



Eleanor's Quest for a Special Place

THE ELEANOR CABOT BRADLEY ESTATE, CANTON



©TTOR

THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS

We are more than 100,000 people like you from every corner of Massachusetts. We love the outdoors. We love the distinctive charms of New England. And we believe in celebrating and protecting them – for ourselves, for our children, and for generations to come.

Together with our neighbors, we care for special places, like The Eleanor Cabot Bradley Estate, across the Commonwealth. We inspire a commitment to protect these irreplaceable natural and cultural treasures because of their value to our lives every day. **Visit us at www.thetrustees.org.**

DIRECTIONS

From Route 128 (I-93/Route 1), take exit 2A and follow Route 138 south. After crossing bridge (from Route 128 north exit) or coming off exit ramp (from Route 128 south exit), turn into first driveway immediately on right. Follow signs to parking lot (75 cars).

HOW TO QUEST

Use the clues and map that follow to find a hidden treasure and story at The Bradley Estate. Along the way, you'll have fun and learn to see (and read) land-use clues and history. At the end of this Quest you'll find a hidden treasure box, where you can sign in, collect a copy of our Quest's stamp, and then replace the box for the next visitor. We recommend you take 1 to 1.5 hours to enjoy this adventure. *Happy trails!*

Eleanor's Quest for a Special Place



LET'S GET STARTED!

Eleanor Cabot Bradley once made this her home.
She tended the gardens, the forest she'd roam.
She loved this land deeply and with kindness and grace,
She preserved for us all this special place.

We welcome you here to take our Quest.
Use the clues and the map and try your best.
They'll help you to learn and appreciate
The Eleanor Cabot Bradley Estate!

YOUR CLUES!

**Turn around and head back through the gravel lot
Toward the four rail fence, that's a great grazing spot.
Take a left to your north, the Blue Hills you will see.
Stop when you come to the tall oaks, there are three.**

This variety has branches that grow straight toward the sky;
These English oaks marked the entrance in times gone by.
To the north, Great Blue Hill can be found;
On the coast, south of Maine, it's the highest point around.
Known today as Blue Hills Reservation,
It's home to miles and miles of nature preservation.
All this due to Charles Eliot's thoughtful creation.
Did you know that he also established The Trustees of Reservations?

Later, folks stopped here as they traveled through,
At the Cherry Hill Tavern, which should be in view,
But in the 1950s it was moved across the street
To make room for the place where two roads now meet.

**Continue on north, 50 paces or so,
Take a left, leave the pavement, on dirt you will go.
Bluebird boxes to the left and farm fields to the right,
Don't get too close, just keep them in sight.**

The land that you see has been changed by man,
What started as woods became pasture land.
Later yet still some became hay fields,
And some farmed for bountiful vegetable yields.
This place grows food for us all to eat,
Like carrots and pumpkins and corn that is sweet.
But wait! Poison ivy grows here by the trees.
Look out for the plants with only three leaves.
And though bluebirds thrive with the fields in sight,
Ticks also live here, watch out for their bite.

**Keep on going, stay on the gravel,
Don't bear left, down the hill you must travel.
At the break in the wall, here is what you should do:
Take a left, stop at the fence for a better view.**

The oldest structure still left here to find
Are the two stone walls arranged in a line.
Before the Cabots and Bradleys lived here
The farmers moved rocks for many a year.
They divided the pastures and moved the cows through,
Here for hundreds of years, and hundreds more, too.

Moving ahead through time to 1902
Charles Platt designed the estate and house before you.
The next evolution did Eleanor see:
The double stone wall, as the garden to be.
Many varieties of azaleas and plantings abound,
They still beautify and enhance the manicured grounds.

**Return to the path, go down the hill
Follow the wall, yet another break still!
Take a left and head to where the pond lays.
This is a spot where cattle might graze.**

This place is so peaceful, natural for sure.
Take a closer look: we want you to see more.
These trees and this water were part of the plan,
A wet spot dug deep became a pond made by man.

Eyes towards the sky, find the tallest tree
Called a metasequoia, extinct it was once thought to be.
Since the days of dinosaurs this giant has been around,
Looks like an evergreen but no, its needles fall to the ground.
Don't forget that every tree has a story to tell;
The mulberry and sweet gum are both doing well.
But not the old ash, a stump is all you can see.
We counted the rings and it dates to 1860.

