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VANISHING ORIGINAL PRAIRIE AREA IN CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

GEORGE R. BOWNE

Approximately 55 years ago, in 1889, W. J. McGee, in a study of primeval forests and swamps of northern Iowa, compiled a map from original records of the U. S. General Land Office by B. J. Tarbert. On this map a wet prairie area in Twp. 83N, Range 7W, Section 15 was shown. This prairie area is in the vicinity of Mound Farm in northeast Cedar Rapids, Linn County. Due to an extensive home building plan the area is being destroyed.

This natural area covers approximately 40 acres. It is bounded on the north by Maplewood Drive, and on the south by a north-sloping hill. The western boundary is a meandering intermittent creek. On the opposite side grow small trees and shrubs such as hawthorn, wild plum, wild crab apple, and wild grape. The Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad runs north and south along the entire eastern edge of the prairie. The area was originally part of the Greene Farm (an early Cedar Rapids pioneer) and due to its geographical location the area has been left uncultivated.

It was thought advisable to study and collect the flora on this area in order that some record might be made before total destruction has occurred.

Until approximately 1941 the intermittent stream across the prairie area functioned, but at present it is replaced by a large storm and sanitary sewer.

There are three types of soil on the area, Carrington Silt Loam, Lindley very fine Sandy Loam, and Tama Silt Loam, but the distribution of plants over this area does not seem to be due to the difference in soils. The varying amount of soil moisture seems to be the main factor.

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GRAMINEAE

Sagittaria latifolia Wild. Rare.

GAMINEAE

Andropogon furcatus Muhl. Abundant.
A. scoparius Michx. Abundant.
Paspalum ciliatifolium Michx. Abundant.
Echinochloa crusgalli (L.) Beauv. Occasional.
Phleum pratense L. Common.

Agrostis alba L. Common.
Poa pratensis L. Common.

CYPERACEAE

Scirpus lineatus Michx. Frequent.

COMMELINACEAE

Tradescantia virginiana L. Common.

LILIACEAE

Melanthium virginicum L. Frequent.
Lilium philadelphicum L. Frequent.
L. superbum L. Common.
L. canadense L. Frequent.
Ornithogalum umbellatum L. Common.
Aletris farinosa L. Common.

AMARYLLIDACEAE

Hypoxis hirsuta (L.) Coville. Common.

IRIDACEAE

Sisyrinchium albidum Raf. Frequent.

ORCHIDACEAE

Habenaria psycodes (L.) Sw. Rare.
Calopogon pulchellus (Sw.) R. Br. Occasional.

SALICACEAE

Salix humilis March. Common.

URTICACEAE

Laportea canadensis (L.) Gaud. Rare.

SANTALACEAE

Commandra umbellata (L.) Nutt. Frequent.

POLYGONACEAE

Polygonum hydropiper L. Common.

NYCTAGINACEAE

Oxybaphus nyctagineus (Michx.) Sweet. Common.

CAROPHYLLACEAE

- Agrostemma githago* L. Rare.
Arenaria lateriflora L. Common.

RANUNCULACEAE

- Thalictrum polygamum* Muhl. Frequent.

CRUCIFERAE

- Brassica arvensis* (L.) Ktze. Common.
B. nigra (L.) Koch. Common.

SAXIFRAGACEAE

- Saxifraga virginiana* Michx. Frequent.

ROSACEAE

- Spiraea salicifolia* L. Frequent.
Potentilla arguta Pursh. Frequent.
P. canadensis L. Common. Flowers from May to early August.
Rosa setigera Michx. Common.
R. Woodsii Lindl. Frequent.

LEGUMINOSAE

- Trifolium pratense* L. Common.
T. hybridum L. Common.
Lespedeza hirta (L.) Hornem. Common.
Melilotus officinalis (L.) Lam. Common.
M. alba Desr. Common.
Amorpha canescens Pursh. Common.
Petalostemum purpureum (Vent.) Rydb. Frequent.
P. candidum Michx. Common.
Desmodium canadense (L.) DC. Common.
Vicia villosa Roth. Common.
Lupinus perennis L. Frequent.
Baptisia bracteata (Muhl.) Ell. Occasional

OXALIDACEAE

- Oxalis corniculata* L. Common.

POLYGALACEAE

- Polygala sanguinea* L. Common.

EUPHORBIACEAE

Euphorbia corollata L. Common.

RHAMNACEAE

Ceanothus americanus L. Frequent.

HYPERICACEAE

Hypericum perforatum L. Common.

VIOLACEAE

Viola pedata L. Frequent.

