyond the financial. He directed from Ohio and Roanoke the style, size, and content of the garden. Furthermore, he provided opinions on the cost and preliminary site work requirements.

### The Creation, Evolution, and Restoration

In the summer of 2009, the orange-blossomed daylily features prominently in the Beale Memorial Garden. Daylilies, forming ever-enlarging clumps, jump the banks and alternately fringe both sides of the rock-lined creek. The most abundant plant in the garden, this species, *Hemerocallis fulva*, has narrow, frond-like leaves and long, slender, emerald stems stretching up to four feet that support a sequential fanfare of orange, carrot, and tangerine blossoms that open daily during the early summer months. The generous blossoms of the lily memorialize the people, past and present, involved with the creation and restoration of the garden.

Although Hollins maintains archives on the garden, some critical pieces of information remain missing. When Hollins' Fishburn Library flooded in 1985, approximately 40 percent of the archives were lost, including some documents related to the garden. Surviving archives reference a map and scale model that have unfortunately disappeared. But the Garden Club of Virginia and its landscape architect, William Rieley, retain records on the restoration that provide some clues about the original garden.

At the time of Lucy Huffman's offer, Hollins had undertaken a campaign drive to move from "private ownership to a corporation administered by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees."<sup>35</sup> Thus, a group comprised of the school's trustees, alumnae, and staff oversaw the Beale Memorial Garden donation. Members included Turner, Lucy McVitty, W. C. Stephenson, C. Edwin Michaels, D. D. Hull, and Kitty Settle Morgan. The committee partnered with Oscar Huffman and the landscape architect to create the garden.

The Huffmans selected Albert A. Farnham to design and implement the garden. A former town planner for Lynchburg, Farnham lived and practiced in Roanoke. Following the Beale Memorial Garden installation, he went on to teach at Virginia Tech<sup>36</sup> and design the grounds of the Hotel Roanoke.<sup>37</sup>

In a letter dated nearly a year after Lucy Huffman's offer, Turner wrote to her about Farnham's plans, stating that he "has done wonders and everybody who sees it is enthusiastic in praise and appreciation."<sup>38</sup> Letters



Beale Memorial Garden circa early 1930s. Photograph courtesy of the Wyndham Robertson Library of Hollins University.

documenting the initial planning stages between the Huffmans, the committee, and Farnham began in September 1929. To begin, Farnham wrote to Stephenson about the need for a topographical map of the area. By October 1929, Huffman balked at the cost of the map and clarified in a letter to Farnham that he and his wife had been considering a smaller area for a garden than Hollins thought ideal.

These discussions and negotiations led to questions about the size of the Huffmans' financial contribution and the area for the garden. Initially, the Huffmans and Hollins did not see eye to eye on either issue. By November 1929 a \$3,000 figure was being discussed. However, Stephenson feared that "this amount would not be sufficient to start the garden we had in mind, so I think it is quite important that a very diplomatic reply be prepared."<sup>39</sup> His concerns had ceased by the spring of 1930. For unknown reasons, the Huffmans increased their pledged amount to \$5,000.<sup>40</sup>

Farnham sought the Huffmans' input in the design process. At the very least, he knew "that Mrs. Huffman is desirous of using some boxwood."<sup>41</sup> Turner concurred with the idea of boxwoods, but Oscar Huffman, in a follow-up letter to Farnham, asserted that boxwood "would be out of the question, as I understand this runs into a great deal of money."<sup>42</sup>

Thus no boxwoods were installed initially. Farnham envisioned a larger landscape,<sup>43</sup> but in the end he developed a garden within the boundaries the Huffmans desired. Shrinking the size permitted the design and implementation to remain within budget.

