MARY-COOKE BRANCH MUNFORD (Sept. 16, 1865-
July 3, 1938)
A life-long resident of Richmond, Mary-Cooke Branch was
educated in the manner befitting a young lady from a
respectable Richmond family. Because of her unfulfilled
desire to attend college, she became passionately
interested in educational reform. She helped organize the
first woman’s club in Richmond and became its president
in 1900. The following year, she helped Lila Valentine
found the Richmond Education Association and became its
second president (1904-1911). She was the first woman
member of the Richmond School Board and was active in
the Cooperative Education Association. Beginning in
1910, Munford worked unceasingly for the establishment
of a co-ordinate college for women at the University of
Virginia. Although she was never successful, women were
admitted to the College of William and Mary (1918)
because of her efforts. Munford was the first woman
member of the board of visitors of William and Mary
(1920) and a member of the board of visitors of the
University of Virginia from 1926 to her death. To recognize
her contributions, the first women’s dormitory at the
University was named after her.

“Remember the Ladies” Project
Charlottesville NOW 1982
Photograph courtesy of the Virginia State Library

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