

OUTDOOR MINNESOTA

WCCO - Wednesday - August 11, 1943

Interview: Mrs. W. H. Crone

Announcer: Max Karl

Script: Ken Morrison

KARL: Outdoor Minnesota presented by the Minnesota Department of Conservation.

Did you know that just ten minutes from the Minneapolis loop is a serene undisturbed woodland sanctuary that is so wild that it might easily be mistaken for a segment of Minnesota's great northern wilderness. Great numbers of wild flowers grow in profusion and birds rare to the city - such as the Green Heron and Woodcock - nest there. Is this idyllic sanctuary hard to find? Not at all - the Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden lies in the center of Theodore Wirth Park. Tonight we have in the studio Mrs. W. H. Crone, the curator of the wild flower garden. About how many different species of plants are found in the wild flower garden.

CRONE: We probably have over 1,000 species of plants in our 20 acres reserve.

KARL: Are all of these species native to Minnesota?

CRONE: Yes, Max. All plants in the Butler Wild Flower Garden are native to this state. About half of these are indigenous to the area and the rest have been established there.

KARL: The term "garden" may be a little confusing to some of our listeners. Does that mean that you have to water and cultivate the wild flowers in the garden?

native  
plant

CRONE: No, Max, once the plants have been introduced and have become established, they are disturbed as little as possible and are not watered or cultivated.

KARL: In other words, your wild flowers have to fend for themselves.

CRONE: If they are crowded out by *weeds* or other plants, it is just too bad. We believe in keeping our wild flower sanctuary as wild as possible. If we were to attempt to control the flowers carefully, it would mean that the wild aspect of the area would disappear. I have had visitors tell me that our woodland is as wild as anything they have seen, even along the Gunflint Trail.

KARL: Could you give us a little preview, Mrs. Crone, of what the visitor to the Butler Wild Flower Garden may expect to see at this time of the year?

CRONE: This is not the best time of the year to see flowers in profusion. Spring is, of course, our rush season at the sanctuary. However, there is much to see even now. The Purple Loose-Strife is in bloom and adds a beautiful touch of color to the landscape. It is the most attractive and showy of the flowers that are blooming at the present time.

KARL: What about the fall flowers? Aren't they due to put in an appearance pretty soon?

CRONE: Yes, Max. The fall asters, golden rod and sunflowers are coming now and will last until frost.

KARL: Your sanctuary is noted for birds as well as flowers. Isn't it?

CRONE: The wild garden has been a favorite haunt of bird watchers for many years. Some enthusiasts, such as Miss Aler, keep a daily record of birds observed in the Theodore Wirth Park.

KARL: Aren't the birds more or less quiet in August?

CRONE: This is the quiet season for birds all right. Some of them are still feeding their young and others travel about in small groups feeding as they go. It is the pause before migration. But some of the birds are still singing. For example, the Wood Pee Wee, Indigo Bunting and Song Sparrow.

KARL: What would be the largest number of species of birds recorded in your garden during a single day?

CRONE: More than 90 species have been recorded in the area during the course of one day. This record, of course, was established during the spring migration.

KARL: When I visited your curator's cabin in the Butler Garden the other day, I was particularly interested in the Humming Birds that visited your artificial feeders every few minutes during my stay. I wonder if you would describe these feeders and tell us what you used to attract the birds and how often they visit your feeders.

CRONE: Small bottles ornamented with red used to represent petals of a flower and filled with a liquid made of boiling  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water were fastened to the outside of the windows. The humming birds feed every few minutes and can be closely observed by remaining quietly on the inside.

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KARL: I believe you mentioned that when the humming birds return in the spring they look for your feeders even before they have been put out.

CRONE: *When the humming birds return in May they constantly hover near the place where the feeders were placed the year before, since it is rain from feeding them until July. They never tire coming until finally rewarded.*

KARL: Getting back to the flowers again, how do you know where the various species are located in the garden?

CRONE: During the 11 years that I have been curator of the wild flower garden I have come to know every inch of the area.  
(tell about your card file system)

*An indexed card system is that of a name of plants and where planted, if any do not thrive in a situation, a new area is attempted.*

KARL: Do you have any personal favorites in the flower line?

CRONE: I can't say that I have, Max. As each flower blooms, it seems to be a favorite with me. Naturally, of course, the rarer and more elusive flowers receive the greatest amount of attention. The Rams-horn <sup>Red</sup> Lady Slipper is a particularly beautiful flower but then so are all of the members of the orchid family which, unfortunately, are diminishing in this state.

KARL: How many species of orchids are found in Minnesota?

CRONE: It is interesting to know that of the 18 genera and 68 species of orchids listed for the whole range of Gray's Manual, 15 genera and 44 species occur native in Minnesota. You might be interested to know of the 77 species of violets found on this continent at least 20 are known to grow in Minnesota. Other groups in which the number of species native to Minnesota runs high are the lily, the buttercup, the heath, and milkweed families.

KARL: I was particularly impressed by the many different species of ferns found in the wild flower garden.

