



1918

History of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden

Winter 1917/1918

This winter Eloise Butler again traveled to the East Coast to visit her relatives, as had been her custom since she retired from teaching in 1911. Her residence was at 20 Murray Hill Rd, Malden, Mass. While there she sourced some plants from Gillett's Nursery in Southwick MA, and from Kelsey's Nursery in Pineola, North Carolina. The plants were then sent to her and arrived in April. Others arrived from Gillett's in October.

In late March she returned to her rented quarters at the residence of John and Susan Babcock at 227 Xerxes Ave. from where she could walk to the Garden.



Front Garden and entrance of the Cora Pease house in Malden MA where Eloise spent winters. Photo from 1989 courtesy Martha Hellander.

Spring 1918

Eloise Butler's first Garden Log note of the season was on 31 March when she wrote:

Spring more advanced than it was last year. Aspen catkins gone by; several willows, hazel, and alder in blossom. Bluebird, downy woodpecker, flicker, junco, red-winged blackbird, song sparrow, phoebe in evidence; pasque flowers opening on the prairie.

The weather was definitely different. The previous year had record amounts of snow on the ground in late March, but this year, even though there was an 11 inch snowfall in mid-March, temperatures were warm and there was no snow in late March.

Her first planting occurred on April 1st with sowing 13 acorns of Black Oak, *Quercus velutina*, that were collected in Providence Rhode Island and stratified during the winter at Malden Mass while Eloise

stayed there with sister Cora. On that same day she noted the Snow Trillium in bloom and that a large gray western great horned owl was captured in the vicinity of the Garden.(1)

Some additional notes:

May 13: "heavy frost last night. Young leaves of plants frozen. Grape badly affected."

May 26: "Noted a pair of bitterns about the brook from nine to three O'clock. The female one-third smaller than the male and more conspicuously striped on the breast -- like a garter snake. The male sported his courting dress -- two large united tufts of white down looking like cotton-wool displayed across the back at the origin of the wings. It is said that these masses can be thrown out or drawn in at will."(1)

Plantings: This spring she brought in 3 new species, all obtained from Gillett's Nursery in Southwick Mass. Northern Holly Fern, New York Ironweed, and Catberry or Canadian Holly. None are native to Minnesota. Details below the autumn section.

She also recorded planting 13 other species, many of which are still in the Garden.

Summer 1918

During the summer months she planted around the new 1917 bird bath Golden Corydalis (*Corydalis aurea*), Downy Yellow Violets (*Viola pubescens*), and Blue violets (*V. sororia*).

In the summer months she obtained 4 new species for the Garden, Jerusalem Oak Goosefoot, Blue Lettuce, Sandbar Willow and the Small Northern Bog Orchid. Only the first is not native. Details on all 1918 new plantings listed below the autumn section.

August 6 - Snapping turtle measuring a foot across noted walking down the path towards the office. Back coated with a thick layer of mud. Turned and faced me twice when accosted. (1)

She also recorded planting 16 other species, many of which are still in the Garden. A number of these came from a trip to Pequot MN where she said plants were collected from the vicinity of Lake Margaret.

Autumn 1918

Since 1910, Eloise had maintained a display about the Wild Garden at the Minnesota State Fair, but we believe that 1917 was the last year. She would spend a week at the fair, bring back the plants from her



Mature Black Oak. Eloise planted acorns in 1918. Her first planting of acorns of the species in the Garden was 1913.



1917 Bird Bath, shown here in a 1934 photo.



Sensitive Fern, *Onoclea sensibilis* planted in 1918, but also indigenous to the Garden.

display to re-plant in the Garden, but based on her log dates, it does not appear she was absent from the Garden this year. Perhaps the U.S. entry in WWI was the reason.

What she did begin this year was a rotating display of native plants at the Minneapolis Public Library. She updated the exhibit every few days and brought back plants to replant in the Garden, frequently mentioning the replanting in her Garden Log.

In the fall months she obtained 10 new species for the Garden: Cutleaf Grape Fern, Hemlock Water Parsnip, Narrow Panicked Rush, Ontario Aster, Showy Beggarticks, Spearwort Buttercup, Staghorn Sumac, Thimbleweed, Virginia Dwarf Dandelion, and Male Fern. Several are not native, or the plant she collected was mis-identified. Details listed below.

She also recorded planting 37 other species, many of which are still in the Garden, including numerous asters.

Two of her sources for a large number of plants were from around Pelican Lakes,

MN and from Mahtomedi MN, which was a location she frequently used. Then there were her regular sources of Minnehaha Park, Glenwood Park and Fort Snelling.

Her last log entry was on October 31st when she noted planting 6 Sensitive Ferns gotten from a bog on Superior Blvd. near the Garden. Superior Blvd. was U.S. Hy. 12.