In a page and a half letter addressed to Lucy Beale Huffman on November 20, 1929, Farnham details his vision for the space:

[T]he possibilities which the stream affords are many.... [B]y diverting the stream into a series of pools and low cascades along which water loving plants could be grouped...this would beautify not only the banks, but would protect them by giving space for flood water. The treatment immediately on the stream and in the bed of the stream would be with rocks, ferns, Japanese iris, and other plants that thrive in damp places. On higher ground both sides of the branch, quantities of rhododendron and azaleas together with the better varieties of blooming shrubs should be used. Paths should be built and perhaps a small foot bridge here and there so that the garden would be properly used.<sup>44</sup>

Farnham's letter contains no sketch or map of the garden plan at Hollins but simply this short description of his initial ideas.

On behalf of the college, Turner expressed pleasure with the plans in a letter to Oscar Huffman on the eve of summer 1930:

[Mr. Farnham] brought with him a very lovely model of the proposed Garden. This model is worked out to scale and shows the lay of the land and the general scheme of planting. It does not, however, show the detail of planting, that is, the type of shrub, plant, etc. that will be used. The banks of the stream, the walkways, the trees already there, etc. are shown. Surely it makes a beautiful picture and everybody here is interested and enthusiastic about it. As it happens the Tiger Lillies [sic] on the banks of the stream are in full bloom now.... Mr. Farnham's plans are really very lovely and comprehensive and all who have seen the model and have heard him discuss the plans are happy and enthusiastic over the prospects for a very beautiful spot on this campus.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to plants, Farnham's designs for the Beale Memorial Garden included a brick pathway and limestone rock wall. A Rockydale Quarry invoice for November 1930 showed that the garden required ten yards of rock<sup>46</sup> to create the wall.

The bulk of the planting and constructing the wall and path occurred from July to September 1930. Additional work happened in December and in the spring of 1931. During most months, Farnham employed about six laborers. Over the course of approximately fifteen weeks, the Beale Memorial Garden emerged around the streambed. The largest expenditure went to Hedge Lawn Nurseries for plant material. A separate nursery supplied one thousand tulip bulbs.<sup>47</sup> A Roanoke chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution commissioned Farnham to install a concrete bench with the following inscription:

In memory of Mrs. Lucy Preston Beale  
Presented by Col. Wm. Preston Chapter DAR 1932

At the same time, suggestions for a celebration circulated. Turner concluded, "I am inclined to think that such a dedicatory service would be entirely appropriate," and in the same memo, he copied Farnham and included positive reviews of the garden from McVitty.<sup>48</sup>

Turner invited Lucy Beale Huffman to visit Hollins and judge the garden for herself. After nearly a year, two more letters about a dedication service appear in Turner's correspondence files. In March and April 1932, Turner revealed that Farnham has "the impression that Mrs. Huffman was not particularly keen about any 'to do' being made about the garden."<sup>49</sup> Others reached similar conclusions when Lucy Huffman apparently did not answer a letter from a committee member about the topic. Because Lucy and Oscar visited the Roanoke area up until 1940, it is possible they visited the garden, but no official confirmation of a visit was recorded. Although it had no formal introduction, "this area with its little brook, became an even more popular recreation ground"<sup>50</sup> for the Hollins' College community.

During the 1930s, eighteen flowering crab trees were planted as gifts from the Classes of 1932–34.<sup>51</sup> Subsequently, six editions of Hollins' promotional literature highlighted the garden during this decade.<sup>52</sup> However, in the next two decades, the Beale Memorial Garden continued to evolve, presenting challenges to its identity.

The 1940s brought minor changes beyond annual growth for the Beale Memorial Garden. At the beginning of the decade, Hollins' consulting architect W. Pope Barney of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, presented

