



Eloise Butler and the Wild Flower Garden

"Being a great lover of nature, an especially of wild flowers and plant life, it was her desire that one part of our park system should be left in its natural condition and devoted to the wild flowers and birds of our state. Under her loving care for many years, this garden has become famous and given pleasure to many." Alfred Pillsbury, President, Board of Park Commissioners, May 5, 1933.

Section I

From Maine to Minnesota

She was born in rural Maine, near Appleton, on August 3, 1851. An interest in botany may have been aroused at an early age by her family's herbal remedies, made at home from their knowledge of local plants. After high school graduation in 1870, she took a position as a teacher in West Appleton, Maine, near the Butler farm, but soon she was enrolled in a Teachers College, the Eastern State Normal School in Castine, Maine, from which she graduated in 1873. After graduation she moved with her parents to Indiana where other relatives were already established. That resettlement was not to last long for her, for in September 1874 we find her in Minneapolis. Here she began a long teaching career, principally in Botany, that was to last until retirement in 1911.

During those years in Minneapolis, she pursued her interest in botany by attending classes at the University of Minnesota, collecting, editing and working for certain professors, botany trips to Jamaica, Woods Hole, and the University's new research station on Vancouver Island. She was a member of the Gray Memorial Botanical Chapter, (Division D) of the Agassiz Association and frequently submitted articles for circulation to chapter members. Some of those articles are referenced later in this text.



Eloise as a young woman, ca 1890s. Blanche's Studio, Minneapolis.

In 1911 Eloise wrote about her early years in an unpublished article entitled *An Autobiographical Sketch*. The text is on the website.

Origins of the Wild Flower Garden

As early as the 1880s observant people realized that the development of the city of Minneapolis was incompatible with the retention of native habitat. West of the city in the Saratoga Springs Addition, residents successfully petitioned the new Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners (the "Park

Board") to obtain a segment of that area to preserve for future generations. Named "Glenwood Park" and with adjustments in size over the years, this became what is now Theodore Wirth Park. A small section of this new park was particularly attractive to Eloise and her teacher colleagues. They were having great difficulties familiarizing their students with plants growing in their natural surroundings, as development was wiping out these areas.

A 1907 newspaper reporter wrote:

"There was a time, and not so long ago, that some Minneapolis families could pluck these rare wild flowers almost from their back doors, but when too many people took a hand in the culling and the plucking became a massacre, the plants grew discouraged and disappeared." (copy follows text)

This spot in Glenwood Park would be accessible and attractive for that purpose.

As the Park Board had done little with the entire park due to lack of funds, this small group decided that something must be done to protect the unique native flora of the small area they had selected. That area included a swampy bog, fern glens, hillsides, upland hills and trees and nearby, the Great Medicine Spring. In April 1907, after a petition from a group of teachers and other citizens (copy of documents follows text) the Park Board was moved to set aside a portion of this area as a *Natural Botanical Garden* but soon it was known as the *Wild Botanic Garden* (as the partially visible sign in the photo on the next page states). The initial area designated was only about 3 acres. Eloise Butler became the most prominent guardian and promoter of this natural space or as an April 3, 1910 *Tribune* article put it "practically the mother of the garden," but it was not a paying position nor were the 3 acres considered a permanent set-aside as there was no permanent care arrangements. After 1909, she spent each growing season in the Garden, living with friend Jessie Polley in south Minneapolis from 1912 to 1915 and then she took up lodging just north of the Garden at the J. W. Babcock house at 227 Xerxes Avenue near the Garden where she could walk to her domain. Mr. Babcock owned a photo engraving business at 416 4th Ave. So., Minneapolis. Eloise would room here until her death in 1933. In the fall, the garden closed on September 30th and each year after 1910 Eloise, in mid-October, returned East to 20 Murray Hill Road in Malden, Massachusetts, to stay with her sister Cora. Prior to 1910, while still teaching, she had returned to Malden in July and August each year.



Eloise Butler (center) with a Mr. Simmons and unidentified woman studying a natural tree graft near Glenwood Springs, ca. 1900.

It was originally believed that the Garden, with its naturalist approach, was the first of its kind in North America, but soon after its creation there was an account in the *Boston Transcript* of a similar garden near St. John, New Brunswick, in Canada that was established in 1899 by botanist Dr. George Upam Hay. It was a two acre "wild garden" on his summer property at Ingleside near Westfield, where he maintained more than 500 species of flowering plants. These were for the benefit of students and those who study plants. It was not a public garden, but the concept was the same. Martha Hellander's research indicates that the Wild Botanic Garden in Glenwood Park was certainly the first natural wild flower garden in the United States and as a public garden, probably the first in North America. Eloise and Cora visited Dr. Hay in 1908.

A document in the archives of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB), the successor to the Board of Park Commissioners, titled "Our Native Plant Reserve" by Mrs. John Jepson, gives more detail on the origins of the Garden. (copy follows) Most of the detail in this short history appears to be taken from the notes of Eloise Butler that are preserved in her written documents "Annals of the Wild Life Reserve." Details about the "annals" below. This document itself was subsequently published in June 1933 following her death, in *The Minnesota Clubwoman*.

Eloise - the First Curator



Above: ca. 1917. Eloise (on the left) with Clara Leavitt (former fellow teacher), just outside the curator's office. Eloise had the building constructed to her design in 1915. Photo courtesy Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis Collection M2632H

After her retirement from teaching in the spring of 1911, a pivotable moment occurred. On retirement Eloise was going to return to the East Coast unless some permanent arrangement could be made for her to care for the Garden.(1) Were it not for what followed next, this history would not have happened.

On April 5, 1911 the Garden Club of Minneapolis, meeting in the mayor's reception room at city hall, passed a resolution recommending to the Park Board that Eloise Butler be appointed curator of the Garden and that the space be set aside as a permanent wild flower garden.(2) They were joined on June 5th by the Woman's Club in presenting a petition to the Park Board signed by several hundred persons. They stated that Miss Butler was prepared to begin introducing a number of plants to the space to make it representative of the plants native to the state. The Board did not have any opposition to the proposal but required it to go through the committee process.(1)

On June 9 both groups appeared before the Finance and Improvement Committee.(3) The committee approved as did the full Park Board when it met, but her salary was to be paid by the Woman's Club until 1912 with the understanding that the position was to be permanent. In February of 1912, the Park Board took over the payment of \$60 per month for seven months each year as previously agreed and thus Eloise Butler remained in Minneapolis to make history.(4) 1911 would

prove to be a busy year for Eloise.

