



1936

History of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden

Winter 1935/1936

1936 was Martha Crone's 4th year in charge of the Garden as temporary Curator. The Garden began its 30th year. (1) At the end of 1935 Minneapolis Parks Superintendent Theodore Wirth retired and his assistant C. A. Bossen began his first year as Superintendent. "Bossen Walk" at the Roberts Bird Sanctuary near Lake Harriet is named for him.

The Garden came into the new year with adequate snow cover for the plants and this was followed by large amounts of snow in the first three months of the year. Significant snowfalls included one of seven inches at the end of February and one of 8-1/2 inches at the end of March. Snow depth increased as the winter days waned with up to 16" of snow depth in early March. The temperatures were extremely cold in January and February with 36 consecutive days of sub-zero minimums including one day of -34 F in January. This gave no indication of the historic high temperatures to be reached six months later. The snow depth would begin to succumb to the sun in late March. Martha Crone wrote in her annual report that this snow pack "brought about an ideal condition, resulting in a very fine display of blossoming plants during the spring months."



Photo right and at top : The Garden "Office" in February 1936. Photo by Martha Crone.

Spring 1936

Preliminary notes about the plants. Native Status: Some of the plants obtained by Eloise Butler in the early years of the Garden were not native to Minnesota or if native, may have been difficult to establish in the Garden. Most of these are no longer present. Martha Crone was somewhat more selective of native plant material, but also brought in many species not native to the State, and many of her imports have not survived either. The plants illustrated here, so one can see what they looked like, are mostly of the class no longer extant in the Garden. Some of those plants still existed at the time of Martha Crone's 1951 Garden Census and they are identified by the "(M.C.)" following the plant name. As for plants mentioned here that are still present in the Garden today, there

may have been numerous re-plantings, and most have a web link to a detailed information/photo page, or, if not, are noted as being present in the Garden today - these are not illustrated in this article. **Botanical classification:** Over the years Botanists have reclassified many plants from the classifications in use at the time Eloise Butler wrote her Garden Log or when Martha Crone prepared her census. I have retained the nomenclature that Eloise Butler or Martha Crone used and then provided the more current classification as used by the major listings in use today, particularly *Flora of North America* and the *Checklist of the Vascular Flora of Minnesota*.

Martha Crone opened the Garden for the season on a cold April 1st and noted that there was deep snow everywhere, several feet deep on some paths and with six inches covering the area of the Snow Trilliums (*Trillium nivale*). And the Garden remained cold and frozen until the last snow storm of the season passed on April 6th, bringing 2-1/2" of new snow. After that things began to warm up. There was rain on the 8th and by the 10th visitors came to the Garden on the first good warm day when the temperatures reached 45 degrees.

Martha noted many birds arriving at the Garden even with the snow on the ground, including meadowlarks, which are not seen in the city any longer. By April 16th all the snow in the Garden had melted and the paths were drying out and the Snow Trilliums came into bloom. Many bird houses were erected in the Garden in 1936 and the process began on April 19th and 20th with the help of a Mr. Yelick. Bloodroots and Hepaticas began to bloom on April 25th. Martha noted what birds were nesting in the various houses and boxes that were scattered around the Garden. Blue birds were nesting near the Office, a Crested Flycatcher was nesting in a box on a Large-toothed Aspen, Wood Thrushes in a Prickly Ash, and young Cardinals were noticed in several places.



Adam and Eve, (*Aplectrum hyemale*)
Photo ©R\ K Kupfer, Wisconsin Flora

On April 14th she gave an instructional tour to a group of 18 Scout leaders. These people would later bring their own groups to the Garden and apparently these visits took a lot of her time as she made mention in her annual report to the Park Board that
the instruction extended to Scout Troops and their leaders has increased to such a great extent as to require much of the Curator's time.(2)

Martha began the year's planting efforts in May by planting Pasque Flowers (*Anemone patens* ssp. *multifida*) Sharplobe Hepatica (*Hepatica acutiloba* - now *Anemone americana*), [still extant], Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*) [still extant], Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*) [still extant] and Adam and Eve (*Aplectrum hyemale*) which is a most unusual orchid, so named because it usually has two connecting bulbs. It is native to many counties in the SE Quadrant of MN. (photo above). It is no longer in the Garden. Martha had previously planted it in 1933 and 1935, as did Eloise Butler in 1907, '08, '09 and '10.