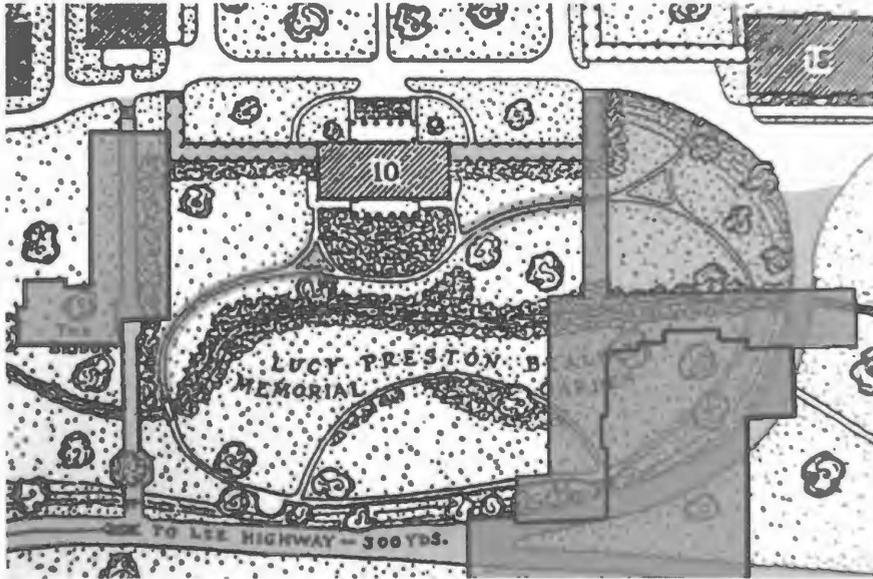


Illustration of Turner Hall and duPont Chapel encroaching on the Beale Memorial Garden. Shaded areas show the footprints of Turner Hall on the left and the duPont Chapel on the right. Illustration courtesy of William D. Reiley, landscape architect for the Garden Club of Virginia.

drawings of his comprehensive plan. He envisioned an enlarged garden with extensions to the east and west of approximately 400 feet. The proposal would nearly triple the size.<sup>53</sup> Barney's treatment reflected the size initially desired by Farnham. Conversely, some members of Hollins wanted buildings constructed within the garden's footprint; however, Chairman Charles F. Cocke and President Randolph opposed any encroachment on the site.<sup>54</sup> During the decade, the school considered future building needs but did not break ground on either the replacements for the library and chapel or a new dormitory. The school's Centennial Celebration of 1942 featured the garden and helped to maintain its identity.

At the dawn of the new decade, the garden continued to be recognized as

a spot of particular charm for students, faculty, and visitors ... [that] contains many beautiful black ash and elm trees and an abundance of flowering shrubs. In the spring the area is a mass of redbud and dogwood, beneath which grow narcissus and daffodils.<sup>55</sup>

At this point, the garden remained undisturbed, but by the close of the decade it diminished in size and identity.

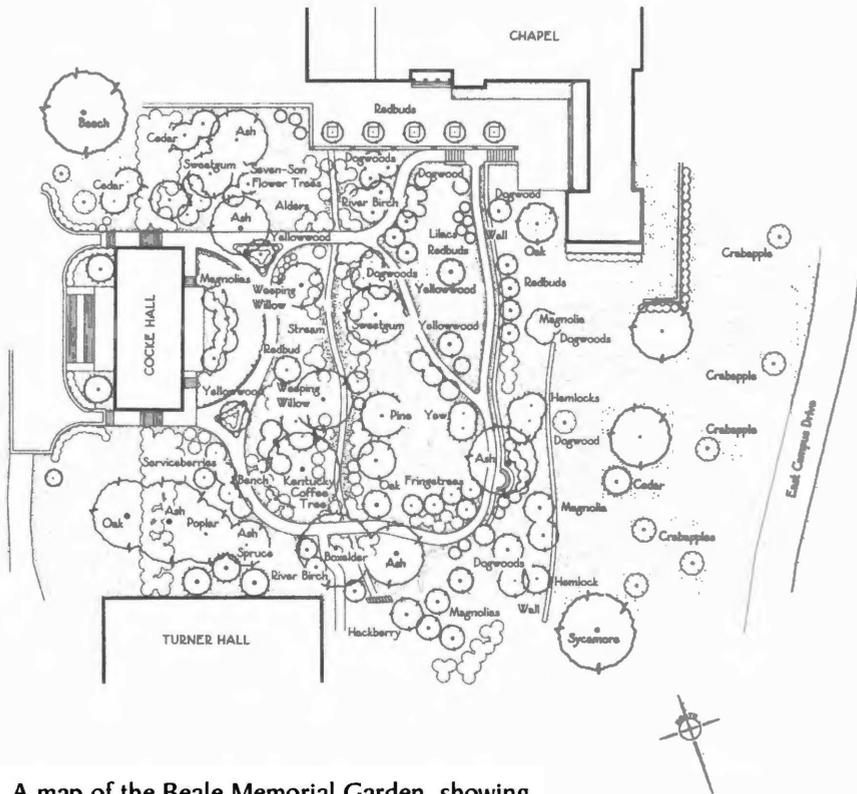
During the 1950s, construction of new buildings dramatically changed the layout of the Beale Memorial Garden. Two major factors enabled the changes. First, transformations came with new leadership at Hollins when John Everett became the president in 1950. Second, with the exception of Willard James, none of the people involved with the conception of the garden had either survived or remained closely tied to the school. The new development contrasted directly with Farnham and Barney's schemes: instead of expanding eastward and westward the Beale Memorial Garden shrank.

