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All Dolled Up For Commencement

The Western State campus has never looked better, now that a replanting and resodding program has been started

By JOE CREASON, Courier-Journal Staff Writer

GRADUATES and former students returning to the picturesque hilltop campus of Western State College in Bowling Green for graduation this year are sure to be pleasantly surprised with what they see.

For the Western grounds, long scenically attractive, never have looked neater or better groomed, thanks to an intensive replanting-reseeding-resodding program. The program, started by President Kelly Thompson, is under the supervision of Mrs. Paul L. Garrett, whose late husband Thompson succeeded in office.

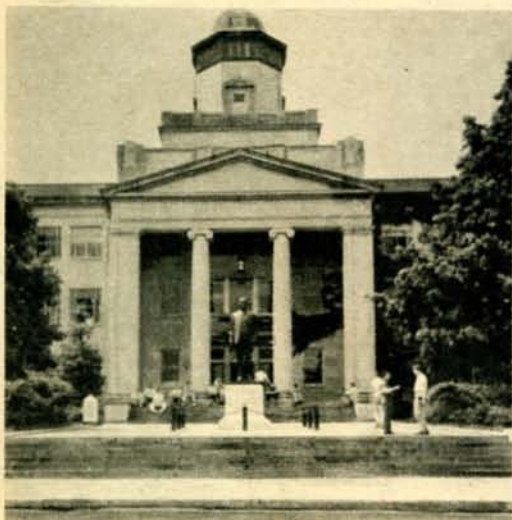
All parts of the campus, which spreads along the top and down the sides of the hill where in 1861 Albert Sidney Johnston erected a fort in the Confederate Army defense chain across Kentucky, has been touched in the beautification program.

Bare spots have been covered with sod; new trees, shrubs and flowers have been planted; the Civil War trenches crisscrossing the hilltop have been cleared. More than 600 shrubs and trees—including 100 redbud and 100 dogwood—have been planted in the last three years. Some 50 red rose bushes were planted last year alone.

Old shrubs, some of them dating back 30 years or more, have been replaced wholesale with vigorous, new varieties. Great care has been taken to put in plants that fit their surroundings.

AS AN example of that, rather rare white redbud was planted next to the Student Union Building, the idea being that the conventional species would clash with the red brick of the structure.

Mrs. Garrett, who for years has been active in garden-club activities, mulled over the situation for weeks before hitting on the



Students lounge on steps of Henry Hardin Cherry Hall, admiring all the new planting.

proper selection of plantings to go with the handsome new campus entrance marker which was put up last year. One problem was to pick plants of colors that fit together.

In the end, she planted pink dogwood, laurel, a columnar hornbeam tree, raintree seedlings, summer-blooming jasmine, and euonymus alatus in the plot surrounding the marker. Ivy was planted along the base.

"In doing this planting, we have had to think not just how the trees and shrubs look now, but how they will look 25 years from now," Mrs. Garrett pointed out.

The tree planting was made necessary by heavy losses on the campus during the extended dry spells two and three years ago. Nearly 200 trees died and were cut, leaving gaps in the once heavily shaded campus.

"I hated to see the trees go," said Mrs. Garrett. "A tree is a priceless thing. They have about to whip me every time a tree on the campus even is trimmed.

"But this work in beautifying the campus saved my life. When my husband died, I was tired mentally and physically and the chance to get out and work in the open was exactly what I needed."

A week after Dr. Garrett died, Thompson, who took office immediately, created the position of campus landscape supervisor and induced Mrs. Garrett to take the job.

This is not the first time that a campus-wide beautification program has been undertaken at Western. Back in 1911, Miss Elizabeth Woods, a modern-language teacher, had sparked an effort to clear away the tangle of trees and vines that covered most of the campus when the first buildings were erected on the hilltop.

Later, around 1929, it was Miss Woods and Miss Florence Ragland, the first college librarian, who started an intensified drive to beautify the campus with flower and shrub plantings. Since money was too scarce then to hire the work done, faculty and students joined in a cleanup effort.

Miss Woods's classes brought all kinds of bulbs, seeds, roses and trees from home to plant on the hilltop, which in the old days had been known as Vinegar Hill. Some of the magnolia trees that grew from seedlings put in the ground then still are standing.

