NOTICIAS

Quarterly Magazine Of The Santa Barbara Historical Society

Vol. L, No. 4 / Vol. LI, No. 1 Winter 2004 / Spring 2005

A Garden for All Time

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

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AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: *The generosity of numerous people has made the preparation of this history a pleasure; it has been a true collaboration. Laurie Hannah has shared a wealth of resources and historical perspectives, and provided me with countless leads, asking and answering insightful questions that have furthered this research. Dr. Edward Schneider conceived of the scope of the project, obtained backing, and provided input and support along the way. Kellam de Forest, son of Lockwood de Forest, Jr., offered invaluable perspectives on his family and served as a keen editor. Dr. Ralph Philbrick, Dr. Robert Muller, Dr. David Young, Dr. J. R. Haller, and E. R. "Jim" Blakley all answered many questions and granted interviews. Tom Bliss of the Bliss Family International Society, Cortlandt Van Rensselaer (Maunsell Van Rensselaer's son), Ned (Edward Maunsell) Van Rensselaer, and James Van Rensselaer also provided helpful information. Lady Bliss (Gertrude Bliss, Ralph Hoffmann's daughter, who turned one hundred in 2003) answered questions in correspondence from London. Wayne Ferren, Jr. shared information and feedback on Dr. Frederic Clements and the Santa Barbara Society of Natural History. Dr. Shelley Bookspan, former editor of the* Public Historian, *provided valuable guidance and was a supreme editor. Laura Baldwin, former Garden editor, along with Bruce Reed and Ellen Stoddard, also patiently edited numerous drafts. Dr. Dieter Wilken, Lynn Carlson, and Nancy Johnson helped with documents and information. Don Matsumoto, Laurie Hannah, and Michael Redmon helped select photographs, and Jeffrey Yardy prepared the wonderful maps. Michael Redmon of the Santa Barbara Historical Society deserves special thanks for his artful shepherding of this project through its various stages. Finally, I wish to thank my children, Anna and Sam, who have been supportive and tolerant of this multi-year project.*

Front cover photograph shows the lower meadow of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in bloom with a snow-covered La Cumbre Peak in background, 1965. Back cover photograph shows detail of a Washingtonia palm. The drawing on pages one and fifty-nine is by Campbell Grant, originally executed for the 1972 Annual Report *of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. All illustrations are from the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Archives unless noted otherwise.*

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS: NOTICIAS is a quarterly journal devoted to the study of the history of Santa Barbara County. Contributions of articles are welcome. Those authors whose articles are accepted for publication will receive ten gratis copies of the issue in which their article appears. Further copies are available to the contributor at cost. The authority in matters of style is the *University of Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition.* The Publications Committee reserves the right to return submitted manuscripts for required changes. Statements and opinions expressed in articles are the sole responsibility of the author.

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Single copies $10.00
ISSN 0581–5916

A Garden for All Time: The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden 1926–2005

Flourishing in the heart of Mission Canyon, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden appears as if it has always been there. The verdant redwood forest, the wildflower meadow, and other sections of the Garden seem so much a part of nature that it is easy to forget that the Garden is a designed and planted landscape that has changed with time to reflect the interests and aesthetic leanings of its designers and administrators. Different and sometimes conflicting visions have shaped the Garden, and its ongoing metamorphosis is a vital part of its story.

As the Garden approaches its eightieth year, its mission remains the same as when it was originally conceived by Dr. Frederic Clements in 1924—exhibition, conservation, demonstration landscaping, experimentation, and research.[1] Unlike a nature preserve, in which human disturbance is minimized and the natural vegetation left intact, the original Garden was created by removing much of the existing vegetation and then planting displays to educate the public about selected natural processes and communities. These living exhibits were also intended to be the resources for scientific inquiry and experimentation. The Garden was founded on the dual principles of research and education, with living displays serving as dynamic tools

Mary Carroll

Maps prepared by Jeffrey L. Yardy

to help both scientists and the public gain knowledge about California plant life.

Setting the Scene

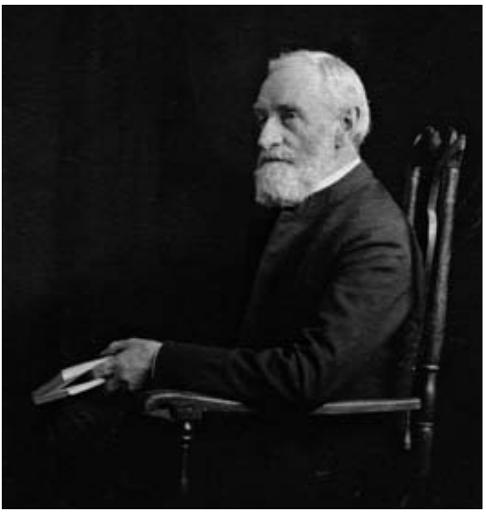
Santa Barbara experienced a boom in growth when the railroad connected it to Los Angeles in 1887 and to San Francisco in 1901. This area, with its beautiful setting, mild Mediterranean climate, sparkling ocean, and backdrop of stunning green-clad mountains, attracted many people of wealth, culture, and education. People from the East Coast and Midwest made Santa Barbara their winter home, including several who played a significant role in early Garden history: Bernhard and Irene Hoffmann from Stockbridge, Massachusetts; Anna Dorinda and William H. Bliss from St. Louis, then New York City. Later came Mildred and Robert W. Bliss from Washington, D.C., and Mrs. Oakleigh Thorne from Chicago. Others retired to this area, such as Dr. and Mrs. Elmer J. Bissell of Rochester, New York. These new residents with others began to lobby for creation of more cultural pursuits in Santa Barbara.

At the same time, skilled horticulturists moved into the area, providing plants for various estates and gardens. Joseph Sexton arrived in 1867 and established the first commercial nursery in town on Castillo Street. Kinton Stevens, originally from England, came to Santa Barbara in about 1882 and established his nursery in Montecito on the site of what is now *Lotusland;* his son, Ralph Stevens, was a landscape architect who, among other projects, designed gardens at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse and, along with Lockwood de Forest, Jr.[2], at *Casa del Herrero;* Dr. Francesco Franceschi, originally from Italy, arrived in Santa Barbara about 1893, followed by Peter Riedel from Holland in about 1905, and the Englishman E.O. Orpet in about 1920. Dr. Augustus B. Doremus arrived in California in 1882 and served as Santa Barbara's first Superintendent of Parks from 1902 to 1918; he was responsible for the planting of the stone pines (*Pinus pinea*) on East Anapamu Street.[3]

By 1880 interested ranchers, horticulturists, and gardeners had formed the Santa Barbara Horticultural Society.[4] In 1891 the City of Santa Barbara held a flower festival, which attracted hundreds of visitors, to celebrate the visit of President Benjamin Harrison and his wife, Caroline.

Elizabeth de Forest recalled, "When I came here in 1925 everybody was talking about plants and horticulture. You went out to a stylish dinner party; or if you were humble folk and lived in Santa Barbara the talk was about gardens and about horticulture, and all the wonderful things that could be grown here. So it was a very fruity . . . horticultural climate."[5] Articles about gardening, tours of local gardens, and competitions fostered great enthusiasm for horticultural endeavors.[6] It was an ideal climate in which to establish a local botanic garden.

A headline in the Santa Barbara *Morning Press* for January 26, 1918, read, "Mass Meeting Favors World Botanical Garden for Santa



Francesco Franceschi was only one of a number of talented and innovative horticulturists who introduced hundreds of new plants to the Santa Barbara area. Santa Barbara Historical Society photograph.

Barbara." Community leaders had launched a movement to form a World Botanical Garden, featuring regional botanical exhibits in the area between Canada and Mexico along the 2000-mile Pacific Coast Highway. Speeches at public meetings detailed the scientific value of such an undertaking and extolled Santa Barbara as the place "where the vegetation of the tropics and of the north meet in the most harmonious mingling." Santa Barbara would serve as headquarters and feature the largest exhibits.

There is no place in the entire world so well furnished by nature for such a mighty botanical garden as planned, that the variety of flora in this section being more numerous than anywhere else on the globe puts the divine stamp of approval on the movement; further that the proposed botanical highways will attract millions of tourists from the world over, and that they will never be satisfied until they have finally reached the fountain head of these great ribbons of floral beauty, the world botanical gardens in Santa Barbara.[7]

Meeting notes described the ideas and social context:

"[Speakers testified about] . . . *the unique adaptability of the Santa Barbara climate, soil and physical character to the purpose in view, as well as its favorable social conditions for developing local interest and support for such an undertaking. These conditions were held to promise the possibility of growing here a greater variety of plant life, under conditions favoring natural and full development of each, than anywhere else in the world, and so making Santa Barbara a center of botanical interest which would attract the attention of the whole world, and to which people would be led by the proposed extension of exhibits along the Pacific Coast Highway in both directions.*[8]

Although these plans never came to fruition, the foundation was laid for the formation of a botanic garden during the next decade.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, under whose auspices the Garden was originally formed, was an outgrowth of a group of professional scientists and amateurs with avid interests in the natural sciences. This group, the Santa Barbara Society of Natural History, founded in 1887, created a small museum at 1226 State Street and a publication, *The Bulletin of the Santa Barbara Society of Natural History*. Activities diminished around the turn of the century but resumed in 1916 with the arrival of ornithologist William Leon Dawson from Ohio. Dawson founded the Museum of Comparative Oology with other members of the Santa Barbara Society of Natural History and located this new museum on Puesta del Sol Road in Mission Canyon. Exhibits included Dawson's bird egg collection as well as collections from several Society members. The museum was renamed the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and Comparative Oology in 1923 when Caroline Hazard donated two acres of land and money for the building of a permanent museum.[9]

The Founding of the Blaksley Botanic Garden

Anna Dorinda Blaksley Bliss provided funding for the purchase of land for a botanic garden in 1926, adding gifts and an endowment as time passed. She was representative of women in certain circles at that time: well educated, full of vision and energy, and desirous of making contributions to their community although not employed in remunerative occupations. Many women who received college educations or education abroad before World War II returned home to find that their skills and fine minds did not enable them to obtain gainful employment. Many women chose to marry and sublimate their energies into managing a household and garden and raising a family. Volunteerism by educated women surged during these years.[10]

Anna Bliss was born into a well-to-do family in St. Louis in 1851. Several years after the death of her first husband, she married William Henry Bliss, the U.S. District

Attorney in St. Louis, in 1894 and the couple moved to New York City. While in New York, Anna Bliss belonged to the League of Political Education, a "vibrant group of suffragists, whose fight for the 19th Amendment led them to build a meeting space to educate people on the important issues of the day." She donated $500,000 to the League of Political Education for construction of New York's Town Hall building, which was completed in 1921.[11]

The couple moved to Santa Barbara in 1914 and in 1918 their Montecito estate, *Casa Dorinda*, was completed. The home became a Montecito social center and today it serves as a retirement community. Anna Bliss was generous to her adopted community in a number of ways, but her enduring legacy in Santa Barbara is the beautiful garden she helped to found in Mission Canyon.

Among the many botanists and horticulturists who gravitated to the Santa Barbara area were the famous plant ecologist, Dr. Frederic Clements, and his wife, Dr. Edith Schwartz Clements, who had moved to San Diego around 1924. Clements had been conducting both studies of plant relationships (taxonomy) and ecological research at his Alpine Laboratory in Colorado for many years and also worked with Harvey Monroe Hall of the University of California at Berkeley. He was particularly interested in studying inheritance of traits and determining which features were "fixed" and which might respond to experimental manipulations. He and others employed the use of "reciprocal transplant gardens;" these consisted of gardens at selected locales with differing environmental characteristics, such as elevation, temperature, and relative length of growing season.[12]

It was largely the vision of Dr. Frederic Clements that materialized into a botanic garden in Mission Canyon. A research scientist, Clements left the administration of the Blaksley Botanic Garden in the hands of others after its founding in 1926.

Prior to moving to the area, Clements and his wife had dreamed of forming a botanic garden in Southern California at a site with a favorable winter climate.[13]

Frederic and Edith Clements were friends with Bernhard and Irene Hoffmann, sharing an avid interest in the arts as well as in the scientific pursuits of Mr. Hoffmann's brother, Ralph, who became Director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in 1923. Bernhard and Irene Hoffmann had settled in Santa Barbara in 1919. Bernhard was very active in civic affairs and was especially interested in the city's architecture. He purchased the Casa de la Guerra and had built adjacent to it a complex of retail outlets and offices, El Paseo.

Hoffmann served as founding chairman of the Plans and Planting Committee of the nonprofit Community Arts Association, and appointed Pearl Chase as his secretary. Chase later wrote that Hoffmann "was a practical idealist who worked tirelessly and with farsighted vision to make Santa Barbara a beautiful city with an architecture in harmony with its historical background and adapted to its distinctive topography, its climate, and its delightful location."[14]

These two were at the center of efforts to rebuild the shattered portions of the city in the aftermath of a major earthquake which struck Santa Barbara on June 29, 1925. The community came together as never before, with new residents and old uniting on committees and connecting in public and private venues to provide aid and demonstrate community spirit.[15]

In 1924, two years prior to the founding of the Garden, Dr. Clements wrote Bernhard Hoffmann:

The plans for the combined botanical and experimental gardens have assumed definite form, and one that looks attractive to the planner at least . . . I have striven for a certain unity of the four phases that appeal to me most, namely, exhibition, which is largely a matter of exotics; conservation, through the influence of wild gardens; demonstration, by means of examples of natural rather than naturalistic landscaping; and experimentation, which would spread the spirit of inquiry over the whole enterprise. To render the community service that is always in my thoughts, such a garden should be given the opportunity to make the most direct contacts with the schools, the park system, neighborhood clubs, etc. I assume that it would bear some organic relations to your "Plans and Planting Branch" from the very outset.

I shall bring the outlines and suggestions with me in the hope that we can discuss them at an early date. . . . In order that we may contribute as much to this as possible, we are planning to make Santa Barbara headquarters this spring and to make the various journeys from there as a base.[16]

Edith Clements wrote about the search for such a location in her memoirs:

We found an ideal location for the main coastal gardens in Mission Canyon at Santa Barbara, and for dune gardens on the shore eleven miles away. Mr. and Mrs. Bernhard Hoffmann, prominent residents of the city, had their own beautiful gardens on their large estate in the Canyon, and were interested enough in our plans to assign several acres for the scientific experiments. The western wall of the Canyon offered protection against fog and cold sea breezes, and the valley soil was deep and rich.[17]

Arriving in Santa Barbara in 1925, the Clements lived adjacent to the Hoffmanns at the base of Mission Canyon, where they remained until Dr. Clements's death in 1945. This became the site of the experimental gardens they used in various studies.

Soon after moving to Santa Barbara, Dr. Clements consented to serve as the Honorary Curator of Botany for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History where he gave talks and wrote articles for the *Museum Leaflet* series. In late 1925, Ralph Hoffmann arranged a meeting between Clements and the trustees of the Museum and members of the Garden Club to discuss the botanic garden proposal. Dr. Elmer J. Bissell, who was present at the meeting, reported a few

Anna Dorinda Blaksley Bliss provided initial funding for the purchase of the Botanic Garden site. The Blaksley Botanic Garden was named in memory of her father, Henry Blaksley. Santa Barbara Historical Society photograph.

Mission Canyon, ca.1905. The boulders at left center mark the future entrance of the Blaksley Botanic Garden. Santa Barbara Historical Society photograph.

days later that he thought he might have a potential donor for the property purchase for the new garden.[18]

In early 1926, Dr. Clements wrote pages of planning notes, variously named the "Modern Botanical Garden," "Blakeslee [*sic*] Botanic Garden" and "Santa Barbara Botanic Garden." In these notes, he expressed a clear vision for a garden as a research and educational institution, with remarkable insights into ways to engage the public in learning.

Perhaps the chief function of a botanical garden is exhibition, by which the kinds, names, uses, behavior and relationships of plants are made available to all those interested, at the same time that it develops the interest of others. It may be made to reveal a world of fascinating facts about living things, many of them unknown even to the devoted lover of gardens or nature.

While the name is a necessary handle for those who would know and use plants, it should be incidental to a knowledge of uses, relationships, behavior and the like.[19]

His original proposal embraced gardens of both exotics and natives in different plantings that would span miles in the area, including a dune garden to be planted along Cabrillo Boulevard and a montane garden at the crest of the Santa Ynez Range. He also proposed planting a conservation garden of plants native to California or the West. Clements was among the early scientific visionaries who recognized the richness of the California flora and impending threats due to urbanization and outdoor recreation.

The diversity of climate and topography that make the state unique physically also is reflected in the exceptional richness of its flora and fauna. But the flora has already suffered badly in the vicinity of the large cities and the rapid extension of motor travel threatens many of the choicest species with extinction.[20]

Clements envisioned a garden in which there would be several planting themes: plant community displays (redwood, big tree, oak-madrone, prairie, desert, chaparral, aquatic), plant family groupings (ferns, lilies, peas, etc.), groupings of plant genera, experimental

gardens, and gardens representing different climate regimes. He even suggested plantings for the upper roadway leading into the Garden—lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*), sugarbush (*R. ovata*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), and hollyleaf cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*)—which are there to this day.

Clements discussed his concepts for a botanic garden with Ralph Hoffmann in 1925,[21] and it may be assumed that he also shared his planning documents, since they are excerpted by Hoffmann in his article in the April 1926 Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History *Museum Leaflet*:

It is not difficult to imagine the botanical gardens of Santa Barbara in future time as a series of beautiful and significant units reaching from the sea to the crest of the mountains, connected by a drive lined with trees, shrubs and flowers from all parts of the earth.[22]

The new botanic garden was officially founded on March 16, 1926 at a meeting of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees. Anna Bliss donated $16,000 to be used to purchase the undeveloped parcel and administer the new garden. The only conditions she imposed were that the garden be known as the Blaksley Botanic Garden, and that the gift be held in memory of her father, Henry Blaksley. The property, consisting of two tracts of land, one with 11.01 acres and the other with 2.06 acres, was conveyed by Mrs. Mary D. Richter to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History for $13,100 on April 2, 1926.[23]

A Historical Debate

Some versions of the Garden's establishment assert that Frederic Clements conceived of the Garden, its purposes, its design, and its plantings, and then served as the first Director. Others focus on Elmer J. Bissell as the Garden's first Director.

What is known, based on Frederic and Edith Clements' own writings, is that, prior to the year of the Garden's establishment in 1926, Frederic Clements expressed a desire to establish a botanic garden and came to Santa Barbara with that goal in mind. Dr. Clements had prepared pages of planning documents to that end and alluded to them in his 1924 letter to Bernhard Hoffmann. Dr. Clements recalled later that Anna Bliss purchased the original thirteen acres as a direct result of presentations he had made to the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Natural History as well as to the Garden Club. According to him, Elmer J. Bissell was present at the meetings and said he might have someone who could help fund the venture. Here are Clements' exact words:

In coming to Santa Barbara in 1925 in the hope of finding better growing conditions for experimental plants during the winter, I discussed the project with Mr. Ralph Hoffmann, then Director of the Museum of Natural History. He was attracted by the idea of combining experimental work and public gardens in a botanical garden bearing a novel character, and suggested that I meet the Trustees of the Museum and members of the Garden Club to discuss the proposal. This was carried into effect with the consequence that Dr. Bissell, who was present at the meeting, told me a few days later that he thought he had a prospect who might contribute the funds needed.

