

The State Flower of Iowa

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election and ordination." (4) That the action in the case of Bishop Andrews was one of the greatest blots on the pages of Methodist history. (5) That the General Conference of 1844 was not free from corruption inasmuch as the ballot box was thrice "stuffed" in the election of the bishops, more ballots being cast than there were delegates.

While there are plenty more interesting facts concerning Methodism that might be related, probably enough has been written. Lest some other church should begin to feel virtuous, permit me to say that all churches which were national in their scope at that time were just as bad as the Methodists. In fact, the Quakers were about the only church people who were consistently opposed to slavery. Church leaders should take warning from the fact that the impetus of the antislavery movement came from William Lloyd Garrison who could find no rest in any church of his day.

I believe Mr. Young was seeking only truth. Here it is. Lest he think I am an iconoclast may I say that I am, by accident, a Methodist, that I am a local preacher in the Methodist church, and a teacher in fairly good standing in a Methodist college.

C. B. Swaney.

THE STATE FLOWER OF IOWA

As bearing upon the initiation of legislative selection of our state flower we learn that it grew out of a provision of the silver service for the Battleship Iowa of which we published something in the July, 1926, *ANNALS*.

From documentary sources we find that after the appropriation had been made and following a correspondence by Governor Drake and the Executive Council on the one part and Hon. John A. Kasson and Admiral John G. Walker on the other part, a contract was entered into with J. E. Caldwell & Co. of Philadelphia for the manufacture of the service. In the memorandum of agreement June 13, 1896, the company engaged to furnish in advance of manufacture, tracings of all decorations proposed to be engraved on the different pieces. On July 7, 1896, the manufacturers transmitted to Governor Drake, "a set of tracings from the original designs of the silver service * * * and also a set of photogravures taken from the designs." Subsequent letters indicate details of designs favored in addition to the ones suggested by the manufacturers of July 7. The photogravure shows one detail is a conventional wild rose.

As for the selection of "the"—not "a"—wild rose as our floral emblem, we find the legislative record as follows:

In the Journal of the Senate of May 5, 1897, extra session of the Twenty-sixth General Assembly, page 1124, Senator Mitchell offered the following concurrent resolution:

Whereas, the Executive Council has authorized the wild rose of Iowa as one of the decorations on the silver service presented to the Battleship Iowa; therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Senate and House concurring, that the wild rose shall be officially designated as the flower of the state. Laid over.

On May 6, page 1141, it is shown that Senator Mitchell called up the concurrent resolution and moved its adoption, but it was lost by a vote of 10 for and 20 against. On May 7, page 1164, occurs the following record:

Senator Perrin moved to reconsider the vote by which the resolution to adopt the "wild rose" as the state flower was lost, stating in connection therewith that the members of the Senate had asked the advice of the State Federation of Women's Clubs now in session at Dubuque, Iowa, and the federation had by vote approved the selection of the wild rose as the official floral emblem of Iowa. The motion to reconsider prevailed. The question recurring on the resolution a division was called for and the resolution was adopted.

On May 7, page 1169, occurs the following record under messages from the House:

Mr. President, I am directed to inform your honorable body that the House has concurred in the following concurrent resolution in which the concurrence of the House was asked: Relative to the wild rose.

James D. Rowen, Chief Clerk.

The *National Geographic Magazine* (Washington) for May, 1917, (Vol. XXXI, No. 5), at page 492 describes, and at page 506 reproduces in color, the wild rose which it says was selected as Iowa's state flower by common consent. It is not shown how or by whom the specific variety was chosen. The specific rose thus described and pictured is *Rosa carolina* L.; *Sosa humilis* Marsh, and popularly distinguished as "Low or Pasture Rose." The Wild Prairie Rose (*Rosa blanda*), says the article, is North Dakota's floral queen.

We quote under our own subtitles the description of both native Iowa roses.

THE WILD ROSE [The State Flower of Iowa]

(*Rosa carolina* L.; *Rosa humilis* Marsh)

There is nothing about the simple loveliness of the wild rose to suggest that she is a queen who has never come into her own; yet, as the original from which all the reigning beauties of the rose fancier's garden and the florist's window have been developed, royal honors are her due. She resembles rather a little flower princess too fragile to brave the dangers of rocky hillsides or meadows close to busy highways. However, nature has provided this seeming innocent with arms for protection and wiles for perpetuation.

Sharp downward-turning prickles discourage cattle from eating the foliage and prevent the field mice from climbing the stems to steal the fruit in the autumn, when the hips, or berries, are ripe. The prickles also help the plant to hold its position when it grows on the side of a bank.

The delicate fragrance of the usually solitary pink blossoms, and the solid center of bright yellow stamens, rich with pollen, attract a variety of insects. Bumblebees, requiring a firmer support than the petals would give, alight directly on the center of the flower, so that pollen from other flowers is likely to reach the pistil. Occasionally self-fertilization takes place in a simply constructed blossom which yields abundant pollen.

"The wild rose never outstays St. Mary Magdalen," is a fairly true English saying, for her day, July 22, generally ends its season. Each delicate flower has about two days of life. During rainy weather the petals fold over the green stigmas and the yellow stamens to protect them from moisture. The blossom closes with the last rays of daylight and reopens as the sun dispels the darkness, so that only the careful observer and the early riser realize that it "draws the drapery of its couch about it and lies down to pleasant-dreams." It is true that some wild roses may be found open at night, but these are the ones whose seeds are fertilized and whose pollen is carried off, so that rain and dew are no longer to be feared.

