

## ILLUSTRATED NOTES ON THE FLORA OF HENRY COUNTY

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These notes are based upon, and incidental to, a botanical survey being made by the writer of Henry County, one of a group of Mississippi Valley counties situated in the west-northwest part of Illinois. This project has claimed a great part of the writer's time and attention during the past 12 years, and is still continuing. To date some 1150 species, varieties, and forms have been found, including many rare plants and a few apparently not recorded heretofore from Illinois. These comments concern those found or observed for the most part during the 1945 collecting season.

*Collomia linearis* Nutt. (*Gilia linearis* (Nutt.) Gray of Gray, Man., ed. 7.) is a rare plant in Illinois, and seemingly of uncertain status. It has been reported from a number of counties, but always with few annotations as to its habitat or distribution. Deam reports it as having been found along railroad tracks in Indiana on one occasion. It is native on the west coast, and in California mountains it is found on dry slopes and flats up to at least the 8,500-foot level. Unfortunately, the writer never found the species there, although for eight years he traversed California mountain trails afoot, to the extent of about 5,500 miles, in quest of new plants, and has botanized in all the zones of plant life in that state, from the below sea level regions of the Salton Sea to the top of Mt. Whitney, the highest peak in the United States.

The first introduction of this plant to the writer was on June 25, 1935,

when a few specimens were found in waste ground along railroad tracks about 1½ miles west of Geneseo. These plants have been under observation since that time, and a few specimens have gradually spread. However, this increase in abundance was not always immediately apparent. During the spring of 1943 it was necessary to make three visits to the station before a single plant could be found. My third visit was a determined one, however, and finally after diligent search the colony was found to be not only persisting, but, indeed, spreading. At least it had spread in one direction as a long narrow band under a wire fence, which, with dominant quack grass on one side and a farmer's plow on the other, seemed to be the line of least resistance.

My last revisit was made on June 19, 1945, practically ten years after the first few specimens were found. The colonies had increased in size and number to the extent that it is reasonable to assume the species is now, or soon will become, a part of the established flora of Illinois.

*Lactuca pulchella* (Pursh) DC. is also a rare plant in Illinois, and also, seemingly, of uncertain status. This blue-flowered lettuce is generally less than one meter high, prefers exposed situations, at least in Henry County, and has a pale or glaucous appearance, by which it is distinguished from the other blue-flowered species of *Lactuca* in the state. It is native in California where it occurs in montane valleys of the Sierra Nevada up to at least the 6,000-foot

level, and also in Utah and Nevada where it is found in the moist ravines and meadows of the pinyon, artemisia, and yellow pine belts. Deam does not report it for Indiana. In Illinois it has been collected by Umbach in or near Naperville, and there are one or two other reports of its occurrence in this state. On July 17, 1945 a large colony of it was found in waste ground along railroad tracks about one mile west of Alpha, in southwest Henry County. It has spread eastward as far as Maine, but from all reports, mostly along railroad tracks. More time will be required to determine its status in this state.

*Froelichia gracilis* (Hook.) Moq. seems to be another plant of uncertain status in Illinois. Inasmuch as the stem of this plant is often much divided near the base with many prostrate branches, it is easily distinguished in the field from the only other Illinois plant of the genus, *Froelichia floridana* (Nutt.) Moq. var. *campestris* (Small) Fern. (*Froelichia campestris* Small). From the paucity of occurrence records, the assumption has probably been rather general among Illinois botanists that the plant is rare in this state. My first specimens were found near Cambridge, July 18, 1938. Since that time it has been found near Geneseo, Atkinson, Orion, Alpha, and the village of Green River, always on railroad ballast, however, which might carry the presumption that the plant is not established. On September 9, 1945, however, a sizable colony was found in a dry rather sandy upland pasture field quite some distance from highway or railroad, and inasmuch as the first colony found near Cambridge is still persisting, the evidence suggests the probability that the species is now, or soon will become, established in Illinois.

*Erysimum inconspicuum* (Wats.) MacM. (*Erysimum parviflorum* Nutt. of Gray, Man., ed. 7), and distinguished in the field by its fine canescence and strongly ascending to nearly erect pods, is another rare plant in Illinois. It is native in the states of Utah and Nevada where it occurs in the valleys, and ascends the mountains to at least the level of the spruce belt. It has also spread eastward to eastern Canada and New England, but from all reports, always on railroad ballast. Deam cites two Indiana stations for it, also on railroad ballast. On July 24, 1945, a small colony of it was found on the cinders of a railroad siding at the east edge of Geneseo, where it undoubtedly is a plant of very recent introduction. It apparently is not established in Illinois, and from the evidence at hand, will not be for some time, if ever.

Another plant apparently of very recent introduction in Illinois is *Heterotheca subaxillaris* (Lam.) Britton & Rusby. This species much resembles *Chrysopsis villosa* (Pursh) Nutt., a psammophilous plant of rather frequent occurrence in Henry County, but may be distinguished from it by the achenes of the ray and disk flowers, which are quite markedly dissimilar. It is nearly ubiquitous in the southern states and Mexico, and is spreading northward. On September 17, 1944, a few plants were found along railroad tracks near the village of Green River, and they were still persisting at the time of my last revisit which was on September 9, 1945. Although the region has been botanized rather frequently, no specimens were seen prior to the above dates. Deam does not report it for Indiana, and the writer has never heard of its occurrence elsewhere in Illinois. More time will be required to determine its exact status in Illinois.

On July 1, 1945, in dense woodlands near the western limits of Henry County, the writer found a large colony of what appeared to be *Pedicularis canadensis* L. However, because the colony was so dense, a further investigation was made. When the roots were examined, many horizontal basal offshoots were found, some of them distinctly repent. Inasmuch as I had never seen such root structure in typical *Pedicularis canadensis*, the specimens were sent to Dr. M. L. Fernald, director of the Gray Herbarium. He recognized the root variation as of varietal significance, and the new plant was dedicated to the writer with the name of *Pedicularis canadensis* L. var. *Dobbsii* Fern. (For a full description of the plant, with two plates, see *Rhodora* 48: 59-60. 1946.)

Just why *Lycopus asper* Greene should be so rare in Illinois is not at the moment clear. It is undoubtedly a native plant in this state, and with its pubescence of flat, multicellular hairs and rather short internodes, these often less than 2 cm. long, it is easily distinguished in the field from all other species of Illinois *Lycopus*. On July 27, 1945, in Edford Township, a few flowering plants were found on the low moist rather open margin of an old pond about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile west of Illinois-Mississippi Canal Lock No. 25. The station was revisited two days later, and

many more plants were found. Deam does not report it for Indiana, and Stony Island in or near Chicago is the only other station of record for its occurrence in Illinois which has come to the writer's attention.

The Russian-olive, *Elaeagnus angustifolia* L., a native of southern Europe and Asia and which has become established along canals in Nevada, should scarcely be looked for in Illinois, but on June 16, 1945 a single tree was found on a rather high embankment of the Geneseo Creek, just to the south of Geneseo. It is distinguished from other Illinois trees by its striking silvery appearance, together with its alternate leaves and the four stamens of the flower. A day or two prior to the above date, the species was found on a nearby shoulder of U. S. Route 6, where it was probably planted by the state highway department. It is reasonable to assume the species may increase in abundance, and may possibly become established in the state. Furthermore, in my opinion, the planting of trees and shrubs along Illinois highways is going to play an increasingly important part in the distribution of plant life in the state, and must be considered when unusual plants are found. The writer has secured from the Henry County superintendent of highways a list of such species being planted along county aid roads, which list should help in an intelligent appraisal of this interesting situation.