A short time afterward a local real estate agent, Mr. [James] *Wagner, heard that we were looking for a site and took Mrs. Clements and myself up to the Richter tract in Mission Canon* [sic] *to determine its possibilities. This proved so attractive that I immediately got in touch with Dr. Bissell and asked him to come out and look the ground over with reference to its possibilities. He did so, and became very enthusiastic about it and the opportunities it offered for developing a garden of dual character. Soon after he brought Mrs. Bliss to the property and as a consequence she told him to go ahead with the plans for organizing a botanic garden*

The novel feature of the plan was to include representative areas of the various

plant societies found in the general neighborhood, from the mountains to the sea.[24]

Contemporaneous minutes and reports from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History unambiguously identified Clements as the Garden's first Director, acknowledged Anna Bliss as the person whose financial contributions allowed Clements' ideas to come to fruition, and the Bissells as contributors on an operational level. Further, Dr. John C. Merriam, president of the Carnegie Institution, which supported Clements' work from 1917-1941, visited the Garden to oversee progress on several occasions. An article in *The Santa Barbara Gardener*, written by Lockwood and Elizabeth de Forest, stated, "The Carnegie Institution will co-operate with the Museum of Natural History in the work done at the Gardens and the direction will be under Dr. Clements, now honorary curator of botany at the Museum."[25]

Yet no internal documents have been uncovered detailing Clements' administrative work at the Garden. Museum of Natural History documents from the period made it clear Clements was expected to serve as Director of the new garden, and initial plantings were even delayed until he returned from his Alpine Laboratory at the end of summer 1926.[26] The record is silent on his intentions regarding management of the new garden on a day-to-day basis and the extent of his expected involvement. Certainly the initial layout of the Garden reflected Clements' community concepts, and he wrote of the redwood planting at the Garden in 1927:

Several new stations for acclimatization studies have been installed during the past two years. The most extensive of these is the Blaksley Botanic Garden at Santa Barbara. This is located in Mission Canyon where the stream has cut a deep gorge in an outlying ridge of the Santa Inez [sic] *Range. Redwoods and associated shrubs have been planted and it is expected to develop the herbaceous layers as the shade increases. The lower portion of the canyon is devoted to a community group of* Sequoia gigantea *with its associates of the montane forest, while oakwoods, chaparral, sagebrush and prairie are being planted not only with species typical of them in California, but also with close relatives from other climates. These reconstructed and augmented communities are expected to contribute experimental results for building the foundation of paleo-ecology, as well as to yield direct values for acclimatization.*[27]

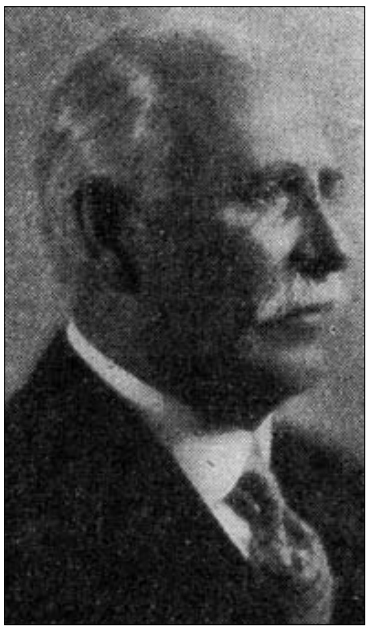
Clements was first and foremost a research scientist and spent long periods of the year at his Alpine Laboratory in Colorado as well as at other experimental stations in Nebraska and elsewhere. When in Santa Barbara, he engaged in research at the "main garden site" by his house in Mission Canyon as well as at the beach site at Coal Oil Point that had been provided by Mrs. Colin Campbell. He does not seem to have spent much time at the new botanic garden, despite his involvement during the conceptual phase.[28]

Whatever the formal arrangements were for the new Garden's administration, the Bissells were the ones that could be found at the Garden site on a daily basis from 1926 to 1936. Elmer Jefferson Bissell and his wife, Ervanna Bowen Bissell, retired from Rochester, New York to Santa Barbara in 1920. They purchased a home on Glendessary Lane in lower Mission Canyon, which they called *Stone Acres*, a "little garden among big rocks . . . where Goleta Valley meets Mission Canyon."[29] Dr. Bissell served as an ophthalmic surgeon at Genesee Hospital in Rochester for over thirty years, while Mrs. Bissell acquired a passion for plants there, tending a lovely garden and pursuing botany courses at the University of Rochester.

At the meeting that established the Garden in March 1926, Dr. Bissell was nominated to the Board of Trustees of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, a position he held for the next ten years. By September of that year, the Museum reported, "Instead of planting a heterogeneous mass of exotic material, a definite plan has been thought out by Dr. Clements and is now being carried out

by Dr. Bissell, showing the native California plants in their natural associations."[30]

Bissell was sixty-five when he began working at the Garden, and Mrs. Bissell was sixty-six. Caroline Hazard wrote of the Bissells' partnership, "She and her husband worked so perfectly together in the inception and development of the Garden it is hard to tell where one began and the other left off. The technical knowledge was hers—the administration his, so they worked together in a beautiful harmony."[31] Dr. Bissell was first listed as Director of the Garden in 1928, and Mrs. Bissell was added as Associate Director in 1929. They served in these roles until 1936.



Elmer J. Bissell and his wife, Ervanna Bowen Bissell, supervised the initial layout of the Garden grounds and the selection of the foundation plantings.

The last reference made to Frederic Clements' involvement with the Garden during his lifetime appeared in the Museum of Natural History Board Minutes for January 1929, which included a note that Dr. Bissell wished the composition of the Blaksley Botanic Garden Committee to remain the same as in 1928 with the addition of Dr. Clements.[32]

The Clements continued to live in Santa Barbara until Dr. Clements' death in 1945. He had expressed great initial enthusiasm for the establishment of the Garden, outlining educational and aesthetic objectives, in addition to his interest in research plantings and experimental gardens. After 1927, he never referred to the Garden in research publications.

It is not clear what precipitated Clements' diminished involvement with the Garden he helped to plan. Some possibilities include involvement with his extensive research pursuits, lack of interest in administration, or differences in approach and style between himself and the effusive, flowery Ervanna Bowen Bissell. This latter idea is given some credence by an interview with Dr. Clements several months before his death in which he is asked about his role in the Garden's establishment. He describes the events in detail, and then makes a distinction between designing plantings that are utilized for experimental and scientific study and those that focus solely on display. Although the two approaches can easily be melded, it requires the collaboration of scientist and designer. His words speak of this conflict impersonally:

However, it proved difficult to combine the research idea with the development of popular interest in the Garden and in consequence this part of the plan was relinquished.[33]

In late 1944, Sellar Bullard, Garden Board President, sent a letter to Clements acknowledging the importance of his contributions in "promoting the idea of a botanic garden of native plants for Santa Barbara, in suggesting the present magnificent site, and in giving advice and assistance in the early stages of the Garden's development." Dr. Clements was then elected as an Honorary Member of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Association.[34]

Other Versions of the Garden's Founding

Many versions of the Garden's establishment have been related, some of which minimize Frederic Clements' involvement in the Garden's founding, suggesting that Anna Bliss asked Dr. Bissell to direct the Garden from its inception. Differing accounts have led to a great deal of confusion concerning the early focus of the Garden. Some of these give the impression that the Garden was created primarily as a display and recreational facility when, in fact, the Garden's original focus was research and education.

Ervanna Bowen Bissell, 1930:

In 1926 when this land was divided into small lots and offered for sale, a generous woman, Mrs. William H. Bliss, bought the whole of it and asked her friend, Dr. Elmer J. Bissell, to develop it for the public's benefit. . . . The Director, being also a museum trustee and fully understanding the situation, promised to give his services and also to endeavor to make the young botanic Garden the museum's outdoor wing, a credit to it, not a care. [35]

In this version, Frederic Clements and the Carnegie Institution of Washington were not mentioned, only the Bissells. It incorrectly implied that Dr. Bissell had been a member of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Natural History prior to the Garden's inception.

In 1936, Paul Marshall Rea, Director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, recalled an exchange with E. J. Bissell:

In a conversation soon after I came to Santa Barbara, Dr. Bissell told the story as follows: One day, after a botanical reconnaissance, Dr. Bissell stood on the present site of the Garden with two representatives of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, when one of them said, "What a perfect place for a botanic garden!"... Dr. Bissell stated that he was fascinated by this dream, but had no thought of its serious development. That evening he happened to be with Mrs. Bliss and told her of his exciting afternoon, when she startled him by saying, "If you want it, I'll buy it." [36]

In this version, Bissell and two representatives of the Carnegie Institution (one likely being Dr. Frederic Clements) are all present when the idea of a "perfect place for a botanic garden" is formulated and discussed, although Bissell had no "thought of its serious development."

Maunsell Van Rensselaer, Director of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden from 1936-1950, told this story to Rea in 1936:

Dr. Bissell stated that he and Mrs. Bissell were in the habit of picnicking with Mrs. Bliss at the site of the Mission Dam and that on one of these occasions they observed surveying stakes which tended to confirm a

Carving out a botanic garden in rugged Mission Canyon was a formidable task. The Blaksley Boulder fronts what would become the Meadow Section of the Garden in this scene from the 1920s.

report that Dr. Bissell had heard regarding the development of the area as an allotment. Dr. Bissell stated that these circumstances led to the purchase of the land by Mrs. Bliss for the purpose of preserving a historical site and their favorite picnic ground; and that following this purchase consideration was given to the uses to which the land might be put; and that it was in this way that the cooperation with the Carnegie Institution arose.[37]

This version had the Bissells and Anna Bliss relaxing at their favorite spot and noticing surveying stakes. After a plan was hatched for preserving this wonderful locale, the property was purchased, and then the idea of cooperating with the Carnegie Institution developed.

In subsequent articles in the *Santa Barbara News-Press* and other publications the picnic story was retold many times. Although there may have indeed been a picnic involving the Bissells and Anna Bliss, Dr. Clements reported that he and his wife found the parcel with the help of a real estate agent and proposed it as a potential botanic garden site. Dr. Clements' original idea of a botanic garden based on natural plant communities remains to this day.

Breaking Ground—the Early Years (1926–1936)

The structure and layout of the proposed Blaksley Botanic Garden were detailed in the planning documents prepared by Clements in 1926; in essence, these documents served as the Garden's first master plan. He proposed several major themes for the display portion of the Garden, with accompanying plant lists for each. These planting themes (community and taxonomic groupings), design guidelines (harmony of design, low in front and tall in back, masses and drifts of plantings, etc.), and plant labels continue to be essential elements of the design to this day.

The first Blaksley Botanic Garden Committee consisted of Anna Dorinda Blaksley Bliss; Dr. Elmer J. Bissell, soon to become Director; Mrs. Bernhard Hoffmann; two individuals who had offered additional land for Dr. Clements' research, Mrs. Colin Campbell and George Knapp; Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Board President Harold Sidebotham; and Frank Kelly, another Board member. The committee articulated its aim "to so unite the aesthetic, educational and scientific that this garden will hold a unique place in the horticultural world."[38]

Work commenced on the grounds on April 7, 1926. The task was daunting. Support facilities for staff and infrastructure for Garden maintenance needed construction, as well as clearing of existing vegetation so that garden plantings could be installed. Another priority was signage and labels to guide visitors and enhance their appreciation of the displays.

Despite obstacles, the enthusiasm of the Bissells was palpable. "The property is wonderfully adapted for a botanic garden. It has open and wooded slopes, moist and dry areas, a great variety of soils, and more than half of the property is covered with hundreds of native wildflowers, shrubs and trees."[39] Further, the Bissells decided to use the indigenous trees and shrubs among the sandstone boulders scattered throughout the property as a backdrop for the plantings, "to make the plan fit the ground and not to twist the ground to fit a plan."[40] This followed one of the hallowed landscaping principles advocated by Charles Sprague Sargent, founder of the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University, and others.

John Bertolli, was one of the first gardeners and worked there from 1926 to 1945. Anna Bliss transferred him there from *Casa Dorinda*. He recalled this early period:

On April 7, 1926 . . . my first assignment was to make it possible for a car to get in and up to the weeping oak tree above the Blaksley Boulder which was the original wagon road that crossed Mission Canyon before Tunnel Road was built. . . . For the first three months I worked alone

with the help of Dr. Bissell's house man in the afternoon on general cleanup and removing dead trees in the canyon. [A] *portion of the meadow was plowed by Luigi Reginato with a team of horses. In July 1926 three men were hired and Bob Canterbury as head gardener and the planting had started. Dr. Bissell handled the pay roll and all administration business. Mrs. Bissell was the supervisor of the project.*[41]

No drawings or planning documents exist from this period, yet the Bissells, their tiny staff, and a few volunteers accomplished an amazing amount in the first nine months. A lath house, tool house, superintendent's cottage, public restrooms, and garage were constructed, along with an entrance road and parking area. They laid three thousand feet of water pipes and installed a drinking fountain. By the end of 1926, several trails traversed the new garden, marked by carved directional signs. One man worked for several weeks digging out poison oak, and a tree surgeon tended over forty oak trees.

Quantities of boulders had to be cut into smaller blocks and hauled away. Heavy clay mud made the unpaved county road approaching the Garden impassable during much of winter, and dust in the summer proved problematic. Chipped stone from years of quarrying in the canyon was mixed with the clay to create a foundation for the entrance driveway and a parking space located near the new pond and desert community.

Ervanna Bissell made a gift of three rock pools, which were planted with aquatic species, beginning a pattern of providing gifts for special features to enhance the Garden, since money always seemed to be in short supply. In 1927 Anna Bliss gave $120,000 to create an endowment for the new garden. That year the Bissells and the Museum Board decided that a policy "largely limiting the garden to the flora native to the Pacific slope from Mexico to Puget Sound" would be prudent.[42]

The Bissells embraced Dr. Clements' original ideas for plant community displays, with one addition, an island section. Hence, the Garden was planted with eight communities beginning in 1927: desert, sagebrush, chaparral, oak-madrone, Sierra big-tree, coast redwood, prairie, and island.[43]

In the Garden's early years, one of the major difficulties was obtaining seeds or container-grown native plants, as few were available through nurseries. Further, little information was available on the care and propagation of native plants. As a result, legendary California plant collectors such as Carl Purdy, Theodore Payne, and Lester Rowntree obtained seeds and cuttings for a range of early Garden plantings.[44] The Bissells also sent the grounds superintendent, Robert Canterbury, on collecting trips to the California Islands and to areas within 150 miles of Santa Barbara to gather plant material for the Garden. John Bertolli recalled that the Garden purchased initial planting material from Payne, including Torrey pine (*Pinus torreyana*), gray pine (*P. sabiniana*), Monterey pine (P. *radiata*), Santa Cruz Island ironwood (*Lyonothamnus §oribundus*), lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*), sugar bush (*R. ovata*), and others.

The tiny staff handled an impressive quantity of plants in the early years. In 1928 alone Garden plantings included 2,600 trees and shrubs representing 250 species. They set out over 2,000 bulbs, other herbaceous perennials, and ferns. Two hundred different types of seed were sown, and the lath house contained over one thousand plants in various phases of development.[45]

By 1927 most of the new plants were labeled, reinforcing the Garden's educational focus. Plant labels included common name, scientific name, family, and habitat, as suggested by Dr. Clements. "This policy has attracted much attention from both professional and amateur . . . and bids fair to make the Garden of ever increasing educational and scientific value." Mrs. John Bertolli was hired occasionally to "paint with a fine brush

Mission Creek. Photograph by Jean Haywood.

Lupine and poppies, 1973. Photograph by Jacqueline Broughton.

the plant labels." That same year the Bissells posted a map of the community groupings and the trails leading to them for visitors and placed a small open-air reference library under the oaks. A meteorological station was also installed.[46]

As the staff struggled to establish foundation plantings, there were discouraging losses of plants in both the nursery and in the ground. Browsing deer and gophers, squirrels, field mice, rabbits, quail, sparrows, and other birds ate hundreds of young plants. Further problems arose from plant diseases and insect pests, introduced from plants that had been dug up in the wild. Many plants brought from other parts of the state or the Pacific Northwest would not grow in this region. Others would only grow in certain locations. Irrigation requirements varied broadly. Constant experimentation and replanting were required.

LEFT: The entrance to the Blaksley Botanic Garden, early 1930s.

RIGHT: Education was a priority from day one at the Garden. Note the early label in the right foreground. The Blaksley Boulder is at left.

Ervanna Bowen Bissell described this period with her usual humor:

Native plants object to being put in an adobe plaster cast. They rebel, also, against animal fertilizers. This latter idiosyncrasy has made it more difficult to turn the Garden's clay into rich loam. The piles of decaying vegetation mixed with lime and the truckloads of sharp sand along the upper road have not been ornamental. The shrubs and perennials, recently moved or newly planted, which were protected from the sun by rude burlap tents, or shielded by shingles, have also been far from decorative. We apologize to a suffering public for so offending its eye.[47]

Mrs. Bissell created the initial design of the Garden and her correspondence and published articles reflect her imaginative spirit and aesthetic sensibilities. Describing the Garden and its goals, Mrs. Bissell wrote in 1930:

Blaksley Botanic Garden is an exhibition garden; its aim is to grow attractive plants native to the Pacific Slope; its plan is to set these plants in communities, artistically arranged; its object is to show the beauty of native plants and their adaptability for use in private gardens; and its slogan is Back to the Soil—with native plants. Back to California's soil—not with thirsty exotics—but with California's drought-resistant plants which conserve the state's water supply.[48]

She believed landscaping was a "matter of taste, line, mass, proportion," and Garden plantings should be "artistically arranged" in natural communities.[49]

It is obvious from her writings that Mrs. Bissell gave considerable thought to the plac-

ing and arrangement of the plantings, as well as associated signage and other details. She noted which species looked best in masses and drifts and which served well as the sole focus in a planting. The relative heights of mature specimens were also important considerations in her designs. She had a particular fondness for native rock, personally directing its placement, and liked to place a rock with every new planting.[50]

The Garden obtained design assistance from others as well, in particular Lockwood de Forest and E. O. Orpet. The Museum of Natural History had named Lockwood de Forest as botanist for the Blaksley Botanic Garden in 1928 and he served as a consultant for the Garden from time to time; Edward O. Orpet served as Chief Propagator for the United States Department of Agriculture (Bureau of Plant Industry) in Chico before coming to Santa Barbara, where he was a Superintendent of Parks from 1920-1930.

The Early Plantings

The Meadow Area: The broad sweep of meadow framed by native coast live oaks at the fringes and sandstone peaks in the distance has served as a focal point for visitors since the Garden's inception, though planting and design in this area have undergone major transformations through the years. In 1926 a team of horses plowed an area near the large boulder, which was then designated as the Prairie Community, featuring "annual and perennial flowers and grasses of the meadow and prairie portions of the West."[51] Three years later, in 1929, horticulturist Peter Riedel volunteered his services to clear a larger area and plant it with non-native Bermuda grass.

As the Garden was not originally conceived as solely a native plant garden, there was no conflict with the planting of a non-native grass in the Meadow area. The Bermuda grass Meadow created a "grassy space across

which one looked at the mountains—an interval of green silence amid chords of color," in the words of Ervanna Bissell.[52]

Her writings provide a glimpse of the aesthetic effects she was trying to achieve in her designs, "an interval of green silence amid chords of color," which evokes powerful visual images of composition, form, and color—a painterly approach intended to create a strong visual impact. Subsequent maps and descriptions from this period depicted the Meadow as a grassy expanse surround by large flower beds, planted with annuals, herbaceous perennials, and some shrubs.[53]

Several water features were placed in the Garden in its very earliest days, including a small pond by the edge of the Meadow, still present above the Blaksley Boulder, which was originally planted with water plants rimmed with succulents. Dr. Bissell paid for the construction of this pond in 1928 in commemoration of Mrs. Bissell's sixty-eighth birthday.

In 1929, there was a break in the main city water pipe from Gibraltar Reservoir and the city constructed emergency pipes that climbed from a pool behind Mission Dam, up the canyon's steep bank, and across the Meadow to empty finally into Sheffield Reservoir. After the city removed the water pipes many months later, the Meadow was plowed again, and Garden staff dug a channel to create a "stream" that flowed into a "lake," where montane moisture-loving species were planted. This lake was dedicated in 1931 to honor E. J. Bissell's seventieth birthday.

