



The Katharine Ordway
Natural History Study Area

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ORDWAY BULLETIN
No. 121

MACALESTER
COLLEGE

located at 9550 Inver Grove Trail (Dakota County Road 77), Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

KATHARINE ORDWAY at ORDWAY.

As I round out fourteen years at this quiet, restful spot many small incidents have become woven into a pattern of memories which shall never escape nor can ever be adequately expressed. However, I find that there was one obscure happening at Ordway which was quite significant but which, through "the luck of the draw", I missed. I have forgotten the reason for my absence but I was away that day when Miss Ordway came to visit at Ordway.

It was near the end of June, 1972 when our benefactress put in her appearance and her interest in the place was both specific and vivid. Typically, she wanted to actually view the property, even walking for some distance through the grassland and into the oak forest despite her advancing years and her somewhat frail physique.

She was one of the staunchest champions of conservation, particularly of the prairie grassland habitats in the Midwest where she had been born. She liked the orderly state which Nature assumes if left alone. Perhaps this orderliness was reflected in her oft-stated dislike for having her name incorrectly spelled "Catherine" or any of the numerous renditions of that name. Anyway, she seemed to revel in the natural state of things. She observantly commented upon the presence near the building of the Hoary Alyssum (Berteroa incana), questioning the apparent proliferation of this white-headed member of the Mustard Family. Some time later she expressed pleasure at receiving a mounted herbarium specimen of the flowering plant along with our explanation that it was an "alien" plant which often invades newly-disturbed areas such as that near the building.

Although I never met her, my image of her is formed from two pictures: one, a photograph of her observing a prairie habitat from the shelter of an umbrella; the other, her letters so neatly typewritten and cordially concerned with the property here. The last letter was dated June 26, 1978 and expressed regret that she would not be visiting us that summer again. She died the following June, aged 81.

She left behind her a rich legacy in conservation, a small fragment of which is this vibrant portion of Macalester College that we refer to as "Ordway" - and rightly so.

R J CHRISTMAN,
Naturalist

Feb. 22, 1984
rjc/gw