

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 1974

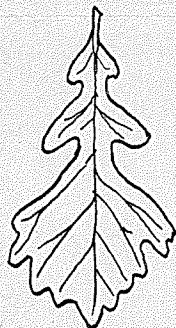
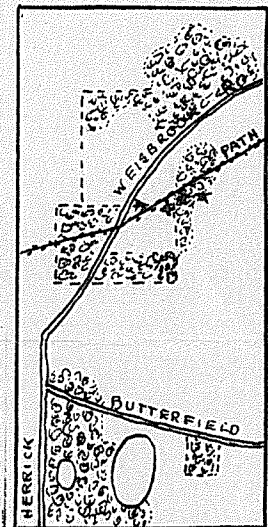
WHAT TO SEE . . . CLUES

Why is the Prairie Path such an inviting place to walk? We may thank:

- the glacier that left us a legacy of hills and valleys, marsh-land and streams;
- the climate that was responsible for clothing the land with both prairie and woods;
- the railroad that cut through the hills and built up causeways creating a path with little grade. (It also spread ballast full of a variety of stones for budding geologists.)

As described in the 1874 atlas of DuPage County, Milton township one hundred years ago was "considered as a prairie township although there are some fine groves of timber within its limits". Even then the groves were being broken up into farmers' woodlots and from many of them the timber had been cut. Much of the original prairie had been plowed. About 25 years later the C.A. & E. Railway was built and a strip 60 to 100 feet in width was fenced, preserving, in part, a belt of native plant life. Now with the walking surface improved and with time which heals wounds, the Path offers a trail of great variety and beauty.

Consider a specific area, north-east from Weisbrook Road. This map is traced from the 1874 atlas with the Prairie Path added. There are clues that you could see on a walk along this section today that would tell you how it must have looked 100 years ago. There are several old oaks. They were growing within the right-of-way, but far enough from the center so that they were not in the way and could be left when the tracks were laid. The locations of some are indicated by black stars on the map. One old bur oak is dying but there are many young oaks, its children, to take its place. Growing next to them are some hawthorns and wild crabs, trees that are characteristic of the edge of the forest around here. Are they telling us where the wooded area ended, or were they planted by the birds that found the fences to be good perching sites? There are no prairie grasses; this part of the county had little prairie.



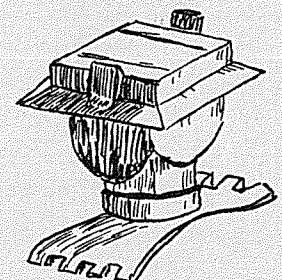
Bur
Oak



White
Oak

Many of the shrubs are garden varieties planted first at the stations and since naturalized and spread along the Path.

A footpath on an old right-of-way provides a rich and varied environment. If it was an electric railway it may also provide the RR buff with a chance to find artifacts, the old hardware that supported the third rail.



ANNUAL WALK OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Date: October 12, 1974

Nature hike with well qualified leaders

Time: 10:30 a.m.

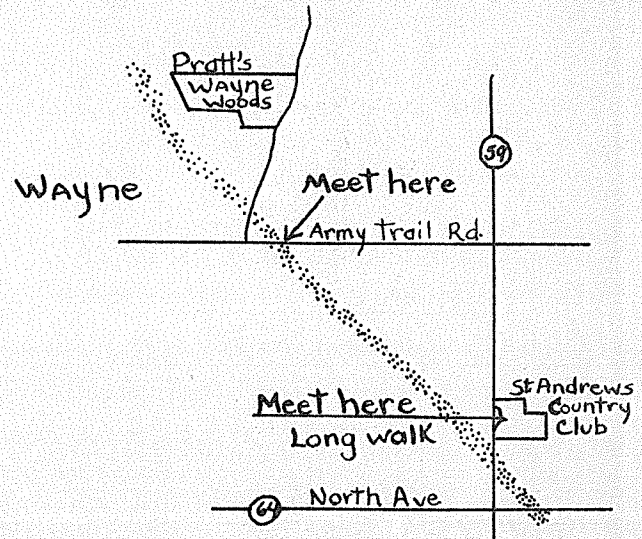
Meet at: north side of Army Trail Road in Wayne
about 1 3/4 miles west of Highway 59.

Longer and vigorous walk

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Meet at: St. Andrews Country Club parking lot.

Bring lunch and beverage. Both walks will end in Pratt's Wayne Woods where we will have lunch. Transportation will be provided back to cars.



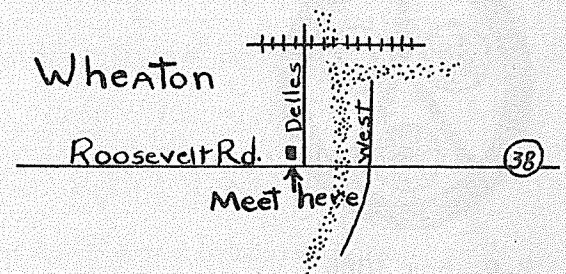
MEMBER BIKE TOUR

Date: October 20

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Leader: Dick Wilson 299-7882

Meet at: the IPP headquarters, 616 Delles St. at Roosevelt Rd. in Wheaton. Bring lunch and beverage. This will be a 25 mile ride.



WITH GREAT REGRET WE ANNOUNCE ... the recent resignation of two Illinois Prairie Path board members. Miss Helen Turner, chairman of the board and one of the founders, has moved to Hendersonville, North Carolina. Mrs. Phoebe Ryerson, a charter member of the board and head of the Cook County Committee, has moved to Aspen, Colorado.

Miss Turner will be long remembered as the originator of the *Prairie Path Newsletter* which she wrote and illustrated. She also wrote and illustrated *A Guide to the Prairie Path*. She was the official mapmaker for the Path, worked closely with girl scouts in their activities related to the Path, served as Path Naturalist, and was one of the prime movers of many activities and accomplishments that the Path could not have attained without her long standing devotion. The front page of this Newsletter will be the last in her series.

Mrs. Ryerson, from the Path's beginning in 1963, shared the excitement of Mrs. Watts' dream of a walking path. Her varied contributions in achieving reality for it cannot be numbered. She was responsible for the first Path mailing and for the effective Path film strip. Her connections with NI Gas Co., Commonwealth Edison, and NIPC; her persistence toward the goal of National Trail designation; her fund raising ideas; her undaunted approach to county supervisors, village presidents, state and federal government leaders in many instances actually made Path progress possible.

The void their leaving has created will not be easily filled.

ANNUAL MEETING

A future mail will contain the details of the Annual Meeting to be held in November.