In the mid-1930's, Henry Wright, a landscape architect, helped Miss Woods in her extra-curricular grooming of the campus. When the stately Kentucky Building was put up, she started a formal garden behind the structure.

However, not until Thompson and Mrs. Garrett teamed up had there been a long-range plan been drawn up for completely re-vamping the campus. The first results of that plan is what Westerners will see when they come back to the campus for graduation.

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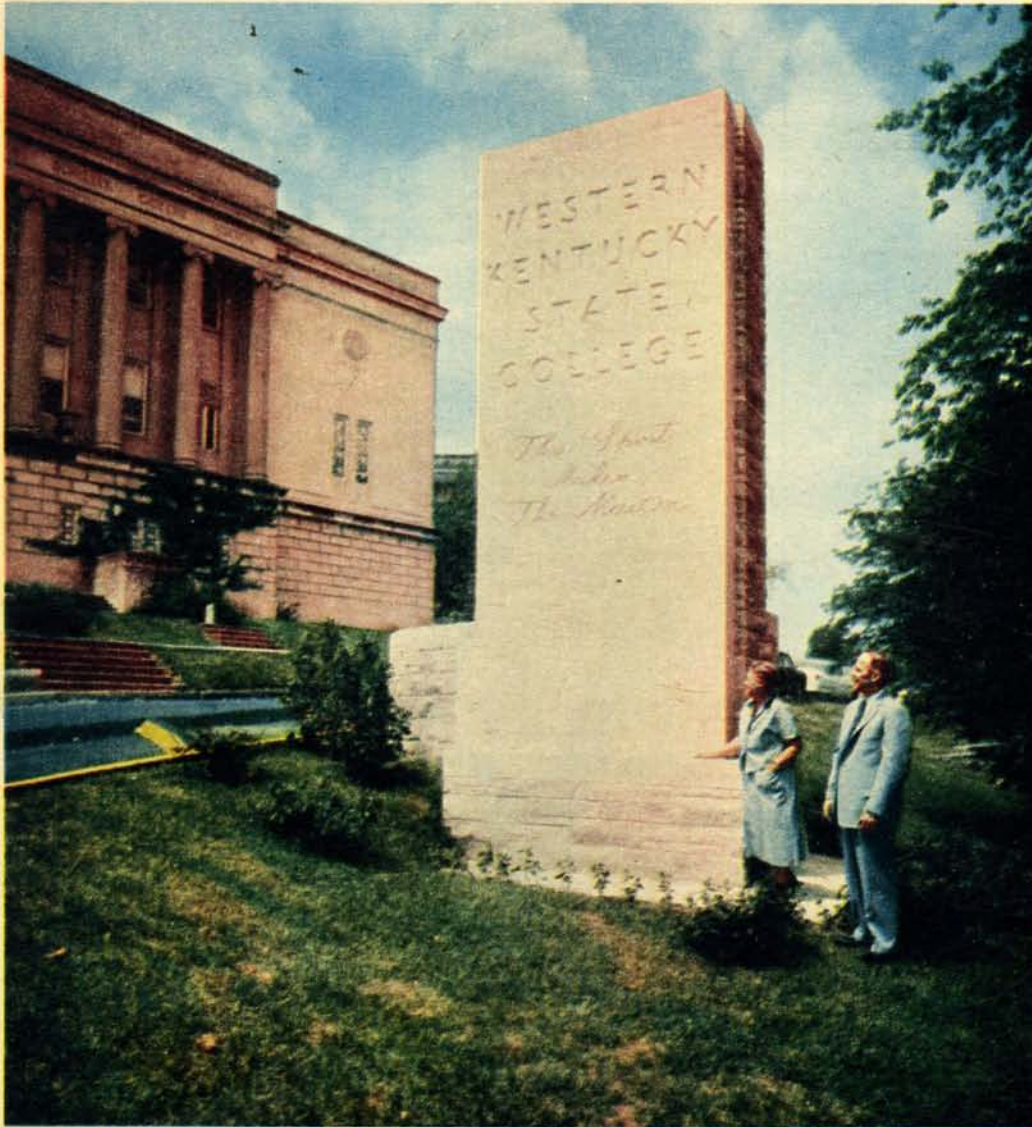
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Dr. Kelly Thompson, Western president, and Mrs. Paul L. Garrett, wife of the former president, inspect new plantings in front of the stone pylon erected in 1955 at the main entrance to the campus.



