

Newspaper Articles about Cedar Bog 1940s

Resource: Champaign County Library

Newspaper Article:

Date: April 26, 1940

Permits Will Be Issued Visitors To Cedar Swamp

In order to preserve and protect the Murdoch sections of Cedar Swamp from destruction, Miss Florence Murdoch as announced a new plan of limiting visitors to the swamp land.

Miss Murdoch has printed cards which permit the bearers to visit Cedar Swamp, and which must be presented at the Oscar Evilsizor home before entering the land. Evilsizor is the tenant on the Murdoch land and resides at the house on the south side of the Woordburn road, next to the Big Four Railroad tracks. The card pledge the bearer not to pick flowers or destroy wild life.

Cedar Swamp is the result of glacial action and contains many rare plants and flora not found elsewhere in this section of the United States. An attempt was made several years to have the district purchased by the state, but the plan never materialized.

Miss Murdoch resides at 2448 Maplewood avenue, Cincinnati, and it is requested that persons wishing to visit the swamp write her beforehand in order to obtain a signed permit.

Resource: Champaign County Library
Newspaper Article: **The Columbus Sunday Dispatch**
Date: July 13, 1941

Original article contained several pictures. Here is the caption:

“Above, left, is a glimpse of Cedar swamp, which contains many bog plants. Upper center photo shows a branch-tip of the charming, rare, little dwarf birch of the Artic tundra, while in circle is a close-up of a spike of grass-pink orchids. At upper right is a view of the bog-meadow at Cedar swamp. – Photos by Thomas.”

Cedar Swamp Treasure

By Edward S. Thomas (Curator of Natural History, Ohio State University)

A season would never be complete without two or three visits to Cedar swamp, that treasure-trove of rare northern and rare bog plants. Once could, in fact, visit it every two weeks during the growing season and find a different lot of plants in flower on each occasion.

And so it was this time. I think that I had never before visited the swamp at the exact flowering season in which we found it, though I have been there many times during the past 20 years.

I had driven to Urbana, where I gave a nature talk to the Urbana Lions club and after the lecture I drove the few miles south to the swamp with three Urbana men: Common Pleas Judge Marion M. Owen, a classmate of mine, in college days; R. M. Fosnight, superintendent of the city schools, and R.L. LaRue, superintendent of the Urbana water works.

* * *

Upon arriving at our destination, we immediately started north along the east fork of little Cedar run and suddenly, in a few steps, we had entered upon a new country.

It was difficult to realize that only a few moments before we had been driving through some of the richest agricultural lands in Ohio. Now we were in a wilderness which might have been transplanted from Michigan or Canada.

All about us were arbor vitae or “white cedar” trees. Cedar run, a typical northern trout stream, was bordered with sedges and rushes and cattails, while floating on its surface were large mats of water cress.

No dwelling of any sort was in sight; in fact, we could not see a dozen feet beyond us, in all but impenetrable tangle of vegetation.

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The going, as well we knew from previous experiences, was slow and treacherous. There were tangles of fallen cedar trees barring the way and underfoot were boggy quagmires into which the incautious traveler might sink up to the waist.

Not the least of the inconveniences was the abundance of poison sumac bushes. Once in guiding the group through a tangle, I found in spite of my caution, that I had brushed right through the midst of a particularly thrifty poison sumac bush.

I am glad to say that I did not subsequently develop a case of poisoning and I sincerely hope that the same is true of my companions.

* * *

The prize discovery of our trip through the cedar wood was finding a colony of purple-fringed orchids, flowering aristocrats, rare, delicate, beautiful. Purple-fringed orchids are so rare in central Ohio that it has been many years since I have seen a single plant so close to Columbus, let alone a fine colony. There ensued a half-hour wait, while I attempted some color pictures of the lovely plants.

There also ensued a banquet for the mosquitoes. It is absolutely impossible to fight mosquitoes and take pictures at the same time, and I wanted the pictures.