Many warblers came through the Garden on the 9th and 10th of May including the Chestnut sided, Cape-May, Pine, Wilson's, Tennessee, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Canada and Blackburnian. Martha had an eye for birds. Dr. Thomas Roberts (Author of *Birds of Minnesota*, (photo next page), a Dr. Kilgore, and W. J. Breckenridge, Director of the University of Minnesota Natural History Museum, were in the Garden on May 18th to conduct birding classes. Dr. Roberts had been doing this for years now. He was first noted in Eloise Butler's Garden log in 1914.

Martha's May and June plantings included some plants **she had not previously planted** in the Garden:

Moccasin Flowers (Stemless Lady's-slipper) (M.C.), (*Cypripedium acaule*) Native to the state. Eloise Butler planted many of these in the early years of the Garden beginning in 1907. (Photo below). [Not extant]

Ostrich Fern (M.C.), (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) from her home garden. While this was the first time Martha planted the species, Eloise Butler planted it in the early years of the Garden. (Photo below. [Present in the Garden today]

Ovate-leaved violet - (M.C.), (*Viola fimbriatula*) Three plants from Taylor's Falls. This is the first time Martha used this name for a violet. It is actually the same as the Arrowleaf violet (*Viola sagittata* var. *ovata*) that she first planted in 1934 and 1935. Eloise Butler also planted in in 1909 and 1910. [Not extant]



Dr. Thomas S. Roberts.



Moccasin Flower (*Cypripedium acaule*).



Ostrich Fern, (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*)

Martha loved ferns and in May in addition to the Ostrich Fern, she set out five others of the nine species she would plant in 1936 - Rattlesnake, Common Polypody, Purple Cliff Brake, Rusty Woodsia and Hayscented. Other plants put in this month included both Yellow Lady's-slippers (*Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *makasin* and *Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens* ; and Bitternut Hickory trees (*Carya cordiformis*).

June included more plantings with emphasis on bog plants including Pitcher plants (*Sarracenia purpurea*), Tamaracks (*Larix laricina*). By mid-June the Blue Birds were nesting again in the same box.

There was adequate rainfall during the spring until the Summer Solstice. Then things would change. Temperatures started to rise above the normal averages in May and except for a few days of coolness in June, the summer would be utterly hot.

Summer 1936

On the first day of summer, the Showy-Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium reginae*) came into bloom; this is the second latest date of bloom ever noted, matched in 1958. The latest was June 28, 1945. Here is a list of plantings for species no longer extant in the Garden that **Martha planted for the first time** (all are native to Minnesota except where noted otherwise):

Ground Junipers (Common Juniper) (M.C.), (*Juniperus communis*) From Cedar Forest (where Martha visited often and later bought property)

Blue or Mt. Fly Honeysuckle - (M.C.), (*Lonicera caerulea* - now *Lonicera villosa*) No source given - June 18. Photo at right.

Naked Mitrewort (M.C.), (*Mitella nuda*) No source given - June 18. Photo next page.

Ramshead Lady's-slippers (M.C.), (*Cypripedium arietinum*) 24 plants from the Swamp at Cedar. Photo next page and more about them in 1937 and 1938.

Small Cranberry (M.C.), (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) June 13, no source given. In 1908 Eloise Butler noted this plant in the Garden. It is native to Minnesota but there is no reference to it being present in Hennepin County in the later years. Photo at right

Ragged Orchis (Green Fringed Orchid) - (M.C.), (*Habenaria lacera* now- *Platanthera lacera*), no source listed. Native to NE Quadrant of State. Photo next page

Wooly Beach Heather (Poverty Grass) (M.C.), (*Hudsonia tomentosa*) Native to scattered counties. On Martha's 1951 census list she names it False Heather. Photo next page.

There was no rain during the summer from mid June until August 15th. July would become the hottest July in local recorded history with the highest temperature in recorded history of 107.8 degrees on July 14th. Altogether there were 14 days of temperatures at 100 degrees and above during July. Martha planted a few species but she noted on July 28th that everything was dried up and yet it would be another 18 days before it would rain. There would be several good rainfalls in August after the half inch on August 15th, but from September through the end of the year, moisture would once again be slight.



Mountain Fly Honeysuckle (*Lonicera villosa*); Photo ©Joanne Kline, Wisconsin



Small Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*). Photo ©Susan McDougall, Wisconsin Flora

By August 16th, Martha noticed birds migrating already. She saw Grinnell's Water Thrush, and the Black and White Warblers passing through the Garden.