Promotion: As part of her crusade to raise public awareness of the Garden, Eloise began to write more extensively for publication. As early as 1909 we know she gave talks about the Garden to groups such as one at the Minneapolis Central Library on March 27, 1909. (5) In 1910 she contributed an article to *School Science and Mathematics*, Vol. 10, 1910, in which she advocated for "The Wild Botanic Garden". Between 1910 and 1918 she put on an exhibit about the Wild Botanic Garden in the horticulture building at the State Fair. It was a large exhibit consisting of 54 species of trees, 84 shrubs and 400 herbs. Over 100 photographs taken by Mary Meeker, many colored by hand, were on display including several large photos of Garden scenes. The exhibit of correctly named wild flowers won the first premium. The photos then went to the public library for display. (6)

You can read her 1911 weekly articles in our Education Archive. In addition, they are also found in Martha Hellander's book *The Wild Gardener*, along with a large number of her other writings. Many of these are also found in the our Site Archive.

In August of 1913 Minneapolis hosted a convention for the American Florists and Ornamental Horticulturists. Eloise supplied a display of native wild flowers - whichever ones nature deemed to provide at meeting time. Her January 1914 letter to Parks Superintendent Theodore Wirth - summarizes why the Garden is so important and so enjoyable. (text on website).

From 1911 onwards Eloise wrote occasional articles for the newspapers about what plants to see in the Garden. She would note in her text that tours could be had by contacting her during the season. Eloise preferred to not have people come to the Garden and wander around, the paths were narrow, precious plants would be stepped on, water holes could be stepped into so she had a number of signs erected of the "do not" variety. More frequently newspaper staff reporters would write about the Garden and what could be found there. Fletcher Wilson wrote in 1926 that "the native plant reserve is under the scrupulous care of a little old woman, Miss Eloise Butler. Except for fences and signs it looks like a particularly beautiful spot in the wilds that has remained undisfigured by the encroachment of civilization." (7)

The Plant Collection and Protecting it.

Eloise Butler's governing idea for design of the Garden was as follows:

"My wild garden is run on the political principle of laissez-faire. A paramount idea is to perpetuate in the garden it's primeval wildness. All artificial appearances are avoided and plants are to be allowed to grow as they will and without any check except what may be necessary for healthful living."

This was soon modified. Martha Crone wrote in her brief 1951 *"History of the Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden"*: "The original plan of allowing plants to grow at will after they were once established, and without restraint, soon proved disastrous. Several easy-growing varieties spread very rapidly and soon shaded out some of the more desirable plants. An attempt was made to check them, but with limited help, this proved to be a problem."

In those early years the Garden was relatively secluded. Prof. D. Lange, wrote about the extermination of wild flowers in the cities, in the *Minnesota Horticulturist* of Jan. 1912. He said:

"The writer knows of one such glen where there are now growing on the space of about three or four acres about twenty-five different kinds of trees, shrubs and vines, half a dozen kinds of ferns and about half of all the species of the wild flowers found in the country. A little stream and a bit of Indian history make the place still more interesting. What a boon this little place would be to the city twenty-five or fifty years hence!"

What Eloise was thinking of if the space could be made permanent was explained in a long article in the newspaper about the Wild Flower Garden.(8) This may have been a bit of preemptive lobbying for what she wanted. The article highlighted the natural features of the place, and stated that there were already 452 species of herbaceous plants and 51 shrubs in the Garden. The way the area was maintained was explained in the same manner as Eloise wrote about later in September (see Autumn section). She was developing the following ideas:

1. There was no reason to limit the plant selection to Minnesota plants. Everything that could grow here should be tried. While this was not the intent of the original petition creating the

space, she considered instead that it should be like an arboretum rivaling if not exceeding those famous ones in the east.

2. There should be a building nearby where visitors could rest, find reference books and photographs. In 1915 she would have her own building built right within the Garden.

3. A herbarium should be established. Years later Martha Crone started one.

4. The space needs to be enlarged. It was already seven acres at this time due to requests from the teachers to add more to their care. Eloise was ready to ask for more acreage to be appropriated and that was done when the space for the Garden was made permanent - eventually reaching 25 acres in the 1920s.

The enhancement of the garden with the planting of additional native species then gathered full steam in the hands of Eloise Butler after 1910. Eloise rescued plants from development areas and sourced them from nearby sources such as the Quaking Bog and local street sides. The Quaking Bog is also located in Theodore Wirth Park, on the west side of Theodore Wirth Parkway, opposite the Garden. It is a hidden five acre acidic bog with mature tamaracks shading an under story of sphagnum moss much like the Garden bog was when the Garden was set aside as a preserve.



Here in 1911 we see Eloise, in full dress and hat, using a downed tree to navigate on a visit to the quaking bog, which is close to the Garden. Eloise would source plants there, as would Martha Crone in later years. Photo courtesy Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis Collection, M2632J

It became her practice to import plants not growing in the area that she thought would grow there, even if they were not native to Minnesota. She sourced many plants from nurseries in other states, particularly nurseries she was familiar with from her families home states of Maine and Massachusetts. With her plan to include all plants native to the area plus those not native that might grow here, Eloise set about the task with gusto. The years 1912 to 1916 in particular were devoted to the expansion of the

plant collection. In those years alone 262 new species were introduced plus the numerous additions and replantings of species already present. The introduction of species never abated. Even in 1932, her last full year as Curator, 11 new species were introduced. Work slowed in her later years, but never was the year without new introductions and replantings.

Her sources of plants included the east coast nurseries she was so familiar with from her winter visits to Malden; nurseries in Minnesota, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Colorado; the Park Board nursery located adjacent to the Garden near Glenwood Lake, and her personal plant gathering forays. Returning from one such foray to Bloomington with Mary Meeker in May 1911, their runaway buggy overturned and Eloise spent a few weeks in a hospital with an arm fracture and hip injury. (9)



In the photo above we see Eloise, well dressed as usual, wearing her peace officers star, ca. 1921 by which time the Garden was well established. Photo courtesy Minneapolis Public Library.

It was time for a fence: Eloise Butler was the 'Park Policeman' of the Wild Flower Garden. To give herself some air of authority she frequently wore a tin peace officers star. In 1912 Eloise included within the text of her annual report to the Board of Park Commissioners the following:

"Another cause for congratulations is the generous extension of the Garden limits by the addition of an adjacent hillside and meadow. The labor of the curator would be materially lightened if the garden were fenced and more warning signs posted. Her work consisted of conducting visitors, exterminating pestilent weeds and protecting the property from marauders. For " 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true" that a small proportion of our citizens have not yet learned to name the birds without a gun, or to love the wood rose and leave it on its stalk." [Nov. 8, 1912].

By 1913 the area assigned to the Wild Botanic Garden was about 10 to 12 acres. A story about the Garden that appeared in the May 3, 1913 issue of *The Bellman* stated that the Garden have been enlarged 3 to 4 times the original size. Shortly after that, a meadow north of the Garden was added bringing the total area to 20 to 25 acres. [Eloise cites both numbers in later correspondence.] The article in *The Bellman* is significant in that it is the earliest detailed description of the Garden and it included 5 photographs that are the earliest views we have of the pool in the Garden, the fernery and the large elms that Eloise had named the "inner guard" and the "lone sentinel."