In 1952, Hollins erected Turner Hall on the western side; near the end of the decade, the completion of duPont Chapel on the eastern side eliminated approximately 3/8ths of the garden.<sup>56</sup> At last, however, boxwoods made their way into the garden by lining the chapel's terrace. The chapel construction created an identity crisis for the garden. By the 1970s, according to William Rieley, the club's landscape architect, "no one talked about the garden anymore as an identifiable location."<sup>57</sup> Members of the classes of 1962 and 1965, Carol Greene Donnelly and Anna Logan Lawson, respectively, have no real memory of the garden from their undergraduate days.<sup>58</sup> However, these women, as members of the Board of Trustees, steered the relationship between Hollins and the Garden Club of Virginia to restore the Beale Memorial Garden. The last major alteration, before the recent revitalization, happened in 1982. Additional landscaping given as memorials to Jane Moon Goodwin, a French major,<sup>59</sup> went into the garden. The back of the Lucy Preston Beale bench now reads

1982 Landscaping in Memory of  
Jane Moon Goodwin '34

Plans for the plantings or the quantities and varieties of the plants do not exist in the Hollins archives. Interestingly, Goodwin studied at Hollins during the creation of the Beale Memorial Garden.

By 2002, the idea to renovate the garden circulated among members of the Hollins University community. Donnelly, a gardener and chair of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, found inspiration in the Garden Club of Virginia's work at Sweetbriar College near Lynchburg.<sup>60</sup> The Gar-



A map of the Beale Memorial Garden, showing some plantings. (Margaret Page Bemiss, *Historic Virginia Gardens: Preservation Work of The Garden Club of Virginia 1975-2007*. © 2009 by the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia. Reprinted by permission of the University of Virginia Press.)

LUCY PRESTON BEALE GARDEN  
Hollins University  
0' 30' 60'

den Club of Virginia has a history of “picking projects important enough to be part of the heritage of the commonwealth,”<sup>61</sup> and Lucy Ellet of the club’s Restoration Committee worked on its behalf to promote the idea.<sup>62</sup>

In preparation, Donnelly visited previous Garden Club of Virginia restorations, including Smithfield Plantation. Lawson, chair of the Hollins Board of Trustees, shared Donnelly’s passion for the project. The women kept the idea of the restoration alive by sharing their enthusiasm with other alumnae, Hollins’ President Norah Kizer Bell, and other members of the board. By autumn, the club agreed to partner with Hollins, and architect Rieley of Charlottesville prepared plans to restore the garden.