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When we finally emerged from the woods upon the sunny marl flats to the north we had another thrill. The entire area was dotted with the magenta-pink flowers of another little orchid, the grass pink.

I had found grass pinks at the place before, but I never dreamed that they were so plentiful, since I had not before happened to find them at the height of their bloom.

It really made a thrilling sight. There were the marl flats along the brook, damp from dozens of spring-seepages; the white, limey ground sparsely vegetated with delicate marsh grasses and sedges. And as far as we could see, here and there were little patches of deep pink of the orchids.

* * *

There were other rare plants, scarcely less beautiful, though not so striking. There were many specimens of the glutinous triantha, with grass-like leaves and foamy spikes of white flowers raising their heads above the surrounding vegetation.

There was another charming little plant, whose unfamiliar name gives you no idea of its grace and beauty; the glaucous anticlea, which I had seen in flower on only a few occasions. It, too, had grasslike leaves and a cluster of whitish flowers at the summit of a slender stem.

To give you an idea of the rarity of these two little gems, let me say that the triantha is known from but five of our 88 Ohio counties, while the anticlea has been recorded from only seven.

* * *

The shrub zone which borders the marl flats was also fascinating, although there were not many plants in bloom. It consisted very largely of the shrubby cinquefoil, a rare Canadian plant, with occasional clumps of dwarf birch, a charming little shrub, with dainty, scalloped leaves about the size of one's thumb-nail.

It, like so many of its companions, is a northern plant, its range extending north of the Arctic circle. It has been reported from but four Ohio counties, of which Champaign is by far the southern-most.

* * *

The abundance of Canadian plants in this southern locality may be explained by the effects of the Ice Age. When, some 50,000 years ago, the ice front pushed down from the north, it brought with it a host of arctic plants and animals, which literally fled southward before the advancing ice. When the ice departed at length, the southern flora and fauna gradually exterminated these relics of a past era.

But at Cedar swamp, the cold, boggy, springy soils, heavily choked with lime, provided an inhospitable medium for the southern flora. Here a last small remnant of Ice Age plants has been able to hold its own, and here we see them today, venerable relics of a former climate.

Cedar swamp is the last remaining arbor vitae box in the state.

* * *

Mr. Fosnight was very anxious to find some specimens of the carnivorous pitcher plant. I had told him that I had found specimens at the swamp, but that they had been very rare, in my experience.

We did not succeed in our quest, but we found another insect-eater which was fully as attractive and interesting. While I was photographing a group of grass-pink orchids in the marl flats, I happened to spy a little clump of sun-dew plants, growing on a bit of moss at the base of an arbor-vitae seedling.

More cunning and fascinating little plants could scarcely be imagined. I passed a hand lens around to the men and when they glimpsed them under the glass, the exclamations of pleasure might have been those of a lot of school girls, rather than a group of mature professional men. I hope that all of you may have the same privilege some time.

* * *

Imagine a tiny plant, a rosette of long-stemmed, quarter-inch, round leaves spreading out on the moss, each covered with rose-red hairs. Each of the hairs had at its tip a minute drop of sticky "dew," which under the lens was as beautiful as spun glass.

The entire leaf, as a matter of fact, is a living bit of sticky flypaper. When a minute insect happens to alight upon a leaf, it is held momentarily by the sticky drops at the tips of the hairs. Then, almost as though the plant were sentient, adjacent hairs bend over and press the doomed victim down upon the flat surface of the leaf.

Soon, all that can be seen is a tangle of sticky red hairs covering a dark speck in the middle of the leaf. In time, the insect is digested and absorbed by the plant, providing precious nitrogen in a habitat almost devoid of that indispensable element.

* * *

As we made our way out through the woodland, we had to wade through acres of wood nettles. We were dressed in fairly serviceable clothing, but in time the stinging hairs of the pesky plants got in their work and our knees were soon a-fire with nettle rash.