In order to really secure the Garden from large animals, vandals and people that just wandered in from all directions without regard to where they stepped, it had to be securely fenced and equipped with gates that could be locked. Eloise Butler even resorted to the newspaper on three occasions to state her case for a fence, but the Garden was not protected by any substantial fence until 1924, and then only partially. Although the initial action by the Park Board in creating the Garden called for a fence, there is no positive record that one was ever put up, but if there were a fence, it would have been around the original 3 acres only as the 1907 action stated A fence was a necessary step to keep out interlopers, "spooners", and destructive animals, such as the neighboring hog.

Eloise had written in a September 18, 1921 article in the *Minneapolis Tribune*:

"It's not the wild, voracious mosquito-
It's not the snooping vagabond dog -
Nor is it the pussy-footing feline -

But it's the demon surreptitious spooner that's brought the need for an encircling barbed wire fence around the wild flower garden in Glenwood Park to save plants of incalculable scientific value from destruction. A stray cat will pitter patter into the garden and leave a narrow trail. A dog seeking food perhaps in the shape of a ribbit (sic) will snoop through and leave a wider wallow - But the spooning couple - "For destructive properties the army of tussock worms is a piker when compared with the Spooner."

In 1924 her call for a fence appeared again in the newspapers but with no action by the Board of Park Commissioners Eloise had the fence put up herself. Details on that went on are available in a separate detailed article on Garden fencing.

Today the neighboring hog has moved well away but the white tail deer have moved in and it requires consistent fence maintenance to keep them out. Natural calamities affect the garden as well. In the photo at right we see Eloise near a stand of birches, many of which were lost in a destructive tornado of June 2nd 1925. In more recent years the loss of many elms to Dutch Elm Disease and oaks to oak wilt has left some areas without the tree canopy that sustained the habitat beneath, resulting in changes in the Garden's appearance and habitat.

How to handle the "errant" visitors

A Minneapolis newspaper article published in 1917 observed this about Miss Butler:

"If any one comes upon her suddenly, at a quick turn in the path, her first thought is to exclaim: 'do not step off the path, be sure to come this way along this foot path so as not to step on those geraniums,' or it might be gentians if it is fall, or bloodroot if it is spring. These flowers are her family."



Eloise Butler, ca 1920 at birch tree grove. Photo courtesy Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis Collection, M2632B

A particular person who was confronted by Miss Butler was *Minneapolis Star* writer Abe Altowitz who wrote in 1964 about his earlier encounters with her.(10) On his first visit on assignment she led him around naming various plants. On his second assignment she was not present so he nosed around. A year later on a third assignment he writes:

I found Miss Butler very much in evidence. Her greeting was a peremptory challenge: "Young man!" The mien and vocal quality were those of a teacher addressing an erring pupil.

"Yes?" I said.

"Last time you were here you strayed from the pathways. You walked where you never should have without being accompanied by the curator!"

She knew of my transgression because of the names I had used in that second story. I believe she knew every blade of grass in that entire garden acreage. There was nothing I could do but plead guilty. Whereupon she gave me a grand smile and told me I could consider myself forgiven, on condition I never transgressed again.

Notes to Section I:

- (1) "Botanical Garden Sought," *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 6, 1911
- (2) "Wild Flower Garden Urged," *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 6, 1911.
- (3) "Wild Flower Garden Proposed," *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 10, 1911
- (4) "Miss Butler's Services Kept," *Minneapolis Tribune* February 6, 1912.

- (5) The lecture was announced in the *Star Tribune* on March 27, 1909 and was preceded by an announcement about upcoming Library programs published on December 27, 1908 in the *Star Tribune*.
- (6) Article in *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 9, 1910 and *Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners*.
- (7) *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 31, 1926.
- (8) "Wild Flower Garden City Park's Feature" *Minneapolis Tribune* March 26, 1911
- (9) *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 25, 1911.
- (10) *Minneapolis Star*, July 23, 1964.

Section II

Martha Crone



Martha and William Crone with daughter Janet, in the early 1920s

About 1918 a young woman named Martha Crone entered the scene. Her connection to the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and later to her assistance in founding The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden are linked back to her innate loving response to wild things and their place in the environment. Like most people who devote a passionate lifetime to the pursuit of a certain subject or hobby, she was largely self-taught about wild plants and birds. Her first contact with the Garden was as an inquisitive and persistent visitor, extracting information from Eloise Butler and in turn bringing in specimens and providing assistance to Eloise.

Martha and her husband William, a dentist, lived at 3723 Lyndale Ave. North in Minneapolis. Together, they were avid explorers of plant habitat and especially mushroom habitat. Martha was secretary of the Minnesota Mycological Society from 1926 till 1943 and a member until her death. Considering the need for large numbers of plants for the developing Wild Flower Garden, the Crones were able to provide good assistance to Eloise Butler in finding sources for wild plants and for rescuing plants from areas where the native habitat was soon to be overrun with development. Winter correspondence between Eloise and the Crones started in the early 1920s and continued to the end.

Naming the Garden

In Eloise Butler's early years at the Garden, she referred to it as "The Wild Botanic Garden" for two reasons. First, she maintained it in a "wild" state, such as the plants might appear in the natural environment. Second, she wanted to establish which plants would grow well in the climate of the Garden, even if they were not native - hence - it was a 'botanic' Garden. This second reason was slightly contrary to the original stated purpose *"to display in miniature the rich and varied flora of Minnesota."* (1) The first premise has been maintained to the present day. The second was abandoned at the end of Martha Crone's time when it was established that only plants native to the area should be present.

A second name appeared fairly early in Eloise Butler's time - "native plant reserve." Martha Crone and later Ken Avery used the term 'reserve' when speaking of the Garden. In an essay Eloise wrote in 1926 [The Wild Botanic Garden - Early History] she explained why the second name was chosen: *"It was*

soon found that the term "Wild Botanic Garden" was misleading to the popular fancy, so the name was changed to "Native Plant Reserve," even though she was bringing in many non-native species. Nevertheless, newspaper accounts of the Garden and its Curator from 1913 to 1924 still called it the Botanical Garden of (or sometimes "in") Glenwood Park. Kirkwood's 1913 article in *The Bellman* is titled "A Wild Botanic Garden."

On June 19, 1929, the Park Board took official action and renamed the Garden the "Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden," to which was added "and Bird Sanctuary" in 1968 when the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden requested making the name "Eloise Butler Wild Flower and Bird Sanctuary" making the word "sanctuary" apply to both flowers and birds. Note that the Park Commissioners in 1929 named it "Wild Flower." Most documents found in later years use the name with "wild flower" as two words until 1970 when "wildflower" came into use. That came about as the result of the 1968 Friends' request. (2) The name addition was approved in early 1969 but in the transition when the name was officially changed to add that phrase "wildflower" was sometimes substituted for "wild flower." In 1986 the MPRB officially made it the current 'Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary' but with the two words 'Wild Flower' condensed to 'Wildflower' and the word 'garden' reinserted.