In exchange for funding the restoration, the club made three promises and had the same number of major commitments from Hollins. First, the club required that the garden “must be open to the public on a regular basis, either seasonally, several days a week, or daily, including Historic Garden Week in Virginia”; second, that “further maintenance shall be at the obligation of the owner. Strict adherence to high standards of maintenance is required”; and last, “any future changes in the landscape design must be approved by the owner and GCV.”<sup>63</sup> In return the Garden Club of Virginia would pay for the restoration, publicize the restoration, and install a plaque acknowledging the partnership.<sup>64</sup>

After spending around \$150,000<sup>65</sup> and a year’s worth of work, the restoration culminated in a landscape with reconnected paths, an emphasis on both the creek and native plants, and a renewed identity for the Beale Memorial Garden. Separately, Hollins paid for the renovation of the duPont Chapel terrace, a space that provides a vantage point for the garden.<sup>66</sup> In October 2006, the Garden Club of Virginia and Hollins rededicated the Beale Memorial Garden.

In pursuing the new design plan, Hollins approved an arrangement utilizing mostly native plants. Among others, Lee Cochran from Hollins’ board and Bessie Carter, the club’s restoration chair, favored this approach. Rieley’s re-interpretation of plant choice supported a trend toward environmentally sound design. These plant selections deviated from Farnham’s original plan but provided an opportunity for the best re-creation of the remaining twenty acres of the garden. In the 1930s, personal preference played the greatest role in plant selection. In the 21st century version, all parties agreed to

the benefit of growing plants within the region they evolved [because] they are more likely to thrive under the local conditions, maintain and improve soil fertility, reduce erosion, and often require less fertilizer and pesticides than many alien plants. These characteristics save time and money and reduce the amount of harmful run-off threatening the aquatic resources.<sup>67</sup>

Hollins should see a reduction in the amount of time and energy needed to maintain the garden through the emphasis on the natural beauty of native plants.

Rieley noted in his comments at the October 18, 2006, ceremony that

Farnham's plan embraced the stream valley, with graceful curving paths connecting the back of the Cocke building to the valley and climbing up the hillside beyond to give prospect points into the garden and stream below. It had ... a wonderful pastoral quality.<sup>68</sup>

He concluded that the garden was more of "a revitalization and adaptation"<sup>69</sup> than a strict reproduction or restoration.

Approximately six landscape installers worked to plant Rieley's selections. Nearly three-quarters of Rieley's perennial, shrub, and tree choices are native to Virginia or the southeastern United States. Additionally, many of these plants have generous displays of color and texture over the four seasons.

Accessibility to the Beale Memorial Garden improved with the re-grading of the grassy area and the reconstruction of the pathways. The existing brick was reused to supply borders to the circuitous, crushed gravel paths. Before restoration, "the paths were not accessible even if you got into the garden."<sup>70</sup> Walkways link steps leading up to the duPont Chapel terrace and the Cocke Memorial Building. Additionally, the installation of two bridges, reminiscent in color and design of the longer one that existed where Turner Hall now stands, connect the pathway. The bridge design provided the circulation conceived by Farnham.

The re-creation of the stone wall provided a 36-inch-high border nearly the length of the northeastern portion of the garden. The wall tapers at each end to approximately 11 inches. Two stonemasons, working with Rockydale Quarry limestone, crafted the wall from blue, grey, and tan rocks.

New features included a wider creek to help alleviate flooding. Now the streambed has multiple rock borders that split it into unequal thirds. Improvements to the culvert under the duPont Chapel terrace and the adjacent manhole cover made them more visually appealing.

Notably, some plants that came out of the garden found new life. A craftsman transformed a diseased ash into bowls given to donors and other people closely connected to the restoration. Likewise, transplanted boxwoods from the duPont Chapel terrace conveniently camouflage the heating and cooling units at the Richard Wetherill Visual Arts Center.

Rieley concluded his remarks from the dedication by telling those in attendance that

We cannot remain connected to the contributions of our predecessors through passive acknowledgement. I have come to believe that memorials that demand our care and that demand our attention are the ones that really connect us with those contributions and that reinforce our on-going responsibility to support them — even as they change, as all gardens and as all educational institutions do.<sup>71</sup>

The legacies of these Preston descendants will live on in the prolific, natural beauty of the Beale Memorial Garden.

### Endnotes

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