Six years after the Garden's founding, most sections had been laid out and were largely complete. Mrs. Bissell then turned from community displays to the second of Dr. Clements' exhibition ideas, taxonomic groupings. Utilizing the beds surrounding the Meadow, she installed displays of woody genera that exhibited diversity of form and habit. She also established plant family displays nearby in the Chaparral Section

The Meadow Oaks Area: The west side of the Meadow, with its large oaks gracing the edge of the Canyon rim, has served as a gathering place and shady respite since the Garden's inception. Since rocks had been quarried there in earlier years, Mrs. Bissell took advantage of piles of rubble to transform the area into a "rock garden for shade-loving plants." Weathered stone steps led up to a level place from which there was a fine view

The Garden has undergone constant metamorphosis from its beginnings. The pond shown in this 1928 photograph is there today, but the plantings around it have completely changed.

of the canyon and old Mission Dam. Seats placed under the trees and beside the paths offered visitors a "restful welcome."[54] These features remain to this day.

The Desert Community: Ervanna Bowen Bissell designed the Desert Community, beginning in 1927, with input from E. O. Orpet, Lockwood de Forest, and Peter Riedel. Among the early plantings were the *Acacia* and the non-native mission cactus (*Opuntia ficus-indica*), from which Bertolli once made wine. By 1928, 115 species had been planted.[55]

Although the general policy was to restrict Garden plantings to species native to the Pacific slope, staff made many exceptions early in the desert garden's history. In addition to cacti from Texas and Mexico, palo verde (*Parkinsonia aculeata*) from the desert Southwest and other non-native plants also were displayed. Mrs. Bissell wrote in 1930 that the Desert Community included "as many fine specimens of cactus as could be met with anywhere."[56] So popular were desert plants that she created an extension of the Desert Community to the north along the canyon's rim, hanging "like an eyelash on the canyon's rough face."[57]

Actually, she was not particularly interested in desert plants, especially cacti. "As you may have noticed, I take no interest in cactus," she wrote to her assistant, Maunsell Van Rensselaer, in 1935. "I think having a 'desert garden' as so many people wish is an abnormal interest, a fad which will die out after a while. More than that, the desert with its giant cactus is part of the saddest moments of my life."

In 1930, the Bissells' beloved son, Harold, had been taken seriously ill in Birmingham, Alabama, where he lived with his wife and two children. News of his death reached the Bissells as they were en route by train to see him; upon hearing the news, Dr. Bissell had a heart attack.

He slept, almost unconscious himself, and I watched the gathering twilight over the stretches of sand, the firm mountains behind like a guard, and the tall, gaunt cacti, like fierce sentinels standing always there, like inexorable guardians of fate. I can no more be interested, find pleasure, in a phase of plant life which has struggled against hard conditions and won, through a meager existence, a bare subsistence than I can find diversion in a cripple overcoming his handicap.[58]

Despite her sentiments, Mrs. Bissell and her colleagues created striking combinations of desert plants amidst boulders, placing pale green palo verde and deeper green mesquite in front of gray rocks, punctuated with clumps of *Opuntia, Agave,* and wildflowers.

Describing the transition from the Desert to the Chaparral Community, Mrs. Bissell wrote, "The masses of Mexican sedum (*S. dendroideum*) are like patches of sunshine among the Mountain-Lilac's blue sky."[59]

The Island Trail: The Island Trail was established below the Meadow adjacent to Mission Canyon Road in 1926-27. This area seemed to be Mrs. Bissell's personal favorite, and she wrote frequently about it in Garden publications as well as in a special article for the *Gardeners' Chronicle of America*. Quite a bit of grading was required initially to achieve the desired effect.

In the Island Community even the contour of the land is changed. The ground has reared itself up—aided by horses and a scraper—into two small hills with a miniature canyon between. Four pools—fed it is supposed from a spring hidden in the bank above—empty their water from one basin into another. Time-worn rocks left the ridge where Nature piled them and moved only by man's upheaval, formed these pools and the little brook. Trees, shrubs, herbs and wild flowers found on the islands are planted in this section. Grass is to grow in the open area between the entrance steps and the man-made hills. These will be someday shrubby masses of island cherries and red snapdragons indigenous to the islands. From a seat among the cypresses one has an unobstructed view of the sea and the Channel Islands that give this section its name.[60]

Mrs. Bissell extolled the beauty of island plants in her publication, even stating that they "grow old so gracefully." She described each genus in detail, calling attention to special features a visitor or reader might otherwise miss. Island buckwheats were carefully sited against boulders at the top of the path, and red buckwheat (*Eriogonum grande* var. *rubescens*) edged the trail, backed by Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (*E. arborescens*), and Saint Catherine's lace (*E. giganteum*). The leaves and inflorescences were used to evoke sculptural images; of Santa Cruz Island buckwheat, Mrs. Bissell said, "Some day a sculptor, remembering a Greek Acanthus or an Egyptian Lotus, but seeking new forms of beauty, will immortalize the Channel Islands by carving *E. arborescens* in stone."[61]

By 1928, eighty-seven species were collected on Santa Cruz Island for propagation, seventy-five of which were planted along the new Island Trail.[62] Collecting trips in subsequent years continued to add to this collection.

The Arroyo: Among the first trails laid out in the Garden in 1926 was the Arroyo Trail, and its creation was a practical solution for handling drainage from the Meadow during the rainy season or after irrigation. From the beginning, water-loving, stream-side native plants were placed along a stream course that probably followed the contours of a small ravine extant when the Garden was founded.[63] An early description of brush clearing creates a vivid image of the transformations that took place.

The steep bank beside the Arroyo Trail is transformed. Violets and trilliums grow where poison oak thrived, and prickly phlox and yellow mimulus tumble over rocks once hidden by sprawling Carissa grass.[64]

Planting in the popular Redwood Section began in 1926 and was significantly augmented in the mid-1930s and early 1940s.

The Forest Section: In 1932, the Garden acquired 5.8 acres opposite the main entrance. Not only did this eliminate the risk of real estate development, the new parcel enabled arriving visitors to be surrounded by natural scenery. Originally covered by an olive orchard, this slope was interplanted with native trees between the olives to slowly create a forest section; over three hundred pines and many toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), cherries (*Prunus ilicifolia* subsp. *lyonii*), and Ceanothus were planted along with native perennials and wildflowers.[65]

By 1939, about three-quarters of the olives had been removed and replaced with a diversity of native trees. Once a roadway was constructed in 1940, greater ease of access and horticultural progress became possible.

The Chaparral Community: Early reports on the Garden give little mention of this community, except that "the Chaparral Community is made from the plants forming the brush cover of the mountains, both north and south."[66] Opening this section was challenging, and involved quite a bit of clearing. Plantings of Ceanothus and other chaparral plants, as well as plant family groupings, were the highlights of this section.

T*he Big-Tree Community:* Frederic Clements' original plan for this community included twenty tree species, with giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum)* at the top of the list. "In the canyon a group of big trees, *Sequoia gigantea*, have been set out, and near them Incense Cedar, Silver fir, Dogwood and other trees and shrubs characteristic of the Sierras have been set out."[67] By 1930 the emphasis on this planting was modified, "The Big Tree Community is an experiment to see if the *Sequoia gigantea* and its associates will grow in this locality."[68] This section was eventually discontinued.

The Coast Redwood Community: Frederic Clements had also assembled an extensive plant list for the coast redwood community in his planning documents that would feature coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), canoe-cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), *Rhododendron*, and many other redwood associates, and planting commenced in 1926. The redwood community was "expected to develop the herbaceous layers as the shade increases."[69]

Accession records indicate that seeds of coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) were obtained from the "Redwood Empire" in 1934 and Richardson's Grove (Humboldt County) in 1940. This led some people to think the first redwoods were planted in the 1930s. It seems possible that some of the initial 1927 plantings struggled along, and plantings in later years may have augmented the early ones, which were not well documented.

The Canyon Trail: The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History *Annual Report* of 1926 mentioned three newly-laid trails in the canyon: the Canyon Trail, the Mission Falls Trail, and the Indian Trail. These paths, which ran the "length of the canyon," were ambitious undertakings during the first year of Garden work. In that period, the Garden did not own the property west of the Mission Dam, nor was there a bridge. In 1927, a pool created above the Dam provided habitat for aquatic plants.

Metamorphosis into a Non-Profit (1936-1939)

In 1936, both Dr. and Mrs. Bissell resigned as directors because of poor health. In just ten years, they had completed the basic layout of the Garden and foundation plantings, constructed several buildings, labeled many plants, assembled a small library, and published several articles about the Garden. Tributes to the Bissells from this period justifiably celebrated their hard work and creative endeavors. "The esthetic quality of the Garden has been developed with rare

In 1934 the Bissells hired Maunsell Van Rensselaer as an assistant. He would then serve as Garden Director from 1936 to 1950. Van Rensselaer promoted research, education, and publication during his tenure. He also upgraded plant inventory and record-keeping.

discrimination and great ingenuity. Full advantage has been taken of the steep canyon with its sheltering ring of hills and mountains to make a place of entrancing beauty," wrote Paul Marshall Rea in his tribute. One surprising detail—Dr. Bissell had arranged to have orchestral and vocal music broadcast from hidden loud speakers down in the canyon to enhance the visitor's experience.[70]

A transition period actually began two years before the Bissells' resignation. The couple began looking for an assistant, and a young man named Maunsell Van Rensselaer, who was called Van by his colleagues and Billy by his family, applied for the position.

Both Van Rensselaer and his wife, Eleanor, had attended the University of California at Berkeley, from which the former graduated in 1923. He took a general degree, but also completed courses in botany, forestry, and zoology. During the previous nine years, he had worked with the public, establishing outdoor programs at a nature lodge and resort he founded with a friend. He was a gracious young man, writing such salutations as "my dear doctor Bissell" and "thank you for your good letter" in his correspondence. In his letter to Dr. Bissell about the job opportunity at the Garden, he stated, "I was very much impressed with your most pleasing personality, your seriousness of purpose, and the painstaking way in which you do your work that I immediately developed a great feeling of confidence in you and know that I could work very easily and very pleasantly with you."[71]

What Van Rensselaer did not tell the Bissells, or anyone else at the Garden, was that he came from a long line of famous and distinguished Van Rensselaers, including a huge Colonial-era family that held vast tracts of land, over one million acres, called Rensselaerswijck in New Netherland (later New York), which now form large portions of Albany, Columbia, and Rensselaer counties in New York state. Another Van Rensselaer,

Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer (1851-1934), was a writer of books on architecture and is remembered as the "first woman art historian." Stephen Van Rensselaer founded the school that became Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Maunsell Van Rensselaer's wife Eleanor, *née* Eleanor Olmsted White, was a distant cousin of the famous landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903). Van Rensselaer kept all this information to himself; he wanted to succeed on his own merits and became distant from his family of origin during this period.[72]

The Bissells decided to hire Van Rensselaer in the spring of 1934. They had been working without financial remuneration at the Garden, paying many expenses out of their own pockets. The Depression had taken its toll on the Garden's endowment, and funds were tight. Further, the Museum of Natural History, during the tenure of Board President Major Max Fleischmann, was beginning to rethink its long-term commitment to the Garden.[73]

On May 21, 1934, Dr. Bissell approached the Museum Board of Trustees with a request for approval of an assistant's position at an annual salary of $2,000. This request was bound to cause concern, since income from the Blaksley Trust Fund had steadily declined during the Depression years; by 1938 it was worth half of its original value. Further, the Museum had always been "opposed to shouldering the financial responsibility of the Blaksley Botanic Garden."[74]

So when Fleischmann asked Bissell how this new position would be funded, the latter was prepared. He replied that he and Mrs. Bissell were willing to pledge their home, *Stone Acres*, to the Museum for the benefit of the Blaksley Botanic Garden, as well as to establish an endowment of $25,000 to $50,000 to fund the assistant position and provide ongoing support for the Garden. This offer was unanimously accepted by the Museum board and Van Rensselaer was hired to assist the Bissells in June 1934.[75]

Mrs. Bissell chose to direct her new assistant by correspondence sent from her home, often on a twice-daily basis. In the first year of correspondence, she gave Van Rensselaer, who had no formal training in horticulture, direction in horticultural practices:

Erysimum aspermum . . . *try it in a thickly planted mass (it is weak in composition unless massed) back of the godetia on right side of entrance to Canyon Trail. There is sun now where the branches were cut away.*

My theory is this, founded on action of native seed. Seed lies dormant if covered by dry dust and leaves, perhaps two seasons. Witness last year so dry; few flowers bloomed; both Rowntree and Payne told me they would not have fresh seed to collect. This year with abundant rains, seed germinated in fields of wildflowers. Surely the abundance did not come from last year's seed for there was so little.[76]

One task that needed attention was the development of some type of record-keeping system for the Garden. Museum Director Paul Marshall Rea wrote during this period, "I gradually became aware that Dr. Bissell kept neither accounts nor records of the Garden, and that the lack of these was a source of increasing anxiety to the trustees."[77] There were no maps of irrigation, water or other underground pipes or conduits. In addition, no documentation of the origin of plants planted on the grounds or growing in the nursery existed. Hence, one of Van Rensselaer's first tasks as Curator was to create plant records and other administrative documentation. Van Rensselaer, who was detail-oriented, developed lists of all plant species in the Garden and attempted to discover their original source, when possible. He also sent many specimens to botanical authorities to confirm identification.

In his initial 1934 inventory, Van Rensselaer determined that there were 587 species and varieties of native plants on the Garden grounds. At the recommendation of Dr. Thomas Harper Goodspeed, Director of the University of California Botanical

Garden, Van Rensselaer began the practice of accessioning each propagule (seeds, cuttings, divisions) and assigning it a unique number. Other records for each accession included date acquired, condition of material, quantity, exact source location or information, and name of collector. The unique number was placed with the accession at all times, following it into the ground on a more permanent label when the accession was ready for planting. Cultural records were also created for each species, which included propagation techniques, location of plantings, growth rates, timing and length of flowering period, moisture requirements, pruning techniques, etc.[78]

Mrs. Bissell gently poked fun at her assistant's desire to begin using the word "accessions" for the plant collections at the Garden:

I am much interested in your books of records of Blaksley Plants. They are so nicely kept and will prove valuable in future days . . . when you may not have time for so much worth-while detail. You ask about use of word Accessions . . . My training was to reduce my tendency for words of Latin derivations toward those of simpler forms, Anglo-Saxon. I have liked the word Additions, because it presupposed that one added to what was already on hand; also I think it less stilted. . . . "Accessions" is a law term, a term of weight. And as such it gives, or rather impresses listeners . . . Your word is correct, a little more pretentious but commonly used by people in large institutions.[79]

Van Rensselaer also initiated education

Garden Board President William Lassiter, fourth from left, receives deed to property just above the intersection of Tunnel and Mission Canyon roads from owner Albert B. Watkins, 1941. Watching, left to right, are Frederick Kellam, Mildred Bliss, Frank McCoy, Louis Lancaster, Maunsell Van Rensselaer, Anne Stow-Fithian, and Clara Gould.

programs and exhibits early in his tenure. A geology exhibit and "education center" placed under the Meadow Oaks in 1934 featured books and magazines on natural history as well as postings of information about the plantings, lists of birds seen in the Garden, and other items of interest. He conducted Sunday classes for Scout leaders and became involved with the Nature Study School, a ten-day program for teachers from the southwestern states that was initiated by Mrs. J. F. Manning in 1933.

Soon after being hired, Van Rensselaer began pursuing horticultural studies of Ceanothus and sent some of his records to Mrs. Bissell. In her reply to thank him, she expressed some feelings of regret about her work at the Garden, as well as perhaps some resentment that Anna Bliss did not provide more financial resources:

Thank you very much for sending this Ceanothus record. It is a fine piece of detail work. I envy you the chance to have done it.

I see how I spent myself to build up a garden for a memorial to a man I did not know, and whose descendants were perfectly able to have supplied the necessary labor. It was a wrong estimate of values, on my part. I am realizing with bitter truth the meaning of Emerson's sonnet on Hypocritic Days; "The Day, turned and departed, silent. All too late, under her solemn fillet, I saw the scorn!"[80]

During their years of service, the Bissells were never paid for their work and they were undoubtedly familiar with Anna Bliss' lavish parties and considerable expenses at *Casa Dorinda*.

Two months after the Bissells resigned, they requested a modification of their agreement to leave their property for the sole use of the Garden; instead, the property and its income could be used for "any corporate purpose of the Museum."[81] It is not clear why they chose to make this change, although the disillusionment suggested by Mrs. Bissell's letter might provide some clues. The Bissells were both in their mid-seventies at this time, and were frequently ill. They had given their hearts and most of their financial resources, including their beloved *Stone Acres*, to the Garden. Perhaps they did not feel adequately appreciated.

Mrs. Bissell died in 1938, and her husband died two years later. After the Garden became an independent corporation in 1939, the Bissell property was deeded to the Garden by the Museum Board.

Anna Bliss had died in 1935 and her daughter, Mildred Barnes Bliss (Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss), came to California to settle her mother's affairs. Mildred had married Robert Woods Bliss, the son of her mother's second husband, in 1908. He was a foreign service officer and, later, chief of the Division of Western European Affairs at the Department of State. In 1920, Robert and Mildred Bliss purchased property near Washington, D.C. and named the estate, *Dumbarton Oaks*. It was here that the conference was held which laid the foundation for the charter of the United Nations in 1944. In 1922, Mildred hired landscape designer Beatrix Farrand to work on *Dumbarton Oaks;* the two struck up a deep friendship which was to play an important role in the story of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.

Mildred wrote a letter to the Museum of Natural History:

Soon after my Mother's death, it was made clear to me that I was expected to supply the Garden's financial needs. Having no cognizance whatever of the matter, I learned as much as possible from a long talk with Dr. Bissell, and then communicated with my Mother's executor, requesting him to reply to the letter I had received, and to make every easement he could under the terms of her will.[82]

In this same letter she included recommendations on the future direction of the Garden; her ideas were undoubtedly bolstered by her experiences establishing the gardens at *Dumbarton Oaks* as well as her involvement with other cultural institutions. Her priorities were scientific investigation, education,

recreational use, commercial dissemination of plants and information, exchange with other similar organizations including those in other countries, landscape design and the arts, and the keeping of detailed records. She also enclosed a donation of $40,000 for the Garden's endowment fund.

Two weeks later, Dr. Bissell resigned from the Museum Board. At the same meeting the administration and finances of the Blaksley Botanic Garden were largely separated from those of the Museum, although the Museum still retained title to the property and oversight of the endowment fund.

Maunsell Van Rensselaer became the Garden's Director. A Garden Administrative Committee of the Board of Trustees was formed, chaired by General William Lassiter and comprised of Museum trustees who were directly involved with the Blaksley Botanic Garden in its early years.

Van Rensselaer was imbued with an abundance of youthful energy and enthusiasm, and he raced into a wide range of activities during his first year as Director. He gave frequent talks about native plants and the Garden in the community and at schools, and initiated the Garden's first evening classes. He completely reorganized the Ceanothus Section and created new bulb beds as well as taxonomic sections, such as those that compared members of the genus *Salvia* (sage) and *Artemisia* (sagebrush). He teamed up with California State Senator John J. Hollister to submit a proposal for the coast redwood to become the state tree, which was adopted. He became involved with the Santa Barbara Parks district, eventually serving on the Board of Commissioners.[83]

Mildred Bliss provided a generous donation of $5,000 during Van Rensselaer's first year to build a new administrative center. His old friend, Dr. Thomas Goodspeed, paid a visit to advise on composition and placement of buildings; he suggested that the information kiosk be constructed in a prominent position and administrative buildings be placed out of the way of visitor traffic. As a result of the Bliss donation, an engineering survey of the Garden was completed and a new administrative center was created in the general area of the present Garden courtyard.