The bright red "hips" have a pleasant flavor, but their outer covering irritates the throat, and today they are left for wild things to eat. Old writers refer to them as highly esteemed delicacies. "Children with great delight eat the berries thereof when they are ripe, and make chains and other pretty gewgaws of the fruit; cookes and gentlewomen make tarts and suchlike dishes for pleasure," testifies one. We are rich enough in more luscious fruit today to forego this doubtful dainty. The "hip" is designed to tempt the birds, which sometimes drop the seeds it contains miles away from the mother plant.

Large swellings or galls are frequently found on the rose bush. "Robin's Cushions," the country people call them, although they have nothing to relate them to the robin except a somewhat reddish color. Their origin is found in a kind of wasp—the rose gall—which punctures a bud and lays its eggs inside. Numerous larvae are hatched and later

creep into the leaf tissue, while the bud swells into a gall. The taste of these objects is sufficiently unpleasant to have gained for them a reputation for medicinal virtue in earlier days.

The choice of the wild rose, by common consent, as the state flower of Iowa is only one of many tributes to it. English poetry breathes its fragrance in many pretty verses. The scenes of Scott's "Lady of the Lake" are profuse with "wild rose, eglantine, and broom." Yet so elusive is the charm of this blossom's simplicity that it remained for a great American composer to express it most truly in the wistful sweetness of music.

THE WILD PRAIRIE ROSE

(*Rosa blanda*)

North Dakota's floral queen is the species known to botanists as *Rosa blanda*; to others by various names in different localities. Ranging from Newfoundland to New Jersey and westward to where the Rocky Mountains cut off its march toward the land of the setting sun, it is known here as the "smooth," there as the "early," and elsewhere as the "meadow." It is indeed a bland rose, for usually it is entirely unarmed, with neither true thorn nor bark-attached prickle to defend itself. Now and then it may possess a few weak prickles as a sort of family crest or to show its friendliness with its thorny relatives. Its flowers are a trifle larger than those of the climbing rose and change from pink to pure white.

The wild rose has many relatives. Among these are the strawberry, with its tufted stem, the cinquefoils, with their creeping traits, the spike-like burnett and agrimony, the scrambling blackberries and raspberries, the blackthorn and the hawthorn, the cherry, the mountain ash, the apple and the pear—every variety of size and shape and style, from the lowly creeper to the big spreading tree, within the limits of a single flower family.¹

STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
B. Shimek, Professor of Botany

Iowa City, Iowa, Dec. 17, 1926.

Mr. Edgar R. Harlan, Des Moines, Iowa.

My Dear Friend Harlan:

The article which you quote from the *National Geographic Magazine* gives the Wild Rose as the state flower of Iowa. The scientific names which are given with this common name are *Rosa carolina* L. and *Rosa humilis* Marsh. North Dakota's flower is given as the Wild Prairie Rose (*Rosa blanda*).

It is very hard to distinguish between the species of wild roses and there has been much confusion in the names applied to our Iowa forms. *Rosa carolina* and *Rosa humilis* are distinct species and both have been reported from Iowa. Neither, however, is the common rose of Iowa. Indeed, it is possible that we may be compelled to drop *Rosa carolina* from our list as its occurrence has not been determined with any degree of certainty. We do have a rose which answers very well to the description of *Rosa humilis*, but it is not common, hence it would hardly be selected as the state flower.

Our common wild rose of the prairies is *Rosa pratincola* Greene. It is sometimes called the Arkansas Rose, but most commonly it is known as the Wild Prairie Rose. This is not mentioned in the magazine. If we are to regard the most common and most widely distributed species as the state flower it seems to me clear that this is the species which should be designated.

We have another prairie rose, *Rosa Woodsii* Lindl. This is not rare, but is not as common and as universally distributed (in the state) as the preceding

species. The magazine is wrong in calling *Rosa blanda* Ait. the "Wild Prairie Rose." This species is the smoothest of our wild roses. It is not truly a prairie rose but grows at the edges of thickets and in open woods. It is usually larger than the Prairie Rose. It is the most common species in the timbered sections of the state, and it is just barely possible that this was the species intended. It is by no means the most common rose of the state, however. We recognize still another rose, known as *Rosa virginiana* Mill. This usually grows along the edges of our prairie groves, or sometimes on the more open prairie, but it is much less common than *Rosa pratincola*. This has been reported also under the name *Rosa lucida* Ehrh., but this name is a mere synonym of *Rosa virginiana*. *Rosa sayi* Sch. has also been reported, but this is doubtful.

You will see from this statement that it is difficult to pick out the particular rose which was meant. If the man who proposed the rose for our state flower came from a timbered part of the state he probably had *Rosa blanda* in mind; but if he came from the prairie parts of the state he certainly meant *Rosa pratincola*.

I do not know just how much this will help you, but I concluded that a statement in this form would set the facts before you most clearly.

Very sincerely,

B. SHIMEK.

N. B. I should have stated that these roses are so much alike in general appearance that people would not ordinarily distinguish them. The characters by which they are recognized are not conspicuous and do not materially affect the general appearance of the plant.

B. S.

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JOHATHAN BROWNING.

Brownings, March 6, 1850.

—*The Frontier Guardian*, Kanessville (Council Bluffs), Iowa, June 12, 1850. (In the Newspaper Division of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa.)

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