The 1931 Birthday Party

Above. A gathering of friends on her 80th birthday, August 3, 1931. From l to r: Miss Alma Johnson, frequenter of the Garden; Mrs John Hadden, a former pupil; Mrs. J. W. Babcock, in whose house Eloise lodged while in Minneapolis; Miss Clara K. Leavitt, fellow teacher; Eloise; Dr. W. H. Crone (behind Eloise); Miss Elizabeth Foss, botany teacher at North H.S.; Miss Mary K. Meeker, former pupil; Mrs. O. F. (Edith) Schussler, former pupil; Mrs Crone (Martha); Mrs. Louisa Healy, former pupil. Photo: Minnesota Historical Society, Martha Crone Papers.



Below: Following the outdoor photo above, the gathering moved indoors to the J. W. Babcock House at 227 Xerxes Ave. where Eloise boarded during the time that the Garden was open. The seating arrangement here is: Left side front to back - Mrs. Louisa Healy, Eloise Butler, Mrs. Schussler, Miss Leavitt and Miss Foss. Right side, front to back - Martha Crone, Mrs. Hadden, Miss Johnson, Mrs. Babcock and Dr. Wm. Crone. Photo: Minnesota Historical Society, Martha Crone Papers.



Eloise sent copies of the birthday photos to the Crones August 14 with this note:

"Dear "Cronies". -- I didn't know when you would be able to come into the garden so I am mailing you the snap shots of the joint birthday party. I thought you would (sic) to see how very English Dr. Crone and Mrs. Babcock look with their monocles as they sit at the table. I think that the out-door print is very good, except that the doctor is somewhat obscured by the dark tree trunk."

The Last Major Project

In the photo on the next page, we see Eloise crossing the rustic bridge at the north end of the Mallard Pool just after its construction in 1932. She has physically weakened due in part to neuritis and from burns received in 1929 when a heating pad caught fire while she was sleeping. Her doctors advised her that the burns would always be covered with scar tissue, not true skin, so they would always be somewhat uncomfortable. Perhaps the serious hip injury sustained in 1911 never completely healed either. The development of the Mallard Pool was long on gestation and short on actual building. She had dreamed for many years of creating an aquatic pool for special plants and the site was a meadow north of where the current Garden boundary ends, where water from the wetland drained out into an open meadow. In her letter to The Gray Memorial Botanical Chapter, (Division D) of the Agassiz Association for inclusion in the members circular, she wrote in 1932 (3): "Ever since the Native Plant

Preserve was started I have wished to have a pool constructed where two small streams converge in an open meadow, the only pool in the Preserve being too shady for aquatics. The hard times gave this joy to me, for a jobless expert did the work for a sum that could be afforded by the Park Commissioners." The pool was quickly constructed by the unemployed man and another (Lloyd Teeuwen) was employed to build a rustic bridge of tamarack poles and planks to span the narrow lower end of the pool. When a mallard was soon seen in it, it became the "mallard pool." Eloise had planned extensive plantings around the pool and these were completed by Martha Crone in 1933. That pool is no longer within the boundary of the Garden as the area was abandoned by 1944, but the Garden does contain a pool, in the same place where Eloise originally created one in the Garden's first years, which has acquired the same name.

More details about the wetland and the pools will be found in our article "The Wetland at Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden" and in particular in a detailed article about the original Mallard Pool, both found on the website and in printable form.



Eloise Butler on the bridge at the Mallard Pool. Photo Minnesota Historical Society

The End of a Long Career and the myth of her death in the Garden.

1932 was Eloise's last full year as curator. She wanted to retire but had been unable to find a replacement.(4) While at Malden she wrote what would be her last letter to the Crones on Jan. 11, 1933 in which she thanked them for the Christmas gifts they had sent and she attached copies of correspondence from Pearl Heath Frazer which she wanted the Crones to keep for her as she (Eloise) may want to show it to Mr. Wirth upon her return to Minneapolis. The correspondence was about Mrs. Frazer taking on the job of Curator so that Eloise could retire. Eloise had sent a letter, at the request of Parks Superintendent Theodore Wirth, to Mrs. Frazer on September 29, 1932, explaining the job. Mrs. Frazer had replied to Eloise that that was not the sort of job she was interested in. (copy of Eloise's letter to the Crones follows text).

In that letter to Mrs. Frazer she lays out her plan:

"My aims are only to secure the preservation and perpetuity of The Preserve, as well as its helpfulness to students of Botany and lovers of wild life. When these aims are secured, I am ready to fade out of the picture and will promise that not even my ghost will return to haunt the premises."

Eloise returned from Malden to her Minneapolis lodgings at the Babcock house (located just east of the Garden at 227 Xerxes Ave. North) on April 3 1933. Mr. Babcock notified her Garden helper Lloyd Teeuwen, that she had returned but Eloise wanted to rest a few days after the long train ride from the east coast as she was "not used to walking a lot yet." Several days later Lloyd came to the house and carted down to the Garden office the assortment of books from her library at Babcocks that she wanted in the Garden and also the Garden's tools which were kept in the Babcock carriage house over the winter. She had about 300 books at the Babcock house and about half went down to the office. Then Lloyd and Eloise took the first walk of the year through the Garden where



Eloise Butler ca. 1930, photo courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.

Eloise inspected all the areas to see what was what. She walked very slowly so Lloyd kept behind her to not outrun her. Eloise remarked how enthusiastic she was to be back outside where she could do something because in Boston nobody wanted to do anything. (6)

On the wet morning of April 10, 1933, following an overnight rain, she attempted to reach the Garden Babcock's. She apparently suffered a heart attack and made her way back to Babcocks. A doctor was summoned but nothing could be done and she soon passed away on the couch in the entryway of the house at 2:15 PM. Her funeral was on April 12th, 12:45 PM at the Lakewood Chapel. On May 5th, her ashes were scattered in the Garden as had been her wish.

The myth that she died in the Garden: It is frequently misstated that she died in the Garden and some boys found her there. There is the account of one present at her death at the Babcock House where the doctor was attending her and there is also the coroner's report. It is clear from everything that she died at the Babcock's house. We shall try to clear up how she got there.

Perhaps this romantic myth has some origin in Theodore Wirth's April 19th letter announcing her death when he stated "(she)...had suddenly died in the park while on her way to her domain." Or perhaps it is a misreading of the reports of her death in the newspapers. For example, the *Minneapolis Journal* reported on April 11th (speaking of woodland flowers) that "Miss Butler died yesterday in their midst." The article further says that "she was found leaning against a stump near a little by-path." That last part is believed to be true, (as Wirth's statement that she died "in the park on her way to her domain" may be partially true) as it is known from witnesses on April 10 that she attempted to go to the Garden. Some newspaper accounts and Martha Hellander's research indicate she was found on her way to the Garden and was helped back. But she did arrive back at Babcock's house. The newspaper incorrectly identifies the Babcock house as J. W. Butler's house.(5)



Eloise Butler in her last years.

