



The Katharine Ordway
Natural History Study Area

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ORDWAY BULLETIN
No. 67

MACALESTER
COLLEGE

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

The SHADE-TREES at ORDWAY

One cannot help noticing the shade-trees around the building at Ordway. For one thing they add a nice touch to the blank and windowless walls of the structure, nestling it in their shade during the summer months and etching light-and-shadow across it during their leafless periods. The place was "landscaped", that is, the trees were planted there for beautification. They are Norway maples and are quite attractive although they stand out because they are atypical of the plants of the area; in a word, they "just don't belong". The effect of the local elements is showing to some extent on these maples: "frost-burn" has taken a toll of at least two of the original six trees and has caused another to lose its main trunk and assume a sort of wishbone-shape. There is fair reason to believe that the trees will survive but probably not flourish in this unnatural setting.

Other shade trees are near the building - a Cottonwood and a pair of American Elms. The two elms make a separate story - for one of them is there by plan and the other by chance but, as I said, that will take a separate telling.

The Cottonwood stands at the edge of the parking-lot and is now in its fourth year. The rapidity of its growth is remarkable as are the circumstances for it just appeared one spring day - a supple twig of a sapling which sprang up in the shelter of one of the timber curbs at the edge of the parking-lot. As I could see the promise of a worthwhile arboreal addition to our surroundings I moved the curb and permitted the sapling to gain growth. Now entering its fifth season it has a diameter of about 18 centimeters and stretches upward to about 6 meters; furthermore, it has grown quite straight in the trunk and has a rather uniform spread. I believe it will survive well because of its conformation and location; it is already providing shade and shelter in its location, a boon on the hot sultry days of August.

Already the trees in the immediate vicinity of the building are contributing much to Ordway in the way of shelter - both as shade and as slender bulwarks to break the occasional fury of a strong wind. They form also a most important part of the entire environment - not just "the frosting on a cake" but an increasingly vital part of the surroundings.

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June 15, 1978
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