It is a fortunate thing that an antidote for the nettle poison often grows close at hand. We found bountiful colonies of jewel-weed or wild touch-me-not growing actually among the nettles and it was a real pleasure to prove to my companions how quickly the juice from the crushed jewelweed stems will stop the intolerable stinging from the nettle hairs.

Resource: Champaign County Library

Newspaper Article:

Date: September 11, 1941

Nature Tour Of Swamp Planned

Arthur R. Harper, Columbus, famous Ohio naturalist, will conduct a nature study tour of the Cedar Swamp area Saturday morning, it was announced today.

The tour, which will begin at 9 a.m. at the Russell Dallas farm, is for teachers of the county, Mechanicsburg, and Urbana schools, but any other interested persons are invited to join the group and make the tour.

A similar tour was conducted last year.

Resource: Champaign County Library

Newspaper Article:

Date: October 24, 1941

Valuable Area In County To Be Protected

The State Board of Control today released the sum of \$5,000 for the purchase of between 90 and 100 acres at Cedar Swamp, land which is part of the 227-acre plat which Charles Burnside acquired last March from Mrs. Louise Murdock, Cincinnati.

It was stated that the purchase price represents a basic price of \$55 an acre, which was established after several conferences between Burnside and officials of the Ohio State Historical and Archeological Society. The society will have title to the land, and plans to develop into a state memorial.

E. C. Zepp, curator of state memorials of the society; his assistant, J. R. Lawwil; Edward F. Thomas curator of natural history of the society; and others worked hard toward the state's acquisition of the land, which contains perhaps the rarest arborvitae in the United States.

Governor John W. Bricker, a native of adjoining Madison county, and State Representative Harold W. Houston both have shown a very sympathetic attitude toward the plan of the state to acquire the famous Cedar Swamp.

The Burnside farm—90 acres or more of which is plain swampland, and the portion the state will get—is only one of a number of farms at Cedar Swamp, and it is believed that the state in time will acquire more of the swamp from various owners.

It was stated that Burnside had others who were willing to purchase his entire farm and that he was pleased when the Historical Society acquired it, with the promise that rare natural specimens will be preserved.

Both Burnside and the state made concessions to arrive at the basic price.

This price, while really more than the swamp land is worth for practical purposes, may become the established price in future land purchases by the state, it was stated.

The Ohio Department of Conservation long had attempted to obtain Cedar Swamp, but negotiations fell through when farmers, it was said, asked prohibitive prices for the swamp land.

Since then, the rare arborvitae has been desecrated to such an extent, it was said, the state felt it had to step in at once if any of these remnants of the glacial period are to be preserved, and the historical society worked to this end.

Cedar Swamp has for many years been a mecca for nature lovers from this and other states, phenomena that have abounded in the swamp section. It was a result of the glacial age, when sections of Canadian soil and plant life were carried here by the glaciers. A concerted campaign was conducted by the Citizen and numerous interested groups several years ago, and the Ohio Legislature appropriated funds for purchase of the area. The appropriation, however was vetoed by ex-Governor Davey.

Resource: Champaign County Library

Newspaper Article:

Date: February 27, 1942

Plants Native To Far North Are Found In Cedar Swamp In Urbana Township

Have you ever visited Cedar Swamp? Perhaps you will after you have read this description of it, written by Edward S. Thomas, curator of Natural History, Ohio State Museum. It is a part of his recommendations the swamp be made a permanent wild life reservation. Here's what Thomas has to say:

Cedar Swamp is the last remaining arbor vitae bog in Ohio. It is a bit of Canada, transplanted into west central Ohio.

The swamp consists of a belt of boggy ground adjacent to Cedar Run, located in Sections 31 and 2, Urbana township, Champaign county. Numerous spring-seepages, heavily charged with dissolved limestone, come to the surface along the valley of the run, resulting in what is known as a marl bog, a belt of soggy, calcareous soil. This soil has resulted in the perpetuation, in addition to the arbor vitae, or "white cedar" trees, of a host of other rare plants, unique or exceedingly rare in the remainder of the state.

