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The Prairie Remnants of the Ames Area

ROBERT W. FRECKMANN¹

Abstract. A list of the vascular plants found on five prairie remnants in the vicinity of Ames, Iowa, was compiled in 1965. The five relics, perhaps the last in the area, support a flora of about 180 native species and at least 32 adventive species. These areas, which include both upland and lowland prairie types, are described in the paper.

The prairies which covered most of Iowa at the time of settlement have been reduced almost everywhere to scattered relics. The five prairie remnants described in this paper may be the last stands of an acre or more remaining within 20 miles of Ames. Fortunately, these five remnants vary sufficiently in soil features and species composition to provide a good representation of Iowa prairie types. Their proximity to Iowa State University makes them particularly valuable, and they have been visited for years by university staff members. However, no general discussion of these areas has been published. It is my objective, therefore, to summarize their botanical features in this paper as background information for future research and as an aid to those working for the preservation of these areas.

METHODS

The five prairie areas listed below were visited several times during the 1965 growing season to obtain as complete a list of the plants present as possible. At least one specimen was collected for nearly every species on the list included in this paper. Because I have attempted to list only those species which were actually a part of the prairie, the limits of the prairie had to be set arbitrarily. Consequently, only those weed species which were associated with several native prairie species have been included.

Information on soil series was obtained from Boone and Story County soil survey reports.

A description of each area follows.

THE AMES HIGH SCHOOL PRAIRIE

Prairie area Number 1 on the species list (table 1) is located on hilltops and slopes in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 34, Franklin Township (T.84N., R. 24 W.), Story County, Iowa, adjacent to the Ames high school. It is within walking distance of the Iowa State University campus; Therefore, it serves as an important outdoor laboratory for several classes, especially the large introductory taxonomy class with its nearly 200 students.

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This area possesses the greatest number of native prairie species of the five relics, but it has also been subjected to the greatest degree of disturbance by grazing and construction activities. A few years ago the prairie covered over 30 acres, but construction of the Ames high school and associated facilities has reduced it to less than 15 acres. The high school building and parking lot occupy much of one hilltop and frequent close mowing of the remainder of this hilltop has greatly decreased the number of prairie plants in favor of *Poa pratensis* and certain lawn weeds such as *Plantago major*, *P. rugellii*, *Trifolium repens*, *Prunella vulgaris*, and *Taraxacum officinale*. Nevertheless, some prairie species, particularly those species characteristic of dry prairies, persist and increase when mowing has been stopped. These species include *Andropogon scoparius*, *Bouteloua curtipendula*, *B. hirsuta*, *Muhlenbergia cuspidata*, and *Antennaria neglecta*.

The original vegetation on the hillside has been removed in part by activities associated with the construction of a stadium. Some interesting changes in species composition have been observed here. Dr. Michel G. Lelong studied this prairie intensively in 1960 and 1961 before a bulldozer removed the topsoil from part of the slope. In the following years he noticed the initial appearance of *Panicum wilcoxianum* in this denuded area, along with the decline of *P. perlongum* and *P. praecocius*. He has presented evidence (Lelong, 1965) to support a hypothesis that *P. wilcoxianum* is a hybrid of the latter two species, requiring disturbed ground for establishment.

The remainder of the Ames high school prairie is divided into several smaller segments by a stream and wooded bottomlands. Shrubs and small trees encroach on the prairie in the gullies and on the slopes, producing a transition zone. However, despite these many sources of disturbance and invasion, small portions of the dry hilltops and more moist slopes contain good examples of xeric and mesic prairie communities. The dominants include *Andropogon gerardii*, *A. scoparius*, *Sorghastrum nutans*, *Stipa spartea*, *Bouteloua curtipendula*, *Panicum virgatum*, *Solidago rigida*, *S. nemoralis*, *Ratibida pinnata*, *Echinacea pallida*, and *Liatis aspera*. The only major prairie species absent here are species of lowland prairies such as *Spartina pectinata*, *Panicum leibergii*, *Eryngium yuccifolium*, and *Phlox pilosa*.

The soils of this prairie are described as Clarion fine sandy loam. These are upland soils with good internal drainage.