It was at some time during this year of 1918 that a young woman began to make appearances at the Garden and provide some help, particularly in the area of finding plants for the Garden. That woman was Martha Crone, who succeeded Eloise as Curator in 1933. Martha recalled that she had spent about 15 years helping out in the Garden which would put the start of her volunteer time around 1918 [Conversation with Pat Deweese, *The Fringed Gentian*TM, Winter 1978]. The first reference to this was in an article in the Minneapolis Star on January 10, 1944. The article was about her position at the Minneapolis Library Science Museum. Eloise would soon become good friends with Martha and her husband William. They exchanged letters and Christmas gifts during the months Eloise was back on the East Coast.



Martha and William Crone with their only daughter Janet, circa 1920. Janet was born June 16, 1917.

When Martha Hellander interviewed Martha Crone in 1988 while doing research for her book (2) Mrs. Crone related that when Eloise gave tours of the Garden she (Crone) was often asked to come along and make sure no one picked the flowers. Mrs. Crone noted that "I was her best guard."

With the Garden closed and the office locked up she departed for the East Coast to visit her sister Cora Pease as she has done every winter since 1911.

The year was average in terms of precipitation. Late fall into early winter was relatively free of snow. The entire winter of 1918/19 had only about 25 inches of snow, well below the average of 43 inches.

New 1918 Plants

Eloise brought into the Garden a number of plants that are not listed today on the Garden census. Many of these were native to Minnesota and a few were not. Here is a listing of most of those plants introduced this year to the Garden for the first time - the common and botanical names listed first are names she used followed by other common names for the same plant and the newer botanical classifications, if any; then follows her source for the material. 1918 is the first year the following list of plants occur in her log. "Native" indicates the plant is considered native to Minnesota (here at European Settlement time) or if introduced, long established. "Non-native" indicates it is not known to exist in Minnesota in the wild. "Extant" indicates the plant is present in the Garden today. **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 University of Minnesota's *Checklist of the Flora of Minnesota*.

Spring 1918

- *Aspidium lonchitis*, [*Polystichum lonchitis*], Northern Holly Fern - from Gillett's Nursery Southwick Mass. Not considered native as there are no herbarium collections.
- *Nemopanthis mucronata* [*Ilex mucronata*], Catberry or Canadian Holly, Gillett's, not native. [Photo at right]
- *Vernonia noveboracense*, New York Ironweed, Gillett's Nursery, not native.



Catberry, *Ilex mucronata* planted in 1918.
Photo ©Kitty Kohout, Wisconsin Flora.

Summer 1918

- *Chenopodium Botrys*, Jerusalem oak goosefoot -Mr. Babcocks Garden - introduced.
- *Habenaria obtusata* [*Platanthera obtusata*, ssp. *obtusata*], Small Northern Bog orchis, from vicinity of Lake Margaret, Pequot, MN. Native. [Photo next page]
- *Lactuca pulchella* [*Lactuca tatarica* var. *pulchella*], Blue lettuce, from vicinity of Lake Margaret, Pequot, MN. Native.
- *Salix interior*, Sandbar Willow, from Golf grounds, Glenwood Park. Native.

Autumn 1918

- *Anemone cylindrica* - Candle Anemone (Long-fruited Thimbleweed), from Ft. Snelling. Native. Extant.
- *Aspidium filix-mas* [*Dryopteris filix-mas*], Male Fern, Gillett's Nursery, Southwick MA. Not native. [Photo next page]
- *Aster Tradescanti* [*Symphytotrichum ontarionis*], Ontario Aster, from Washburn Park. Native. Extant.

- *Botrychium obliquum* [*Botrychium dissectum*], Cutleaf Grape Fern, Mahtomedi. Native.
- *Jucus brevicaudatus* - Narrow paniced Rush, from Mahtomedi. Native.
- *Kirgia virginica*, Virginia Dwarf Dandelion. This is doubtful as the U of M herbarium says it has been reported but never collected. Hazel Par, St. Paul.
- *Ranunculus flammula*, Spearwort Buttercup, from Pelican Lake region. Native.
- *Rhus typhina*, Staghorn, Sumac, from Ft. Snelling, Native. Extant.
- *Sium cicutaefolium* [*Sium suave*], Hemlock Water Parsnip, from Glenwood Park. Native. [Photo Shown]



Small Northern Bog Orchid (Blunt leaf orchid), *Platanthera obtusata*, ssp. *obtusata* planted in 1918. Photo ©R.K. Kupfer, Wisconsin Flora.



Male Fern, *Dryopteris filix-mas* planted in 1918.



Hemlock Water Parsnip, *Sium suave* planted in 1918. Photo ©Merle R. Black, Wisconsin Flora.

Notes:

(1) Garden Log

(2) *The Wild Gardener*, 1992, pg. 95.

Photo top of first page: The summer garden at 20 Murray Hill Road, Malden MA where Eloise Butler wintered.

References:

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

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

Various papers and correspondence of Eloise Butler in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.

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

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