Testimony of Lloyd Teeuwen: The only eye-witness account of her death by anyone still living was given by Lloyd Teeuwen on May 4, 1988 in a recorded interview with Martha Hellander while Hellander was researching material for her book *The Wild Gardener*. Teeuwen was a Garden helper for Eloise, beginning when he was 13 or 14 years old. It was he who build the rustic bridge on the Mallard Pool. It was six years later when on April 10th, on a rainy day, he came to the house to help Eloise down to the Garden, as he always did when the paths were wet and muddy. He asked "do you want to go down there and try it." "No" she replied, "I don't think I want to go down there now, maybe a little later if it stops, maybe we can go down there." He believes she may have attempted to negotiate the path herself but states "They didn't find her anywhere, she got to the house herself." Mrs. Babcock had told Teeuwen that Eloise had gone out but was only gone a short time when she returned. "She'd come in and Mrs. Babcock says 'She said she didn't feel too good.' " (6a)

When Lloyd returned to Babcocks from the Garden Eloise was there and his report of her death is as follows: "When I came in there, the doctor was there, and she was laying in the Living Room; they had what they call a little entrance way, like a vestibule, and it had a black leather couch in it and she was laying on it. [Hellander - In the Babcocks house?] Yes, you came in the front door - the doctor had come in it - I don't

remember his name at all any more - and he was checking her out like that [Hellander - was she still living?] She was still living, but she was, ten minutes later, he says (the doctor), 'she's gone.'" (6a)

Second: The Minneapolis Coroner's Report: This report states that she left the house at 1 PM and was found around 2:10 PM in the garden near the house. "She was unconscious and carried on a cot into the house by Martin Olson and Walter Ludvig - she breathed deeply - did not regain consciousness and died in one hour later." The doctor present was Dr. Arthur Mann.(6b)

The Coroner's report supports the statement that she was found in the park and brought back. It states she did not regain consciousness. As the doctor was not present for the entire episode it is not possible to negate Teeuwen's testimony about what Mrs. Babcock said. How those two men (or boys?) happened to be around is unknown, nor how they obtained a cot - perhaps from Babcock's?

The conclusion about her death is that she did go down to or toward the Garden and that she died at the Babcock house as both Teeuwen and coroner's report testify. The words that Teeuwen used in speaking to Martha Hellander were from his memory of an event 55 years prior, so some parts of it may not be 100% accurate recall.

Theodore Wirth Announcement.

"For a full quarter of a century, her useful life has been spent in a labor of love..." Theodore Wirth, Superintendent.

It is not unusual that the accomplishments of an individual are more clearly understood after that person has passed on. While certain people are "in-the-know" about what an individual is



At the 1917 Stone birdbath in the Garden on Wednesday May 3, 1933 are Park Board members (l to r) Alfred F. Pillsbury, president; Lucien C. Miller and Francis A. Gross.



At the entrance to the Garden on May 3 is Superintendent of operations and maintenance of the park board Christian A. Bossen.

accomplishing, it is only after death, when congratulations are too late that the rest of world becomes aware of the qualities of the individual whose life is now past. Theodore Wirth, Superintendent of the Minneapolis Park System, was probably the first to craft a brief but informative statement about the role Eloise Butler had taken on and played with such accomplishment. His letter of April 19, 1933, addressed to the Board of Park Commissioners informed them of her death and of her

accomplishments. The letter announced the date for the remembrance ceremony to be held May 5th and also got the ball rolling on the commemorative tablet that was placed one year later.

The commemorative tablet that Wirth mentioned was also reported in the newspaper in an article announcing the upcoming ceremony. The *Minneapolis Tribune* stated on May 4 "Near the little cabin that served as her office the commissioners will stand about and scatter her ashes among the flowers she loved. They will plant a young oak in her memory, knowing that before long her former botany students will have subscribed enough for a bronze tablet to commemorate the occasion and to perpetuate her name."

The article reported that the commissioners visited the Garden on Wednesday afternoon (May 3) "They inspected the growths, the cabin, paused at the bird bath of stone, noted the bird houses, and agreed that the wildflower garden was a place of serene and peaceful beauty."

Remembrance Ceremony

On April 28, 1933, Superintendent Theodore Wirth wrote to the Board of Park Commissioners that the Remembrance Ceremony for Eloise Butler was to be held at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon on May 5, 1933 in the Wildflower Garden. He stated that he had secured good specimen of a Pin Oak to be planted and made the suggestion that

That every member of the Board participate in the planting of the tree, and that the President of the Board perform the rite of spreading the ashes.

About 100 people attended the ceremony. Mr. A. F. Pillsbury, President of the Board of Park Commissioners, officiated. The Pin Oak tree acquired by Superintendent Wirth was planted in her honor and her ashes were scattered within the area, as had been her wish. (The Pin Oak is difficult to establish there and was subsequently replaced with another.) A the full report of the Ceremony is on the website and in printable form.

Poem for Eloise

Dust we are, and now to dust again
But gently blown throughout the glen
Which was your alter and your shrine
Wherein you gave a life of tenderness all thine
In every nook your footsteps trod
The plants you loved belong to God
And in his keeping they are ours
The trees, the shrubs, the blessed flowers
And still your soul, on guard, will stand
Against the touch of vandal hand.

From Martha Crone's Notebook, Martha Crone Collection, Minnesota Historical Society

Memorial Tablet Dedication

At the end of the path from the front gate of the garden to the Martha Crone Shelter will be found a large granite boulder bearing a dedication to Eloise Butler. The boulder was placed the year following her death in front of the Pin Oak tree that was planted in her memory. On the boulder is mounted a bronze tablet, dedicated on Arbor Day, May 4th, 1934. The oak is no longer there, but the boulder is sheltered by a large Leatherwood shrub - another plant she had sought out for the



Garden. Her "occult" experiences in finding this shrub were described in one of her essays - found on the website as are more commentary, historical documents, and photos of the dedication, all in printable form.

Below: Newspaper photos from day of dedication.



Notes to Section II

- (1) 1907 petition to the board of Park Commissioners to designate space for the Wild Botanic Garden.
- (2) Notes and board minutes of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden from 1968.
- (3) Agassiz Association : The Agassiz Association was founded in the late 1800's to be an association of local chapters that would combine the like interests of individuals and organizations in the study of Nature. The Gray Memorial Botanical Chapter, (Division D) of the Agassiz Association was the chapter that included the middle west. However, after 1901 it was largely defunct and only the Gray Memorial Botanical Chapter, with the same divisions, was still active. Eloise Butler made a number of contributions to it about her garden and about wild flowers. She was a member from 1908 until her death. Various contributions from members were periodically grouped and circulated by post from one member to another. There was no printed published journal at this time. See "History of the Gray Memorial Botanical Association and the Asa Gray Bulletin" by Harley H. Bartlett in the *Asa Gray Bulletin* Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1952, Ann Arbor Michigan.
- (4) Letter to Pearl Fraser, September 29, 1932 Copy follows.
- (5). *Minneapolis Journal* April 11, 1933
- (6a) Interview with Lloyd Teeuwen, May 4, 1988 by Martha Hellander. Tape and transcript in the Martha Crone Collection, Minnesota Historical Society. Lloyd passed away on June 16, 1992.
- (6b) Written report of the Hennepin County Coroner, April 10, 1933. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.