V. lanceolata L. Frequent.

V. cucullata Ait. Common.

ONAGRACEAE

Oenothera biennis L. Common.

UMBELLIFERAE

Eryngium yuccifolium Michx. Common.

Carum Carvi L. Frequent.

Thaspium aureum Nutt. Frequent.

Daucus Carota L. Frequent.

PRIMULACEAE

Dodecatheon Meadia L. Common.

GENTIANACEAE

Gentiana Andrewsii Griseb. Common.

ASCLEPIADACEAE

Asclepias incarnata L. Common.

A. syriaca L. Common.

A. verticillata L. Common.

CONVOLVULACEAE

Ipomoea purpurea (L.) Roth. Frequent.

Convolvulus sepium L. Common.

C. arvensis L. Frequent.

BORAGINACEAE

Lilthospermum canescens (Michx.) Lehm. Common.

VERBENACEAE

Verbena hastata L. Frequent.

V. bracteosa Michx. Common.

LABIATAE

Physostegia virginiana (L.) Benth. Frequent.

Monarda fistulosa L. Common.

Pycnanthemum pycnanthemoides (Leavenw.) Fernald. Common.

SOLONACEAE

Physalis pruinosa L. Common.

SCROPHULARIACEAE

Verbascum Thapsus L. Common.

Veronica virginica L. Frequent.

Pedicularis canadensis L. Common.

PLANTAGINACEAE

Plantago major L. Common.

P. lanceolata L. Frequent.

LOBELIACEAE

Lobelia spicata Lam. Common.

L. inflata L. Frequent.

COMPOSITAE

Vernonia fasciculata Michx. Frequent.

Eupatorium purpureum L. Frequent.

E. perfoliatum L. Frequent.

Liatrix pycnostachya Michx. Common.

L. pycnostachya Michx. f. *Hubrichti* E. Anderson. Rare.

Solidago ulmifolia Muhl. Frequent.

S. canadensis L. Common.

S. serotina Ait. Common.

S. juncea Ait. Frequent.

Aster novae-angliae L. Common.

A. laevis L. Common.

A. puniceus L. Frequent.

Erigeron annuus (L.) Pears. Frequent.

<i>E. ramosus</i> (Walt.) BSP.	Common.
<i>Antennaria neodioica</i> Greene.	Common.
<i>Gnaphalium polycephalum</i> Michx.	Frequent.
<i>Silphium laciniatum</i> L.	Common.
<i>S. perfoliatum</i> L.	Common.
<i>Parthenium integrifolium</i> L.	Common.
<i>Ambrosia trifida</i> L.	Common.
<i>A. artemisiifolia</i> L.	Common.
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> L.	Common.
<i>Helianthus tuberosus</i> L.	Common.
<i>Achillea Millefolium</i> L.	Abundant.
<i>Anthemis Cotula</i> L.	Frequent.
<i>Chrysanthemum Leucanthemum</i> L.	Frequent.
<i>C. Parthenium</i> (L.) Bernh.	Rare.
<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i> Nutt.	Common.
<i>Cirsium arvense</i> (L.) Scop.	Frequent.
<i>C. pumilum</i> (Nutt.) Spreng.	Common.
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> Weber.	Common.

CEDAR RAPIDS,
IOWA

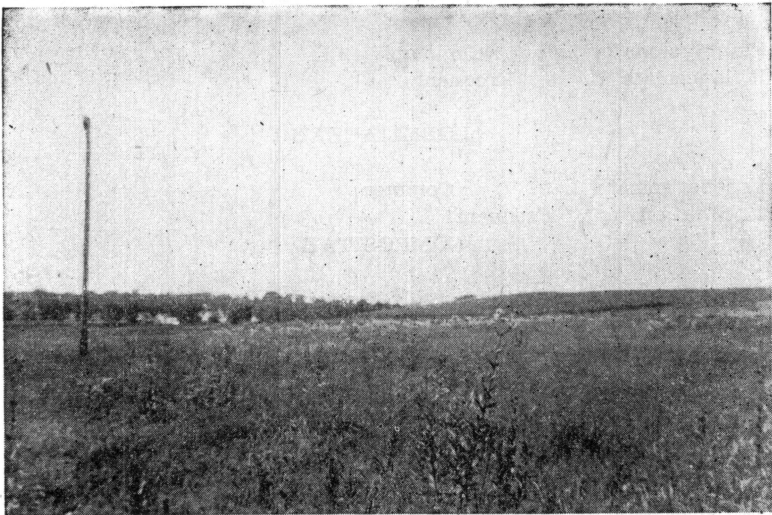


Fig. 1. The prairie area from the center looking toward the southeast.