There are many Canadian plants, brought down with the glaciers of the ice age, 25,000 or more years ago. With the eventual retreat of the ice front, upon the advent of a warmer era, the southern vegetation quickly reconquered the territory from which it had been driven by the ice, choking out the northern plants, which could survive only in a Canadian climate. Only in a few restricted spots, such as Cedar Swamp, where the soils are such that the vigorous southern plants can not thrive, have the Canadian refugees been able to hold out through the centuries which have elapsed since the ice age. Here, then, we have a colony, the most impressive and striking of any in the state, of venerable relics of a former climate. If, for any reason, they should become exterminated, through drainage or grazing, they are gone forever. In the present climate, there is no hope that they may again reestablish themselves.

Among the relict plants above mentioned may be listed such rare and beautiful things as the showy lady slipper orchid, often called the queen of American wildflowers, now almost extinct in the state; the famed fringed gentian, also facing almost certain extermination unless drastic measures are taken to provide sanctuaries for it; the rare dwarf birch, known from but four counties in Ohio, a boreal shrub which finds its metropolis in the Canadian tundra, extending north to beyond the Arctic Circle; and dozens of other rare and vanishing plants.

Bordering the bog proper are some fine examples of swamp forest. These are essential to the preservation of the bog plants, being a buffer against the hot winds and other weather conditions which otherwise would destroy the northern bog plants.

Cedar Swamp is an important element in the history of Ohio. It was visited and studied by William S. Sullivant, famous Columbus pioneer botanist, and by many illustrious botanists since his time. It is today used extensively by the botany classes of Ohio State University and other Ohio colleges, where the students can see in our own state of Ohio, plants which otherwise they might have to travel hundreds of miles to the north to see. Thus, in addition to being one of the natural wonder spots of Ohio, Cedar Swamp is of practical value as an outdoor laboratory for students of geology, botany, and conservation.

From the economic standpoint, Cedar Swamp may be a key spot from the point of view of water conservation. There is reason to believe that the underground lake which furnishes the water supply for the city of Urbana, a few miles to the north, comes to the surface in the form of springs at Cedar Swamp. The supply of well water for industrial and domestic use in Urbana has been rapidly dwindling within the past decade. It is entirely possible that the draining of Cedar Swamp might reduce Urbana's water supply to the vanishing point.

The owner of the major portion of the swamp now proposes immediately to drain and lumber it. To do so would, in my opinion, result in a major calamity, an irreparable loss to the citizens of Ohio; the destruction of a unique natural feature; and a backward step for water conservation in the central Mad River Valley. I consider the situation an emergency of the highest order.

Edward Thomas
Curator of Natural History
Ohio State Museum
Columbus, Ohio

Resource: Champaign County Library

Newspaper Article:

Date: April 22, 1942

To Preserve Cedar Swamp;

Section Important For Rare Plants Not Found Elsewhere In This Area

Almost a century of local botanical science and two hundred centuries of geological plant history were spanned late Tuesday when a deed for 88 acres of Cedar Swamp land to the State of Ohio was filed with County Recorder Paul Tidd. For years the Cedar Swamps in the south central part of Champaign county has been noted among botany authorities and students for numerous plants not found anywhere else in the state.

Now the vision of many nature students has become a reality as the state will prevent the destruction of these rare specimens of plant life of other times and other climes. The tract of land acquired by the state is about a half mile in length north and south and averages about a quarter mile in width. It is located on both sides of the Woodburn Road and is traversed its entire length by Cedar Creek. The land was acquired from Mrs. Marguerite Burnside for the sum of \$4,438.50.

While Cedar Swamps was noted many years ago by the botanists for its rare plant specimens it is doubtful if the cause and the real importance of the flora there received even a fraction of the attention it deserved. It is of great interest and importance to botanists and advanced nature study classes but to the general public it fails to live up to expectations as a show place of any real interest or importance.

