

## Notes For October 2023

I have been amazed at how Oct, 2003 has redeemed an otherwise disappointing year of too much heat, too little rain and dismal news from out there in the world where everything seems to be “out of joint.” What has caught my attention in nature is how earlier predictions of a not spectacular autumn leaf display have proven too be very much mistaken.

Trips to Maplewood Park and Hartford Beach, S.D. have proven to be a bit disappointing to my wife and daughter compared with the glories of previous years. I didn't go along, preferring to stay and fish around Wahpeton.

And amazingly, the colors of the foliage right here in the twin towns have grown more and more rewarding as the month has worn on. Not the spectacular displays I've seen in places such as Beauty Lake near Pillager Mn., but here we've been treated to a beauty much more subdued, yet possibly just as pleasing as the breath-taking scenery of other places in other years.

Many of our venues here have particularly beautiful foliage. Eleventh Ave. South west of the residential area has a shelter belt with an astonishing variety of russets, and reds, and purples and variations in green and gold which make a trip to Econo for groceries worth a slow creep, even a stop, just to take in God's artistry. And a slow cruise through the golf course and our fine park, taking note of individual trees of all kinds dressed in their finest to celebrate having endured the long hot summer.

The same can be said for the area along the Red down by the big catfish. The foliage there is fine, especially with the river, now much more visible thanks to the removal of lots of undergrowth that used to leave only two or three places one could stop and enjoy the painting.

Sometimes we forget that the river is the main attraction for many. People just stop to ponder the rapids, the ripples and the runs that lead to reflections. Our metro is blessed: “a river runs through it.” Add in the brilliant colors reflecting back to us through the sparkle of the rapids and you are in ponder country worthy of meditation.

The sun is a major contributor in your drive-about to drink in the loveliness of our towns. Put the sun over your shoulder and it will light up foliage displays invisible in the shade. But really, divorce your self from the rush to get places and have accidents. Slow and easy wins this race.” It will take your mind off the insanity of a frantic world in free fall, and remind you, as natural beauty always does, that “God’s in His Heaven,” even though all’s not “right with the world.” Gerard Manly Hopkins, the amazing poet priest, wrote “There lives the dearest freshness/ Deep down things/... And lo, The Holy Ghost over the bent world broods/ With warm breast/ And with, ah, bright wings.” (God’s Grandeur)

Wahpeton’s “bright wings” this fall have been her amazing foliage, and I’ve noticed that different species of trees come into their glory at different times. Right now It’s the birches and the cottonwoods looking fine, earlier it was the ornamental apples. In a few yards bright maples put on a show. It seemed that every tree has its perfect season of glory.

Shakespeare caught that drift long ago: “When I consider everything that grows/ Holds in perfection but a little moment. That this great stage presenteth naught but shows/ Whereon the stars in secret influence comment.” I think the “little moment” of our twin town foliage climaxed at around the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Then a big wind came, and many, especially the ashes, dropped their leaves. Let me only say, I’ve felt as rewarded just being here in the twin towns as I used to feel visiting the great parks.

And in closing, let me confess a major blunder I made in my previous column. I wrote that Jesus hung on the cross for three days. You who caught that mistake knew it was six grueling hours. The “three days” were spent in the tomb being about the business of defeating Satan and ascending into Heaven. I must have gotten distracted by something. “So runs the world away.”

Gene Pinkney/ Oct, 24th/ 23-10-24- for The Daily News