



B.W. Wells Association

Rock Cliff Farm Quarterly

Fall 2006

Editor: Brian Bockhahn

Another new age improvement

Welcome to another new chapter of the B.W. Wells Association, e-newsletters with color! This will save time and money on mailings, and allow our members to see color photos of wildflowers and other sights. Members without email will still receive a mailed black and white copy. Those that prefer a paper copy can print their own from this program.

This newsletter contains a reprint of the spring Edna Metz Wells article (with photos), a report on a new orchid found at Rock Cliff and an invitation to our annual meeting.

Let us know if you like the new look of the newsletter, and if there are any articles or features you would like to see.



ON ROCK CLIFF FARM...

"You come to the end of a dead end road, and crossing a line at a dip, your load of city worries, cares and thought drops as you cross into Rock Cliff Farm where peace, freedom and joy were bought with the acres"

--- B.W. WELLS

Annual meeting Sept. 17th

ATTENTION MEMBERS AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS...

Our Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, September 17, and we are ready to start a busy year. Unless you are a life member, it is time to **renew your dues**. Or, if you have been thinking about joining the Association, now is the time. To encourage membership we have reduced the dues as listed below. As always, we will still welcome you as a Patron or a Lifetime member.

Membership Dues:

_____ Student/Senior	\$10
_____ Membership (Individual)	\$15
_____ Family	\$30
_____ Membership (Patron)	\$50
_____ Club/Organization	\$75
_____ Life Membership	\$100

To kick off our new year, we will have a **Members Only Old Fashioned Pig Pickin'** at the Annual Meeting at Rock Cliff Farm on Sunday, September 17, starting at 1 p.m. The lunch line will stop serving at 2 p.m. Come eat, socialize, and hear about the activities coming up.

Please mail the membership form so we can receive it before September 9. We cannot accept membership funds at Rock Cliff Farm because of NC State regulations.

Mail the form below to: B.W. Wells Association
P.O. Box 1901, Wake Forest, NC 27588

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

New membership _____ Renewal _____

Amount Enclosed _____

Number planning to attend the September 17 meeting _____ (There is no charge for the lunch, but reservations are required) Check here if you prefer a vegetarian lunch _____.

Edna metz Wel I s park

On March 15, I had a pleasant spring walk through the Edna Metz Wells Park in Raleigh. Edna was B.W. Wells' first wife and a native of Nebraska. In 1919 they moved to North Carolina and traveled the state studying the natural areas and falling in love with the diversity of its flora.



Edna was a botanist and brought botany and ecology to her teachings in Raleigh. While teaching at Broughton High School she discovered a small park between the school and their house on Park Drive.

Edna started a science club at Broughton, and enlisted its help in transplanting ferns and flowers into this park. She very much wanted to see the park used as an outdoor learning laboratory.

At one point B.W. labeled the plants and trees with metal tags, and trails laced through the property. Sadly, vandals destroyed most of the signs, and neighbors dug out most of the plants.

After falling ill following an operation, Edna passed away in February of 1938. A few weeks later the city of Raleigh officially named the small park after her. Some 50 years later the park still holds a great deal of charm and bountiful flora. Several picturesque entrances bring you to the heart of the park along the Pigeon House Branch River.



Huge oaks and pines dominate the west bank, with ferns and daffodils growing in their shadow. The east bank has thickets of cane, a huge sycamore, and odder than odd, redwood trees!

Several sequoia sempervirens, planted in the 1980's, are growing strong.

In bloom are profusions of daffodil, Eastern Redbud and a rose bush just finishing up. Ivy and ornamental hollies bring you back to present times. A metal arch bridge crosses the river, which is one of the most urban streams in Raleigh. Where it crosses under



Clark Avenue, a massive pool forms at the base of the culvert. The river then scours away the bank leaving several feet of exposed soil. The river then passes a gauging station and under Forest Drive. Here it starts to resemble a riverway in Venice. With houses and yards on each bank, concrete retaining walls were installed, along with concrete check dams. Apparently this little river can flood profoundly and raise several feet up its banks.

Crossing the park and walking along Park Drive you can find the rock wall B.W. built around his home. The home has long since burned down and been replaced with another, but the rock wall runs for over 350 feet along Park Drive. It is in very good repair and the neighbors have many flowers growing along the wall.



Parking is along West Johnson Street near the grassy, open area. A lone picnic table sits near a sequoia tree, and a few other benches line the banks of the river.

Several of the old trees could be nominated for the Wake County Capital Tree Program.

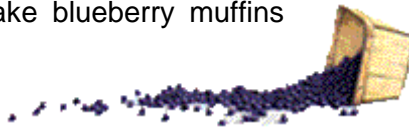
So, is anyone interested yet in a field trip next spring to this little gem?