According to scientists this plant life was brought south by the same ice sheets which deposited the granite boulders in the western section of Champaign county. Many of the plants are similar to those found under similar conditions in Wisconsin but it is not clearly proven whether they originally came from that section of the country or whether the Wisconsin and Cedar Swamp plants were carried down from the same area in Canada.

Milo G. Williams, first president of Urbana University, is believed to have been the first to discover that certain plants were found in Champaign county which did not exist in other sections of the state. He was a scientist of national reputation and was credited by the scientific men of his time as the first to discover a number of plant specimens. His botanical investigations were made almost a century ago, the majority in the era which included 1850.

President Williams made a botanical collection in the form of a herbarium which is still in the possession of the local college.

It is doubtful if the Division of State Memorials of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society will be able to make many improvements before the need of the present national emergency but steps will be taken to protect the plant life from destruction by the lowering of the water levels, the indiscriminate removal of plants by botanists for other collections and by unintentional inroads by the general public.

Several years ago seeing that this important scientific collection was doomed to destruction unless immediate steps were taken to protect it a local group of those interested brought the matter to the attention of state scientific groups and state officials. A year ago Curator Edward Thomas of the Natural History section of the Ohio State Museum became actively interested. Assisted by Representative Harold W. Houston and many others, the matter was brought to the attention of Governor Bricker and met with his approval.

In the transfer of the property Tuesday, the state was represented by Erwin C. Zepp, curator, Division of State Memorials and his assistant, J. R. Lawwill.

Resource: Champaign County Library
Newspaper Article: Urbana Daily Citizen
Date: April 28, 1942

**Cincinnati, Ohio,
April 28, 1942**

**To the Editor,
Urbana Daily Citizen
Urbana, Ohio**

I am delighted to learn through your paper that the state has at last purchased part of Cedar Swamp, for now this thing of beauty will have a fair chance to be a joy forever.

It seems only fair to the memory of my mother, Mrs. James R. Murdoch, owner of this portion of the Swamp for the past fifty years, to recall that but for her solicitude, and the co-operation of the tenants who guarded it, (John Geron, Irving Evilsizer, and Jasper and Oscar Evilsizer) there would have been but little worth preserving now. Mr. Randall who owns the south portion of the Swamp also deserves our gratitude for its preservation.

We have always encouraged the use of the Swamp for scientific study, and have cultivated the interest of State officials, notifying them of threats of drainage or other destruction. It is to be regretted that the State did not complete its plans for the purchase during our ownership, when it might have been acquired for a fraction of the present cost.

In spite of our care, many of the rare plants have been trampled out or pulled up, but now, with adequate protection, the whole area may revert to its primeval beauty. Let us hope that everyone will give the heartiest co-operation to those in charge of making this area a true Sanctuary for all wild life, and an inspiration and refreshment for the trouble souls of humanity.

Very sincerely yours,
Florence Murdoch

Resource: Champaign County Library
Newspaper Article: Daily Citizen, Urbana
Date: July 23, 1942

Sale Of Cedar Swamp To State Is Completed

When a deed was filed this week transferring 9.68 acres of Urbana township land from the Harry Booher farm to the State of Ohio, it completed the first step to give Champaign county the most important natural botanical museum and laboratory in the state.

This transfer gives the state a tract of almost 100 acres of Cedar Swamp land on which grows many plants not found anywhere else in Ohio. The park is located in the Mad River valley about five miles south of Urbana.

This Cedar Swamp area is now listed among the "prehistorical memorials" by the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society and is described as "a bit of Canada transplanted into west central Ohio. Many plants grow here that are found only in the arctic regions."

The completion of the purchase of the land now brings the question of how to preserve and maintain the plant life so that it will be of the greatest interest and benefit to the public and to the scientist. During the agitation over a period of several years for the purchase of this land by the state, the general public received Cedar Swamp contained of interest to them. Some persons apparently would not have been surprised to have found polar bears roaming around, penguins swimming in Cedar Creek and musk ox grazing.