In front of Henry Hardin Cherry Hall. Plants in the foreground were put out by Mrs. Garrett.

*More than 600 shrubs
and trees have been planted
to beautify the campus*

WESTERN'S BEAUTY *Continued*

At right, students sit on a rock ledge, the remains of a Confederate fort constructed at the beginning of the Civil War on College Heights. Most of this planting is new.



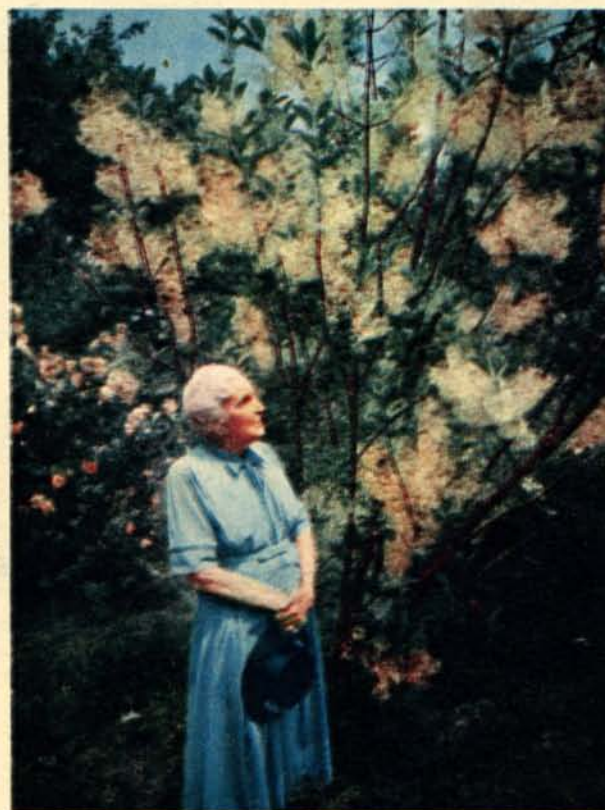


Courier-Journal Color Photos by Chief Color Photographer H. Harold Davis
 This beautiful shaded walkway runs from the library to Cherry Hall, the main classroom building on the campus. It is a favorite relaxation spot for both faculty and students.

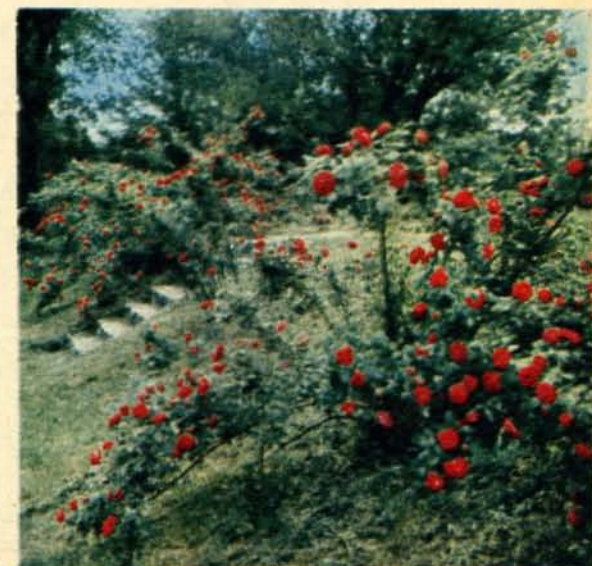
(Left) The wooden bridge these coeds are standing on is the romantic spot on the campus. It spans a trench of the fort. After the Confederates withdrew, Union forces held the fort.



Mrs. Paul Garrett now is in charge of landscaping and beautification of Western campus.



Miss Elizabeth Woods started landscaping the campus at Western back in 1911.



Cleverly hidden by a row of roses is a railroad track near the Kentucky Building.