The Administrative center and nursery group consisted of an office, designed by Lockwood de Forest, potting shed; lath house; greenhouse; workshop and seed storage building; storage shed; and five-car garage. The caretaker's cottage, constructed of rounded tongue-and-groove in 1926, was retained, and the original office building of 1926 and a workhouse constructed in 1931 were moved to the site of the new administrative center and combined to form the seed storage room and workshop. A 5,000-gallon water storage tank and an electric soil sterilizer were also purchased and new plant labels created.

For the first time, the word 'standard' entered the Garden's lexicon as more effort was made to evaluate and improve overall institutional performance. Van Rensselaer spoke of design in the Garden, and a desire for developing "increasingly graceful and pleasing proportions . . . it will also be necessary to make a systematic search for new plants which may be used to good advantage." To create such a garden and maintain a "credible exhibition standard" was considered of paramount importance.[84]

In 1936 with Van Rensselaer's encouragement, the Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees decided to restrict the plantings at the Blaksley Botanic Garden to plants native to California. During the early years, a large number of exotic species had been planted to cover bare areas and for aesthetic purposes. Many, but not all, of these were removed during a three-year period.

Yet despite all of this productive activity and a recent $40,000 donation from Mildred Bliss, the Garden was operating a deficit budget at the end of 1936. Museum Board President Max Fleischmann asserted that

A new information kiosk, designed by Lockwood de Forest, Jr., was completed in 1937 as part of a larger building program. Santa Barbara Historical Society photograph.

the Garden would be continued only until the Garden's surplus funds were exhausted, which was estimated at about three years.[85] This sparked an effort by the Garden's supporters to secure funding, difficult to procure during the Depression. As the deficit continued into 1937, the Museum offered to provide $2,500 in support for one year if Mildred Bliss would donate another $1,500, which she agreed to do.

By 1938, Van Rensselaer had befriended noted landscape architect Beatrix Farrand, who had initially written him asking for help in identifying some specimens around the "new observatory on Palomar Mountain."[86] Several letters followed, and by summer they had met and exchanged information about the Garden's financial troubles. Van Rensselaer appealed to Farrand to write a letter to General Lassiter stating that she would have been "reluctant to undertake the Palomar job without the assistance of the Blaksley Garden,"[87] and she complied.

Van Rensselaer developed a pattern of confiding in Farrand over the next fourteen years, often sending her frequent gifts of publications, seeds, articles, and other items. Having her as a confidant was helpful to him in two regards; she was extremely close to Mildred Bliss, and her husband, Max Farrand, was Director of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery in San Marino from 1927 to 1941. Some of the statements she prepared for the Garden had her husband's personal, handwritten additions and edits.

In October 1938 Major Fleischmann stated that he "did not consider that Museum funds should be used for the Garden."[88] General Lassiter wanted to initiate separate Garden membership and fund-raising programs, but Fleischmann did not approve. At this point, the idea of complete separation

of the two institutions developed. Extensive discussion by the Garden Administrative Committee centered on what the founder would have wanted.

Frederick Kellam felt that Anna Bliss would have wanted the Museum to retain governance over the Garden, following the original terms of the trust. General Lassiter felt the Garden had increased in size and scope since its founding and needed to change with the times. The idea of changing the name to the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden was floated by Van Rensselaer, who thought that it would influence donors since the name Santa Barbara was so well known "throughout the world." It was also noted that "enterprises such as this Garden are apt to pass away with their originators unless they prove sufficiently worth while for succeeding people to take them up... people ask why they should contribute to the support of a family memorial."[89]

In March 1939, with the blessing of Mildred and Robert Bliss, the Blaksley Botanic Garden became incorporated as a separate non-profit organization, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, Inc., with its own by-laws and administration. General Lassiter became the first Board President, a position he held until 1946. Dr. Bissell was named Honorary President.[90] Although the Garden's endowment funds were designated for the sole use of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, Inc., these funds and ownership of Garden property were retained by the Museum, which led to many subsequent meetings and complicated negotiations.

Van Rensselaer wrote Beatrix Farrand in June 1941:

We are all delighted with Mrs. Bliss's growing interest in the Garden, much of which is due to the ground work you so carefully laid. She has undertaken to have the Garden land transferred from the Museum to the Garden corporation and to have the Garden made the beneficiary of the Blaksley Trust Fund. This is an involved matter but she says that it not only can be done, but it must be done.[91]

In December 1942, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, Inc. received title to its property from the Museum for one dollar, along with all Garden endowment funds.

Lockwood de Forest and Beatrix Farrand (1937–1950)

In early 1937 a committee comprised of Frederick Kellam, Chair; his son-in-law, landscape architect Lockwood de Forest; Mrs. Oakleigh Thorne; and Maunsell Van Rensselaer in an *ex officio* capacity, began articulating landscaping principles to guide the Garden in maintaining, improving, and expanding its living exhibits.

De Forest was the son of artist Lockwood de Forest. He studied landscape architecture at Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley. After opening his office in 1920 he worked on a number of Santa Barbara and Montecito estate gardens including Wright Ludington's *Val Verde*, George Steedman's *Casa del Herrero*, and Arthur Meeker's *Constantia*. In December 1925 de Forest and his wife, Elizabeth Kellam de Forest, started a magazine, *The Santa Barbara Gardener*, on horticulture in Southern California, which the couple produced until 1942. By the time of his untimely death at the age of fifty-three in 1949, he had developed a national reputation for his innovative and artistic designs.

The landscape committee articulated several goals, often referred to as the Garden's first Master Plan:

- To provide an attractive, artistically landscaped, and well maintained exhibition garden of California native plants for the enjoyment of the people of Santa Barbara and visitors.
- To carry on exhaustive experimental investigation in the culture of native plants and to demonstrate their adaptability to cultivation, to the end that nurserymen and gardeners may be supplied with adequate and accurate information about their propagation and care.

• To provide accurate information related to the identification, distribution and classification of native plants, to further a desire on the part of the general public to know more about them, and to create a greater interest in their horticultural use and in the preservation in the field.

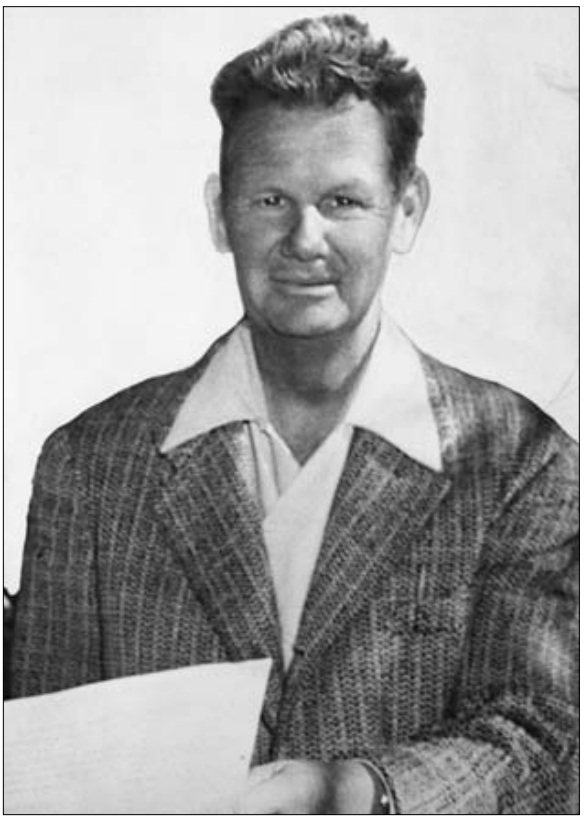
An eleven-page memorandum outlined their plan for "the general layout of the Garden as a guide to future planting."[92] Dividing the Garden into three parts, the memo provided guidelines for each area.

For the Canyon, the emphasis was on naturalistic plantings and improving access. Bridges were proposed, along with a footbridge across the top of Mission Dam. For the main Garden area, inadequate parking was the number one issue. Suggestions included construction of a sandstone retaining wall along Mission Canyon Road so the road could be widened for additional parking spaces. Further, the landscape committee thought that a new pedestrian entrance opposite the "great boulder" would add to the dignity of the Garden and enhance the Garden's natural beauty.

De Forest submitted detailed plans for the information kiosk that was part of the new building program of 1936-1937, to be placed northwest of the great boulder. Construction was completed in 1937, and Antonio Da Ros installed the stonework. This beautiful open-air structure was sited among the oaks beyond the boulder, creating a refreshing and natural ambience. It bears an intriguing resemblance to the Catalogue House at *Dumbarton Oaks;* Mildred Bliss had recommended just such a design for this purpose in a 1936 letter to the Board of the Museum of Natural History, suggesting that "an out-of-door catalogue house be constructed, similar to the one at Dumbarton Oaks."[93] A map created from the new survey was enlarged, colored, and installed on a table under glass in the Information Center.

The committee also advocated that the Bermuda grass in the Meadow be replaced with native ground-covers, with borders of native California "material suitable for domestic garden use." They also recommended that the pond at the upper end of the Meadow be removed. For the hillside area, today's site of the Porter Trail and the Ceanothus Section, ongoing removal of olive trees and planting of native trees was the primary goal, along with improved access.

In 1938, Beatrix Farrand joined the



Landscape architect Lockwood de Forest, Jr. first became involved with the Blaksley Botanic Garden in the late 1920s. His impact on the look of the Garden was immense and upon his untimely death in 1949 he was lauded for the gifts of "his vision and knowledge . . . to the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden." Santa Barbara Historical Society photograph.

Garden Board, two years after Mildred Bliss had suggested her friend be so appointed. Farrand had grown up in New York City in an artistic and refined household. One of her maternal aunts was the novelist, Edith Wharton. She opened her landscaping office in 1895 and in 1899 was the only woman among eleven prominent designers who founded the American Society of Landscape Architects. Her commissions included a number of educational institutions including Harvard, Princeton, and Yale, as well as many private estate gardens and parks. She is perhaps best known for the spectacular gardens at *Dumbarton Oaks* near Washington D.C., which she created for Mildred and Robert Bliss over a twenty-five-year period. In 1913 she married Yale historian, Max Farrand, and the couple moved to California in 1927, where Max served as director of the Huntington Library in San Marino.

In one of the first meetings between Farrand and de Forest in early 1937, they conferred at *Casa Dorinda* about fertilizing oak trees and made small talk about design at the Botanic Garden. Farrand then received a letter from General Lassiter telling her of de Forest's appointment as the official landscape advisor for the Garden. Farrand wrote Mrs. Bliss, "Mr. de Forest has good sense, real love of California local plant material, and will I think be honestly interested in the Garden and its future. The whole situation has been a puzzling one. As things are, it does not seem as though I could be professionally connected with the Garden as advisor in any sort of way."[94]

By late December 1938, however, Farrand was appointed to the Advisory Committee, and wrote Bliss in February 1939 with Garden news:

While no promises or even definite suggestions have been made, one or two of the Santa Barbara people seem to feel that it is likely that Major Fleischmann will be so pleased to get rid of the Botanic Garden from the Museum that he will add to the endowment of the Garden as a sort of "alimony." Mr. Van Rensselaer said that thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Gould they had been able to finish their fiscal year of 1938 with a ten cent credit balance![95]

On March 12, 1939, Beatrix Farrand and Lockwood de Forest made the following suggestions regarding Garden landscaping:

Eliminate Bermuda grass meadow. Replace temporarily with annual and perennial wildflowers. Should this experiment prove successful . . . it might be desirable to make it a permanent feature; otherwise the area could be planted with native strawberries. If the present parking space is eliminated and the new entrance developed, the wildflower area should be extended to the south

The Garden also greatly benefited from the talents of nationally-renowned landscape architect Beatrix Farrand. She was deeply involved in Garden design from 1938 to 1950. Santa Barbara Historical Society photograph.

increasing the length of the north and south axis which would tend to accentuate the view of La Cumbre Peak in the background.[96]

The first suggestion reflected the committee's recent desire to transform the Meadow to native plantings, using wildflowers and/or strawberries. Further, the idea of reshaping the meadow into an oval was introduced, along with elimination of the parking space at the lower end of the Meadow. Then a new entrance could be designed with wide stone steps and a path leading to the new Information Center.

The grass was removed in the fall of 1939. A glorious field of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californfica*), lupine *(Lupinus succulentus*), and other annuals appeared in the spring of 1940, drawing visitors from miles away. In November 1940, staff again plowed the Meadow and planted it with beach strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*) as an experiment. Wildflower seeds were planted between the strawberry plants to give spring color.

By 1945, the strawberry meadow was drawing crowds of over 1,100 people in one day. Mrs. Farrand crowed to Mrs. Bliss:

The beauty of the Garden was ravishing. Just enough white strawberry blossoms in the big central lawn to give brilliance without being spectacular or over-dressed. Then a frill around the edge of golden coreopsis and orange poppies, and behind this picture the big oaks in bud with their new leaves of tender green, and the great mountain with its gray pines finishing the picture.[97]

Although the strawberry meadow was a spectacular success initially, it became badly infested with weedy *Oxalis,* and the Landscape Committee decided to remove it in the fall of 1945. Sea-dahlia (*Coreopsis maritima*) was planted. The mass planting was dramatic; however, "several critical observers, studying the meadow as a part of the general Garden design, concluded that the plants were too tall for a large open area of this kind . . . The main advantage of such a planting is the long flowering period."[98]

A wildflower mix dominated by California poppy was again sown in late 1946, and beach strawberry was again planted in the fall. Again the strawberry meadow grew well for a few years and then became infested with weeds, a process that would be repeated for years until the strawberry meadow plantings were abandoned in 1962.

A beautiful stone bench was placed under the Meadow Oaks in 1941 to honor the Bissells. Designed by de Forest and placed in the cool shade of the oaks adjacent to the canyon wall, an inscription reads:

"A green thought in a green shade"
in memory of Elmer Jefferson Bissell
and Ervanna his wife
who laid out this path in 1934

This area remained essentially unchanged during this period from the original design by Ervanna Bowen Bissell.

In 1940 the Garden purchased twelve acres of Mission lands owned by the Franciscan padres with donations provided by Mrs. Frederic S. Gould; Mrs. Ina Therese Campbell, a friend of Anna Bliss; and the Santa Barbara Foundation. This narrow strip extended from the southern boundary of the Garden up the creek, encompassing the Mission Dam and adjacent aqueduct. This added property solved a number of problems the Landscape Committee had been pondering regarding access to the canyon. Once the Mission lands became Garden property, Lockwood de Forest became involved with trail planning and design.[99]

The Mission Dam dated from 1807 and was part of a system that included another dam in Rattlesnake Canyon, reservoirs, a filter house, grist mill, fountain, lavadero, and a series of aqueducts. The system was constructed by Chumash labor under the direction of the Franciscan padres. The Mission Water Company purchased the water system in 1872 and it remained in use until about 1915. In recent years the Garden has undertaken an extensive restoration of the dam and aqueducts with detailed explanatory panels on how the system worked.

Campbell Trail and Bridge: Funding for construction of the Campbell Trail was provided by Mrs. Ina Therese Campbell, in memory of her husband, John Campbell. This new trail would link the oak woodland property on the west side of Mission Creek with the central part of the Garden for the first time. The trail design included a broad footpath leading from the Information Center down the east side of Mission Canyon, traversing a boulder-covered slope to the floor of the canyon. Steps made of railroad ties led to a fifty-foot, rustic bridge that crossed Mission Creek. The trail and bridge were completed in 1941, and in 1942 a beautiful stone bench overlooking the creek was designed by Lockwood de Forest. The railroad ties leading to the bridge were replaced with a broad curved footpath in 1946.

Pritchett Trail and Bench: A second trail was funded in 1940 to provide access to the newly acquired wooded slopes west of Mission Creek . Mrs. Henry S. (Eva) Pritchett provided the donation to honor her late husband, Dr. Henry Smith Pritchett, former President of the Carnegie Corporation, whose favorite walk had been at the Garden; she stipulated that Lockwood de Forest design the trail and bench, as well as oversee its ongoing planting and maintenance, and reiterated that stipulation more than once as years passed.[100]

Work commenced in 1940, and de Forest incorporated the layout of this trail into part of a class project for a Garden Design course he was teaching at Santa Barbara State College. He and his students recommended that the trail be placed "on the west bank where the natural growth is more beautiful and the contour more interesting . . . This is one of the most beautiful views in the entire Garden and gives a comprehensive picture of the original Mission Canyon flora to which this particular area is devoted."[101] The original construction of the Pritchett Trail and bench was completed by the summer of 1941. At the same time, he suggested a loop that commenced at the dam and ended just north of the Campbell Bridge.[102]

The ground surrounding benches along the trail was worked to provide planting spots for attractive ferns and other woodland plants; hundreds of plants were moved from "nearby slopes and cañons" and planted under de Forest's direction.[103] Noted plants woman Lester Rowntree also made suggestions for plantings.

Behind the scenes, Beatrix Farrand became intrigued by the design of this trail and sent letters to Eva Pritchett and Van Rensselaer with suggestions on plantings, stone bridge design, and even the placement of the bench. She also wrote Mildred Bliss, seeking her influence in convincing the Board to provide funding for upkeep of the new trails.

It happens that this morning with your letter of the 19th there came a letter from Mr. Van Rensselaer rather talking himself out as to his difficulties. It seems that General Lassiter with the spirit of the true pioneer and woodsman is very much interested in opening up and constructing one trail after another, which as Mr. Van Rensselaer says does add enormously to the interest and accessibility of the Canyon, but he said the work goes on without the slightest provision for the upkeep of these paths, which adds work to an already over-burdened staff. He is evidently concerned because the making of the trails and their upkeep have so taken the time of his men that several plants in good collections have died from neglect.

At some meeting it might come your way to ask about the trails innocently and ask if there were any endowment or upkeep funds set aside for them and how this work affected the general upkeep work of the Garden. The less I tell you about the whole situation the more effective your innocence will be.[104]

Unlike most donors, Eva Pritchett took an active interest in the Pritchett Trail's development and design, sometimes hiring her own men to do maintenance and planting. After de Forest died, she requested that Elizabeth de Forest carry on her late husband's work on the trail, and the two women worked together on various improvements. She maintained a hands-on interest in the trail until her death in 1957. Farrand provided funding for

the installation of a natural bird bath along the trail in Eva Pritchett's memory.

The expansions and new plantings that took place at the Garden in the late 1930s and early 1940s would never have been possible without the assistance of the National Youth Association, which provided over 4,900 hours of volunteer labor in 1939 alone.[105]

In 1941, with war raging in Europe and Asia, one might have expected quiet times at the newly formed Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. To the contrary, several pivotal events took place that year. Mildred Barnes Bliss was elected to the Board of Trustees. With her election came many discussions about the management of the Garden, the desirability of purchasing adjacent land to protect the ambience of the Garden from encroaching development, and financial stability. That same year Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Dearing donated their working herbarium, a collection of dried plant specimens with detailed accompanying information, to the Garden. Their herbarium encompassed over 5,000 specimens representing 3,500 California native plant species.[106]

Following this generous donation, Garden Director Van Rensselaer stated he would like to "have a library which would include all available published literature on California plants as well as a fine library on ornamental horticulture."[107] In the months that followed, a large reference library belonging to naturalist and author Charles Francis Saunders was presented to the Garden by his widow, Mira Saunders, comprised of several hundred books, including a complete set of his published works, correspondence and research notes for all his publications, journals, pamphlets, photographs, an autograph collection, several Native American jars, and a collection of watercolors of desert flowers, painted by his first wife.