In all frankness, it must be admitted that notwithstanding the great interest of the expert botanists in many of the plants and shrubs, the average citizen would see only weeds and trees in the area of the swampy thicket. To John Q. Public a weed is a weed even if it is the only one in Ohio while to the scientist it may be one of the small pieces of a jigsaw puzzle when properly placed aids in giving a general idea of the geological history of the country. To the average citizen only the unusual number of evergreens indicate a difference between this and any other lowland thicket.

For a number of years botanists from this and other states have been making studies of the plant life of Cedar Swamp.

The rare plants are easily destroyed and are endangered by two classes of persons—those who do so through ignorance and the taking of rare specimens by those who are too wise and want them for their own collections. At present there is little available funds for the proper development of the park. To enclose it with a tight fence with some one in charge to direct visitors and see that no damage is done is said to be impossible with the present financial restrictions.

In April, 83.77 acres were purchased by the state from Mrs. Marguerite Burnside. The 9.68 acres included in the deed filed this week is a long narrow wedge shaped strip bordering the land first purchased on the west. In the sale of both tracts for the park the state has been represented by Erwin C. Zepp, curator of the divisions of state memorials, while the property owners were represented by Atty. Edwin English, who also prepared both deeds.

The deed filed this week was from Harry W. Booker, Eleanor Bowsher and Walter Booher to the State of Ohio.

Resource: Champaign County Library
Newspaper Article: Daily Citizen, Urbana
Date: February 5, 1943

Mad River Condemned As Propagation Stream

For more than three decades Mad River and its tributaries have been linked with trout in the minds of many Ohio fishermen. Many investigations have been made and much data collected regarding the streams of this fertile valley as a place where these finny beauties can be propagated.

In a recent column by George Robey in a state paper the following paragraphs on this point were included.

“Ohio’s Mad River has been condemned as a suitable trout habitat except for creelable trout that have been planted each spring for the past two years just previous to the opening of the season on April 1. The decision was announced by Dr. T. H. Langlois of the Stone Laboratories, Gibraltar Island, Lake Erie. Recent conferences with his assisting fish management, who have surveyed the Mar river possibilities, indicated that there is no hope of trout propagation in this stream.”

He stated further: “The large trout which are planted each year are easy to catch and are taken on everything from worms to doughballs for a short period after planting.”

“Efforts to improve the stream as a habitat for small trout apparently have not been successful with the type of concrete dam which has been built in one or two locations for experiment.”

“Fly fishermen throughout the state, however, continue to advocate the improvement of the stream to accommodate smaller sportier trout. Low inexpensive log dams which clear themselves of silt are suggested.”

“Commissioner Don Waters has not issued an official statement regarding the Mad River situation and sport fishermen continue to hope that they yet may see the day when a portion of the river will be so improved and reserved for the use of artificial flies exclusively.”

Local fishing authorities, who have been more or less directly connected with the efforts to make Mad river live up to its reputation as a trout stream admit that the views given above contain much truth but they are of the opinion that there is a possibility that spawning beds for trout could be arranged in some of the Mad river tributaries which are never muddy and are always at least cool. The stream usually mentioned first in this line of reasoning is Cedar Creek which rises in the northern end of Cedar Swamp and flows for quite a distance well protected from the sun and with neighboring land which is not cultivated to provide muddy water.

The first effort to stock a Champaign county stream with trout is believed to have been made by a group of Urbana fishermen, including Bob Kirby, Ed Holding, Core Ireland and others, who purchased 1,100 brook trout from “Bun” Cushman who then owned the fish hatchery at Zanesfield. These were placed in Cedar Creek. The trout were from seven to nine inches when released.

Eight years later a specimen weighing three pound four ounces and measuring 18 1/2 inches was caught by Frank Nichols, then superintendent of the Urbana Township school. The entire Mad river valley was stocked by the Dayton flood of 1913 when the water rose to more than eight feet above Cushman ponds.