Section III

Notes on the Curator's Office and Shelter



In the photo at the left we see a more complete view of the original curator's office. This building, located on a flat plateau in the woodland part of the Garden was first erected in 1915 based on Eloise's design. It had two rooms and served as office, tool room, visitor center and for everything else. Prior to that date there was no shelter in the developing Garden, just a tool shed. The year of this photo is 1935. You will notice the small sign visible to the left of the door - it reads

"Office of the Curator - Wild Botanic Garden," even though that name had been discarded for some years prior. The man seated at the right is sitting on the boulder bearing the memorial plaque to Eloise Butler that was dedicated in May, 1934. The men on the left are sitting on wooden "settees" that were replaced in 1960 by Kasota Limestone benches with a dedication to Clinton Odell. For more photos of both the old office and the new Martha Crone Shelter are found on the website. 1935 photo above courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.



That old useful structure, becoming more rustic as each year passed, was finally replaced in 1969-70 with the current Martha Crone Shelter (photo), when the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden took on the major challenge of having a new structure designed and built. With much more room for the Garden Curator and naturalist staff, display areas, a fireplace and attic storage, this building still serves well today. The Garden Curator's tool room has long since been relocated to a storage building/work room at the top of hill above the shelter and near to the front gate.

Eloise Butler's Writings

Once the Garden was established in 1907, Eloise began writing about it. A number of her essays were published in various periodicals, newspapers and also circulated to members of the Gray Memorial Botanical Chapter, division D, of the Agassiz Association of which she was a member from 1908 until her death. Those circulars were circulated among members by postal round-robin circulation and may be the principal reason why, as a newspaper article stated, that she was more well known elsewhere than locally. The Agassiz Association after 1901 was largely defunct and only the Gray Memorial Botanical Chapter, with its several divisions, was still active and remained so until 1943. More details about that are in a separate article.

She also included much information in *The Annual Reports of the Board of Park Commissioners*. Over the years she wrote a number of columns for the local newspapers including a series of 22 in 1911, published in the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, that described various plants in the Wild Botanic Garden. All 22 articles are available in html format in our Educational Archive, as are a number of those published in other venues. She also wrote many shorter articles that were never published. These essays began with a short autobiography and progressed to describing events that occurred in the Garden or on plant hunting excursions; some were observations on the characteristics of plants. Particularly memorable were her recounting of finding the Walking Fern and the White Lady's-slippers and what happened when her hat caught fire. Her intent was to group them into several series under the titles such as "*Annals of the Wild Life Reserve*." A number of these articles will also be found in the Website Archive in printable form.

Eloise Butler Biography.

A complete biography of Eloise Butler was written in Martha Hellander's book *The Wild Gardener*. While it is now out of print and no longer available from The Friends, information on Martha

Hellander and how she created this book plus photos and information on her research in Maine on the Butler Family are also on the website.

The Friends have also produced another book, *The Wild Botanic Garden - 1907-1933*, as a companion volume to Martha Hellander's biography of Eloise Butler - *The Wild Gardener*, detailing the events of each year of Eloise Butler's tenure as Curator of the Garden. It is available as a downloadable PDF file on the website.

©2012 Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc. Quotations of Eloise Butler are from her various writings, from *The Wild Gardener*, by Martha Hellander, North Star Press Inc., 1992, used with permission, from newspaper articles and from documents in the Martha Crone Collection at the Minnesota Historical Society. Photos used with permission of noted source. Text by Gary Bebeau.

SHY WILD FLOWERS TO BE GIVEN HOSPICE

Section of Glenwood Park Has Been Set Aside for Use of
Such Native Species as Are of Special Botanical
Interest to Naturalists and Students.

Minneapolis youngsters are not to be allowed to grow up in total ignorance of the habits and customs of the dainty lady slipper, the shy fringed orchid, or the equally elusive wild calla. Representatives of these first families of Minnesota are to be induced to return to the city, to forget the past when a former generation of children treated them without mercy, and to find a home once more in the city. A certain portion of Minneapolis is to be reserved especially for them and, moreover, they are to live under police protection and the gray-coated park guardian will have something to say to anyone who attempts to infringe upon the freedom.

There was a time, and not so long ago, that some Minneapolis families could pluck these rare wild flowers almost from their back doors, but when too many people took a hand in the culling and the plucking became a massacre, the plants grew discouraged and disappeared. Every year they moved farther and farther from the city, until now anyone who wants to meet them in their own homes has to journey to Minnetonka or White Bear or some other secluded place to find them. The students of botany in the high schools and university grumbled at the time and distance and expressed a willingness to confine their study of these exclusive and retiring families to their text books. With noble self-sacrifice they were willing to deny themselves the privilege of hunting specimens.

For Student Benefit.

It was primarily for the students that the teachers of botany asked the park board to set aside a portion of Glenwood park for the exclusive use of such native wild flowers as like to live with their feet in the water, for the district is somewhat swampy. The lady slipper, pink and yellow, the wild calla, fringed orchid, sundew, pitcher plants, and other varieties which used to be as much at home in Minneapolis as the ever-present dandelion, are to be brought back and coaxed to find the new location satisfactory. The sundew and pitcher plants are insectivorous and several other members of a family which dines off small live things will be induced to join the colony.

Owner of Idea.

The idea of this native flower garden was first suggested by Miss Eloise Butler, a botany teacher of the Central high school. It was enthusiastically

taken up by the other teachers of the subject and the park board met them fully half way. Superintendent Wirth with Miss Butler and the other teachers spent the morning yesterday looking over the swamp section, planning foot-paths and stepping-stones, so that the garden might be visited without danger of a mud bath.

Work will begin at once. Indeed, some of the plants have already been transplanted, but wild flowers are shy things and the new botanical garden will not be at its best for a season or more. The public will be at liberty to enjoy this garden, which will supplement the text books for students, who will find a visit to Glenwood park a part of their regular work in botany, but the park policeman will "get you" if you attempt to carry away so much as a leaf.

To the Board of Park Commissioners,
Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The undersigned, being especially interested in the study of plants and their preservation in their natural surroundings, are desirous of having a certain portion of the park grounds of Minneapolis permanently set aside for a natural Botanical Garden for the instruction of students of botany and for the enjoyment of all lovers of nature.

We think the place most desirable for this purpose the eastern portion of Glenwood Park bordering on Arva Avenue. This tract consists of an undrained tamarack swamp with adjacent meadow land and wooded slopes. An undrained tamarack swamp is essential for the proposed garden, because, on account of city improvements, such land is fast disappearing, together with certain lilies, arums, heaths, dogwoods, mosses, fungi and the rare and curious insectivorous plants which are never found elsewhere.

