A History of The Garden Club of Nashville

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~ Book Committee ~
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~ TABLE OF CONTENTS ~

Chapter I
THE GARDEN CLUB OF NASHVILLE’S BEGINNINGS .................................................. 1

Chapter II
THE EARLY YEARS FROM 1929 .................................................................................... 11

Chapter III
THE GARDEN CLUB OF NASHVILLE IN WAR AND PEACE ................................. 17

Chapter IV
CHRISTMAS - 1946 .......................................................................................................... 23

Chapter V
THE GARDEN CLUB OF NASHVILLE’S FIRST ANNUAL MEETING-1949 .......... 27

Chapter VI
A TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT FLORENCE CHEEK LAMB-1957 ......................... 37

Chapter VII
WE ALMOST HAD A HOME - 1960 ................................................................. 43

Chapter VIII
SUNSHINE AND SHOWERS 1956-1970 ................................................................. 45

Chapter IX
THE GARDEN CLUB OF NASHVILLE’S EVENTS CALENDAR .................... 49

Chapter X
THE STORIES OF THE HOWE GARDEN ............................................................... 51

Chapter XI
THE WORK BEGINS ................................................................................................. 75

Chapter XII
HISTORY OF FUND RAISING IN THE GARDEN CLUB OF NASHVILLE ......... 79

Chapter XIII
THE COMMUNITY FUND - GIFTS TO THE CITY .................................................. 83

Chapter XIV
GARDEN CLUB AWARDS - THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA AWARDS ...... 87

Addendum
A. PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF NASHVILLE ....................... 95
B. MEMBERS OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF NASHVILLE - 1928-2009 ................. 97
~ Cover Illustration ~

Mrs. William C. (Nicky) Weaver III
The Garden Club of Nashville
Chapter 1

THE GARDEN CLUB OF NASHVILLE’S BEGINNINGS

The Garden Club of Nashville was organized by Mrs. Jesse M. Overton on April 30, 1928 at her home “Beauvoir” on Franklin Road.

The first officers were: Mrs. Overton, President, Mrs. E. A. Lindsey, Vice President, and Mrs. Frank Berry, Treasurer. Mrs. Lindsey served as Acting Secretary.

FOUNDING MEMBERS

Mrs. Frank Berry  Mrs. Rufus E. Fort
Mrs. James C. Bradford  Mrs. W. Dudley Gale
Mrs. John M. Branham  Mrs. George W. Hale
Mrs. Johnson Bransford  Mrs. W. T. Hale
Mrs. Daniel C. Buntin  Mrs. A. W. Harris
Mrs. Lucius E. Burch  Mrs. Harry A. Howe
Mrs. Leslie Cheek  Mrs. Walter Keith
Mrs. Henry Colton  Mrs. James H. Kirkland
Mrs. Paul M. Davis  Mrs. E. A. Lindsey
Mrs. Henry Dickinson  Mrs. Jesse M. Overton
Mrs. Bruce Douglas  Mrs. George A. Shwab
Mrs. Guilford Dudley  Mrs. Edwin Warner
Mrs. Herbert Farrell  Mrs. Dempsey Weaver

Organized April 30, 1928
The membership list was increased by October 1928 probably due to previously out-of-town members.

Mrs. Frank Berry  Mrs. George W. Hale  
Mrs. James Bradford  Mrs. W. T. Hale  
Mrs. John Branham  Mrs. A. W. Harris  
Mrs. Johnson Bransford  Mrs. P. D. Houston  
Mrs. Charles Buntin  Mrs. Harry Howe  
Mrs. Dan Buntin  Mrs. Robert Jackson  
Mrs. Lucius Burch  Mrs. Walter Keith  
Mrs. James Caldwell  Mrs. James H. Kirkland  
Mrs. Leslie Cheek  Mrs. E. A. Lindsey  
Mrs. Henry Colton  Mrs. Robert Lusk  
Mrs. Paul Davis  Mrs. Spence McGavock  
Mrs. Henry Dickinson  Mrs. W. H. Morgan  
Mrs. Bruce Douglas  Mrs. Jesse M. Overton  
Mrs. Guilford Dudley  Mrs. Kirk Rankin  
Mrs. Herbert Farrell  Mrs. George A. Shwab  
Mrs. Rufus Fort  Mrs. Edwin Warner  
Mrs. Reau Folk  Mrs. Percy Warner  
Mrs. James Frazer  Mrs. George Washington  
Mrs. Dudley Gale  Mrs. Dempsey Weaver  
Mrs. John M. Gray  Mrs. Richard Wilson
The first meeting of the Garden Club of Nashville took place in Nashville on April 30, 1928. Its purpose, understood by all, was to organize a garden club that would be acceptable to the Garden Club of America that was already functioning in New York, Philadelphia, and Chattanooga. The group of ladies met at the home of Mrs. Jesse M. Overton on Franklin Pike. A few who had been invited were out of town, but turned up at the second meeting. One even accepted an office. All were social leaders of Nashville.

Officers were elected, minutes were recorded, dues were set and collected. The ladies agreed that the number of members must be small. Many of them lived on large estates out from Nashville. Included in this group were Mrs. Weaver, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Warner, and Mrs. Leslie Cheek.

Fortunately, the minute book is still in our archives. There are no erasures and no cross-outs. Attendance was mandatory.

The format of a meeting consisted of the meeting itself, a stroll through the hostess’ garden and a return to the house for a very elaborate tea.

From the beginning, the members kept the membership small. They were determined to be accepted into the Garden Club of America as soon as possible. Some of the original members were in touch with members in nearby cities such as Mrs. Richmond in Chattanooga, Mrs. DeBardeleben in Birmingham, the president of
the Dolley Madison Garden Club in Orange, Virginia, and the Magnolia Garden Club, an early club in Charleston, South Carolina which is not active now.

The following pages are copied from the original book of minutes, still in possession of the Garden Club of Nashville archives. Note the beautiful penmanship.
Minutes of The Garden Club of Nashville
April 30th, 1928

A meeting was held to organize the Garden Club of Nashville. It was called by
Mrs. Jesse M. Ogston, to meet on April 29, 1928 at her home on the Franklin Road.
The following were present:

Mrs. Jesse M. Ogston
Mrs. A. W. Amos
Mrs. F. E. Kirkland
Sister Jerry
Auntie Butch
Mrs. Null
Mrs. F. C. Page
Mrs. W. S. Cates
Mrs. W. W. Burkman
Mrs. S. E. Burkel
Mrs. T. H. Bradie
Mrs. A. L. Harris
Mrs. M. Ford
Mrs. I. M. Page
Paul Davis
Mrs. J. Ford and Dudley
Mrs. W. R. Warner
Mrs. W. A. Alston
Mrs. Harry Alston
Mrs. Leslie Catrell