Cushman abandoned his efforts to rescue his hatchery and went West. Thirteen years later Cushman returned and stated anew. He recovered for his pools 24 trout from 18 to 24 inches in length. These fish, largely rainbows, were caught in traps in Mad River valley streams.

Mad river was opened by the state to trout fishing in 1932. From time to time it has been stocked with legal size rainbows and brown trout. While a number of large specimens of both varieties have been taken in Mad river there is no evidence that they were hatched there.

Resource: Champaign County Library

Newspaper Article:

Date:

Naturalists Study Ohio's Last Arbor Vitae Bog

By Edward S. Thomas

On May 15 I had the pleasure of leading a field trip through Cedar Swamp State Memorial for members of the Upper Maumee Valley Naturalists Club, who had driven down to the swamp from the northwestern corner of the state.

Included in the party were Otto E. Ehrhart, veteran photographer – taxidermist – naturalist of Antwerp; Arther S. Brooks, Van Wert, largest grower of chives in the country and crack amateur botanist; Mr. and Mrs. Fred Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Addison and Denton Retetler, all of Van Wert; Mr. and Mrs. Homer D. Notestine, Vern and Hadyn Notestine of Lewistown, and Julian Hicov of Antwerp.

Cedar Swamp is the sole remaining arbor vitae bog in Ohio. It is situated in the broad valley of the Mad River, about half way between Urbana and Springfield.

The Mad River Valley has the aspects of a great, preglacial river valley but Wilbur Stout, veteran Ohio geologist, informs me that the long, wide through was formed when two lobes of the last ice sheet pushed in from each direction, east and west, and almost, but not quite came together at this area. With the melt-water from two great glaciers spilling into the valley, the Mad River must have been subjected to floods of terrific volume. Even so, the bordering land must have been the home of a great number of Canadian plants and animals.

When the ice sheet finally retreated from Ohio, the northern flora and fauna were quickly exterminated by the southern invaders which we see in the state today—except in a few spots, like Cedar Swamp, where for one reason or another the northerners were able to persist. At Cedar Swamp, the soggy ground prevented the southerners from invading, while the Canadians were able to survive.

I was happy to be able to point out many of these northern plants to the Upper Maumee naturalists; arbor vitae or white cedar; the attractive shrubby dwarf birch, whose range extends north to the Arctic circle; the speckled alder, here at its southernmost station in the state; the dainty, pixie-like star flower, with little white stars on threadlike stems, known from but 8 Ohio counties, this station the southernmost; the dwarf two-leaf Solomon's plume or wild lily-of-the-valley. There was another northerner which was interesting, but we gave it a wide berth—the poison sumac, which is restricted to cold, northern bogs.

Wild columbine was flowering freely. We found several clumps of the small yellow ladyslipper. This rare orchid is rapidly approaching extermination over the state, but here in this sanctuary, administered by the State Historical Society, it is hoped that it will continue to thrive.

In the deep, dark arbor vitae border, the bulblet fern was one of the commonest of plants, outnumbering all other ferns combined. It is equally abundant on the dolomite cliffs at Fort Hill State Memorial. No two habitats would seem to be more diverse than dry, limestone cliffs, exposed to the sun and the moist, heavily shaded peat of the cedar woods.

Two things the two habitats have in common: abundance of limestone and the chemicals associated with it, and freedom from crowding by tall rank-growing plants. Both spots, believe it or not, are dry habitats for much of the year, since the bog is so cold that plants can not absorb the water until relatively late in the spring. The same situation obtains with the arbor vitae, which grows both on limestone cliffs and in alkaline bogs.

The marl flats to the north of the woods present a strikingly different habitat, where lime-choked seepages have deposited lime all over the ground. Many Atlantic coast plants have survived here, believed to have migrated into the area along the glacial front and there are several kinds of Atlantic coast insects which have survived the 15,000-odd years which have elapsed since those days. Grasses and sedges hold sway for the most part, with occasional seedling cedars, and a few rare herbs of various sorts. Here none of the commonplace plants can establish a foothold. Every thing may be classed as a rarity.