We desire to preserve intact all the wild and natural features of the place and to avoid all appearance of artificial treatment. The only changes would be the thinning out of vegetation where it is necessary for the well being of the plants, or for the introduction of Minnesota specimens which grow under similar conditions; the making of a few paths and the placing of a few stepping stones to render points accessible to observers.

The aims of this garden would be to show plants as living things and their adaptations to their environment, to display in miniature the rich and varied flora of Minnesota, and to teach the principles of forestry.

We therefore beg your Honorable Board to set aside the aforesaid tract for the purposes herein enumerated; to protect the place from depredations; and to grant us permission to supervise the changes suggested.

Committee of
Preliminary
Organization

Elvize Butler
South High School

C. O. Rosendahl
University of Minn.

C. W. Hall

D. W. Sprague

D. D. Sprague
K. C. D.

John S. Greer
A. M. Ozias

Harold K. Lyon

Clara K. Leavitt, Teacher of Botany

W. F. Webster

Julia B. Clifford, Teacher of Botany

W. W. Sprague

Robt Pratt

March 25th 1894

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South High School
C. O. Rosendahl
University of Minn.
C. W. Hall

D. W. Sprague

E. D. Decker
Fred. S. Jones
Joseph D. Owen

E. A. Cuzner

Am. N. Folioell

T. E. Jones

Grant Peterson
Taffey \$200

Frank L. Morley

John E. Greer

A. M. Ozias

Harold R. Lyon

Clara K. Leavitt, Teacher of Botany

W. F. Webster

Julia B. Clifford, Teacher of Botany

W. W. Hobbs

March 28th
Commercial Ch.

Robt Pratt

Elizabeth H. Foss, Teacher of Botany

Henry B. Tillotson

C. Hall

Gym. Northrop

George B. Eaton

Fred H. Butler

W. C. Estlund

Henry F. Kachmaier

Blair P. Sigerson

Josephine E. Tilden

Milton O. Nelson

E. W. D. Holway

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS.

REGULAR MEETING.

April 1, 1907.

Office of the Board of Park Commissioners.

Minneapolis, Minn., April 1, 1907.

President Northrup in the chair.

Present—Commissioners Allan, Boutell, Decker, Haynes, Johnson, Jones, McMillan, Nelson, Peterson, Smith, Van Nest, Walker and Mr. President—13.

Absent—Commissioners Nimocks and Phelps—2.

The minutes of the regular meeting of March 4th, 1907, and the special meeting of March 16th, 1907, were read and approved as printed.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS.

From City Treasurer—

Reporting collection of miscellaneous items for the month of March to the amount of \$579.69.

Placed on file.

From Willard J. Hield, General Manager T. C. R. T. Co.—

Regarding change in Interlachen bridge. Referred to Commissioner Nelson and the Attorney.

From S. N. Ewing—

For boating privilege at Lake Calhoun.

Referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Entertainments.

From Joseph Cousineau—

For re-appointment as park policeman.

From Felix Trainor et al.—

For appointment of N. E. Carlson as park keeper, Oak Lake Parks.

From Patterson Street Lighting Co.— 20

Proposition for lighting parkways during the summer of 1907.

All referred to the Standing Committee on Employment and Supplies.

From John N. Greer et al.—

Asking that a portion of Glenwood Park be set aside for a natural botanical garden. Referred to the Standing Committee on Improvements.

From R. H. Warder, Superintendent of Lincoln Park Chicago—

Offering suction dredge for sale.

Commissioner Peterson—

Moved that Commissioner Allan or Commissioner McMillan be asked to visit Chicago and inspect the dredge offered for sale and investigate dredging matters in general. Adopted.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES.

Minneapolis, Minn., April 1, 1907.

To the Honorable Board of Park Commissioners—

Gentlemen: Your Standing Committee on Improvements, to whom was referred the petition of P. F. Smith et al. for lights in Interlachen, respectfully report and recommend that two electric lights be maintained in such locations as the Superintendent may select.

Respectfully submitted,

FRED. L. SMITH,
JOHN H. VAN NEST,
J. W. ALLAN,
C. F. E. PETERSON,
W. F. DECKER,

Committee.

Adopted.

Minneapolis, Minn. April 10, 1907.

To the Honorable Board of Park Commissioners
of the City of Minneapolis.

Gentlemen:-

Your Standing Committee on Improvements to whom
was referred the petition of John N. Greer and others, asking
that a certain part of Glenwood Park be set aside for a
Natural Botanical Garden, respectfully report and recommend
that the petition be granted and that the Superintendent
be instructed to select the proper place and make such minor
improvements in the way of paths and fencing as may be necessary
at an expense of not to exceed \$200.00

Respectfully submitted,

Fred. R. Smith
W. F. Becker

John H. Van Nest
C. E. Peterson

Committee.

"Adopted"

15

From the Archives of the Minneapolis Park Board

OUR NATIVE PLANT RESERVE

Glenwood Park, Minneapolis, Minn.
Now called "Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden"

By Mrs. John H. Jepson

The idea of this institution of Minneapolis arose from the difficulties experienced by the teachers of botany in familiarizing their students with living plants in their natural surroundings. Long journeys were made with their classes only to find but few widely scattered plants, that perhaps by the next season were exterminated by the needs of a rapidly growing city. Thereupon, the plan was gradually evolved of obtaining, before it was too late, a plot of land that contained, or would support, our choicest wild plants; and to introduce, and by all persuasive means, as preferred variations of soil, light, and moisture, to establish therein as much as possible of the entire flora of Minnesota. To secure protection and permanency, it was also decided that the land should be owned by the city and under park management. An ideal spot, fulfilling all requirements, was found in Glenwood Park, the largest pleasure ground in Minneapolis, and of great natural beauty, interspersed, as it is, with hills that afford far-reaching views and containing three ponds of fair extent.

The Park Commissioners responded with ready appreciation to the wishes of the teachers, and granted them the chosen tract, which then comprised about three acres. From time to time more than twenty acres, including outlying marshes, have been added.

Early in April, 1907, the Wild Botanic Garden was installed without any ceremony except by taking a census of the indigenous flora, and by introducing at once, among many others, such distinctive plants as wahoo, bird's-foot violet, early blue phlox, spring beauty, and hepatica.

The core of the reserve is a small tamarack swamp, a sine qua non of wild garden. Here flourish naturally plants most highly esteemed by botanists; orchids of several species, sundew, pitcher plants, *Limnæa*, fringed gentians, Turk's-cap lily, and rare mosses and fungi. The surrounding hillslopes, more or less wooded, support many other desirable plants that require different degrees of light and moisture.