BLACK'S PRAIRIE

Black's prairie (area Number 2 on the species list, table 1) is the smallest of the five relics, covering 1.4 acres in a narrow

triangle between the Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks and a gravel road (an extension of South State Ave. in Ames) in sec. 28, Washington Township (T. 83N., R.24W.), Story County. It is owned by Mr. Clyde Black.

This area shows few signs of disturbance and weed species are confined almost entirely to its periphery. Except for a few small individuals of *Pyrus ioensis* and *Sambucus canadensis*, there is no indication of invasion by woody vegetation.

The soils belong to the Nicollet loam series and have rather poor drainage. *Spartina pectinata* dominates the most poorly drained area in the southern corner of the prairie. The dominants elsewhere include *Andropogon gerardii*, *Panicum virgatum*, *Sorghastrum nutans*, *Stipa spartea*, *Silphium laciniatum*, *Solidago rigida*, *S. altissima*, *Liatris pynostachya*, and *L. aspera*.

Viola papilionacea and *V. pedatifida* occur here and apparently hybridize. A striking series of either backcrosses or cleistogamous lines can be collected to bridge the morphological gap between these two species. Similar hybrid swarms have been reported from several other locations in Iowa (Russell, 1953).

THE BOONE PRAIRIE

The Boone prairie (area Number 3 on the species list) is a lowland prairie extending for about a mile along the Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks and State Highway 60, mostly in sec. 30, Jackson Township (T.84N., R25W.), Boone County. The least disturbed part of the prairie covers about 12 acres in a 70-foot wide strip between the highway and the railroad embankment, and in a 30-foot wide strip on the north side of the embankment. The marshy ground, the mowed area along the highway, and the slopes of the railroad embankment also support some prairie vegetation.

This relic is similar to Black's and McCallsburg prairies. The dominants include *Andropogon gerardii*, *A. scoparius*, *Sorghastrum nutans*, *Panicum virgatum*, *Sporobolus heterolepis*, *Stipa spartea*, *Solidago rigida*, *Ratibida pinnata*, and *Silphium laciniatum*. In addition, several species of drier habitats occur here, such as *Bouteloua curtipendula*, *Solidago nemoralis*, and *Aster azureus*. On the other hand, the marshy areas support *Iris virginica*, *Phragmites communis*, *Glyceria striata*, *Spartina pectinata*, *Phalaris arundinacea*, *Cicuta maculata*, *Eleocharis compressa*, and *Scirpus atrovirens*. This prairie also has *Viola papilionacea*, *V. pedatifida*, and numerous hybrids as described in the discussion of Black's prairie.

The Boone prairie seems to be stable and free of woody

plants except for native prairie species as *Amorpha canescens*, *Ceanothus americanus*, and *Rosa arkansas*. The soils include Carrington loam, and the poorly drained Webster loam and Webster silt-clay loam.

THE GILBERT PRAIRIE

The Gilbert prairie (area Number 4) is an upland prairie situated in the northeast corner of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 6, Franklin Township (T.84N., R24W.), Story County, on a farm two miles west of the town of Gilbert. It occupies about 15 acres of high ground which rises abruptly above plowed fields on the west. It is sharply demarcated on the north by a fence which bisects Section 6. The slope is gradual to the south and east where there is a broad region of disturbed ground containing a mixture of prairie plants and weeds.

The dominant species here are similar to those on the Ames high school prairie, but the flora is less rich. The soils are classed as Clarion. The topsoil is thin and the subsoil is very sandy. This hill is evidently well-drained.

Scattered seedlings and a few larger individuals of *Acer negundo* and *Juglans nigra* occur at the edge of the prairie. Most of the disturbance of the topsoil has been confined to the eastern portion. The prairie was mowed in July, 1965, and this has made it difficult to obtain a complete list of late-blooming species.

THE MCCALLSBURG PRAIRIE

The McCallsburg prairie (area Number 5) lies along the Minneapolis and St. Louis railroad and state highway 221 in Warren Township (T.85N., R.22W.), Story County. It consists of a series of segments of prairie vegetation interspersed with disturbed ground. It extends 4 miles to the west of McCallsburg and 2 miles to the east. Because of the discontinuous nature of the prairie, it is difficult to determine the acreage covered.