When Mrs. Bliss learned of the acquisition of the Saunders Library and the Dearing Herbarium, she generously offered to build a fireproof structure to house these and additional collections. By November 1941 plans had evolved from a small structure to a sizable permanent building that would house administrative functions and a classroom, along with the library and herbarium, with allowances for future growth. Pros and cons of placing the building in the "geographic center" of the Garden were weighed, and finally the site near the old garage, south of the Desert Section, was chosen. The Garden hired a prominent local architect, Lutah Maria Riggs, to design the building, and once preliminary plans were prepared, Bliss quietly sent them off to Farrand in Bar Harbor, Maine, admonishing her to "cast your most penetrating eye upon these plans."[108]

Farrand's prompt reply was five single-spaced pages in length and addressed everything from the position of the building to parking issues, staircases, plumbing, and exterior finishes. She did not like the idea of glass bricks framing the doors and felt that the Trustees did not need parking spots next to the building, away from the general parking to be installed adjacent to the County Road. Further, she asserted that the new structure, because it would be so large, should be harmonious with the landscape:

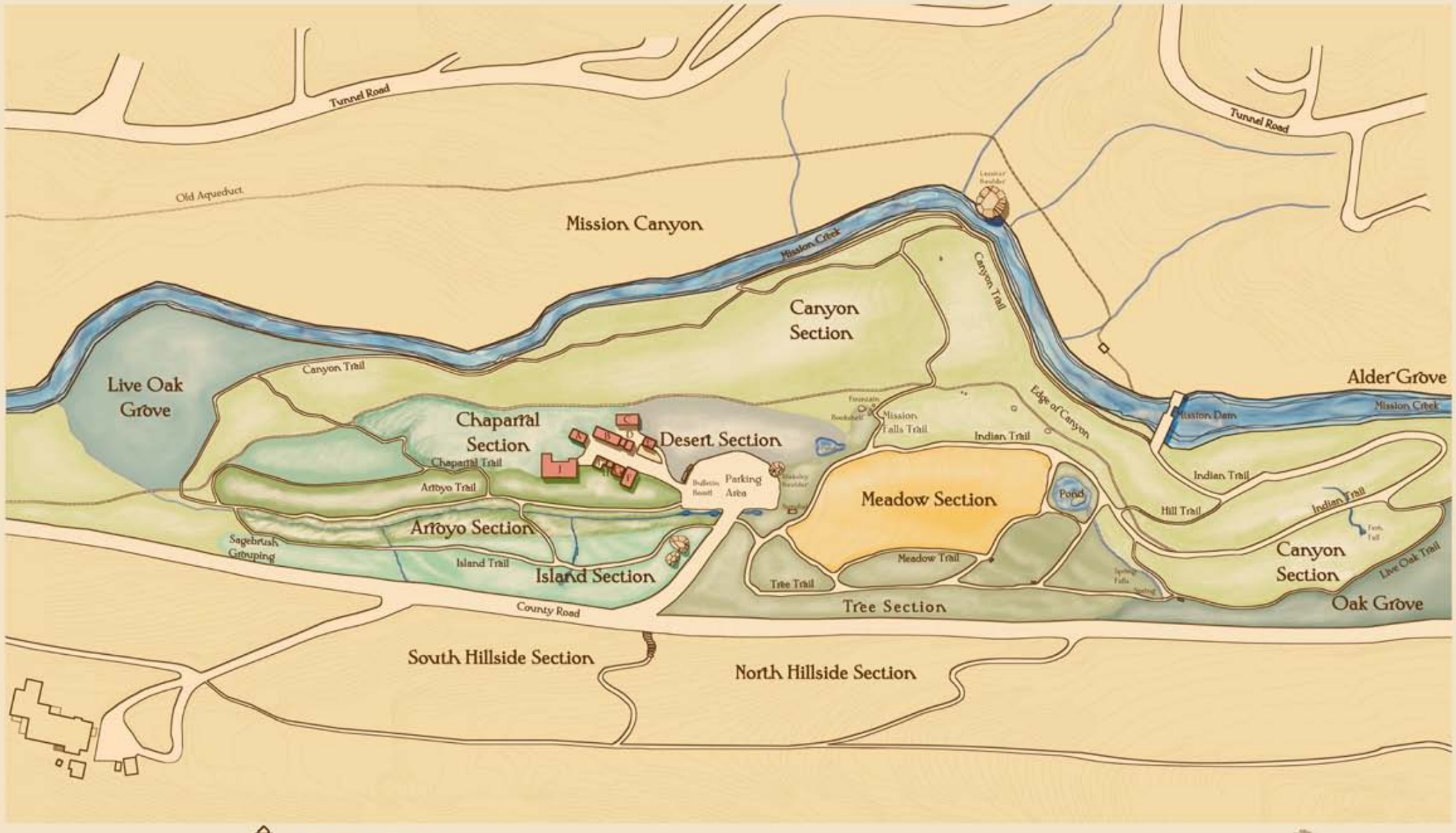
My own feeling also is that a building as large as the future Administration Building has got to be considered as a building, since it can't be hidden like a small shack, therefore its appearance as a building has to be considered from a different angle than if it were a small cabin-like structure which could be dissimulated or hidden. The Garden has passed from its first experimental and somewhat haphazard stage, into an important unit which should be treated with dignity of design.[109]

She also sent a copy of this letter to Van Rensselaer and wrote another to the Garden Trustees. "As the library is the heart of any educational institution, it is obvious that the site for it must be in a key position. Also that it should be so placed that further expansion be possible. It should be part of the working group, accessible to those engaged in the research work of the Garden, and yet somewhat removed from the interruptions of casual visitors."[110]

By December, Farrand was in Santa Bar-

Blaksley Botanic Garden

1931



W S N E

Building Legend

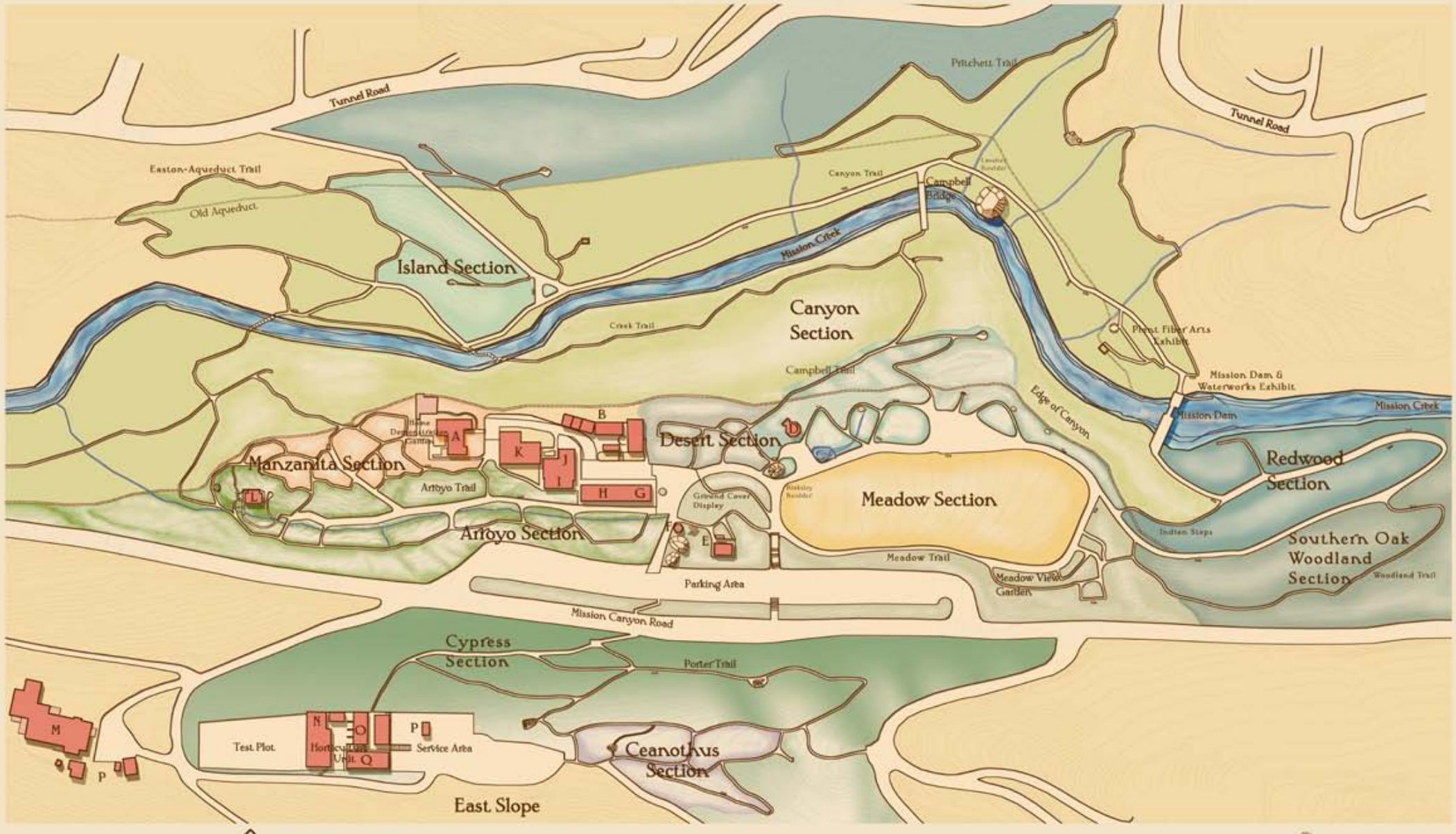
A. Office
B. Car Port
C. Workshop
D. Tool Storage
E. Restrooms
F. Lath House
G. Potting Shed
H. Greenhouse
I. Can Yard
J. Caretaker's Cottage

Not to scale
Approximately 17 Acres

Historian: Mary Carroll
Map Illustrator: Jeffrey Yardy

Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

2004



W S N E

Building Legend

A. Administration
B. Garden Growers Nursery
C. Lath Houses
D. Information Kiosk
E. Restrooms
F. Visitor Services
G. Garden Shop
H. Arroyo Room
I. Business Office
J. Blaksley Library
K. Herbarium
L. Japanese Tea House & Garden
M. Gane House
N. Shade Structures
O. Lath Houses
P. Storage Sheds
Q. Propagation Building

Not to Scale
Approximately
78 Acres

Historian: Mary Carroll
Map Illustrator: Jeffrey Yardy

bara and her "penetrating eye" also picked up on some discrepancies in the elevations. She wrote Van Rensselaer, "As it appears that the map at the Garden is incorrect, I have the donor's [Mildred Bliss] permission to tell Miss Riggs that a simple topo may be made showing accurately certain levels which we must have before the buildings can be placed."[111] This advice was fortunate, as the position of the Blaksley Boulder was ten feet out of alignment, as were nearby trees and the edge of the canyon wall. Mrs. Farrand stood at the site and mapped a visual axis from the Library to the Blaksley Boulder to La Cumbre Peak, envisioning the line of sight a person would experience while standing on the future library steps.

Construction of the new library entailed moving buildings from the former Administrative Center to new locations, and again buildings were reused. The Director's office was placed behind the new Library at an angle that allowed views to the south through the Library windows. Once again, the caretaker's cottage was moved, this time south of the office building, where it remains to this day. The lath house was reconstructed in its current location west of the Garden courtyard, complete with pre-existing moat to deter ants and sow bugs from entry. The original greenhouse was located south of the lath house in 1946, and the glass panes were eventually removed and replaced with shade cloth.

Before and during construction, Farrand held many meetings with Riggs, and they seemed to get along very well. The final building plans from the office of the architect listed Beatrix Farrand as consultant. The building was completed in spring 1942.

The Trustees requested permission to place a plaque in the Library that honored Mildred Bliss and her mother. Mrs. Farrand wrote Mrs. Bliss to request her permission for this tribute, stating,

I felt that your acceptance of the elimination of your mother's name in the title of the Garden was taken as wisely and impersonally as always. It cannot have been easy . . . to have erased the family record from the title of the Garden, so the Trustees would like to keep your mother's name as a part of your library gift.[112]

The plaque reads:

THE BLAKSLEY LIBRARY
GIVEN IN MEMORY OF THE
FOUNDER OF THE GARDEN
ANNA DORINDA BLAKSLEY BLISS
BY HER DAUGHTER
1942

Plans for the Garden courtyard were in flux for about a year or so after the completion of the building. Mrs. Farrand felt strongly that rigid lines were needed to finish off the enclosure and give it cohesion, mirroring the lines of the buildings and, after much discussion of walls and fences, settled on a hedge of lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*), three climbers to be planted by the stone chimney and on nearby railings, and large shrubs to be placed next to walls. The building was judged first in the civic and commercial class of architecture by the Santa Barbara Plans and Planting Committee in March 1950. The award cited the building as being "in good taste, simple and unpretentious, eminently suitable."[113] In recent years, several of Lutah Riggs' designs have been singled out as "major monuments of twentieth-century American architecture," and architectural historian Alexandra Cole called the library building exceptional because Riggs designed so few non-residential buildings.[114]

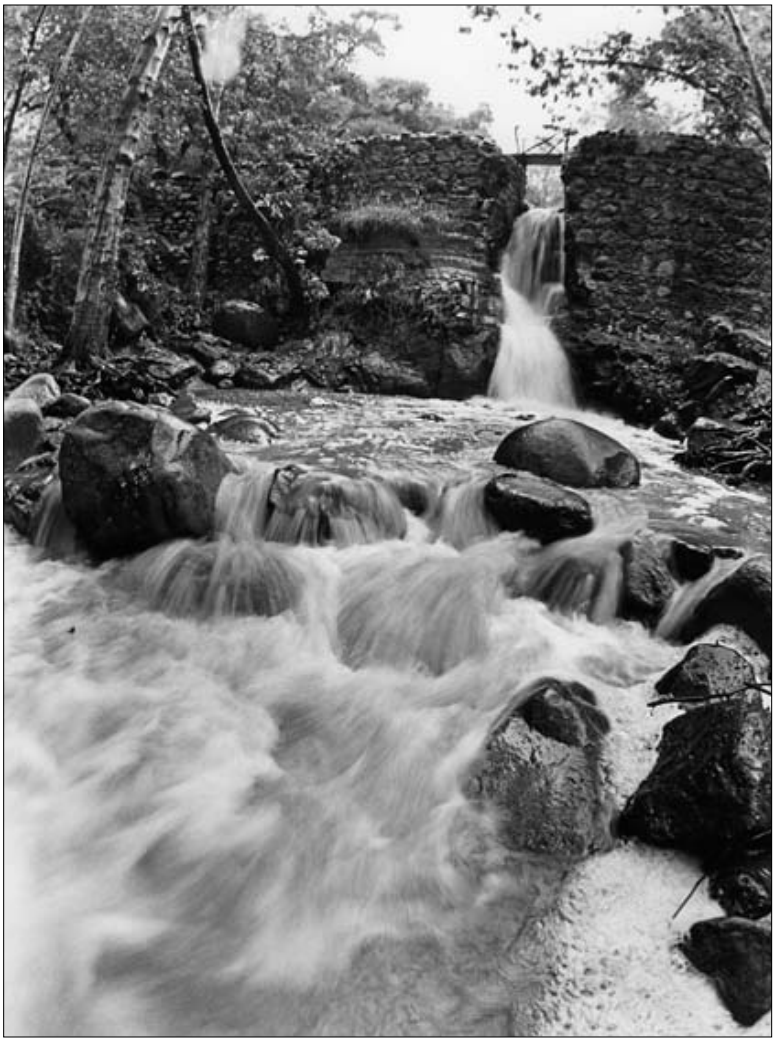
Lockwood de Forest, who had become a member of the Board of Trustees in March 1942, had served in World War I and again volunteered for service in World War II. In September 1942, he was assigned to the Camouflage Section of the U. S. Army Engineers Corps. He continued to be involved with the Garden during this period, but was not available for day-to-day consultation, so Farrand assumed more responsibilities during this period. She met with surveyor Wallace Penfield about options for expanding parking

at the Garden, and they settled on the idea of placing a parking lot below the level of Mission Canyon Road but above the highest footpath in order to keep vehicles out of sight from the Garden. At the same time, access from the parking area to the main part of the Garden was considered. Farrand set her sights on an entry that focused on the Blaksley Boulder.

A part of the survey will be a main north and south "base line," which will run through the center of the library. . . . It happens that the exact right angle taken through the center of the boulder comes out at a most opportune spot on the high road, and one likely to make a most attractive main entrance. This is a piece of good luck which none of us could have foreseen.[115]

By 1943, both Farrand and de Forest enjoyed outstanding reputations as landscape designers. Farrand, who was seventy-one at the time, was more renowned nationally due

The Garden purchased twelve acres from the Santa Barbara Mission in 1940, which included the dam in Mission Canyon and portions of the aqueduct system. The dam had been completed in 1807 by Chumash laborers under the supervision of the Franciscan padres. Santa Barbara Historical Society photograph.



to her work at *Dumbarton Oaks* and many other private estates, as well as on many college campuses, but was not well known in Santa Barbara. The forty-seven-year-old de Forest had gained prominence in Santa Barbara, and although his work was known on a national level, he was not as well known outside of California as Farrand. Both used a combination of formal and informal styles in their residential garden designs, with more formal hardscape elements and hedges near buildings, gradually dissolving to curves and cascades of plant material on the outer edges of the plantings.

Farrand came from an eastern tradition, and saw the landscape as an extension of buildings, with lines and axes enhancing their architecture. De Forest, who had spent most of his life in California, had embraced naturalistic design, eschewing the straight line in favor of narrow meandering paths using natural materials which created an intimate feel. Although these two approaches can be compatible, since Farrand was on site at the Garden and de Forest was away at war, trouble ensued.

On March 11, 1943, Farrand submitted a sketch plan of a main entrance to the Board; this design was approved in principle at the meeting. Her plan showed a straight path emerging from the new parking lot at a right angle, centered directly on the Blaksley Boulder. The design featured several tiers of a few sandstone steps, separated by flat terrace "runs," that were connected to the large sandstone boulder by a short flat path; at the boulder this path intersected the main trail linking the Library with the upper Meadow.

Farrand sent her plans and a letter to de Forest. She was encouraged by Frederick Kellam that his son-in-law would respond favorably, "Although he was not so sure that Mr. de Forest liked the somewhat regular arrangement of the buildings on their present site. However, as Mr. Kellam says, the buildings are placed, and therefore will have to be accepted as they are!"[116]

De Forest, however, did not like the design nor did he want to change the intimacy of the narrow, meandering paths around the Meadow. He also felt strongly that parking should be confined to Mission Canyon Road, and that the new Library should be covered as much as possible with climbing plants. In his letter to the Board he wrote:

My first impulse is to say burn it up and let's consider this area when I get back after the war . . . I consider any formal axis such as shows from the entrance gate of the Library Area to the Large Boulder completely out of place. . . .

I do not like the axis to the big boulder from the parking area. I again consider an axis out of place in our Botanic garden, which should be informal. I consider an axis ending in a large boulder unfortunate. Suggest an informal arrangement leading the eye to the information center to the north of the big boulder. Any visitor to the garden should be directed to the Information Center first, and any entrance that makes the visitor hunt for the center does not function.

I do not consider the wide road around the east side of the meadow desirable. It certainly cuts down on the intimate character of the paths in this area, which at the present time contains many plants of interest. . . .

The new entrance road to my mind hugs the Rock much too closely . . . This boulder is one of the finest natural features of the garden and should be featured. If the new 10' road around the meadow is designed to facilitate the care of the garden (its only excuse) then the new road design near the entrance is inexcusable . . .

I did not complain overmuch when the buildings were rearranged to form the formal court in front of the Library because I was told that the formality would end at the gate . . . I do feel that any continuance of this formality into the rest of the area is definitely bad and I want to register my disapproval.

I feel a little like the private who had discovered someone wanted to put an army camp on Mt. Tamalpais. He wrote [that] *if it was spoilt he didn't see what he was fighting for.*[117]

His letter to Farrand was more conciliatory while making the same point—that the axis has no place in nature and that natural vistas had more appeal to the public than a formal axis. Furthermore,

The formal setting of the new Library building is far too important for such an inconsequential bit of architecture. . . . I should like to see as much of the building covered by planting as possible. After all, the garden is a botanic garden for native plants and not an architectural exhibition. I believe the point of interest could be brought down to the ground by some interesting paving design in front of the steps to the main door of the window.