On a knoll above the swamp and near the south entrance of the reserve, a small convenient office and tool house has been erected for the use of the curator. Two sides of this building have been recently embellished by a sort of pergola-trellis, which, when covered with vines, is expected to enhance the picturesqueness of the place. Near the office a large boulder has been set and chiseled out for a bird bath, which is often thronged by transients and steadily patronized by birds that nest in the garden. The reserve has become a bird as well as a wild flower sanctuary. Several birds that are doomed to extinction, if not protected, have been noted within the precincts, as the crested wood duck, the great and the smaller bittern, the small green heron, Virginia rail, ruffed grouse, bob white, and woodcock.

Our Native Plant Reserve -

The only other artificial feature of the garden is a broad tarvia walk that cuts through the northern portion and affords convenient access to the park boulevard. On this walk is a dam that forms a small pool in a natural depression and receives the overflow from the swamp. This is a favorite sketching point for artists; but the pool is too shady for water lilies, so it is proposed to form at some time a pond for aquatics by an excavation in an open meadow where two small streams combine that flow from springs in the garden.

Until 1911, the garden was cared for by the teachers of botany as a labor of love and without compensation. Then, on the retirement of one of the botany teachers from school, she was made a salaried curator of the garden, a position which she still occupies. But from the very first, systematic care has been given to the place. A complete record has been kept of the plants and an indexed card-catalogue maintained. The chief duties of the curator besides writing the records, are keeping the place in order, receiving and conducting visitors through the grounds, and planting.

Several hundreds of plants are set out each season. Some of them are newcomers; others swell the number of attractive species already present, native or introduced, or replace those that have dwindled out. The ideal aimed at is to maintain a natural wilderness. So no set beds are permitted, but the plants are fitted as closely as possible to their native habitat, be it prairie, bog, or woodland, and are allowed to grow as they will, without any check except their own well-being, and so long as they do not infringe too much upon the right of their companions. They are not watered after they become well-rooted, and no fertilizer is used except decayed leaves, which are allowed to lie as they fall, unless they form deep windrows. By reason of the varied conditions of the reserve most plantings are successful. Lime and sand are lacking in the soil and have to be imported for such exacting species as trailing arbutus and sweet fern (*Comptonia*). Specimens for planting are dug up on wild land, or obtained by exchange, by purchase, or from the park nurseries.

Certain weeds are taboo in the garden, mainly naturalized plants like the all-pervading dandelion and Canada thistle that are too fierce competitors in the "struggle for existence"; likewise several disagreeable "stick-tights", like burdock and buggers' ticks, that usurp the place of more amiable and lovely denizens.

Exclusive of mosses, algae, and fungi, the garden now contains over a thousand species, more than half of which have been introduced. Students and lovers of nature may see in a few hours plants grouped together in a comparatively small area, that they might fail to find in traversing for many days the length and breadth of the state.

The largest and oldest white oak in Minneapolis is "king of the garden". It is estimated that it is at least 700 years old.

ELOISE BUTLER
20 MURRAY HILL ROAD
MALDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
January 11, 1933

Dear Cronies,--

I have been trying in vain for a long time to write to you. The enclosed letter from the aspirant for a position in the wild garden is self-explanatory. Please keep it for me until I see you, for I may wish to show it to Mr. Wirth. I want also to thank you especially, Mrs. Crone, for what you wrote me about the continuance of the wild garden. There's too much of truth in what you say, but I will soon be able to talk with you about the matter in detail. In this time of depression nothing can be done except to hang on by the skin of one's teeth. And what, if there hain't no skin?

I must tell you how much I am pleased with the Crony Xmas package and what a surprise it was. I have found the Magic Slicer a great convenience in preparing salads, the apron just matches a new dress, the Almanac is packed with valuable information, and the lotus seeds came just in time for distribution here, although I have kept some for experiments in Minneapolis. I gave some to one who came to me for advice in starting a large wild flower sanctuary not far from Boston.

Among other gifts I had two books that I would like to share with you-- colored plates of the birds of New England, 86 of them by the noted Fuertes and 2* by Major Allan Brooks who continued the work after Fuertes' death; and a book entitled "WAH'KON-TAH", on the history of the Osage Indians, and written by a native Osage. In it you breath the very air of the western plains.

I hope that you have escaped the prev-

alent flu. We have so far, but I am touching wood! The weather is mild here and sunny for the most part. There has been snow, but it quickly melted away.

Wishing you the Happiest of New Years,

Very truly your friend,

Eloise Butler

Mail Address:
416 8th Ave. So. c/o J.W. Babcock,
Minneapolis, Minn., Sept. 29, '32

My dear Mrs. Frazer:

At the request of Mr. Wirth, Superintendent of Parks, of Minneapolis, I am answering your letter to him.

For several years I have been trying in vain to find an understudy for the Native Plant Preserve, as I have fully realized that I would not always be able to "carry on." A year ago I thought I had found the solution of the problem, but was confronted by an impasse which I still hope can be broken down. I recently wrote for advice to my friends Mrs. C.L. Hutchinson, who is director of a large bird and flower sanctuary on Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. I am anxiously awaiting her reply, for I greatly rely upon her wisdom. My aims are only to secure the preservation and perpetuity of The Preserve, as well as its helpfulness to students of Botany and lovers of wild life. When these aims are assured, I am ready to fade out of the picture and will promise that not even my ghost will return to haunt the premises.

On the first of October The Preserve is closed until the following April. I realize how valuable your assistance might be, but it would be a waste of time and a needless expense unless you could continue as curator; for my successor would require at least one season's training. Are you willing to accept this position for your life work? My salary is \$60.00 a month from April to October. This is not a year's living wage, but I have been able to get along comfortably with the addition of my teacher's pension. Pardon my brutal frankness. You have a child to care for. You are young. If you are a widow, you may marry again, however firm any present determination not to do so. In that case what would be the fate of the Preserve? The hours are long. The place is open Saturdays and Sundays, because then the general public is most free to visit it. Saturday is my off day. Working by yourself in the woods, far from a telephone, you might not be able to endure the loneliness. Guarding the property from the depredations of the thoughtless or lawless is a disagreeable duty. The park in which the Preserve lies, comprises nearly 700 acres. It has but one police officer and I seldom see him, as his services are usually needed elsewhere. The product of years of experiment may be destroyed at one fell swoop. Through all the years I have practiced rigid economy, the chief outlays, outside of my salary, being the building of the office, fencing and repairs. I have done a man's work on the place, although the Park Commissioners have always readily given me all the help that I have asked for.

Of course my successor, subject to the approval of the Superintendent, would carry out his own ideas as to the proper management of the place, but long usage has given to the public certain rights and privileges.

The office equipment, reference library, photographs, lantern slides, etc. (now my personal property) would be turned over to the Park Commissioners for the use of my successor. From the very first I have kept a "Garden Log" and a card catalogue of the plants both indigenous and introduced. If you and Mr. Wirth come to an agreement, he has suggested that I correspond with you during the winter and inform you more fully of the work.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Eloise Butler