CRONE: Our fern banks are outstanding at this time. About 45 different species of ferns occur in the garden. (give any interesting sidelight on the ferns) *Some, such as the Interrupted Fern, the Lady Fern and the British Fern spread very quickly, some make a compact mass - but others spread more slowly.*

KARL: I suppose that your established plants have to<sup>be</sup> checked over each season and many new ones set out.

CRONE: That's right, Max. And of course we have to select a place that matches the particular<sup>ly</sup> environment that is suitable to the plant. For example our aquatic plants go down near the swamp or the pool at the lower end of the garden. The sun-loving plants are set out on the slope of the hill.

KARL: I don't suppose you bother with such things as raking leaves or carting out fallen logs?

CRONE: When the leaves drop in the fall, they are not raked up but are allowed to form a winter cover for the plants and eventually go back to the soil. When trees fall the logs are placed in the swampy part of the garden in hopes of attracting birds that might not ordinarily nest there.

KARL: Do you have any trouble with weeds crowding out the wild flowers?

CRONE: Yes, that is quite a problem. The jewel weed is the most striking example. (tell about the introduction of the weed and its present abundance) *It was introduced some years ago, being an annual whose seeds germinate readily, it would crowd out other plants unless checked.*

KARL: I was interested in the amazing representation of native trees to be found in the Butler Wild Flower Garden.

CRONE: *Practically all of* ~~Here~~ *represented* our native trees are ~~located~~ and many of them are labeled, especially those that are near the trails ~~to~~ *through* the garden.

I remember that you showed particular interest in the partial stump of a white oak that was 700 years old when we had to remove it because of the danger of its falling. In another

MORE

XXXXX: part of Theodore Wirth Park there is an elm standing that is  
KARL: 350 years old. I have wanted for sometime to see a hemlock  
and was amazed to find that you have a healthy stand of them  
at the lower end of the enclosure near the pool.

CRONE: (~~give any pertinent information about the hemlock - where  
they made their last stand - are there any others in southern  
Minnesota?~~)

*The hemlock barely makes its name, occurring native  
only in Carlton Co. It is very difficult to grow, rarely  
surviving in the winter. Those in the garden  
are well established, having been here well over  
30 years*

KARL: Could you give us a short review of the wild flower season?  
What is the earliest flower that appears in the garden?

CRONE: The earliest and hardiest flower is the Dwarf Trillium.  
Shorter and sturdier than its later-blooming brother, the <sup>large</sup> painted  
trillium, it appears even before the snow is gone - this year  
on the second of April. Close on its heels come hepaticas,  
bloodroots, anemones, jack-in-the-pulpits, to be followed all  
season long by a succession of bloom. Starting with the pale  
hepatica, the colors become more and more vivid, ending just  
before frost with a riot of yellow, blue and magenta.

KARL: I believe you told me that one of the questions most commonly asked of you is when was this place established and how could it have been here so long without my knowing about it?

CRONE: Yes, Max. Most people are surprised to find that the Eloise Butler Wild Flower Preserve was established in 1907.  
(tell about Miss Butler and how the reserve happened to be established)

The idea arose from the difficulties experienced by the teachers of botany in familiarizing their students with living plants in their natural surroundings, since the rapidly growing city was crowding out the wilderness.

This was considered an ideal spot, fulfilling all requirements, interspersed, as it is, with hills, ponds, streams and swamps.



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KARL: I think, Mrs. Crone that our listeners would be interested in knowing just when they can visit the Wild Flower sanctuary.

CRONE: There are no forbidden signs on the reserve and although an iron fence marks the boundaries, the gates are open everyday in the week except Wednesday which is my day off. There are small placards telling the location and names of the many flowers along the trail and, of course, I am there to answer any questions that the visitors may have.

*my day off*

KARL: I imagine that your visitors are many, Mrs. Crone.

CRONE: Hundreds of persons visit the garden each month from April <sup>to the beginning of</sup> through October. Small children, hikers, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, bird enthusiasts, botany students, ordinary citizens, all bound together by one common tie - love of the out of doors and particularly, of woodland flowers.

KARL: What objective would you say the Butler Wild Flower Garden has accomplished?

CRONE: I think it has been a powerful factor in building an appreciation of Minnesota's native wild flowers. The garden teaches people to observe flowers and enjoy them in their natural environment. It has lessened the tendency to pick flowers and take them home where they wilt in a few short hours. We invite many more of our citizens to come to know the relaxation and contentment and beauty that can be found just 10 minutes from downtown Minneapolis.

*purpose*

KARL: Thank you very much, Mrs. <sup>W. H.</sup>Crone for this radio tour through Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden which is part of the Theodore Wirth Park and is maintained by the Minneapolis Park Board

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KARL: Mrs. Crone is curator of the Wild Flower Reserve.  
Outdoor Minnesota is presented each Wednesday at 6:45 P.M.  
by the Minnesota Department of Conservation.  
Max Karl Speaking. This is the Columbia Broadcasting System.