Gertrude Cram was once again vacationing on Isle Royal and collecting plants and mailing them to Martha. On August 20th Martha recorded planting the following that she received from Gertrude (all had been planted in the Garden in previous years): Lesser Rattlesnake Plantain, (*Goodyera repens*); Downy Rattlesnake Plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*), Rattlesnake Plantain, (*Goodyera oblongifolia*) Twayblade (*Listera convallarioides*), Creeping Snowberry, (*Gaultheria hispidula*), American Rock-brake fern (*Cryptogramma acrostichoides*), Small Green Wood Orchis (*Platanthera clavellata*) and Calypso (*Calypso Bulbosa*) - this is the Fairy Slipper Orchid, a beautiful orchid that is on the "Threatened" list in Wisconsin. Native to MN in the NE Quadrant.

Later in the month she received from Gertrude - Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*) and Dwarf Primrose (*Primula mistassinica* photo next page) which is native to Minnesota. The Butterwort was first found on Isle Royal after several years of searching by Gertrude and first sent to Martha in 1935. None of these plants from Isle Royal are extant today.

Additional plants procured in the summer from various sources were Showy Lady's-slipper into a new colony in the lower enclosure (the Mallard Pool area), Ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*), Obedient Plant (*Physostegia virginiana*), Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*), Ebony Spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*), Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Pale Corydalis (*Corydalis sempervirens*) and Fire Pink (*Silene virginica*) This is a Catchfly type plant, pretty color. Endangered in Wisconsin.



Woolly Beach Heather (*Hudsonia tomentosa*). Photo ©Paul Drobot, Wisconsin Flora.



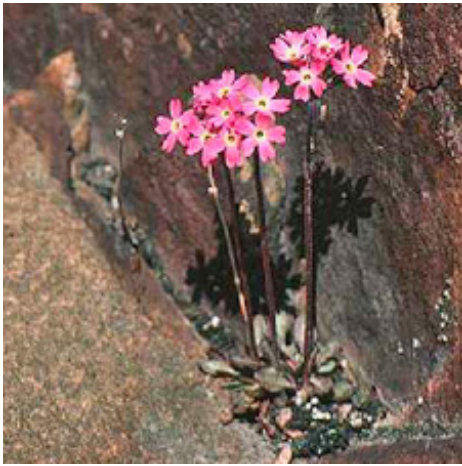
Naked Miterwort (*Mitella nuda*). Photo ©Arthur Meeks, Wisconsin Flora.



Ramshead Lady-slipper (*Cypripedium arietinum*) Photo by Martha Crone in the Garden June 9, 1954



Ragged Orchid (Green Fringed Orchid), (*Platanthera lacera*). Photo ©Merle R. Black, Wisconsin Flora.



Dwarf Primrose, (*Primula mistassinica*);
Photo ©Asa Thoresen, Wisconsin Flora



Fairy Slipper Orchid, (*Calypso Bulbosa*); Photo Martha Crone June 1, 1954.



Fire Pink, (*Silene virginica*); Photo ©Kyle Steele, Wisconsin Flora.

Autumn 1936

On the 15th of September Martha noted the largest Warbler wave that she had ever witnessed. Once again the large White Oak produced a **Hen of the Woods** mushroom (*Polyporus frondosus*), but it was only six pounds, much smaller than the 25 pounder of 1935. These are edible mushrooms. Photo next page.

Martha Crone and her husband Bill were active members of the Minnesota Mycological Society, Martha being Secretary and Dr. Crone being Vice President. In addition to the *Polyporus*, Martha listed nine other mushroom species found in the Garden in 1936.

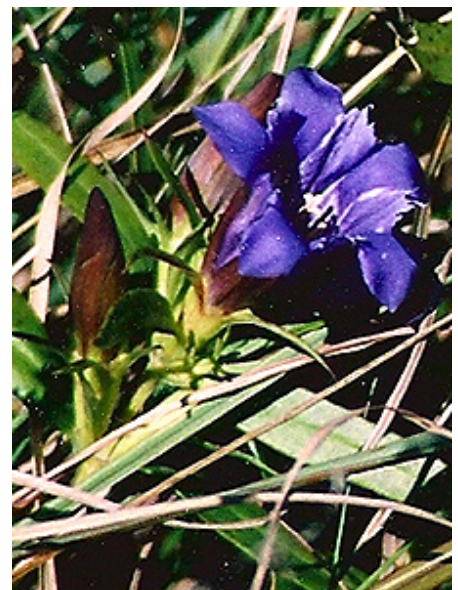
As the birds migrated, Martha made planting notes in her log of **species that she planted for the first time** (all are native to Minnesota except where noted otherwise):

Bottomland aster (Ontario Aster); (M.C.), (*Aster tradescanti* -now- *Symphiotrichum ontarionis*) 3 plants on October 14, no source - This and the Crookedstem Aster, below, were the last plantings of the year. [Present in the Garden today]

Crookedstem Aster (M.C.), (Martha did not list a botanical name) (*Symphiotrichum prenanthoides*). 3 plants, no source listed. Now rare in Minnesota. Known only in 5 SE Corner counties. Photo next pages.