Fruits and honey

In years past, I had not been able to beat the caretaker to any of the farms natural fruit treats. The fig tree is producing some large fruits and the persimmons should show good this fall.

In a boom year, the blueberry patches are producing some succulent treats. These bushes are *Vaccinium ashei*, Rabbiteye blueberries, a named cultivar planted by Benson Kirkman in honor of B.W.

The womans club of Raliegh joined me on a July 20th tour, and we all delighted in this trail snack. I have harvested a handful to make blueberry muffins for the annual meeting.



Well, we have a new insect to add to the fauna list at Rock Cliff Farm, the European Honeybee, *Apis mellifera*. In May I first noticed the bees exploring a crevice behind the chimney of the caretakers house. I was quite excited because I had only seen two honeybee hives in the wild, in natural cavities. This colony has found it's own natural cavity, in the space in between the chimney and wall. By the end of July the swarm has grown to hundreds and have made way into the house through a hole in the wall.



Honeybees are very beneficial creatures and pollinate a wide variety of wildflowers, but when they build hives near humans problems can arise. If the bees feel threatened they can and will defend their hive in large numbers.



The building committee has recommended removal to protect the structure and the public. Park maintenance staff will erect a barricade to keep humans at a safe distance.

Learn more about infestations at: <http://www.ridacritter.com/honeybees.html>

Adam and Eve Orchid

This spring Ken Moore was wandering in the woods and added a new wildflower to our checklist. Several specimens of Adam and Eve Orchid were found, also called Putty Root Orchid. *Aplectrum hyemale*.

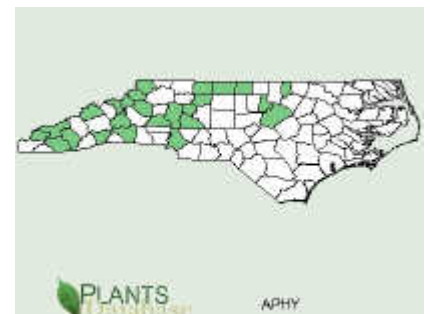
This orchid has a solitary leaf that persists all winter. The leaf can be up to 10" long and 3" wide with beautiful parallel silver veining. In the spring, the leaf vanishes and a 12"-18" pencil thick stem of green-yellow-purplish orchid flowers appears.



In this instance, the common names are quite accurate, as they refer to two interesting characteristics of this unusual plant. First of all, "putty root" derives from the fact that Native Americans used the glutinous matter derived from crushing the bulb of the plant to mend broken pottery and to fasten objects together. Adam & Eve is a reference to the

growth habit of the bulbs as the leaf and flower arise from the current seasons growth (Eve) while last years bulb (Adam), from which forth sprang Eve, is still present.

It ranges throughout the east but is uncommon in most areas. In NY, NJ and MA it is listed as an endangered species. In North Carolina it occurs in the mountains and western piedmont. It has been found in Wake County, but Rock Cliff Farm is likely as far east as it can grow, and is an indicator of the potential of the Farms north facing slopes.



**B.W Wells Association
Membership Information**

MEMBERSHIP DUES

___ Student/Senior	\$10
___ Membership (Individual)	\$20
___ Membership (Patron)	\$50
___ Family	\$50
___ Club/Partner Organization	\$75
___ Life Membership	\$250

Benefits:

- Organized walks and lectures
- Interpretive Displays
- Meetings and Newsletters
- Maintained hiking trails
- Educational project for students of all ages
- Realization of a living memorial

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____
Email _____

Mail to: **B.W. Wells Association**
PO Box 1901
Wake Forest NC 27588

Mission Statement

The B.W. Wells Association will strive to educate the public about B.W. Wells, North Carolina's first plant ecologist, and promote his conservation ethics. The Association will achieve its mission primarily by assisting the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to preserve, restore and interpret the unique cultural and natural resources at Rock Cliff Farm, the site of Wells' retirement.

Vision Statement

The B.W. Wells Association will be the leading resource for educating the public about B.W. Wells and his philosophy of "man living in harmony with nature." The Association will play a major role in restoring Rock Cliff Farm so that it becomes a living legacy of the environmental ethics of B.W. Wells and a source of inspiration to future conservationists.

"Man living in harmony with nature." ---B.W. Wells

Visit the B.W. Wells
Association web site at:
www.bwwells.org

HELP NEEDED...

If you have any information about the following, please contact Brian Bockhahn at 676-1027, or email cbockhahn4@earthlink.net

Naming of Zeagle's Rock
Moonshine Trail rock markers
History of John Davis pre-1800's
History of Wyatt Mangum 1800-1900
Lowery home sites
Pet Cemetery information
BW's painting locations

B.W. WELLS ASSOCIATION

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Secretary - Margaret Pridgen
Committee Chair - Vacant

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Bill Williams
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*Rock Cliff Farm is open for
guided tours only.
See web calendar for dates.*