

Greeting from Wildflower Woods

We have had a busy, successful 1992. The number of schools visiting the site has almost doubled to a total of 42 from as far south as Indianapolis and as far west as LaPorte. The schools are developing exciting programs on Gene Stratton-Porter. Added to what the individual teacher develops are presentations by Margie and Martha, viewings of the movies based on Gene's novels and visitations to the site.

Our two special events, Gene Stratton-Porter Chautauqua Days and Holiday Open House, were well attended.

Margie and Martha were part of an Elderhostel week held at Epworth Forest Conference Center, a first for them. They wondered if they could ever come up with enough information for five, hour and a half sessions. They did and it was so informative and enjoyable that they have been invited back for another week's session in 1993.

We are very proud of Jeannette Shull, our gardener since 1985. She received the Intermittent of the Year award, chosen over all intermittents that work in the Museum and Historic Sites system. A well deserved award to a dedicated, lovely lady.

Shirley Cory, our number one tour guide, was featured in the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette because of her personable and informative tours.

Dolores Kleinrichert has been a welcome addition to our staff. Her time is divided between the gardens/grounds and the cabin. Joy, our full time maintenance man, has been with us since 1985 and we would be lost without his willing helping hands.

A few of the projects at Wildflower Woods: After the tornado went thru the woods this past summer we had to have several trees removed and many trimmed. They are presently relaying the stones in the arbor to make it safer for our visitors. Several hundred bulbs were planted this fall, so the gardens should be even more beautiful in 1993.

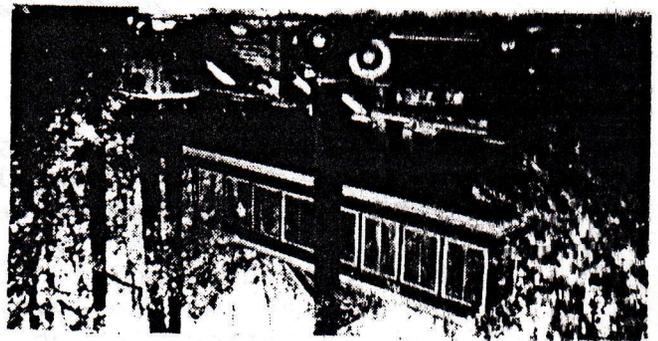
Remember the Cabin is closed for tours from January 1st to March 17. We are already planning the events for 1993 and will keep you informed of our happenings. We hope you all plan a trip to Wildflower Woods in the coming year.

Thanks from all of us to all of you for your continued support.

Happy Holidays

May 19 92

"Cabin In Wildflower Woods"



Gene Stratton-Porter Mem. Soc. Inc.
Box 639
Rome City, IN 46784

IMPORTANT DATE

MAY 11, 1993
ANNUAL GENE STRATTON-PORTER MEM. SOC. DINNER
at UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
ROME CITY, IN

1993 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE
PAYABLE IN JANUARY, 1993.
Won't you please send your
dues now? Thank you!

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER
by GENE STRATTON-PORTER

We thank Thee, Lord, for Christmas cheer,
For loving faces we hold dear,
For turkey birds and shining trees
and thoughtful gifts that greatly please.

Bless every soul with us today
And doubly bless friends far away
Fill our hearts in joyful measure,
and grant a year of work and pleasure.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

From your Gene Stratton-Porter Memorial Society Officers





Wildflower Christmas

Over 1,500 people toured Gene Stratton-Porter's Sylvan Lake home at Saturday and Sunday during "Christmas at Wildflower Cabin." Above, guests sample hot cider and learn more about the cabin from Jeanette Shull, gardener for the site. The cabin was decorated

throughout by Jan Hummel of Jan's in LaGrange and by Diane Perkins of Home Sweet Home in Kendallville. The Noble Madrigal Singers performed Saturday night and Gus Butcher provided piano music both days. (News-Sun photo by Ingrid Lochamire)

Christmas in the Cabin was a great way to start the holiday festivities. People came from far and near — those that registered were from fifty-nine towns in Indiana, eleven other states and three foreign countries. The States were Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, New Mexico, South Dakota, Delaware, Virginia, Illinois, California and Kansas and the countries were Denmark, Brazil and Canada.