Downy Gentian (M.C.), (*Gentiana puberulenta*). Photo at right.

Hairy Stemmed Aster - Calico Aster; (M.C.), (*Aster hirsuticaulis* - now *Symphiotrichum lateriflorum* var. *lateriflorum*). Native. One plant from Stillwater. [Present in the Garden today]



Downy Gentian, (*Gentiana puberulenta*)

White Fringed Orchid (*Habenaria blephariglottis* -now- *Platanthera blephariglottis* var. *blephariglottis*). This plant is not considered native to Minnesota by the standard resources but Martha reported finding it growing along Cedar Creek near what became the Crone property at Cedar Swamp. She moved it into the Garden on September 3rd.

Goldie's Woodfern. (M.C.), (*Dryopteris goldiana*). Native to only 9 counties. Considered rare in Minnesota. Largest of the shield ferns. Six plants on October 2nd. Source not listed. Photo next page. [Present in the Garden today

Following the rain in late August, Martha set out a large quantity of plants including Bottle Gentian, Rose colored New England Aster, Silky Aster (Western Silver Aster), several species of Blazing star, Aromatic Aster, Yews, Tamarack and White Cedar. More ferns were planted bringing the year's species count of ferns to nine.

Her last recorded log entry for 1936 was that she planted seeds of Fringed Gentian (*Gentianopsis crinita*) on October 30th. (Photo right). That would be one of several attempts to establish this plant in the Garden, none successful in the long run. Presumably, the Garden closed on the normal date of September 30th.



Fringed Gentian; (*Gentianopsis crinita*), on Sept. 24, 1950. Photo from a Kodachrome taken by Martha Crone.

Martha summed up the year by stating in her annual report that she set out 682 plants comprising 77 species, representing 54 genera and 27 families. In addition to these, 20 kinds of seeds were sown.

26 bird houses had been set and numerous groups had visited the Garden. She made certain to include a statement on the value of the Garden by writing

All visitors expressed their sincere appreciation in having ready access to the one wild spot in our city limits, bringing to them a breath of the the wilderness. (2)

Fall weather for the Garden was pleasant. Temperatures were back within seasonal averages but there was little rainfall. November and December were mostly dry and there was no remaining snow cover at the end of year - quite a change from the previous winter and thus ended a year of great temperature contrast between winter and summer. It was not the driest year on record - that record belongs to 1910.

On December 31, 1936 the Crones had completed the purchase of 40 acres of property at Cedar Creek Forrest for a total price of \$375 with \$10 down payment. Within this parcel of land there was dry upland that resembled an island elevated above the swampland.and they would spend time in 1937 planning the building of a cabin on the property.



Hen of the Woods, (*Polyporus frondosus*). Photo by Martha Crone.



Goldie's Woodfern, (*Dryopteris goldiana*).



Crookedstem Aster, (*Symphyotrichum prenanthoides*); Photo ©Emmett J. Judziewicz, Wisconsin Flora.



Ontario Aster, (*Symphyotrichum ontarionis*)

Photo top of first page: The Garden "Office" in February 1936. Photo by Martha Crone

Notes:

Note 1: Martha was appointed "temporary" Curator in April 1933 to work until October 1st, 1933 for \$60 per month. (Letter of Superintendent Theodore Wirth to the Board of Park Commissioners dated April 18, 1933). On March 28, 1936, the Minneapolis Civil Service Commission confirmed her "temporary" position as Curator at the same rate of pay. It was not until 1940 that the position became permanent.

Note 2: *Annual Report of the Garden Curator to the Board of Park Commissioners* dated November 15, 1936, submitted by Martha Crone

References:

Martha Crone's Garden Log and her 1951 Census of plants in the Garden.

Garden Log - Native Plant Reserve, Glenwood Park, Minneapolis, MN by Eloise Butler

Papers and letters from the Martha Crone Collection - Minnesota Historical Society.

Historical Climatology of Minneapolis-St. Paul Area by Charles Fisk

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