The vegetation here is quite similar to the Boone prairie, including essentially the same dominant species. The principal soil series is Webster, but there are also areas of Clarion soils.

This relic may be part of the prairie which Shimek (1911) cited as a typical example of the flat prairies of Iowa.

Table 1. Vascular plants found on the Ames (1), Blacks (2), Boone (3), Eilbert (4) and McCallsburg (5) prairies.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| PTERIDOPHYTES | | | | | |
| Equisetaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Equisetum arvense</i> L. | X | X | X | | |
| <i>E. laevigatum</i> A. Br. | | X | X | | X |

GYMNOSPERMAE

Cupressaceae
Juniperus virginiana L. X

MONOCOTYLEDONEAE

Amaryllidaceae
Hypoxis hirsuta (L.) Coville X X X X X
 Commelinaceae
Tradescantia bracteata Small X
 Cyperaceae
Carex brevior Mackenz. X X
C. lasiocarpa Ehrh.
 var. *latifolia* (Bockl.) Gilly X X
C. meadit Dewey X X X
C. sartwellii Dewey X X
C. stricta Lam. X
Eleocharis compressa Sull X
Scirpus atrovirens Willd. X

Gramineae

Agropyron repens (L.) Beauv. X
A. smithii Rydb. X
Agrostis alba L. X
Andropogon gerardii Vitman X X X X X
A. scoparius Mich. X X X X X
Bouteloua curtipendula (Michx.) Torr. X X X X
B. hirsuta Lag. X
 **Bromus inermis* Leyss. X X
 **B. japonicus* Thunb. X
Cenchrus longispinus (Hackel) Fern X X X X X
Elymus canadensis L. X X X X X
E. virginicus L. X
Glyceria striata (Lam.) Hitchc. X
Hordeum jubatum L. X X X
Koeleria cristata (L.) Pers. X X
Muhlenbergia cuspidata (Nutt.) Rydb. X
M. frondosa (Poir.) Fern. X X X X
Panicum capillare L. X
P. implicatum Scribn. X X X X X
P. leibergii (Vasey) Scribn. X X X X X
P. perlongum Nash X X X X
P. praecocius Hitchc. & Chase X X X
P. scribnerianum Nash X X X X
P. virgatum L. X X X X X
P. wilcoxianum Vasey X
Paspalum ciliatifolium Michx. X
Phalaris arundinacea L. X
 **Phleum pratense* L. X X X
Phragmites communis Trin. X X
 **Poa annua* L. X
 **P. compressa* L. X X X
 **P. pratensis* L. X X X X X
 **Setaria lutescens* (Weigel) Hubb X X X X X
 **S. viridis* (L.) Beauv. X X X X X
Sorghastrum nutans (L.) Nash X X X X X
Spartina pectinata Link X X X
Sphenopholis obtusata (Michx.) Scribn. X X X X X
 var. *obtusata* X
Sporobolus asper (Michx.) Kunth X X X X
S. heterolepis Gray X X X
Stipa spartea Trin. X X X X X
 Iridaceae
Iris virginica L.
 var. *shrevei* (Small) E. Anders. X X