Please do not misunderstand me. I have not thrown formal design overboard. I like it and use it much of the time.[118]

Farrand's reply to de Forest's letter was friendly and primarily addressed the relationship between architecture and plantings:

By this time you have undoubtedly seen the plan, and while there may be things with which you disagree, I think that if we were together on the ground you would see that on the whole it seems to fit the conditions and the contours surprisingly well. It is difficult to draw the line between the natural phenomena and the sort of construction which human beings require for convenient use. Certainly a house is not a natural object, and one wonders just where the dividing line is. It seems long to put off our Garden discussion until after the war, but perhaps this is inevitable.[119]

Farrand was invited by Board President Lassiter to become a member of the Planning Committee in November 1943, which she accepted with the "greatest pleasure."[120] A month later, de Forest returned to Santa Barbara while on leave, and Farrand wrote Bliss about de Forest's ongoing "quite vigorous" expressions of disapproval of her ideas.[121]

During a series of meetings that December, the 1937 landscaping guidelines were revisited. Notes dated December 22, 1943 were signed by both de Forest and Farrand. They and the Board again endorsed many of the original ideas from the 1937 master planning document, with specific suggestions for path width, parking, and plantings. Some of the significant recommendations included:

- Path widths of ten feet were recommended for vehicle access, and also to allow students to walk two or three abreast.
- The main pedestrian approach from the parking area into the Garden "should be constructed by steps and ramps aimed directly at the boulder lying to the north of the library."
- "A colony of gray foliage plants is suggested to run northeast from the meadow up toward the hills. It is thought that this gray planting will give perspective and added distance to this part of the Meadow."
- "The absentee colleague agreed that the colleague on the ground should write the report and later send him a copy so that he may see all his ideas are correctly expressed.

Both de Forest and Farrand seemed to concur on their recommendations after several face-to-face meetings.[122]

Yet behind the scenes the relationship continued to present challenges to both parties. De Forest undoubtedly felt strongly about his convictions regarding the importance of informality at the Garden, and Farrand described difficult meetings, frustration with delays, and tensions among the Board members in her confidential musings to Mrs. Bliss.

What a quarrelsome little group they seem to be in Santa Barbara. I don't think I ever was in a community in which there is so much backbiting!

You see my dear whether . . . your journey to Santa Barbara seems necessary to unscramble these various eggs.[123]

We do not have de Forest's perspective on his working relationship with Farrand; historian Diane McGuire[124] refers to Farrand's "intransigence" as a contributing factor in

the tensions that arose between the two landscape professionals.

Perhaps differences in personalities and work habits were the source of some of the tensions. Farrand conducted business in a conventional, efficient manner, often replying to correspondence within a day or so of receipt, writing detailed comments documenting her ideas, and typing up meeting notes (with her own handwriting visible in edits and additions). She tended to make decisions and stick with them. As wife of the Director of the Huntington Library with a bi-coastal lifestyle, she moved in circles that emphasized formality. At the same time, she was very effusive in her expressions, and it is easy to recognize a document she has written, even unsigned, with practice. She often flattered de Forest, with comments such as the "talented junior adviser," which may have annoyed him.

De Forest, on the other hand, was more casual and had no patience for "fancy plans and pretensions."[125] He had a small office and liked to do sketches on site, often unsigned. He rarely wore ties. He designed lamps for his home made of old car parts, topped by lampshades constructed from nautical maps of the offshore islands.[126] Although from a wealthy family himself, he spent his formative years in the carefree atmosphere of Southern California, where many experimental approaches to art and life styles have originated. He was much beloved in the community, and was in demand for his outstanding work, as well as his editorials and writings in *The Santa Barbara Gardener*.

There is no question that both were enormously talented and created designs of exceptional beauty; both exhibited a fine attention to detail along with a propensity for creating tableaus that led the eye to the distant view; and both seemed comfortable being direct in their communications.

The Campbell Memorial Trail with its fifty-foot bridge over Mission Creek was completed in 1941. The trail linked the west side of Mission Canyon with the central portion of the Garden. Santa Barbara Historical Society photograph.

After the March 1943 interchange, the two seemed to go out of their way to sign meeting notes jointly and to present a united front to the Board.

On January 14, 1944, the 1943 sketch plan was submitted to the Board, along with accompanying memoranda that documented decisions submitted to the Planning Committee.[127] The Board approved these documents as the official Master Plan of the Garden. In August, Mrs. Bliss presented the Garden with securities worth $200,000 to be added to the endowment and used for special needs

During March of that year, Farrand took up de Forest's request for investigating types of paving and wrote up a memo describing experimental paving materials and locations in the Garden that might be useful. She drove around Montecito with Peter Riedel and Maunsell Van Rensselaer to inspect the use of different materials *in situ*. Not much progress was made during this period, as she was nursing her ailing husband, who died in 1945 and de Forest was still away.

During the war years the Garden participated in a number of special emergency projects, including horticultural research on guayule, a possible source of rubber, and plants useful for camouflage, as well as propagation of over one thousand cork oak seedlings to ensure the nation's cork supply.

Van Rensselaer wrote *Trees of Santa Barbara,* published jointly by the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and the City of Santa Barbara Board of Park Commissioners in 1940, followed by the book *Ceanothus* in 1942, which he co-authored with Dr. Howard McMinn of Mills College. *Ceanothus* linked taxonomic treatments of Ceanothus species in California with a separate section on horticultural uses; it won the Bulkley Gold Medal from the Garden Club of America in 1943, and Van Rensselaer went east to receive the award on behalf of the Garden. A young botanist, Clifton Smith, began a survey of Mission Canyon in 1943 that culminated in publication of his *Flora of Santa Barbara* in 1952, first published by the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.

The war years brought limitations in supplies, staffing, and funding to the Garden, and internal documents refer to "war-time neglect" of sections of the garden such as the Ceanothus Section. In addition, a severe drought occurred that lasted for several years. Rainfall was below normal beginning in the rainfall season 1942–43. In 1947 there was only 4.64 inches of rain at the Garden (3.99 in Santa Barbara); the open range lands were still brown in early February 1948. Permission had to be obtained from the Water Emergency Committee for fifty gallons a day to keep Garden nursery stock alive. Many trees died in the Garden and had to be removed. The drought led to the formation of the Mission Canyon Association in 1948, which replaced the Mission Canyon Improvement Association with the primary purpose of securing adequate fire protection. Meetings were held in the Blaksley Library. An exacerbation of stress on the plantings occurred during the late 1940s with excessively cold temperatures recorded for two successive winters, 1947–49, culminating in two inches of snowfall on January 12, 1949.

Farrand was elected to the Board in September 1944, but was largely absent due to her husband's health. A letter from Bliss referred to Mrs. Farrand as being "weary and unwell lately." In September 1946 Farrand was invited to be Chief Consultant to the Botanic Garden and an ex-officio member of all committees. Sellar Bullard had become Board President, and he and Farrand clearly saw eye to eye on many matters—chief among them, the creation of a written plan for the parking area and entrance, and to document the changes that might be necessary to implement the improvements. Farrand wrote glowingly of committee and Board meetings to Bliss.

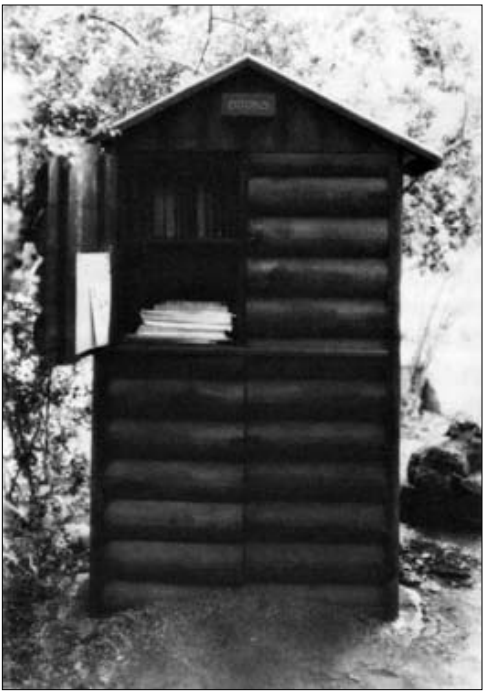
The Garden felt keenly the need for additional parking during this period. The strawberry and wildflower plantings in the

Meadow were drawing huge crowds and the "mob of cars is strung out for over a quarter of a mile on the highway."[128] She ordered a new survey and wrote a four-page report for the Board that detailed her design ideas for parking, foot paths, vehicle access, and realignment of the Meadow, the entrance, and future placement of buildings. In presenting her report, she made an appeal for a permanent and controlling plan for the central part of the Garden, supplemented by maps showing boundaries and contours with exact placement of the buildings and paths. An important feature of her reports, including this one, was consideration of the future—in terms of additional parking, buildings, and plantings. Many of her ideas continue to resonate to this day.

In 1948 Farrand, de Forest, Bullard, and Van Rensselaer finally agreed on the placement and dimensions of the parking area and entrance steps, and articulated their nineteen points agreed upon at conference. The design details for the sandstone entrance steps reflect the recommendations of both landscape professionals. Suggestions regarding informal arrangements of intersecting paths and irregularly shaped planting areas expressed de Forest's design approach. The mix of practical considerations and unity of composition reflect Farrand's desire to integrate beauty and utility.[129] Both de Forest and Farrand were concerned with proportion, scale, composition, and the distant view. The entrance steps have been attributed by some to Farrand and others to de Forest, but they are the reflection of a true collaboration.[130]

The entrance steps and parking lot were completed in 1950, with funding by Mrs. Sellar Bullard as a memorial to her mother, Mrs. Albert Paul Smith. The 1948 Annual Report credited both Farrand and de Forest with the design, "The approach was designed by Mrs. Farrand and Mr. de Forest as a prominent feature of the Meadow Section of the Garden."

De Forest died unexpectedly on March 31, 1949 at the age of fifty-three and was eulogized for his many contributions to the Garden's "basic landscape plan," the Pritchett Trail, three benches, the Kiosk, and the new entrance,[131] as well as his "bright spirit, great enthusiasm and sound advice which he always gave without stint. . . . What he has given of his vision and knowledge to Santa Barbara County and especially to the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden will long live to



grow and remain a fitting memorial to him and his work."[132]

The new parking area was completed in 1950, and Farrand donated the landscaping of the area around the parking lot and steps. Although she resigned from active participation at the Garden in January 1950 at the age of seventy-eight for health reasons,[133] a memorandum from April 1950 detailed further suggestions, including the additions of seasonal wildflower plantings, overhanging plants along the steps to soften the edges, and additions of more rocks to the area. After her resignation, the Board reflected on her contributions, her "time, effort, scientific advice, and monetary help have been of

inestimable value. The master plan which she prepared has been adopted and will be a constant reminder of her guiding support and great interest in the Garden."[134]

Maunsell Van Rensselaer's growing interest in research, publications, and education led to the use of Garden facilities by faculty and students of the newly formed campus of the University of California, due to shared interests and need for more research space by scholars at the cramped Riviera campus. Several faculty became Garden Research Associates, including Dr. Cornelius H. Muller, world-renowned plant ecologist; Dr. James Walters, an outstanding geneticist; and the vertebrate biologist Dr. Mary Erickson. Others, such as Dr. Garrett Hardin, were expected to join them. Several students who served as Botanic Garden research assistants later became distinguished scientists. Among them were Dr. John Tucker, an expert on California oaks, and Dr. Reid Moran, long-time student of *Dudleya* and the flora of Baja California.

By 1948, a cooperative agreement between the Garden and the University with shared research objectives was proposed, and discussion of a new publication, to be called *Fremontia* and to be published by the Garden, was initiated. This scientific journal would emphasize research on plants of the Southwest, and Cornelius H. Muller would serve as editor. Although funds were set aside for its production, the project was abandoned in 1949.

LEFT: This rustic bookcase served as the Garden library until 1938.
BELOW: In 1942 the Blaksley Library opened, another milestone in the Garden's growth and development.

Muller's wife, Dr. Katherine Muller,[135] joined the Garden staff in 1948 as Associate in Education, setting immediate goals for expansion of educational offerings to include evening classes, lectures, exhibits, and programs for teachers. Within a month, she had proposed a new

Nature Trail along Mission Creek, and was soon promoted to Director of the Institute for Nature Study, a program initiated by Mrs. J. F. Manning that now was sponsored by the University of California, the Museum of Natural History, and the Garden.

For several years prior to 1950, there had been discussion by some members of the Board as to the amount of resources available for Van Rensselaer's ambitious publications and research program. Tensions reached a head in June 1950 when Van Rensselaer tendered his resignation, and Board President Sellar Bullard stated that he would like to "see a man in charge of the Garden who was not afraid to take off his coat and go out in the Garden and work."[136] After much discussion among Trustees, Bullard also submitted his resignation. In the weeks that followed, the Board decided to accept Van Rensselaer's resignation, and Bullard retracted his. The Board reiterated their commitment to research and education, and began a search for a new director.

Van Rensselaer's departure left a huge void, augmented by Lockwood de Forest's death and Beatrix Farrand's resignation. Van Rensselaer moved to Saratoga, California with Eleanor, where he founded the Saratoga Experimental Gardens with Ray Hartman, which later became the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation; he served there as Director from 1951 until he retired in 1971.

Van Rensselaer had many accomplishments during his Garden years—the Garden's financial condition transitioned from tenuous to solid, with a tripled endowment; the land area had increased from thirteen acres in 1926 to fifty acres by 1949 due to a series of donations and purchases; a large membership base was established; permanent buildings had been constructed, including the Blaksley Library; there was considerable expansion of plantings on the grounds, including the transformation of the Meadow from Bermuda-grass to wildflowers; the Campbell and Pritchett Trails were added; and a series of books and journal articles had been published. He suc-

An unusual sight—two inches of snow blanket the Garden, January 1949. This second consecutive winter of very cold temperatures put great stress on many of the Garden plantings.

cessfully lobbied to have the island ironwood named as the official tree of Santa Barbara County and the coast redwood as the official state tree. He also brought increased professionalism to many areas of management, and national prestige to the Garden as a botanical and horticultural institution.

The Katherine Kinsel Muller Era (1950 – 1973)

In October 1950, the Board appointed Dr. Katherine Muller as Acting Director. By April 1951, they recognized that the talents they were seeking in a new director were already embodied in their Acting Director, and she was appointed to the permanent post. Unlike the previous decade, in which hidden tensions marked relations between the Board and Director, the years of Muller's directorship were characterized by an atmosphere of calm efficiency. In 1952, Board President Bullard could report:

The cooperation of the Officers and Trustees, the outstanding efficiency of the Director, Katherine Muller, with her office staff Frances Hannah and Katherine Miller, the energy and loyalty of Jack Keifer and his Gardeners—in short, the complete harmony and goodwill throughout the organization, make the office of President almost a sinecure.[137]

For the next twenty-three years, Katherine Muller oversaw a transformation of the Garden from hometown jewel to an institution of international prominence. A superb administrator, she had the ability to work well with Board, staff, Garden members, university faculty and researchers, as well as the community at large. Her vision for the Garden had a clear focus—celebration of the native California flora and regional planted landscapes—and she was able to articulate this focus through a wide range of activities and creative expressions.

She sponsored a publications program that included many popular articles for the public on wildflowers and garden plants. She co-authored books such as *Trees of Santa Barbara* with Richard Broder and Will Beittel and *Wildflowers of the Santa Barbara Region* with Jacqueline Broughton, and oversaw final production of Clifton Smith's first edition of *A Flora of the Santa Barbara Region.* The Garden also published the proceedings from the *First Symposium on the Biology of the California Islands* in 1967.

Research endeavors by staff botanists encompassed tree ring analysis, genetic studies of various plants, plant breeding, and extensive studies of the biology of the California Islands. Harold Gladwin, a pioneering tree ring expert, established his tree ring laboratory at the Garden, producing publications that revealed fluctuating patterns of climatic change over the past 3,000 years and contributed to greater understanding of Southwestern archeology. Marta Walters, along with others, studied plant chromosomes and disruption of chromosome structure and function by radiation; her work was funded by the National Institutes of Health. Staff members E. R. Blakley and Martin Piehl began floristic inventories of the California Islands in 1953, building on the earlier plant collections—now housed in the Garden's Herbarium—of Ralph Hoffmann, Lorenzo Yates, and others who surveyed these fragile insular ecosystems during the 1920s and 1930s.

To support these important endeavors, new buildings were needed. Lutah Maria Riggs designed offices for each side of the Library, and these were added in 1959 and 1961. Riggs also designed the new research wing in 1964, which was completed with funding from the National Science Foundation and the Santa Barbara Foundation, and included laboratories, seed storage areas, offices for researchers, and information window, the last later expanded into the Garden Shop. Muller's team completed an enlarged unit for horticultural research and propagation in 1973, encompassing a glass house, lath house, and nursery area on the east side of Mission Canyon Road.

A herbarium building to house the Garden's collection of dried plant specimens was initiated in 1973 and completed the following year. Designed by John Pitman, this fireproof building has, for the last thirty years, housed the region's largest scientific collection of preserved Central Coast plant specimens. Collectively, the specimens, now over 140,000 in number, document the ecology and geography of the region's plant diversity.[138]

In addition to supporting research and horticultural initiatives, Muller had many innovative ideas for piquing the public's interest in plants. Beginning in 1949, she gave weekly radio broadcasts about plants and spoke frequently to various community groups on a wide variety of plant-related topics. The Garden began to participate in the city's annual flower show, creating stunning exhibits using native plants that consistently were awarded blue ribbons. After she hired Jacqueline Patman Broughton as Educational Coordinator in 1963, classes for the public expanded, including Muller's popular *Trees about Town* and monthly wildflower forays, as well as visits to wilderness areas and other gardens. Trail guides such as the *Guide to the Garden, Nature Trail*, and *History Trail* were created. She initiated a docent program involving volunteers in fostering appreciation of the native flora by both school children and interested visitors.

Changes in approach to Garden design during Dr. Muller's tenure were inevitable. The Landscape Advisory Committee had concluded its work with the creation of a revised Master Plan, as well as the design and installation of the new Garden courtyard, entrance steps, and parking area, which were completed in 1950. Losing the talents of de Forest and Farrand impacted the Garden on many levels and for a time Muller and the Board of Trustees pursued the idea of hiring an outside consultant to aid with design. They approached both the landscape architects Garrett Eckbo and Ralph Cornell just days after the board meeting during which Farrand's resignation was announced.[139]

Although Cornell's office gave occasional input on the Garden's landscape plans in the ensuing years, much of the interaction between the Garden and Cornell's office began to center on displays for the Santa Barbara Fair and Horse Shows. Cornell's office would prepare designs for the displays, and Muller and her staff would select the plants and refine the designs to suit their tastes and pragmatic considerations related to space and site constraints. The Garden won a succession of blue ribbons (1951, 1954, 1955, 1957) for its beautiful drought-tolerant designs.

Muller and the Board settled on a local solution to landscape design: the Plantings and Grounds Committee, which had formed in February 1949 as the Plantations Committee. After Muller became Director, the Plantings and Grounds Committee was composed of Katherine Muller, Elizabeth de Forest, Mildred (Mrs. E. O.) Orpet, and Dorothy Crofton-Atkins. Later additions to this committee included Campbell Grant, John Pitman, and others. In the early years of Muller's tenure this committee was intimately involved with all aspects of grounds maintenance and design, mirroring the roles filled earlier by de Forest and Farrand.

During Grounds Superintendent E.R. "Jim" Blakley's years at the Garden (1956-1963), a triad composed of Katherine Muller, Elizabeth de Forest, and Mildred Orpet made Thursday morning weekly rounds of the Garden plantings. Blakley and Dara Emery, the Garden's Horticulturist (1955-1980) and Plant Breeder (1980-1991) would accompany them and ensure that their requests were carried out. Blakley remembered the three women working beautifully together, each bringing a different perspective to their collaboration. Muller had the administrator's view as well as a knack for good design. De Forest was more formal, bringing vast experience in growing both native and exotic plants to the mix, along with wonderful design

perspectives. Also knowledgeable, Mildred Orpet was a jolly presence who served as the secretary, noting all recommendations of their meetings on a clipboard for later discussion and/or documentation. The three women visited all parts of the Garden and talked at length about design and plant placement, often "spotting" the plants themselves. "Dara and I would trundle behind."[140] The women told Emery what they wanted for a given planting, and he told them what was available or could be grown.