**Retrace your steps, to the road once again.
Follow it down to the stone wall and then
Don't go straight, take a right about 90 degrees,
Go ahead till you see the shaggy bark trees.**

Shag bark hickory grows around here,
They provide nuts for food for squirrels and deer.
There are also cedar trees with peeling bark
Set against a stone wall, man left his mark.
Cedar's berry is blue with a fragrant smell
Keep on this trail to find the dell.

THE ELEANOR CABOT BRADLEY ESTATE, CANTON



**Proceed past the bench where the trail makes a left bend,
You will see holly trees as you start to descend.
Walk the trail down the hill past the tangle-y mass,
Look but don't stop 'til you come to the grass.**

At this magical opening in the trees
Eleanor had a vision of what a landscape could be.
In the middle of the woods you will find
An area not like the forest, it was designed.
Her plan was a gift that stretches through time,
An invitation to make it yours and mine.
It is important to know that it takes people today
To care for this place, to keep it looking this way.

**Straight on the path, go past a small pond.
In the warmer months, you will see many a fern frond.
Head towards an island of trees on your right
Stop where you see a rock stack in sight.**

This group of trees may seem out of place –
From across the world, they were brought to this space.
Eleanor's choice of Asian flora and fauna
Adds an element of natural drama.
Fifty years have passed, who would have known?
The Japanese Umbrella Pine has slowly grown.
They grow very tall but it takes many years,
You'll never see needles bigger than theirs.
To call it a pine would be slightly amiss,
It's in its own genus called Sciadopitys.

**Go straight to the field, Bradley's lowest spot.
If you think we are done, we are not!
To the left up the hill but do not dread,
Next we will look at the white pines ahead.**

These woods were a field once; all trees were cut down.
Succession is when the trees come back around.
The evergreens that you see here today are first in a line,
With needle bundles of five, they're called the white pine.
Oaks will eventually take over this place,
Battling the pines for sunshine and space.
This process will continue, so enjoy the current view.
As decades pass, it will all be new.

**Now trek up the hill 'til you get to the top,
This place may have water, it is where you should stop.
This wet spot's not cold, it's really cool!
Scientists would call this a vernal pool.**

It may not look like much and in the summer it's dry,
But it's very important and I'll tell you why.
In the spring when there is water from rain and snow
It creates more than a puddle, it's where the amphibians go.
Wood frogs and salamanders come lay their eggs;
Tadpoles swim here in safety 'til they grow their legs.
Without these places, these critters would disappear
And on spring nights, silence would be all you hear.

**Don't take a left on the path up ahead;
Go right, through the grove of small pines instead.**

In these woods invasive species abound.
You might not have seen them, but look around!
Barberry, buckthorn, bittersweet, and garlic weed;
These plants are bullies since they are first to flower or seed.
Invasives are plants that do not belong,
But in this environment, they will grow strong,
Carried by birds or in ships from afar
The seeds fall to earth and grow where they are.

**Continue your quest, don't stray towards the street,
The next test is a hill that's short but steep.
It's up ahead a couple hundred paces or so.
Keep an eye out for a buck or a doe.
Once going southeast now turning north bound
Don't stop hiking till you reach open ground.**

The stone wall divides and defines this space.
Called the kitchen garden, every plant has a place.
These trees like the apple and pear will bear fruit
And some of the vegetables come from a root.
Raspberries, blackberries, and strawberries galore,
Herbs and spices used for medicines, cooking, and more.
In the past kitchen gardens grew food for the year,
But Eleanor also grew cut flowers here.

**Head towards the barn, your treasure is near.
Go through the stone wall, is that a rooster I hear?
When you see where the chickens live, take a right turn.
Near the red barn door you will find an urn.**

**Inside is your treasure, you've reached our Quest's end!
Stamp the book, leave a note, you've become our friend.
When you are through, close the box up tight.
Around the greenhouse and barn, your car is in sight.
Thanks for coming to our property, we hope you can see
There is much more to explore with friends and family.**



The creation of "Eleanor's Quest for a Special Place" was a collaborative community process. The Trustees would like to thank all the volunteers and staff that helped make the quest a great learning experience and a lot of fun. Volunteers: Louise Hannington, Judy Lieberman, Erica Max, Kate Merrigan, Quinn Merrigan. Staff: Meg Connolly, Dennis Camp, Ronan Moore, Wil Bullock.