

13.3 acres

January 17, 1934.

Mrs. J.W. Thompson
Chairman, Conservation Committee
5th District of Women's Clubs
312 Oak Street SE
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Subject: The Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden - Its
purpose, creation, and benefits to the people

Dear Mrs. Thompson:

Because of the rapid growth of the city in all directions, and the consequent disappearance of the wild lands and their indigenous vegetation, the plan was gradually evolved by teachers and students of botany and other lovers of wild nature, of obtaining before it was too late a spot of land on which to perpetuate a wild flower garden in its primeval state. Thereupon, in 1907, the Board of Park Commissioners set apart a tract of land in Glenwood Park, comprising about 25 acres, which has for its core a tamarack swamp, surrounded by untimbered bog land, merging into meadows and wooded slopes - the meadowland threaded by a tiny, bubbling brook, falling through several levels in little musical cascades.

Here the variations of soil, light, and moisture present an ideal spot for the preservation and encouragement of all the flora native to the State of Minnesota. The many varieties of flowers and birds to be found there, and the peace that prevails throughout this quiet spot make it the mecca for flocks of visitors during the four seasons of the year. Hundreds of plants are set out each season, and the garden contains more than 1,000 varieties.

In this tract of native wildness, the botanist or flower lover may in a few hours view what would otherwise take days of search and travel to discover. Here he is given opportunity to study botanic problems at first hand. To the student of mushrooms, it is a veritable paradise. Although the plant reserve is within easy walking distance of the trolley lines and skirted by parkways and well-traveled thoroughfares, the area is so wild that it has become a bird as well as wild flower sanctuary. Here in its shade and quiet are to be found the nesting places of such rare birds as the small green heron, the American bittern, the marsh hawk, and the lovely cardinal - several specimens of the last named actually spending even the winter months in this haven for wild bird life. For the student or other interested visitor, the curator has available careful records, files, pictures, and lantern slides of the treasures to be found in the garden.

To those seeking the delight of Nature's graces, the garden with its ever-changing seasonal march of flowers is a place of unsurpassing beauty. The numerous white birches which adorn the hillsides and the majestic white oak over 800 years young are other attractive adjuncts of the reserve. Especially lovely is the pool for aquatics where two small streams converge in a sunlit marsh, which, with its charming irregular contour, is a scene of rare enchantment as glimpsed amongst the shrubs and trees.

To some of the many visitors, the garden in its atmosphere of untouched tranquillity is a retreat for the majesty of artistic contemplation and devotion - the peace of heart which is the gift of God. Here they come for relaxation - away from the beat of the city - seeking for a place in which to allow their spiritual gropings to soar.

In 1911, Miss Eloise Butler, former teacher of botany in the Minneapolis Public Schools, was made curator for the garden; and in 1929, in recognition of her efforts to create the garden, as well as her devotion to her duties as curator, the plant reserve was given the name of The Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden. Miss Butler passed away in April, 1933, and mindful of her oft-repeated wish, a group of those who knew her work and skill - many of them her former pupils - together with members and officials of the Board of Park Commissioners joined in the simple service of committing her ashes to the ground she loved. Under the sponsorship of a memorial committee, composed of her many admirers, pupils, and friends, a lasting tribute will be paid to the memory of Eloise Butler in the form of a bronze tablet to be placed on a boulder resting under a pin oak tree which was planted in the garden and dedicated to her by the Board of Park Commissioners. Part of the wording of the tablet will read as follows:

"In this sequestered glen Miss Butler gathered from all sections of our state specimens of its beautiful native plants and tended them with patient care. This priceless garden is our heritage from her and its continued preservation a living testimony of our appreciation."

Mrs. Wm. H. Crone was appointed curator of the garden upon the death of Miss Butler, and from April 1 to October 15, each year, she will be receiving the many visitors who come to the garden to satisfy the "call of the wild" that is present in a more or less degree in the hearts of all mankind.

Yours truly,

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS,

TW-M

General Superintendent.