In later years, there was a shift towards staff-directed design and programs, while Board members confined their activities primarily to policy-making. Dr. Ralph Philbrick was hired in 1964 as a scientist, and remembers that Dara Emery and Katherine Muller made most of the horticultural decisions for most plantings.[141]

A persistent design issue for the Garden from its inception has been the difficulty of providing year-round color with California native plants, a design feature that many visitors expect. As soon as Katherine Muller became Acting Director she began to wrestle with this dilemma and experiment with solutions, trying a variety of techniques in order to extend the blooming season, including supplemental irrigation, pruning back to stimulate a second bloom, and other cultural practices.

Although 1952 was a very wet year, the following year proved to be the second driest year on record, with only 6.98 inches of rain. This took its toll on the beach strawberry in the Meadow that had been planted in 1947, and again the Meadow was plowed under; this time the soil was treated with a weed killer (methyl bromide) to eliminate *Oxalis,* vetch, and Bermuda grass. Mixed wildflowers (California poppy and lupine) were sown in fall 1953 and then the beach strawberry was again replanted in 1954 (from 1700 plants grown in the Garden's nursery), this time lasting seven years. The Meadow was replanted in beach strawberries two additional times, but the strawberries were prone to root rot and also adversely affected by the heavy clay soil and accumulated salts from irrigation.

In 1962, the strawberries were dug up

Dr. Katherine Muller, at left, chats with three supporters of the Garden. Muller joined the Garden staff in 1948 and served as Director from 1950 to 1973. She encouraged an active publications program and Garden membership doubled during her tenure.

for the last time, and wildflowers were once again sown in the Meadow. Six years later, weeds were competing so intensely with the wildflowers that, once again, a new experiment was launched. Over five thousand plants of the yellow-blooming herbaceous perennial, St. John's Wort (*Hypericum formosum* var. *scouleri*), were grown from seed and then transplanted to the Meadow. Beds on either side of the Meadow were planted with Carmel creeper (*Ceanothus griseus*) to produce contrasting blue flowers and visual interest. Three years later, public demand resulted in a replanting of the wildflower meadow, so the St. John's Wort was torn out and wildflowers were replanted annually for another decade.[142]

Other new plantings during this period included a new ground-cover display and a home demonstration garden at the upper end of the Meadow to help the home owner visualize native plants in the confines of a small yard setting. The Island Section was moved from the old parking lot area by Mission Canyon Road to a new location across the canyon adjacent to Mission Creek. Ralph Philbrick designed the new plantings, and oversaw the addition of unique island specimens through the years.[143]

In 1959, the Forest Section was also greatly expanded, with the addition of a new trail funded by William Stratton Porter, an attorney and generous philanthropist. Plantings along the new trail borders were completed in the first year, along with a new bench and a plaque bearing these words, "A trail to a closer walk with nature."

In September 1964, the Coyote fire burned into the Garden and caused damage to several sections, most especially the new Porter Trail.

Flames burned across the north end of the Garden, through the Redwood Section, along the Pritchett Trail on the west, and up the old, undeveloped olive slope on the east into the Forest Section. Plantings along the Porter Trail were severely damaged and the pines at the top of the Forest Section on the ridge above Mission Canyon Road were destroyed. . . . Even though only a small portion of the Garden was burned, the inventory of burned and scorched plants totaled over 1,500 sizeable trees and shrubs in addition to many small perennials.[144]

William Porter died in 1964, and funds given in his memory were used to extend the trail and create a Ceanothus Section on the sunny, recently charred hillside, where it remains to this day.

Under Muller's stewardship the Garden grew from fifty to sixty-five acres and membership doubled. In recognition of her outstanding con-

Lutah Maria Riggs designed a number of buildings for the Garden, including the Blaksley Library. Here she is pictured in her office in the early 1950s. Santa Barbara Historical Society photograph.

Garden Horticulturalist Dara Emery, in hat, conducts a plant propagation class in 1955. Under Dr. Muller's guidance as Director, the number and variety of classes offered to the public expanded.

tributions to the profession, Muller received many awards during her tenure at the Garden, including the Eloise Payne Luquer Medal from the Garden Club of America and awards from the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, the California Conservation Council, and the International Shade Tree Conference. She preferred, however, to let the Garden's work speak for itself.[145] After she retired in 1973, she became Director Emerita of the Garden, attending Garden staff meetings and also serving as a member of the Board of Trustees from 1976 to 1988. She was elected an honorary Trustee in 1989. The Library Annex was opened in her honor in 1982, housing a collection of botanical and horticultural journals; it was renamed the Katherine Kinsel Muller Reading Room in 1995.

At the same time that Dr. Muller's career was flourishing, her husband Neil worked on taxonomic, ecological, and historical projects out of his laboratory at UCSB. He enjoyed a national reputation in the field of plant ecology. Once in a great while, the couple collaborated on a paper, although this was unusual. According to their son, Bob, "Although they did not collaborate directly in terms of publications, theirs was a lifelong collaboration of ideas. It was clear to me as a child that each used the other as a sounding board for things they had been thinking about."[146]

Katherine Muller died in Santa Barbara on August 17, 1995; Neil Muller passed away on January 26, 1997.

The Contemporary Period (1973 –Present)

In the early years of the Garden's history, its tiny staff, with limited resources, was greatly enhanced by the onsite use of the talents of its Board, Advisory Committee members, as well as its Directors. These advisers brought considerable expertise and made significant contributions to the organization as a whole. The beautiful layout of the Garden, which in the central area highlights the view across the oval Meadow to the mountains in the north and ocean to the south, can be directly attributed to the landscape artistry of Ervanna Bowen Bissell,

Lockwood de Forest, Beatrix Farrand, and Katherine Muller and her associates.

As the organization grew, there were more professional staff members to carry out day-to-day operations and more financial resources with which to operate. Further, in recent decades non-profit boards nationwide have generally shifted from hands-on involvement to policy making. Although there have been several talented landscape architects on the Board of Trustees since 1950, none have been as involved in onsite planning as Lockwood de Forest and Beatrix Farrand, followed by Elizabeth de Forest and Mildred Orpet.

Each Director in the last three decades has had his or her own approach to planting design in the Garden, although all have collaborated with horticultural staff and only occasionally hired a landscape architect for a special project. Each encouraged expansion of research and education programs as well, resulting in an institution that is a community jewel with international recognition for program excellence.

• *Ralph Nowell Philbrick, Director 1973-1987:* While a graduate student, Ralph Philbrick worked as a Research Associate in the celebrated Liberty Hyde Bailey Hortorium (the herbarium at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York) and traveled widely during his study of garden *Camellia*s. He came to the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden as a taxonomist, with research interests centering on the evolutionary relationships of prickly-pear cactus in the genus *Opuntia* and on furthering the Garden's studies of the California Islands. In 1973, when Katherine Muller retired, he was appointed Director of the Garden, a position that he held for thirteen years.

During his tenure, Dr. Philbrick continued the scientific research program that had been a Garden tradition since its establishment in 1926—studies of natural communities and ecosystems, as well as taxonomic work on evolutionary relationships of native species. In addition to island and *Opuntia* research, he maintained massive written files on the California flora and expanded the herbarium holdings of valuable early specimens and horticultural material from the Santa Barbara area. When Clifton Smith retired as Librarian from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural

Dr. Ralph Philbrick served as Garden Director from 1973 to 1987. Commitment to scientific research deepened during his directorship, with special attention paid to the California Islands. The Garden's first newsletter was issued under his watch. Photograph by William B. Dewey.

History in 1985, Philbrick was instrumental in bringing him, along with his extensive personal herbarium collection, back to the Garden to continue his work on the flora of the Santa Barbara region.

Philbrick's commitment to island research led to the first symposium on the biology of the California Islands in 1965, a symposium series that continues to this day. Held at the Garden, the foremost scientists on island biology of that time presented papers, which were then published in a much-cited volume, *Proceedings of the Symposium on the Biology of the California Islands (*Ralph Philbrick, editor, 1967); he also published other scholarly papers in ensuing years. Under Philbrick's leadership, the Garden directed ongoing island studies for the National Park Service and the Nature Conservancy and grew to be recognized as an international center for island research.

Philbrick had established a new Island Section in the lower portion of the Canyon in 1966 during Katherine Muller's tenure. The original Island Section had given way to the parking lot in 1950, so only a small area remained for both the Arroyo and Island sections. The intent of the new display was to showcase the ornamental value of many plants of the California Islands and to allow comparisons of related plants collected on different islands that were grown in the same environment.[147]

He also helped to formulate the concept and design for the new herbarium building, a project begun under Muller's direction and completed in 1974, with donations from Mr. and Mrs. Harold Gladwin, the Santa Barbara Foundation, and the Doris Fay Palmer Trust. Herbarium equipment was provided by Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Chandler. Architect John Pitman created the design for the structure, which includes thick walls to protect the priceless specimens in case of a wildfire. The Garden's 1974 *Annual Report* noted that Pitman was "both helped and hindered by suggestions from the Garden staff."

The new Horticulture Unit on the eastern hillside, funded by the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, was designed by Bob Bronfen and constructed in 1985, consisting of a building housing two offices, general propagation work area, seed-drying shelves, storage, and classroom space. In the surrounding area, a glasshouse, lath house, plant breeding house, can yard, and nearby test plots and experimental growing grounds continue to be used by horticulture staff.

Philbrick was intimately involved in development of the Garden grounds. Working first with horticulturist Dara Emery and then with Carol Bornstein, he participated in planting walks and design discussions. Philbrick described this process in the Garden's 1976 *Annual Report*:

This was the third year of annual landscape and planting review by Ralph Philbrick , Dara Emery, and David Leaberry. The design of each portion of the Garden is considered, distracting plant material is removed, and new and interesting plants are added where possible. Each year Dara Emery grows planting material from cuttings, seeds, and divisions obtained in the wild; and careful records are kept on the sources of new plant accessions. A Buildings and Grounds Committee advised the staff on the most difficult landscape problems.[148]

He favored natural communities and/or a naturalistic layout to any planting, and had a particular dislike for leggy plants and conspicuous signage. An unimpeded view from the plants at a visitor's feet to far vistas was his ideal. As a result, he was also active in procuring properties adjacent to the Garden and sharpened the concept, begun under Dr. Clements, for the evergreen shrub borders along Mission Canyon Road—a green corridor that draws the visitor's eye up the road to the mountains beyond.

Building on designs created by Ervanna Bowen Bissell, Lockwood de Forest, and Beatrix Farrand, the Meadow area was purposefully framed by larger evergreen plants on the east and west sides:

Valley cholla, 1989. Photograph by Alan Weisskopf.

The Porter Trail, 1985

Dara Emery was a fixture at the Garden for over thirty-five years, serving as Garden Horticulturist from 1955 to 1980 then as Plant Breeder to 1991.

Dara has described the basic Meadow design as including conifers at the top (north end) of the Meadow and clumps of large junipers along the east side. There are large live oaks along the west side; and the trees near the south end, plus the Blaksley boulder, give a balance in mass and between conifers and broad-leaf plants.[149]

Once again, ongoing problems with pervasive weeds in the Meadow area provided an opportunity for innovation. In 1981 Carol Bornstein began to transform the Garden's Meadow from a seasonal display of wildflowers into a grassland habitat. A series of experiments ensued; the drifts of native grasses and patches of annual and perennial wildflowers were designed to evoke the ambience of a native prairie. Additional goals were to reduce water use, improve soil texture, increase species diversity and year-round interest, and educate the public about endangered grassland habitats.

Landscape architect Isabelle Greene provided a number of suggestions for arrangement of the Meadow borders, including an "irregular block design using low shrubs and interplanted annuals."[150] An herbaceous perennial border of California natives planted in the English tradition was designed and planted by Bornstein and her staff in 1987 on the west side of the Meadow near the sundial.

The cool stately splendor of the Redwood Section is a magnet for visitors all year long. When the redwoods were measured in 1983, the tallest tree was 118 feet in height and had a crown diameter of 44 feet. The spreading understory of redwood sorrel, lush ferns, and diverse assemblage of herbaceous perennials and woody redwood associates magnifies the naturalistic appearance of this section; many people mistake it for a native forest, although the nearest naturally-occurring redwood forest today is two hundred miles north in southern Monterey County.

Manzanita Section: To the south of the main Garden buildings, a sunny rock-strewn terrace hosts a display of manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*), which were planted here in the late 1970s after the Ceanothus collection was moved to the Porter Trail. A comprehensive assemblage of both manzanita species and cultivars is grown in this area. A mixed border of gray-foliaged drought-tolerant plants was designed by Carol Bornstein and her staff in 1986 for a rock-lined bed at the southern end of this section; it was planted

in memory of Polly Anderson, a long-term Garden volunteer.

Garden Growers and a New Plant Breeding Program: Philbrick encouraged horticultural activities on many levels, and in 1974 Dara Emery organized a volunteer group, the Garden Growers, to propagate and sell native plants to the public.[151] The two also initiated a plant breeding program in 1980, and Emery began working full time on plant breeding efforts. He received the prestigious Mitchell Award for his development of *Iris* 'Canyon Snow' from *Iris douglasiana* parents in 1979. The low-growing *Artemisia* 'Canyon Gray' as well as the spectacular gray-leaved *Leymus* 'Canyon Prince' are popular cultivars that were selected on the California Islands by Philbrick and brought back as cuttings to the Garden for horticultural study and eventual introduction into the commercial trade. Emery also wrote his seminal *Seed Propagation of Native California Plants* with Philbrick's encouragement, published in 1988.

Philbrick's tenure as Director was characterized by a quiet emphasis on bringing public recognition to the Garden. The Garden's first newsletter, *Gleanings from the Garden*, was initiated in 1975; it highlighted botanical and horticultural information for members, as well as events and classes. Education programs expanded, with class offerings and field trips that attracted an enthusiastic group of supporters. He resigned in 1987 and is now semi-retired, working part-time as a botanical consultant.

• *David Allen Young, Director 1988 to 1991:* David Young served as Director of the Liberty Hyde Bailey Hortorium of Cornell University before coming to the Garden in 1988; he obtained a Ph.D. from Claremont College. A taxonomist with a specialty in the systematics of plants in the cashew family, Young brought considerable administrative skills and an abundance of enthusiasm to his position as Garden Director.

During his brief tenure, he created new administrative policies with his senior staff, as well as five-year plans and a new long-range Master Plan for the Garden. Working with the Board of Trustees, he established the Garden's first organized development program and significantly increased financial backing, annual giving, and grants and contracts to support Garden programs. Admission fees were charged for the first time, providing new revenue. He was most proud of his promotion and hiring of four women to senior positions at the Garden, and reported that one half of all new hires were women or ethnic minorities while he directed the Garden.[152]

He hired the first volunteer administrator to coordinate the efforts and talents of dedicated community members. Additional scientists joined the research staff, and funding was obtained for completion of *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island*, published in 1995. The National Science Foundation visited the Garden for the first time in three decades to review research programs and proposals.

Under Young's direction, special events such as "Give the Earth a Hand Day" introduced hundreds of people to the Garden and its programs. The Garden offered more classes, tours, and school programs than ever before. Along with education staff, he helped to establish the Master Gardener program in collaboration with University of California Cooperative Extension in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.

The Easton-Aqueduct Trail: In 1989, the Easton-Aqueduct Trail, the first new trail in thirty years, opened on the west side of Mission Creek south of the Island Section; funding was provided by the late Robert O. Easton, a long-term Garden supporter, author, and community activist. He loved undisturbed native vegetation and wanted to create a path through the naturally-occurring southern oak woodland habitat. Portions of the Mission Aqueduct system were uncovered during trail construction.[153]

Home Demonstration Garden: In 1989 the Garden contracted with a talented San Francisco Bay Area landscape architect, Ron

Lutsko, Jr,, to design a new Home Demonstration Garden. With plant selection by Carol Bornstein, this section surrounds the original caretaker's cottage built in 1926, providing both design ideas and specific solutions for home owners. Completed in 1991, this garden promotes the use of native California plants in the home landscape and serves as a model water-conserving garden. Educational interpretation was integrated into the design planning process from the project's inception.

Goals for the garden were to demonstrate the principles involved in designing a water-conserving garden; to display plants appropriate for Southern California's Mediterranean climate; and to show that a garden of native California plants can be beautiful year-round. In creating the garden, staff focused on native plants that are easy to grow, complement each other visually, and are readily available at nurseries.

The completed garden includes a shade garden, perennial borders, turf substitutes, decorative pots, and various hardscape elements—all of which serve as examples and ideas for people to use in designing their own gardens.[154]

Young left the Garden to return to academia, as Dean at the University of Oklahoma. Today he is Dean and Professor of Plant Biology for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University.

• *Edward Lee Schneider, President and CEO 1992-Present*: Like Frederic Clements, E. J. Bissell, Katherine Muller, Ralph Philbrick, and David Young, Ed Schneider brought a doctoral degree and considerable scientific expertise to his position as Garden President and CEO. Prior to coming to the Garden, he received his Ph.D. at UC Santa Barbara and then served as Dean of the College of Science at Southwest Texas State University, where he worked for twenty years. A prolific writer, he has authored five books and over one hundred scientific papers. Despite a full schedule managing the Garden, Schneider works with Dr. Sherwin Carlquist in the Garden's structural botany laboratory every week, conducting scientific explorations that are shedding light on the pollination biology, origins, and evolution of plants.

Schneider may be better known in the national botanical arena than in downtown Santa Barbara. A recipient of both teaching and research awards, he remains active in undergraduate and graduate teaching at the UC Santa Barbara. He is an active Board member of several organizations including the Botanical Society of America, American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta, American Association of Museums, and the International Waterlily Society. His honors include being named a Fellow of the Texas Academy of Science; Hall of Fame in

Dr. Edward Schneider has been Garden President and CEO since 1992. Levels of scholarship and professionalism have continued to rise under his leadership. Education has been at the core of many initiatives taken during his stewardship.

the International Waterlily Society; Distinguished Alumnus, Central Washington University; Botanical Society of America Award of Merit; the Centennial Medallion for excellence and distinction from Southwest Texas State University; and Outstanding Faculty Member, University of California, Santa Barbara.

He implemented a number of initiatives to enhance the level of professionalism and scholarship at the Garden. He conferred with staff to prepare policy and procedure manuals for programs and human resources management for the first time. He formalized a Memorandum of Understanding between the Garden and the University of California at the Regents level that provides Garden scientists with adjunct professor appointments and the opportunity to teach university courses. The Garden also became one of a handful of public gardens in the United States to be honored with accreditation by the American Association of Museums. The distinguished Center for Plant Conservation invited the Garden to become one of only thirty-three member organizations in 1996; the Garden serves as the nationally-recognized center for conservation of Central Coast and California Island plants.

Schneider was instrumental in arranging for Dr. Sherwin Carlquist to continue his structural botany research at the Garden after his retirement from the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and Claremont College in 1992. Carlquist was awarded the 2002 Linnean Medal for Botany by the Linnean Society of London, their highest honor. The award citation noted that Dr. Carlquist is "preeminent as a plant bio-geographer and island biologist, and the leading living authority on wood anatomy. When viewed as part or as a whole, Dr. Carlquist's career is one of magnificent achievements in terms of his innumerable intellectual contributions to biology and in shaping the thinking of generations of biologists."