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Sisyrinchium campestre</i> Bichn. | X | X | X | X | X |
| Liliaceae | | | | | |
| * <i>Asparagus officinalis</i> L. | X | X | X | | |
| Orchidaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Spiranthes cernua</i> (L.) Richard var. <i>cernua</i> | | | X | | X |
| DICOTYLEDONEAE | | | | | |
| Aceraceae | | | | | |
| <i>Acer negundo</i> L. | | | | | X |
| Amaranthaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Amaranthus retroflexus</i> L. | X | | | | |
| Anacardiaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Rhus glabra</i> L. | X | | | | |
| Apocynaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Apocynum cannabinum</i> L. | X | | X | | |
| <i>A. sibiricum</i> Jacq. | | X | X | | |
| Asclepiadaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Asclepias syriaca</i> L. | X | X | X | X | X |
| <i>A. tuberosa</i> L. var. <i>tuberosa</i> | | X | | | |
| <i>A. verticillata</i> L. | X | X | X | X | X |
| Boraginaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Lappula echinata</i> Gilib. | X | | | | |
| <i>Lithospermum canescens</i> (Michx.) Lehm. | X | X | X | X | X |
| <i>L. incisum</i> Lehm. | X | | | X | |
| <i>Onosmodium occidentale</i> Mackenz. | X | | | | |
| Campanulaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Lobelia spicata</i> Lam. var. <i>spicata</i> | X | | X | X | |
| Cannabinaceae | | | | | |
| * <i>Cannabis sativa</i> L. | X | | | X | |
| Caprifoliaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Sambucus canadensis</i> L. | X | X | | | |
| Caryophyllaceae | | | | | |
| * <i>Lychnis alba</i> Mill. | | | | X | |
| <i>Silene antirrhina</i> L. | X | | | | |
| Chenopodiaceae | | | | | |
| * <i>Chenopodium album</i> L. | X | X | | | |
| Cistaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Helianthemum bicknellii</i> Fern. | X | | | | |
| Compositae | | | | | |
| <i>Achillea millefolium</i> L. | X | | X | | |
| <i>Agoseris cuspidata</i> (Pursh) Raf. | X | | | | |
| <i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i> L. | X | X | X | X | X |
| <i>A. psilostachya</i> DC. | X | | | | |
| <i>A. trifida</i> L. | X | X | X | X | X |
| <i>Antennaria neglecta</i> Greene | X | | | | |
| * <i>Anthemis cotula</i> L. | X | | | | |
| * <i>Arctium minus</i> (Hill) Bernh. | X | | | | |
| <i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i> Nutt. | X | | X | X | X |
| <i>Aster azureus</i> Lindl. | X | | X | X | X |
| <i>A. ericoides</i> L. | X | X | X | X | X |
| <i>A. laevis</i> L. | X | X | X | | X |
| <i>A. novae-angliae</i> L. | | | X | | X |
| <i>A. sericeus</i> Vent. | X | | | | |
| <i>A. simplex</i> Willd. var. <i>simplex</i> | | | | X | |
| var. <i>ramosissimus</i> (T. & G.) Cronq. | | | | X | X |
| <i>Cacalia tuberosa</i> Nutt. | X | | X | | X |
| <i>Cirsium altissimum</i> (L.) Spreng. | | X | X | X | X |
| <i>C. hillii</i> (Canby) Fern. | X | | | | |
| * <i>Conyza canadensis</i> (L.) Cronq. | X | | | | |
| <i>Coreopsis palmata</i> Nutt. | X | | X | | |
| <i>Echinacea pallida</i> Nutt. | X | X | X | X | X |
| <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> Mill. | X | | X | X | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i> B. & B. | X | | | |
| <i>Desmodium canadense</i> (L.) DC. | X | X | | X |
| <i>D. illinoense</i> Gray | X | | X | |
| <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> L. | X | | | |
| * <i>Glycine max</i> (L.) Merr. | | X | X | |
| <i>Lespedeza capitata</i> Michx. | X | | X | X |
| * <i>Lotus corniculatus</i> L. | X | | | |
| * <i>Medicago lupulina</i> L. | X | | X | |
| * <i>Melilotus alba</i> Desr. | X | X | X | X |
| * <i>M. officinalis</i> (L.) Lam. | X | X | X | X |
| <i>Petalostemon candidum</i> (Willd.) Michx. | X | | | |
| <i>P. purpureum</i> (Vent.) Rydb. | X | X | X | X |
