

# THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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## CONSISTENCY, THOU ART A JEWEL

Writing about natural phenomena presents certain problems that, while they are not unique to this area, are particularly true of it. Virtually nothing that happens in a natural area does so for the first time. Of those things occurring in the Sanctuary, for example, nine-tenths are continuations of things from the past and the one-tenth which seems to be some repetition from my past reports, you can blame it on nature. I must also admit a prejudice on my part for those things that have been recurring in season for those years that I have been at the Sanctuary: the flowers that I know will come up (almost in order) and bloom each year; the birds that pass through or return to nest every year.--If one of them disappears for even a short time, I am afraid that I have lost a valued acquaintance, and I wonder if the slow evolution of the area has eliminated it from my small universe as some have been eliminated in the past.

One physical phenomenon, which I have written of in the past and which seems to have been eliminated now, is the spring which ran from the time Minneapolis was first found until now--I'm afraid that we have finally managed to bring an end to this faithful servant as we have to so many before it. I have checked the water level and it is still well below the present surface of the ground (which is eighteen inches below the original contour of the earth). It may run again for short periods of time but I'm afraid it should no longer be called a spring anymore than we should call a puddle a lake.

One old friend that gave me a fright last year is back, however, and seems to be ready to stay--our Great Horned Owl. Last year I saw him a few times in late fall and then not one more time all winter. I was afraid the greatly expanded winter use of the area might have discouraged this shy bird and that he had secured more remote lodgings, but he is back as usual this winter.

Another bird which I have seen with some regularity this fall and winter is the Pileated Woodpecker. This spectacular bird used to be one of our valued residents but for close to ten years now none have made their home here in the Sanctuary. We have seen them every year but only at widely spaced intervals. We have continued to hope that one (and preferably two) will make our Sanctuary their sanctuary. The bird which I have seen this fall has remained in the area much longer than any have for the last few years so I remain an optimist.

Continued next page.

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I should also report that the Saw-whet Owl, a bird that is not at all common in this area, showed himself to me at the spring about a week before Christmas. I have seen the species in the Sanctuary once before about nineteen months ago when one was seen in a white pine by the front gate at about five-thirty one afternoon and it was at the same place at the same time again the next day. I went back time and again to see if this were his schedule but I did not see one again until this December.

Since most of this report seems to be about birds, I think I will be consistent and finish by saying that except for the Juncos, none of the winter birds (Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Redpoll, Crossbill, etc.) have appeared in the Sanctuary with any consistency so far this winter.

Kenneth E. Avery,  
Curator

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ECOLOGY LESSON  
BY BETTY BRIDGMAN

One against the winter  
I walked a windy ridge  
far from city-center  
and outer suburb-edge.

Wrapped against the winter,  
layered deep from air,  
I felt the chill tormentor  
though tree and vine stood bare.

Warned against the winter  
I called it hostile, hard,  
pitiless enchanter--  
and set a stronger guard.

Then some spoke up for winter:  
squirrel, pheasant, crow,  
corn- and acorn-hunter,  
partridge in hollowed snow.

World opened I might enter  
warm-blooded, strong of stride.  
I came back one with winter,  
enfranchised and allied.

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A BIT OF HISTORY

For the benefit of many of our members who are not acquainted with the history of the Garden, we will from time to time bring you some of the story. A history was written by Mrs. Martha Crone in 1951 and revised by Kenneth E. Avery in 1972.

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The idea of the wildflower garden arose from the difficulties experienced by the teachers of botany in familiarizing their students with living plants growing in their natural surroundings. Long journeys had been made with their classes, only to find but few scattered plants, which perhaps by the next season were exterminated by the needs of a rapidly growing city. Thus was gradually evolved the plan of obtaining before it was too late a plot of land that could support the greater share of our Minnesota flora.

An ideal spot, fulfilling all requirements, was found in Theodore Wirth Park (then known as Glenwood Park), the largest park area in Minneapolis, and one interspersed with hills and valley and possessed of great natural beauty. To the original tract comprising about three acres, additional area was added from time to time, until at present the garden totals 20 acres fenced in and receiving intense maintenance and protected by the surrounding sanctuary of about forty acres.

Early in April 1907, the wildflower garden was installed without any ceremony, except the taking of a census of the indigenous flora and the introducing at once of a number of varieties.

Until 1911, the garden was cared for by the botany teachers as a labor of love, without compensation. In 1911 Miss Eloise Butler, upon retiring as a botany teacher in our public schools, was made full-time curator, a position she occupied until April 10, 1933, at which time she passed away in her beloved garden.

On June 19, 1929, the wildflower reserve was named "The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden" in recognition of Miss Butler's efforts to create the garden and of her service as its first curator.

Upon Miss Butler's passing in 1933 at the age of 82 years, Mrs. Martha Crone became curator. She was quite familiar with the garden and its service to the community, having assisted Miss Butler in her duties some fifteen years or more. She remained at this position until she retired in 1959 and was succeeded by Kenneth E. Avery.

On May 5, 1933, members of the Board of Park Commissioners, together with approximately a hundred friends and former students of Miss Butler, gathered at the Wildflower Garden to pay tribute to the memory of its founder. The Honorable Alfred F. Pillsbury, President of the Board at that time, was the principal speaker.

(To be continued)

Dear Friends:

Some years ago and over the span of several, I had the privilege of coming to know three members of a remarkable family. The father, Clell Gannon, I met only once in the corridors of "Old Main" at Macalester College. But before his death in 1962, and through my contacts with his wife and sons, I had come to have some inkling of what a rare spirit he was.

In 1965, a collection of Clell Gannon's verses, illustrated by his own hand, was published by family and friends as a memorial. Entitled, EVER AND ALWAYS I SHALL LOVE THE LAND these verses speak to all of us who love some bit of land--in our case as a group - The Eloise Butler Sanctuary.

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WINTER

I love winter so --  
Crackling fires to leap and glow,  
Hungry flames to feed;  
Call of friends I long have known,  
Or, whenever left along,  
Books to read.

I love winter so --  
Prairies buried under snow,  
Crispness in the air,  
Colors of the sunset, and  
Stars at night above a land  
Bowed in prayer.

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HOAR FROST

The world is filled with beauty; every tree  
And shrub and fence is laced in filligree  
Of crystal white, and distant shapes become  
Lost in the heze, like full-rigged ships that run  
Before the sea-wind; yet the world is still  
As stars are still above a wind-swept hill.  
My soul in awe, looks up, no more denied  
Its search for beauty - and is satisfied.

Both of these poems may be found in EVER AND ALWAYS I SHALL LOVE THE LAND, Vantage Press, N. Y. by CLELL G. GANNON.

Robert J. Dasset, Jr.  
President  
Friends of the Wildflower  
Garden and Bird Sanctuary