

Plants on a Mound Compose Community

Walloon Lake—This morning on a leisurely ramble in a low woods I came upon a small plant-covered mound which represents the remains of an old stump. Long since reduced to soil my many and varied agents of decay, its richness of earth now makes a home for an interesting plant community.

Conspicuous among its tenants are three commonly known plants: a horsetail, a fern and a Jack-in-the-pulpit.

HORSETAILS ARE primitive spore-bearing plants.

The Latin genus name *Equisetum* comes from equus, meaning horse, and the plants have a fancied resemblance to that animal's tail.

There are 25 species, ten of which are found in Michigan.

The group is characterized by simple or branching hollow stems, which are divided into sections by joints and are strongly ribbed longitudinally.

The species which I found on my little mound is the marsh horsetail, *E. palustre*. It departs from the usual dry and sandy habitat of the common varieties such as *E. arvense* which is fre-

quently seen along railroad tracks. Here as a child I amused myself by pulling apart its jointed stems and blowing through their hollow centers.

THE LIFE-CYCLE of the horsetail generally includes two distinct generations. The fertile or reproductive shoot bears the spores in a cone-like structure atop a bare brown stem, while the sterile or vegetative shoot has numerous slender and leafy green branches arranged in whorls. These produce the food for the plant.

My marsh horsetail is about 14 inches tall, but one species, *E. hyemale* may reach a height of nine feet.

Our pioneer ancestors used several varieties of these plants, which contain silica in their stems, for scouring their pots and pans.

THE MOST conspicuous plant growing on my little mound is a clump of the spinulose shield fern (*Dryopteris spinulosa*) one of the most beautiful of our native species. It is an evergreen variety and I have often seen its feathery and tri-pinnate fronds standing green against the winter snows.

It bears its spores in small half-circular dots which ripen on the under side of the leaf.

As is true of all spore-bearing plants, the reproductive process is interesting and involved. The

spores upon germination produce a small and intermediate plant which in turn gives rise to the male and female components. The life cycle is completed when these unite to form a new plant.

FERNS WERE the first plants to have a vascular system; a distinct step forward on the evolutionary road.

The fossil record indicates that both horsetails and ferns had their beginning in Devonian times as long as 350 million years ago. They reached their climax in the hot, moist climate of our coal-bearing swamps where they grew to tree proportions.

Horsetails have persisted to our present day little changed in form and structure but dwarfed in size. Our temperate zone ferns have followed a similar evolutionary pattern, but the tree-sized species of our tropics still attain a height of 80 feet.

THE MOST UNUSUAL plant growing on my little mound is a Jack-in-the-pulpit, *Arisaema triphyllum*. It reproduces by seeds, which are complete embryonic plants and belongs to the angiosperms, our most highly developed group of flowering plants.

Its name comes from its particular structure: an arched leaf-like and striped hood is spread over a stalk-like spadix (Jack)

which bears both pistils and stamens. This odd bloom has neither sepals or petals. Its two dull green and three-parted leaves stand erect overshadowing the bloom.

NOW, IN mid-summer, a cluster of green berries has formed on the naked stalk, but when autumn comes it will glow with the most brilliant scarlet to be found in our woods and swamps.

Although this group of plants is intimately associated with and draws its sustenance from the same habitat, it represents three distinct phases of the evolutionary process.

And so nature has retained the individuality of her plant forms over the ages, giving variety and beauty to our present-day flora.

Coins

(Continued from 1-D)

and settings with which they are associated.

ITEMS IN THE traveling exhibit are chosen from among more than 14,000 specimens in the money museum. Originally the personal collection of Nate S. Shapero, chairman of Cunningham Drug Stores, Inc. and a director of the bank, it rates as the largest such collection in the Midwest.

is dropped, a curse shouted; Martin is carried off with an injured foot and Joe disappears never to be seen again—unless you believe in ghosts and believe the verger's story of the vision he saw on the 18th of May.

ST. DUNSTAN, "sweet Father Dunstan," was a creative artist in painting, metal work and music and became the patron saint of goldsmiths, jewelers and locksmiths and it is to him the chapel at Cranbrook is dedicated. Legend has it that he was so dextrous with metal workers' tools he once took up a blacksmith's

pincers and seized the nose of the devil who was trying to tempt him.

THE GHOST at Cranbrook, like all good ghosts, can't be proved or disproved. He has come back on St. Dunstan's day, May 18, more than once to offer his prayers at the altar in the presence of all the other great artists and craftsmen who spent their talent to the glory of God.

The style of this little book is uneven and its title, for this reader, unfortunate, but the story is a fresh one.

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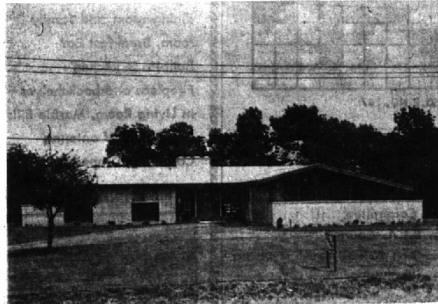
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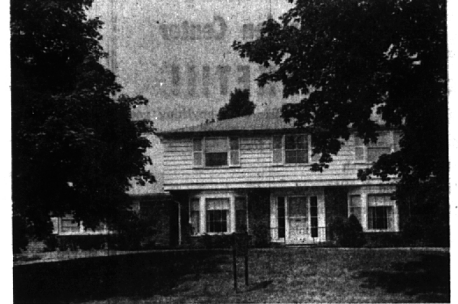
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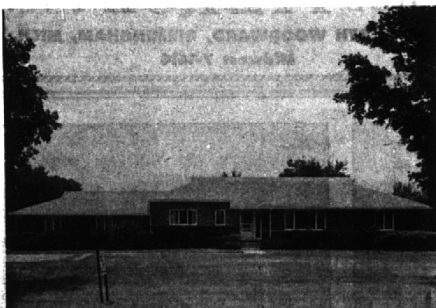
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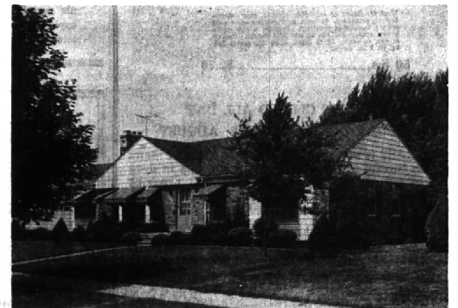
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