| <i>Psoralea argophylla</i> Pursh | X | | | |
| * <i>Trifolium hybridum</i> L. | | | X | |
| * <i>T. pratense</i> L. | X | | X | X |
| * <i>T. repens</i> L. | X | | | |
| <i>Vicia americana</i> Muhl. | X | | | |
| Linaceae | | | | |
| <i>Linum sulcatum</i> Riddell | X | | | |
| Malvaceae | | | | |
| * <i>Abutilon theophrastii</i> Medic. | X | | | |
| Nyctaginaceae | | | | |
| <i>Mirabilis nyctaginea</i> (Michx.) MacM. | | X | X | |
| Oleaceae | | | | |
| <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> Marsh. | | | | |
| var. <i>subintegerrima</i> (Vahl) Fern. | | | | X |
| Onagraceae | | | | |
| <i>Oenothera serrulata</i> Nutt. | X | | X | |
| Oxalidaceae | | | | |
| <i>Oxalis violacea</i> L. var. <i>violacea</i> | X | X | X | X |
| Plantaginaceae | | | | |
| * <i>Plantago major</i> L. | X | | | |
| <i>P. rugellii</i> Dene. | X | | | |
| Polemoniaceae | | | | |
| <i>Phlox pilosa</i> L. var. <i>fulgida</i> Wherry | | X | X | X |
| Polygonaceae | | | | |
| * <i>Polygonum convolvulus</i> L. | | X | X | |
| <i>P. pennsylvanicum</i> L. | X | | | |
| * <i>P. persicaria</i> L. | X | | | |
| <i>Rumex altissimus</i> Wood | | | | X |
| * <i>R. crispus</i> L. | X | X | | |
| Primulaceae | | | | |
| <i>Lysimachia ciliata</i> L. | X | X | | |
| <i>L. quadriflora</i> Sims. | | X | | |
| Ranunculaceae | | | | |
| <i>Anemone canadensis</i> L. | X | | X | |
| <i>A. cylindrica</i> Gray | X | X | X | X |
| <i>Delphinium virescens</i> Nutt. | X | | X | |
| var. <i>virescens</i> | | | | |
| <i>Thalictrum dasycarpum</i> Fisch. & Lall. | | | | |
| var. <i>dasycarpum</i> | | X | X | |
| Rhamnaceae | | | | |
| <i>Ceanothus americanus</i> L. | | | | |
| var. <i>pitcheri</i> T. & G. | | | X | |
| Rosaceae | | | | |
| <i>Craetegus mollis</i> (T. & G.) Scheele | X | | | |
| <i>Fragaria virginiana</i> Duchesne | | | | |
| var. <i>virginiana</i> | X | X | X | |
| <i>Potentilla arguta</i> Pursh | X | | | X |
| <i>P. norvegica</i> L. | X | | | |
| * <i>P. recta</i> L. | X | | | |
| <i>P. simplex</i> Michx. | X | | | |
| <i>Pyrus ioensis</i> (Wood) Bailey | X | X | | |
| <i>Rosa arkansas</i> Porter | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| var. <i>suffulta</i> (Greene) Cockerell | X | X | X | X | X |
| Rubiaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Galium boreale</i> L. | | | | | X |
| <i>G. obtusum</i> Bigel var. <i>obtusum</i> | | | X | | |
| Salicaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Populus deltoides</i> Marsh. | | | | | X |
| Santalaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Commandra richardsiana</i> Fern. | X | | | X | |
| Saxifragaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Heuchera richardsonii</i> R. Br. | X | | | | |
| Scrophulariaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i> (L.) Farw. | | X | | | X |
| Solanaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Physalis heterophylla</i> Nees | X | X | | X | |
| <i>P. longifolia</i> Nutt. | | | | X | X |
| <i>P. virginiana</i> Mill. | X | | X | | |
| <i>Solanum carolinense</i> L. | X | | | | |
| * <i>S. nigrum</i> L. | X | X | | | |
| Umbelliferae | | | | | |
| <i>Cicuta maculata</i> L. | | | | X | |
| <i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i> Michx. var. <i>yuccifolium</i> | | X | X | X | X |
| <i>Oxypolis rigidior</i> (L.) C. & R. | | X | X | | X |
| <i>Zizia aurea</i> (L.) W. D. J. Koch | | X | X | | X |
| Urticaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Parietaria pensylvanica</i> Muhl. | | X | | | |
| Verbenaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Verbena hastata</i> L. | | | | | X |
| <i>Verbena stricta</i> Vent. | X | | | X | |
| Violaceae | | | | | |
| <i>Viola papilionacea</i> Pursh | | X | X | | X |
| <i>V. pedatifida</i> G. Don | X | X | X | X | |
| <i>V. papilionacea</i> X <i>V. pedatifida</i> | | X | X | | |

