

The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden



Dr. Marian Grimes 1903 - April 22, 1988

Background:

The May 1988 issue of the Friends newsletter, the Fringed Gentian™, reported that Friends member Dr. Marian Grimes had passed away on April 22nd. Dr. Grimes was the volunteer coordinator for the Friends from 1971 to 1980, a Garden shelter volunteer herself, a past member of the Friends Board of Directors and active in the Minnesota Mycological Society.

Dr. Grimes was a pioneer female physician in Minneapolis and for years maintained a private practice in obstetrics and gynecology. She was a graduate of Sweetbriar College and then graduated from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 1928. In Minneapolis she was president of the Twin City Alumnae of Sweetbriar College. She retired from practice in 1968 at which time she became active with the Friends Board. After Mildred Olson, in 1970, organized a volunteer group that would staff the new Martha E. Crone Shelter, Dr. Grimes took over the coordination of the group in 1971 and continued to do so through the end of the 1980 season. Dr. Grimes' mother was a student of Eloise Butler.

During her first year as coordinator she saw the need for a guest book. She purchased one and placed it on the shelter table. It is from this book and later versions that we learn that visitors come from far and wide places. In that first year of 1971 some of the comments were:

From Texas "How fortunate the people of Minneapolis are to have a place of this kind so easily and quickly accessible."

From Nebraska "How quiet and peaceful, and still only a few minutes drive from the heart of the city."

From New York "Your Wild Flower Garden says what Ecology, a much publicized word these days, is all about."

In 1977 she received a Community Service Award from the Voluntary Action Center, following her nomination by the Friends.

Dr. Grimes grandfather owned a nursery in what is now south Minneapolis. One day Henry Thoreau came to visit. He was looking for a fine crab-apple tree he had heard of. "Someone sent him to a Mr. Grimes." (1) Dr. Grimes tells the story this way:

"I had heard that Thoreau had visited my grandfather's nursery in Edina. It was called the Calhoun Nursery, and I've been told it was the first nursery in Minnesota. My grandfather, Jonathan T. Grimes, came to Minnesota from Virginia because he disapproved of slavery. When my parents were married, Grandfather gave my father the eastern part of his farm, the block between 44th and 45th Streets and Beard and Chowen Avenues South. (The pronunciation of 'Chowen' was 'Kowen')."

"I like to think that the wild apple tree in our garden at 44th and Beard was the one Mr. Thoreau spotted. I picked many a gorgeous bouquet of blossoms from this tree in my child hood and gave them to neighbors. The apples, though! They were like round green olives, very hard, and didn't even soften from freezing."

"The Jonathan T. Grimes home at 4200 West 44th Street in Edina is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is considered to be the best example of Gothic architecture in a home in this area. Richard E. Stallard, D.D.S., Ph.D., is the present owner, and has accomplished much in restoring the old homestead, as I like to call it. He is a director of Edina Historical Society. Last summer he transplanted a clematis vine from my yard to his. It originally came from the Calhoun Nursery. Possibly this farm of my grandfather was a magnet for naturalists. Dr. Roberts of bird fame [Thomas Sadler Roberts for whom the Robert's Bird Sanctuary at Lake Harriet is named] hunted deer there frequently."



Jonathan T. Grimes House, Edina MN. Photo ©Elkman

"My mother, Jennie Alden, was a student of Miss Eloise Butler. I hope this account provides a bit of 'meat' for the Fringed Gentian™ and explains my interest in the Eloise Butler Wildflower and Bird Sanctuary."

Betty Bridgman, who was editor of the Friends newsletter at the time, added to this story:(2)
"The editor has lived on what was the Grimes farm for 43 years, and has heard that Jonathan Grimes kept a rowboat moored at what is now 42nd Street and Grimes Avenue, and that he could row from there through swamps to Lake Calhoun."

The Friends received a \$1,000 bequest from the estate. After reviewing projects for the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden that were feasible with the amount, the Friends Board voted on Oct. 21, 1989 to procure a stone bird bath for the Upland Prairie Garden. This would be a counterpoint to the 1917 bird bath in the lower Woodland Garden.

Board member Geri Benavides was going to put the plan together. The story of finding the stone and having it carved is related in the following article.

Reference:

(1). University of Minnesota UPDATE magazine - reference given by Dr. Grimes.

(2) The Fringed Gentian™, Vol. 31 No.1 March 1983.

Other documents of the Friends - Board meeting minutes and newsletter issues.

Obituaries

Dr. Marian Grimes, 85, Minneapolis obstetrician

Dr. Marian Grimes, 85, one of Minneapolis' pioneer female physicians, died of congestive heart failure Friday at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis.

Grimes maintained a private practice in obstetrics and gynecology and was on the staff of St. Barnabas Hospital for 38 years before retiring in 1968. She served another 15 years after retirement as a volunteer gynecologist at the University of Minnesota's Cancer Detection Center.

She married Dr. Francis Collins, a local dentist, in 1937. He died in 1958.

"Because there were two Dr. Collinses and he didn't like to be awakened during the night to deliver babies, she practiced under her own name," said Grimes' nephew, Alden Grimes of Evanston, Ill.

Grimes, a life-long resident of Minneapolis, graduated from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 1928. She did post-graduate work at the New York Academy of Medicine

and studied for a year in Vienna. She was made a diplomate of the National Board of Medical Examiners in 1931.

She was a member of the American Medical Association and its affiliates and served on several committees at St. Barnabas before it became part of Metropolitan Medical Center.

She was a former director of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden (Elcise Butler sanctuary) and was active in the Minnesota Mycological Society and other horticultural groups.

Grimes was the granddaughter of Jonathan Taylor Grimes, who came to the Minneapolis area in 1857. He was the original owner and operator of the flour mill later known as Edina Mills. The former family home just west of Grimes Av. and W. 44th St. has been restored and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Grimes is survived by several nieces and nephews. At her request, services will be private.

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A Birdbath in the Prairie

In 1990 The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden acquired a granite boulder for purposes of creating a stone birdbath to be placed on the central hill of the Upland Garden in the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. The cost of the project was paid for with funds received from a bequest of Dr. Marian Grimes, a long time member of the Friends who served on the Board of Directors and was volunteer coordinator for the Martha Crone Shelter from 1971 through 1980.

The committee of volunteers recruited for this project were Kathryn Stennes (also the editor of *The Fringed Gentian*), Geri Benavides and Connie Lavoie. They traipsed around the state in the winter weather looking at boulders and like many things we look at, they eventually settled on the first one they viewed, which was a 1,200 lb. model.

The chosen one was found at Gray Cloud Island in Washington County and was donated to the Friends by Tim Duncan of J. L. Shiely Stone which had operations on the Island.



Next the bird bath had to be carved into the stone so it was moved to West Lake Landscape in Eden Prairie so that stone carver Jon Roe could create the bird bath. Next, it was desired to have the date incised on the stone, so another move was made to Drake Marble in St. Paul where sculptor Henry Valiukas carved the date "1990" into the side of the stone.

Finally on April 5th, the boulder entered the Garden via the Prairie gate. By using three pieces of plywood as bases and levers, Gardener Gary George and two Park Board Staff helpers rolled it up the hill and placed it where it now sits, next to the large White Oak that dominates the hill. There is a bench there that looks out past the Oak and over the bird bath to the far end of the Upland Prairie Garden, providing a restful spot for both humans and birds.

This article was written and compiled from information recorded in Board Meeting minutes of the Friends and from text in several issues of *The Fringed Gentian*TM from 1990.

Text - Research, text and photos by Gary Bebeau