Dr. Schneider also brought Dr. J. R. Haller, a renowned expert on the California flora, from UC Santa Barbara to the Garden in 1993; Dr. Shirley Tucker, an expert on lichens and floral development from Louisiana State University to the Garden in 1995; and Charis Bratt, a leading authority on lichens from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in 1998, along with 18,000 specimens of California lichens. In 2002, Dr. Robert Muller, son of Drs. Katherine and Cornelius Muller, became the Garden's Director of Research after serving as the Chairman of the Department of Forestry at the University of Kentucky for many years. He also serves as a professor at UC Santa Barbara and has recently revised *Trees of Santa Barbara*. Schneider's commitment was encapsulated in a recent statement:

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden since its inception has been true to its founding vision: to be an educational and scientific institution dedicated to fostering stewardship of the botanical world through inspired learning, rigorous scholarship, and premier displays. As an accredited museum of living plants we are dedicated to the communities we serve. Ultimately, the work of museums such as the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden is globally beneficial. Botanical gardens are essential to sustaining the world's ecological diversity and shaping conservation strategies. To do this effectively requires dissemination of knowledge, so the need for education on the local level is crucial. Successful conservation programs not only increase environmental knowledge within the community, but also develop the skills, expertise, and commitment necessary to address environmental challenges. By augmenting education offered in local schools and universities, the Garden fills a crucial need in making such programs personally relevant to students and the public.[155]

Education programs: Before Luigi Reginato first plowed the site of the Garden Meadow with his team of horses, before the first thirteen acres were even purchased, Frederic Clements articulated an educational focus for the Garden that resonates to this

day. In his draft plan for the Garden, he spoke of educating the visitor, "It may be made to reveal a world of fascinating facts about living things, many of them unknown even to the devoted lover of gardens or nature." The educational mission of the Garden permeated its physical design, with community groupings, plantings of unique genera, plant family groupings, and experimental gardens.[156]

The Bissells created plant labels and signs within the Garden's first year, and Maunsell Van Rensselaer offered the first class for Scout Leaders in 1935. Katherine Muller was hired as Associate in Education in 1948, and after she was Director, she brought Jacqueline Patman Broughton to the Garden, who expanded programs to encompass classes, forays, lectures, workshops, teacher education programs, school tours, and much more. An increased focus on field trips and classes for adults involving identification and ecological relationships of plants characterized Dr. Steven Timbrook's tenure as Educational Coordinator from 1976 to 1987, along with developing a strong core of docents to share their love of the Garden with visitors and tour groups. School programs, teacher education workshops, kits for classroom use, classes, certificate programs, symposia, exhibits, and grounds interpretation were among the initiatives pursued by Mary Carroll, Director of Education from 1988 to 1998.

Today the Garden's education programs encompass a broad range of classes, certificate programs, workshops, field courses, lectures, and teacher instruction. Under the leadership of Dr. Barry Tanowitz, Director of Science Education, and Sally Isaacson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, the Garden has developed programs offered through the *Center for Teaching California Ecology,* which reaches more than 10,000 children and adults annually.

Certification programs are offered for volunteer docents, Master Gardeners, and Garden Growers, as well as for interested community members who desire a comprehensive curriculum in California Horticulture, California Plant Diversity, and Sustainable Landscape Practices. Programs for children and families include Nature Camps, family workshops, and weekend and evening educational events. In addition, new programs for underrepresented children and families, such as the *Youth Enrichment Adventure* program and *FamCamp*, expose new audiences to the amazing diversity of the natural world; these programs are cosponsored by the Gevirtz Research Center at UC Santa Barbara and Los Padres National Forest, respectively.

Research: Scientific research has formed the backbone of Garden endeavors from its founding in 1926. Research facilities include the Garden herbarium, several laboratories, greenhouses, and growing areas. The Garden's herbarium, managed by Curator Steve Junak, consists of over 140,000 dried specimens of plants, representing early collections from the Central Coast region, as well as providing documentation of the California plant diversity. This tool forms the basis for ongoing scientific research in ecology, floristics, taxonomy, and conservation biology. The herbarium also contains laboratory research space and regularly hosts visiting scientists.

Both at the Garden and in the field, ongoing investigations center on the following disciplines: floristics and systematic botany (geographic distributions and evolutionary relationships of plants), ecology (patterns, processes, interrelationships of living things), conservation biology (biology of rare plants and associations), and structural botany (structures, cells, tissues and their significance).

Structural botany: Scanning electron microscopy and a range of other techniques are utilized by Ed Schneider and Sherwin Carlquist to examine plant structures and relate findings to structure, function, and evolutionary relationships. Carrying on a tradition of structural botany studies initiated by Dr. Marta Walters in the 1950s, Schneider

and Carlquist have co-authored over forty papers in the past eight years on structural botany which may shed light on the origins of flowering plants.

The California Islands: The Garden is world-renowned for its research on plants from the California Islands, a program that Dr. Ralph Philbrick expanded, beginning in the 1960s, building on earlier work by Garden staff and associates. For over fifty years, Botanic Garden surveys and inventories have significantly enhanced botanical knowledge of these remarkable offshore terrains. As a result, the herbarium includes over 30,000 specimens of the California Islands' vascular plants and lichens, which are consulted by researchers throughout the world. Collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, Catalina Island Conservancy, Channel Islands National Park, and the U. S. Navy, has provided the foundation for scientific management of these globally unique ecosystems. Ongoing inventories of vascular plants by Herbarium Curator Steve Junak and of lichens by Lichenologist Charis Bratt continue to contribute to this effort.

The Central Coast Center for Plant Conservation: For decades the Garden has made a concerted effort to document the flora of California's "Central Coast Bioregion," from Monterey and San Benito counties south to Ventura County, including the California Islands—home to a remarkable flora including over four hundred species found nowhere else in the world. Garden botanist Clifton F. Smith (1920-1999) conducted field and herbarium studies of the regional flora for over fifty years. Today, these studies continue, with an emphasis on identifying areas of endemism, that is, areas with high concentrations of plants found no where else in the world. Some endemics are threatened with extinction and Garden botanists work with agencies to accurately determine rare plant distributions and monitor existing populations.

In 2001, the Garden established the Central Coast Center for Plant Conservation to promote and coordinate research on rare plants, including botanical inventories; database management; cultivation of rare plants, including preservation of seeds and living plants in the Garden's Conservation Collection; laboratory, greenhouse, and field research on the reproductive biology and ecology of rare species; restoration management; and other related investigations.

Member of the national Center for Plant Conservation since 1996, the Garden is the only organization actively developing and maintaining a conservation collection of endangered species in the Central Coast region. The Botanic Garden's work on state and federally listed species is implemented through cooperative agreements with the California Department of Fish and Game, the Los Padres National Forest, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dr. Dieter Wilken became Director of Botanical Research, now Vice President of Education and Plant Sciences, in 1993; he managed the *Jepson Manual* project at UC Berkeley and was a Colorado State University professor. Garden conservation studies conducted by Wilken focus on the biology of several rare island plants, as well investigations of seed dormancy and germination, life history characteristics, and plant longevity. Through cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, experimental recovery efforts are being conducted for island species on Santa Cruz Island. Similar studies on the rare Santa Ynez false-lupine (*Thermopsis macrophylla*) have been initiated, with the purpose of characterizing its habitat and life history characteristics.

Dr. Robert Muller, Director of Research, studies long-term vegetation patterns to examine the direct and indirect effects of urbanization on plants in the Central Coast area. An expert on native and exotic trees, he is completely revising *Trees of Santa Barbara,* with photography by Dr. Bob Haller. Dr. Nancy Vivrette investigates seed dormancy and germination in California native plants,

with an emphasis on understanding both short-term and long-term changes in vegetation patterns.

The Blaksley Library: From the small table of books placed out under the Meadow oaks in 1927 to the donation in 1941 of several hundred books and other publications belonging to writer and naturalist Charles Francis Saunders, to the 15,000-volume collection today, the Blaksley Library continues to provide vital resources for researchers, educators, and scholars. The books in the Library collection represent important botanical and horticultural works on California flora, Mediterranean floras of the world, landscape history, and the disciplines of botany and horticulture. Specialized monographs and journals provide detailed results of new scientific investigations.

The rare book collection contains over one thousand books and journals dating back to the seventeenth century with many fine examples of botanical illustration, key works in the exploration of the American West, and the flora of California. Non-book collections include maps, over 20,000 photographic images, manuscript collections; architectural drawings, reprint collections, clippings files, 1,500 nursery and seed catalogs, botanical artwork, and the Garden's institutional archives.

Horticulture Programs: Living collections, including more than one thousand kinds of plants, are featured in displays throughout the Garden grounds, accessible by over 5.5 miles of trails. Behind the scenes detailed records and active collections management practices are used to track each perennial planting. These plants represent a living museum devoted to illustrating the remarkable diversity of California's flora and vegetation.

Each planting in the Garden has an educational, scientific, and/or conservation theme. Ongoing efforts to strengthen and add to the scientific and educational value of displays while enhancing the visitor experience are a priority. The aesthetic goals for horticultural displays are being refined by Vice President of Horticulture, Jeff Cope, who brings thirty years experience in urban horticultural management in Santa Barbara to the Garden. Universal access to the living collections is being planned and implemented throughout the Garden.

The Garden's *Dudleya* display on the northeast side of the Meadow was planted in 1993 in memory of Elizabeth Kellam de Forest. Succulent live-forevers (*Dudleya*) occupy a broad range of habitats in arid environments, exhibiting an amazing diversity of form and color; the Garden's display now contains over fifty different kinds of live-forevers. In 2002 the *Dudleya* collection became a member of the prestigious American Plant Collection Consortium, sponsored by the American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta.

The Plant Fiber Arts Display celebrates the ingenuity of California's native peoples in utilizing plant fibers for a broad range of purposes. This unique display, installed in 1997 below the Mission Dam, combines living displays of California basketry plants with glass-topped exhibit cases that contain examples of plant fibers used for basketry, nets, clothing, and other objects. *The Mission Waterworks Display* features signs and artifacts that depict the creativity in designing the dam and aqueduct system, which served the community of Santa Barbara for one hundred years.

The Mission Dam, as part of the Santa Barbara Mission complex, is listed as a State Historic Landmark. The Garden initiated a request for the Dam to be designated as a Santa Barbara County Landmark, which was granted in 1983. In 2003, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors designated several features on the west side of Mission Canyon Road as historic landmarks, including the Mission Aqueduct, Indian Steps, Entry Steps, Information Kiosk, Caretaker's Cottage, Blaksley Library, and the Campbell Bridge.

In 2003, the Garden purchased thirteen acres of undeveloped property to the northeast, continuing its tradition of adding adjacent properties to preserve the natural ambience of Mission Canyon and provide an unimpeded view of the ridgeline. *A Japanese Teahouse Garden*, featuring a Japanese-style garden of California native plants surrounding an authentically restored teahouse, was completed in the lower Arroyo Section. In 2004 work in the Arroyo Section on a new Discovery Garden, *Garden of the Earth, Sky, and Water*, commenced. This educational garden will include interactive nodes for different plant communities. Initially designed for children and adults alike by Daryl Morrison, the garden and educational components were further developed by others before Katie O'Reilly Rogers provided the final drawings. In early 2005 environmental artist Patrick Dougherty twisted a truckload of willow saplings into a sculptural display in the upper Meadow called *Toad Hall*, which will remain at the Garden for about two years.

A Garden for All Time

Today, stunning displays that build on Frederic Clements' original concepts of community plantings, coupled with exhibits of important California plant groups, comprise the backbone of Garden plantings. And yet, as Ervanna Bissell so aptly put it in 1929, "Change is universal... all that seems not to change is an illusion."[157] Utilizing the never-ending diversity of California's beautiful plants at the exquisite Garden site, designers have been tinkering with plant placements, configurations, forms, and associations for almost eighty years. Beatrix Farrand reflected in 1946, "It may not be generally realized that plants are really the ephemeral parts of a garden design, since they require replacement, restoration, and constant control."[158] Nonetheless, the general layout of the Garden, the beauty of many of its designs, the constancy of its endeavors—to enrich both the local community and the world at large with program excellence in science, education, and horticulture—endure.

Volunteers have played a vital role at the Garden since its earliest days. Here long-time volunteer Avis Keedy shares her expertise with a youngster, 1994. Photograph by William B. Dewey.

NOTES

SBBG Archives = Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Archives

1 Frederic Clements to Bernhard Hoffmann, 5 April 1924, SBBG Archives.
2 Lockwood de Forest, Jr. was actually the third Lockwood de Forest. He was called Lockwood Jr. since his father, Lockwood de Forest II, also lived in Santa Barbara and was prominently known as a painter. For the sake of simplicity, "Jr." will be dropped in the balance of this piece when referring to de Forest.
3 Victoria Padilla, *Southern California Gardens—An Illustrated History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 92-96, 197-202; Walker Tompkins, *Santa Barbara History Makers* (Santa Barbara: McNally and Lofton, 1983), 225-227; Elizabeth de Forest, lecture notes, 1975, SBBG Archives.
4 www.rain.org/~hcsb/sbseasons/SBCOHORT.html, July 2004.
5 Elizabeth de Forest, lecture notes, 1975, SBBG Archives.
6 William F. Peters, "Lockwood de Forest, Landscape Architect, Santa Barbara, California, 1869 – 1949" (M.A. thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1971), 11-12.
7 As reported in the Santa Barbara *Daily News* and the Santa Barbara *Independent*, 26 January 1918.
8 Meeting notes for World Botanic Garden, 17 January 1918, SBBG Archives.
9 *Museum Leaflet*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, July 1926.
10 *Ibid.*
11 www.the-townhall-nyc.org.
12 Frederic Clements, "Plant Succession: An Analysis of the Development of Vegetation," *Carnegie Institution of Washington Publication 242*, 1916; Frederic Clements and V. E. Shelford, *Bio-Ecology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939); F. E. Clements, "Researches in Ecology: Acclimatization Gardens," *Carnegie Institution of Washington Year Book No. 26* (1927): 306-339.
13 Edith S. Clements, *Adventures in Ecology: Half a Million Miles… From Mud to Macadam* (New York, Pagaent Press, 1960), 198-199.
14 Smith, "Tales of Hoffmann," 71-77.
15 Rosanne M. Barker, "Small Town Progressivism: Pearl Chase and Female Activism in Santa Barbara, California, 1911 – 1918," *Southern California Quarterly* 79 (Spring 1997): 47-100.
16 Frederic Clements to Bernhard Hoffmann, 5 April 1924. SBBG Archives.
17 Clements, *Adventures*, 198-199.
18 Frederic Clements, typescript, 24 May 1944, SBBG Archives.
19 Frederic Clements papers, 1926, SBBG Archives.
20 *Ibid.*
21 Clements typescript, 24 May 1944.
22 *Museum Leaflet*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, April 1926.
23 Minutes, Board of Trustees, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 16 March 1926.
24 Minutes, Board of Trustees, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 8 December 1944.
25 Lockwood and Elizabeth de Forest, "The Blaksley Botanic Garden," *The Santa Barbara Gardener*, April 1926.
26 *Museum Leaflet*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, August 1926. For a complete summary of relevant documents from the period, see Mary Carroll, "A History of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and its Landscapes," 2003, in the SBBG Archives.
27 F. E. Clements, "Researches in Ecology: Acclimatization Gardens," *Carnegie Institution of Washington Year Book No. 26* (1927): 306-339.
28 E. R. Blakley, interview with author, 3 January 2003.
29 Ervanna Bowen Bissell, *Glimpses of Santa Barbara and Montecito Gardens* (Santa Barbara: Schauer Printing Studio, 1926), 62.
30 *Museum Leaflet*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, September 1926.
31 "Caroline Hazard Writes Tribute to Mrs. Bissell," undated newspaper clipping in the SBBG Archives.
32 Minutes, Board of Trustees, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 15 January 1929.
33 Clements Papers, 1926, SBBG Archives.
34 Minutes, Board of Trustees, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 8 December 1944.
35 Ervanna Bowen Bissell, "The Blaksley Botanic Garden," Museums (May 1930).
36 Paul Marshall Rea, unpublished history of the Blaksley Botanic Garden, 1936 in the SBBG Archives.
37 *Ibid.*
38 *Annual Report*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1926.
39 "Caroline Hazard Writes Tribute to Mrs. Bissell."
40 Diana Balmori, Diane Kostial McGuire, and Eleanor M. McPeck, *Beatrix Farrand's American Landscapes: Her Gardens and Campuses* (Sagaponack, New York: SagaPress, Inc., 1985), 17.
41 John Bertolli, unpublished recollections, 28 November 1975, SBBG Archives.
42 *Annual Report*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1927.
43 *Ibid.*
44 Carl Purdy (1861-1945) ran a nursery in Ukiah, California, which was established in 1879. He specialized in California natives, especially native lilies. Theodore Payne (1872-1963) established a nursery specializing in California native plants in downtown Los Angeles in 1903, where he grew between four and five hundred species of native plants. In 1960, about a year before his retirement, friends established a foundation in his honor, the Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild flowers and Native Plants. Lester Rowntree (1879-1979) wrote several books and more than a hundred articles on California plants and seeds. She moved with her husband to Carmel Highlands in the mid 1920s, where she devoted herself to studying native plants. She spent nine months of the year traveling the state alone in a battered station wagon or packing into the back country by burro to collect seeds, which she sold to gardens and plant specialists. An ardent conservationist, she helped found the California Native Plant Society.
45 *Annual Report*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1928.
46 *Annual Report*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1927.
47 *Museum Leaflet*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, November 1929.
48 *Annual Report*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1930.
49 Ervanna Bowen Bissell to Maunsell Van Rensselaer, undated, SBBG Archives; Ervanna Bowen Bissell. "Back to the Soil—With Native Plants," *The Western Woman* 7 (1931).
50 John Bertolli, interview with Katherine Muller and Ralph Philbrick, 6 January 1976 in SBBG Archives.
51 "The Outdoor Museum," *The Santa Barbara Gardener*, July 1927; *Annual Report*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1927.
52 *Ibid.*
53 Bissell, "The Blaksley Botanic Garden," in *Museums*.
54 *Annual Report*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1929.
55 *Annual Report*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1928; John Bertolli, interview, 6 January 1976.
56 [Ervanna Bowen Bissell], "The Blaksley Botanic Garden of Santa Barbara," *Desert*, (1930), 70-71.
57 *Annual Report*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1929.
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133 Beatrix Farrand resigned at Dumbarton Oaks in 1947 and her friendship with Mildred Bliss gradually came to a close. There has been considerable speculation as to the causes of the deterioration in the once close relationship, and it seems likely that the core issues may have been as simple as the two women growing apart. Mildred Bliss went on to create new things at Dumbarton Oaks, such as the Pebble Garden with Ruth Havey. Farrand was described by some as "peppery" during this period, as age and grief for her deceased husband and perhaps her lost friendship took its toll.

Bliss did not offer Farrand assistance with housing her professional library or papers (which included the papers of Gertrude Jekyll) and in the end, after the Reef Point venture was deemed a failure, Farrand turned to UC Berkeley, where her papers remain to this day. She sold Reef Point and dismantled the gardens there. See Jane Brown, *Beatrix—The Gardening Life of Beatrix Jones Farrand 1872 – 1959* (New York: Viking Press, 1995), 184-190, 199-201.
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135 Katherine had joined the faculty at Santa Barbara State College in 1943 on the Riviera, and continued as a faculty member when it became the University of California, Santa Barbara College in 1944. During the same period, her husband Neil carried on wartime research for the US Department of Agriculture in offices at the Garden. Katherine resigned her position at the University in 1945, and Neil was offered the position vacated by Katherine. A son, Robert Neil, was born in 1946. See Nancy Vivrette, Wayne Ferren and Bruce Mahall, "In Memoriam: Cornelius H. Muller,: University of California, Biological Sciences: Santa Barbara" at www.dynaweb.oac.cdlib.org:8088/dynawb/uchist/public/inmemorium/inmemorium1998/@Generic__].
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The Santa Barbara Historical Society
wishes to acknowledge the support of the
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