*Species not native to the mid-west.

DISCUSSION

The five prairies of the Ames area have a flora of at least 212 species, of which about 180 are native to the Midwest. The largest families are the Compositae, with 22.7% of the total flora; the Gramineae, 18.9%; the Leguminosae, 10.9%; the Rosaceae, 3.8%; and the Cyperaceae, 3.3%. The largest genera are *Panicum* (8 spp.), *Aster* (6 spp.), and *Solidago* (6 spp.).

Curtis (1956) devised a system for aligning Wisconsin prairies on a moisture-gradient spectrum, employing sets of indicator species. He established ten species as indicators for each of the wet, wet-mesic, mesic, dry-mesic, and dry prairie types. In assigning a prairie to a position on this spectrum, the number of indicator species of each class is expressed as a percentage of the total number of indicator species present. The percentages for the wet prairie species are multiplied by one, the wet-mesic by two, the mesic by three, the dry-mesic by four and the dry prairie species by five. These values are summed, giving a possible range of values of 100 for a "pure" wet prairie to 500 for a

prairie composed of only xeric species. The values for these five relics are given below. (Table 2).

Table 2. A comparison of prairie remnants on the basis of numbers of indicator species present.

| Prairie type | Ames | Black | Boone | Gilbert | McCallsburg |
|--------------|--|-------|-------|---------|-------------|
| | Number of indicator species in each area | | | | |
| Wet | 2 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Wet-mesic | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| Mesic | 4 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 7 |
| Dry-mesic | 9 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Dry | 5 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Values | 398 | 235 | 296 | 354 | 257 |

Thus, the Ames high school prairie should be the driest and Black's prairie the wettest. This system could, perhaps, be used to describe other Iowa prairie remnants, although the behavior of certain indicator species in Iowa may have to be re-evaluated.

Black's, Boone, and McCallsburg prairies probably owe their existence today to the fact that they were cut-off from cultivated lands at an early date by the railroad tracks and nearby roads. The Chicago and Northwestern tracks along the Boone prairie were laid in 1865, and those past Black's prairie were laid in 1878. The Minneapolis and St. Louis tracks were extended through McCallsburg in 1881 (Hewes, 1950). The Gilbert prairie may have escaped cultivation because of the sandy subsoil. The dry, hilly nature of the land may have saved the Ames high school prairie originally. However, regardless of the reasons for these tracts having escaped destruction to date, their continued persistence is in doubt. Abandonment and removal of the little-used railroad tracks past Black's and McCallsburg prairies could mean the annexation of these remnants to nearby cultivated fields. Although abandonment of the tracks along the Boone prairie seems unlikely, the mowing and use of herbicides along the tracks and the highway could effect the species composition here. The Ames high school prairie has been reduced so drastically in recent years by construction and shrub invasion, that, unless steps are taken immediately to check further disturbance and the spread of woody plants, this prairie will be lost.

Many attempts have been made in the last few years to have the Ames high school prairie and the Boone prairie set aside as preserves. An agreement was made in the 1950's with the owner of the present Ames high school land to give the University the first opportunity to purchase the prairie area. However, the Ames School District ultimately purchased the land and efforts have been made since that time to have the School District set up a preserve on this site. Attempts have likewise been made

to interest the Chicago and Northwestern railroad in fencing the Boone prairie. Although this prairie does not seem to be as seriously threatened as some of the others, its formal establishment as a preserve is important to assure the University of having at least one example of lowland prairie in the vicinity for years to come.

The total disappearance of the prairie from the Ames area would be very regrettable. The five relics discussed in this paper represent the last known native prairie areas available for permanent preservation in this vicinity.

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History of the Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit¹

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Abstract. The history of the Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit is traced from its beginning as a locally sponsored agency in 1932. It became one of the Wildlife Units when the National program was established in 1935. The late J. N. (Ding) Darling, nationally prominent cartoonist, conceived and negotiated the establishing of the Research Unit program. His belief in the soundness of the research unit idea is witnessed by the fact that he helped to finance the Iowa Unit from his personal funds during its first 3 years of existence. The succession of Unit leaders, and their specialties, the increase in facilities, and the early coursework available to wildlife students are indicated. Since 1932, 65 M.S. and 25 Ph.D. degrees have been awarded under the Unit program, and 1030 articles have been published during the 34 years since the Unit was established.

DARLING'S IDEA

History was in the making in January 1932 when two men from Des Moines walked into Iowa State College President R. M.

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