Gene Stratton-Porter Chautauqua Days - July 30 thru August 16, 1992

Many different activities took place throughout the time both in Rome City and at the Gene Stratton-Porter State Historic Site. A very well formed and very well attended parade was held in Rome City on Saturday, August 15.

The Chautauqua Princess, a triple decker paddle boat operated from the dock in Rome City and was nearly sold out for all of its scheduled cruises. On Sunday, August 16 the boat docked at the historic site pier.

Highlights of Sunday at the Cabin were the appearances of our Miss Congeniality, Kelli Huth and a former Miss Limberlost and now Miss Indiana, Shelli Yoder. Shelli sang several numbers and signed many, many autographs. What a thrill!

Two ladies, staff members from the Columbian Zoo at Lafayette, Indiana, showed and told about a variety of animals that they had brought from the zoo.

It is estimated that some 2500 people visited the cabin and grounds on Sunday enjoying the activities and goodies, popcorn, homemade ice cream, sandwiches and soft drinks.

Gift shop sales were very good and our Society's tote bag and T-shirt sales were excellent. This helped the Society's checking account so that we can fulfill our 1992-1993 budget and possibly a few other needs of the historic site.

1992-93 BUDGET

by GSP Mem. Soc. Board

Northeast Tourism Travel Guide	\$ 300.00
Postage	275.00
Printing (Newletters, etc)	150.00
GSP Birthday Celebration	400.00
GSP Christmas Open House	500.00
Annual Meeting	100.00
Office Supplies	50.00
State of Indiana (Fees)	10.00
Liability Insurance	300.00
Xmas Parade	25.00
Flowers for GSP Gardens	800.00
Wildflower Walk	75.00
Fall Foliage Walk	50.00
Miss Limberlost Tea	85.00

TOTAL

\$3320.00

"MAKING CHRISTMAS LAST A YEAR"

from LET US HIGHLY RESOLVE by Gene Stratton-Porter

"From my earliest remembrance I have loved Christmas dearly. Always it has been the one day out of the whole year marked by the shining of its own particular Star and gladdened by the joy in the hearts of a world to whom there had been made a gift of the hope of life everlasting. The Christmas of my childhood seems to me, in retrospect, like a simple affair, but when I stop to think of it---the gifts that we gave, the weeks of preparation that were made for feasting, the time and the money that were spent for the day, very probably came close to being as proportionate to our means and opportunities as do the festivities that we celebrate today.

In retrospect I can smell the delicious odours of baking, the scent of spices, the tange of boiling vinegar and syrup. I can see Mother, with tired, perplexed face, superintending her preparations for weeks before the great day. I can see the opening of the door, the flurry of snow, when Father and a couple of the strongest of the boys came stamping in with a huge back log that would burn for a week. I can hear the rhythmic music of the axes as great ricks of wood were cut and corded; the crack of the rifle and the blare of shotgun was all around us as game by the dozen was brought in, skinned, frozen, and hung in the smoke house above the barrels of pork and beef to wait until guests arrived. I can hear the cracking of nuts and the popping of corn and smell the delicious odours of boiling maple syrup to make popcorn balls. I re-live the tense excitement of the many trips Father made to town bringing home mysterious bundles small folk dared not see. I can see all of us working, planning, loving the day, rejoicing in what it would bring to us and rejoicing equally in what we could give to others. The celebration was held in a different way, as time always makes differences, but it ended with the same results---overweary, overtaxed people. There was always the house packed with the elder children and their children home for the holidays; there were prayers and singing---the same great festival that pertains practically all over the world to-day.

