

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER
Winter 1971

WHAT TO SEE

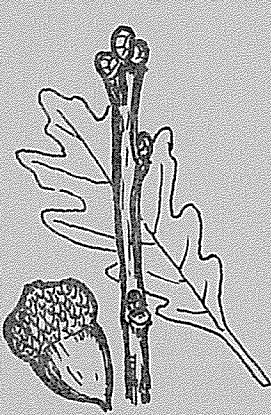
Winter is the time to enjoy the grandeur of the oaks. As you walk the Path in summer it is the fast-growing, fence-row trees that you see, trees that are rapidly forming a frame for the Path. But when their leaves are gone, the rugged old oaks focus your attention, standing back on either bank in the places where the right-of-way cut through the native oak-hickory groves. Most of the hickory trees are gone now; the tough wood made strong ax handles. But the oaks remain. See whether you can recognize them. The twigs (with clustered end buds and star shaped pith) and the general shape are enough for the expert, but if you need further help, you will often find last season's leaves still clinging, and if there are patches of ground clear of snow the fallen acorns give the final clue.

White oak The bark of the trunk is gray and flaky, and often appears smooth or rubbed off in patches. The buds are rounded. The acorns, maturing in one year, sprout soon after they fall and may winter-kill unless buried by squirrels.

Bur oak The bark of the trunk is dark, thick, and deeply furrowed. It insulated the tree against Indian fires and, as a result, bur oaks are generally found on the margins of the groves. This is the tree of the oak-openings, chosen site for pioneer homes. Acorns are very large with a "mossy" cup.

Red oak The bark of the trunk is dark brown and ridged or furrowed. The buds on the red-brown twigs are pointed. This is the dominant oak of the rich, moist, well-drained forests. The cup of the large acorn is a "saucer."

Black oak The bark is very dark and deeply furrowed. The inner bark is yellow or orange and was used as a natural dye. Twigs are red-brown with pointed buds. This oak will survive under harsh conditions and is often found on dry or gravelly soil. The cups of the acorns are loose scaled.



White oak



Bur oak



Red oak



Black oak

BICYCLE PATH

One of our long-time goals is being realized: the laying of a bike-way over the entire length of the Path. *Elmhurst Jaycees* and *Wheaton Friends* initiated the projects (described in previous Newsletters). Now, through the persistent efforts of Phoebe Ryerson, a long section northwest from Highway 59 has been laid. This has been a *Wayne* community project, a cooperative venture delightfully refreshing in these troubled days. Even the "impossible" can be accomplished when a whole town gets involved. It started two years ago when funds were raised by showing a series of movies; the profit was \$468. Response to a recent letter mailed to Wayne residents asking for donations to complete the job was indeed gratifying; approximately \$340 was contributed. The *Garden Club* gave \$100. Then the *Robert Glenn* family had a Christmas tree sale. The whole family went to Wisconsin in November to select choice trees. The sale brought the total raised by Wayne to over \$1,000. The *Schless construction company* and the *Robert Madden company* donated trucks and labor to lay the path northwest from Highway 59 to past Smith Road and the last piece from Pratt's Wayne Woods to Dunham Road. Both Mr. Schless and Mr. Madden are residents of Wayne. CHEERS FOR WAYNE!!!

The next tremendous step has been undertaken by the County. They are laying a good 4 foot limestone screenings path through all of the rural sections of DuPage County. The *DuPage Supervisors* voted \$20,000 to pay for this bike-way. MORE CHEERS, FOR DU PAGE COUNTY!!!

Now it is hoped that the urban areas will be developed by the municipalities, work which is completed in Elmhurst and well started in Wheaton and Glen Ellyn.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting was held at the Morton Arboretum on November 8. The guest speaker was *Everett Mitchell*, former broadcaster for the Farm and Home Hour, NBC. In the business session three new members were elected to the Board of Directors. We welcome --

Mr. Robert Irwin of Glen Ellyn
Mrs. Roland Kumb of Wheaton
Mr. F. Paul Mooring of Glen Ellyn

Officers elected by the Board for 1971 are: Mr. William Nemec, President; Mrs. George Ryerson, Vice-President; Mr. Eugene Lewis, Secretary; Mrs. Corwith Hamill, Treasurer. Mr. Richard Wilson was appointed chairman of the Planning Committee.

ACTIVITY ON AND ABOUT THE PATH

Saturday, November 14 was Prairie Path day in Wheaton. 150 students of *Wheaton College*, members of TOUCH, a community action organization, worked with the city to clean the Path and develop the College Avenue section west of Hill Avenue. They were directed by *William Lindberg*, Associate Dean of Students, and *William Kirchhoff*, Wheaton Director of Public Works. The Path was given its fall house-cleaning and a gravel walk was laid. Many shrubs were planted west of Hill Avenue.

Our trip leaders were active in October. Walks for groups were conducted for Glen Ellyn Brownies, Naperville Girl Scouts, Old Orchard 8th graders (150 came), Twig Benders Garden Club of Wheaton, and Christian Temple Baptist Church young people, Chicago.

As of today, our Honor Guard, those who maintain the Path, is 50 strong. Individuals, families, and groups are caring for 70% of the total mileage. Our new volunteers are: *Mrs. Donald Haskins*, *Mr. B. A. Filkins*, *Mr. Stanley Johnson*, leader of Cub Pack 38, and *Mr. Wayne Jensen* of the Christian Service Brigade.

We hope you saw the feature story about the Path in the *Aurora Beacon*.

We cannot give permission for snowmobiles or any other motor-driven vehicles to use the Path. We do welcome dog-sled teams!

Prairie Path seeking trail recognition

By Jerry DeMuth

The Illinois Prairie Path Inc. is seeking recognition as a national trailway for a 30-mile trail through Du Page County, but the plans so far have been successfully opposed by members of the County Board.

The trail was leased in 1966 for 12 years from the County Board, which had bought the land, the abandoned Chicago, Aurora & Elgin R.R. right of way, for \$400,000 the year before. The lease runs for another eight years, but Prairie Path needs a lease to 1981 in order to obtain national recognition.

The County Board's highway committee, which has jurisdiction over the land, has refused even to vote on the proposal to extend the lease. The proposal is bottled up in committee.

"We don't plan on taking it up," admitted Robert Raymond, Lisle Twp. supervisor and chairman of the highway committee.

Fear losing control

Gerald Weeks of Glen Ellyn, County Board president, said the highway committee members fear that if the path becomes a national trailway, "They'll never get it back for

the original purpose," which includes such possibilities as a roadway and water line.

William Nemec of St. Charles, president of Prairie Path, said the lease extension was first requested in June, when the path could have been the first in the nation to be declared a national trailway by the Interior Department, an opportunity that has been lost.

"Recognition would be a great thing for Du Page County; the county would be recognized as a pioneer," Nemec said. "It's a status symbol that shows that Du Page County is doing something for conservation."

Booster

Nemec said that although the national designation carries no funding, it could help make federal or state funds available for surface improvement.

"Some board members fear that if the path is designated a national trailway the federal government could tell the county what it can and cannot do with the land," Nemec commented. "But the federal government can't prevent the county from doing anything with the land. All the government can do is take away the recognition."

He said that some board members feel there might be other uses for the trail, but "so far the only use for it is for walking or bicycling."

Nemec said that the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation of the

Interior Department recently sent a letter to Raymond and himself emphasizing that the federal designation would in no way prevent the county from doing whatever it wanted with the land.