Resource: Champaign County Library

Newspaper Article:

Date: No Date



Thomas

Cedar Swamp Links Past, Present South of Urbana

By Edward S. Thomas

One pleasant winter day we drove to Cedar Swamp, Jacob A. Meckstroth, Dr. David H. Stansbery and I. Meckstroth is one of the trustees of the Ohio Historical Society; Dr. Stansbery is curator of natural history for the society.

Cedar Swamp, a state nature preserve, administered by the historical society, is the only remaining arbor vitae bog in Ohio and is the home of many other unusual plants and animals. I have often likened it to a bit of Canada transplanted in Ohio.

From Columbus, we drove west over Rt. 161. West of Plain City, we suddenly were in the black-land prairie country, with deep, rich soils and level topography. One of the characteristic trees in the prairie country is the bur oak. There were many handsome, old bur oaks with rounded, spreading tops, their great boles with deep-furrowed bark.

Just as suddenly, a few miles west of the village of Irwin, we found ourselves driving over rugged hills of clay and gravel deposits left by the Wisconsin glaciers. These extended all the way to Urbana and could be seen on our left, as we drove south over Rt. 68.



Ice Age Relic—Cedar Swamp is the only arbor vitae bog in Ohio. Northerners have survived over the centuries.

Cedar Swamp is situated in the Mad River valley south of Urbana. We could see the slender evergreen spires of the arbor vitae or white cedar before we actually realized we were approaching a bog. In that portion of the state a dense thicket of evergreens is noteworthy.

Through the bog flows little Cedar Run, clear and cold, an outstanding feature of the place. On its surface we could see patches of floating water cress.

We found many other northern plants in addition to the arbor vitae trees. Among the more unusual was the speckled alder, a small tree which is here at the southernmost station in Ohio, perhaps in the United States, except in high elevations in the mountains. It is an attractive little tree, with conspicuous lenticels in its bark like those of a cherry. Its catkins, as usual with the alders, were already well formed, ready to expand with the first warm days of spring.

Similarly, there was the dwarf birch or swampbirch, a rare shrub (the only shrubby birch south of Canada), also a northern plant, here at its southernmost station in Ohio, and likely in the United States.

Another noteworthy plant was the shrubby cinquefoil, the only woody member of its clan in our area. It also extends far to the north, almost to the Arctic Circle. In summer, the dense, compact shrubs are studded with golden five-petaled flowers.

In addition to the northern plants and animals, there are a number of members of the prairie biota. I was able to point out two tall prairie grasses, the big bluestem and the Indian grass, a

bright golden-buff at this time of year. A few seeds of the Indian grass were still clinging to the flowering spikes, interesting for being covered with soft, silken hairs. Among the prairie animals might be mentioned the massasauga or swamp rattle-snake, in hibernation, of course, at this season.

Cedar Swamp is a venerable relic of the Ice Age. When the glaciers crept down from the north, their progress was so slow that the Canadian plants were able to keep abreast of the advance of the ice. A fringe of northern plants (and animals, of course) existed along the glacial front throughout the Ice Age.

Proof of this is found in the presence of fossil pollen of northern trees such as fir and spruce in the bottom layers of sediment in glacial relict bogs and the occurrence of fossil remains of northern animals like musk-ox and woolly mammoth in the same bogs.

When the glaciers began to retreat, with the advent of a warmer climate, the Canadian plants and animals also retreated northward, with the southern biota which is so familiar today hot on their heels. The northern flora and fauna could not compete with the southerners in most situations under the warmer conditions. Mostly, the northerners were quickly exterminated and replaced by our present-day biota.

Only in a very few situations where, because of cool microclimates or inhospitable soil conditions, the southern plants and animals have been unable to invade have the northerners survived over the centuries, relics of a climate long-since gone. Cedar Swamp is one of these.