As I think it over it seems to see that Christmas has become progressively splendid in its celebration of gifts and of feasting. It has not only kept up with the material growth of a large and a rich country, but it has forged ahead and worked its way far into the realm of unnecessary extravagance and vulgar show, and this is no place for a true religious festival, a mass to celebrate the birth of our dear Lord. Christmas has progressed to the point where to many it has become both a financial and a physical burden. There has been much talk of late of reducing the expense and the work of the great celebration, of simplifying our gifts and our efforts until some small part of the day shall be left for real worship, for sincere thankfulness for the Star that hung over Bethlehem, for the little Man Child that lay in the manger, for the promise which grew to the fulfillment of the gift of life everlasting to those who believe.

I would not for one minute take away from Christmas its joy, its glamour, its lovely import, but I do believe that all of us would get more joy from the day if we were to begin with this very Christmas to school ourselves to be content with giving what we truly can afford, with doing only those things we can do without taxing ourselves to the danger point physically. Large on my horizon loom the figures of two young women having home, husbands, and small families; these two women literally worked themselves to death making preparation for a great Christmas celebration. I am wondering if the coming Christmas would not be a happier day if, instead of shopping for weeks to buy

useless gifts for many of which our friends do not truly care, we should sit down quietly at home and write to each of our dear ones a letter straight from the heart; it we should try to tell them in that letter how much we love them how much we appreciate them, how thankful we are to share our lives and our love with them. Quite the loveliest gift I have the past Christmas was such a letter from a young man who has since become my son.

It is customary in these days to begin preparations for Christmas very frequently six months ahead of time. Uncounted hours go into the embroidering and fashioning of gifts by those who have not much ready money to spend. To those to whom expense need not be a matter of consideration there comes equal weariness of spirit as they shop for days and days until they are at the point of utter exhaustion and the clerks who take their orders are quite as exhausted as the customers, until the last few days of life before the great event become, not days of thankfulness for what the festival truly means. They are really days of thankfulness that at last Christmas has arrived and the strain is over. Usually at the last minute we discover someone we forgot, very frequently one of our most dearly beloved, and there must be a final rush to repair the error lest offense shall have been given when none was intended.

So I have been wondering if it truly would not be a gracious relief to the people who are giving gifts and to the people who are receiving them if the gifts could become less material, more a thing of the spirit; less a piling up of dollars and cents, more a giving of gifts that have no price. I think, perhaps, what I am trying to express is that instead of spending for gifts money that many of us truly need for the requirements of our families, for charities and taxes, we should give the greatest thing in all the world---that thing which recent scholarship has discovered is wrongly translated in the great credo of "Faith, Hope, and Charity." Modern scholars have noticed that the last of these bulwarks of our faith is wrongly translated.

"Charity" should not be so rendered since the word is "Caritas," which means Love---"Faith, Hope, and Love." Love is the gift which all of us can give without tiring ourselves to the point of exhaustion physically, without spending money until in our hearts we feel condemned for extravagance, the gift which costs us least and is appreciated most---just Love. And would not it be a wonderful thing if, instead of heaping it all into one day of the year, in giving all the love that can emanate from our hearts to our family to our friends, and to our neighbors even to the ends of the earth, we could give a little less on Christmas and a little more every day of the year, and so make Christmas last for a whole year instead of only one day?

After all, Christmas is a compound word. It is a binding together of "Christ" and of "mass" and the mass that we celebrate in honour of the birth of Christ could be no higher, holier thing than that which is celebrated through the inspiration of love. If only the whole world could get together and agree to love one another more and to care less for fine raiment and expensive living, we would not need to talk so much about the necessity for going to heaven when we die. There would not any of us be so tired, so work weary and hungry that we would want to die. We would have such a wonderful heaven here on this beautiful earth where we are being permitted to live that none of us would want to leave it or could be very easily made to believe that anywhere there is anything that is much better.

So my suggestion for this Christmas is that we think this over from the depths of sincere hearts, and see if it is not possible for us to give to our friends more kindness of spirit, more tenderness of heart, more deep, unswerving love, and give it not one day in a year, but every day throughout the year."