

The History of Minnesota

AND

Tales of the Frontier.

BY

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seal employed as the state seal of Minnesota at the time of its admission into the Union. * * * The said design of the state seal shall be surrounded by appropriate representations of the moccasin flower, indigenous to Minnesota, surrounding said central design, and appropriately arranged on the said white ground shall be nineteen stars, emblematic of the fact that Minnesota was the nineteenth state to be admitted into the Union after its formation by the thirteen original states. There shall also appear at the bottom of the flag, in the white ground, so as to be plainly visible, the word 'Minnesota.' "

The commission prepared a very beautiful design for the flag, following closely the instructions given by the legislature, which was adopted, and is now the authorized flag of the state. The flag-staff is surmounted by a golden gopher rampant, in harmony with the popular name given to our state. May it ever represent the principles of liberty and justice, and never be lowered to an enemy! The original flag, artistically embroidered in silk, can be seen at the office of the governor at the state capitol.

THE OFFICIAL FLOWER OF THE STATE, AND THE METHOD OF ITS SELECTION.

On the twentieth day of April, 1891, the legislature of the state passed an act entitled "An act to provide for the collection, arrangement and display of the products of the State of Minnesota at the World's Columbian Exposition of one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three, and to make an appropriation therefor." This act created a commission of six citizens of the state, to be appointed by the governor, and called "The Board of World's Fair Managers of Minnesota." The women of

History of Minnesota

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the state determined that there should be an opportunity for them to participate in the exposition on the part of Minnesota, and a convention of delegates from each county of the state was called, and held at the People's Church, in St. Paul, on Feb. 14, 1892. This convention elected one woman delegate and one alternate, from each of the seven congressional districts of the state. There were also two national lady managers from Minnesota, nominated by the two national representatives from Minnesota and appointed by the president of the United States, who were added to the seven delegates so chosen, and the whole was called "The Woman's Auxiliary to the State Commission." The women so chosen took charge of all the matters properly pertaining to the women's department of the fair.

At one of the meetings of the ladies, held in St. Paul, the question of the selection of an official flower for the state was presented, and the sentiment generally prevailed that it should at once be decided by the assemblage; but Mrs. L. P. Hunt, the delegate from Mankato, in the second congressional district, wisely suggested that the selection should be made by all the ladies of the state, and they should be given an opportunity to vote upon the proposition. This suggestion was approved, and the following plan was adopted: Mrs. Hunt was authorized to appoint a committee, of which she was to be chairman, to select a list of flowers to be voted on. Accordingly she appointed a subcommittee, who were to consult the state botanist, Mr. Conway MacMillan, who was to name a number of Minnesota flowers from which the ladies were to choose. He presented the following:

Lady Slipper (Moccasin Flower—*Cypripedium Spectabile*).

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Silky Aster.

Indian Pink.

Cone Flower (Brown-eyed Susan).

Wild Rose.

The plan was to send out printed tickets, to all the women's organizations in the state, with these names on them, to be voted upon, which was done, with the result that the moccasin flower received an overwhelming majority, and has ever since been accepted as the official flower of the state. That the contest was a very spirited one can be judged from the fact that Mrs. Hunt sent out in her district at least ten thousand tickets, with indications of her choice of the moccasin flower. She also maintained lengthy newspaper controversies with parties in Manitoba, who claimed the prior right of that province to the moccasin flower, all of whom she vanquished.

The choice was a very wise and appropriate one. The flower itself is very beautiful, and peculiarly adapted to the purposes of artistic decoration. It has already been utilized in three instances of an official character, with success and approval. The Minnesota state building at the Columbian Exposition was beautifully decorated with it. It is prominently incorporated into the state flag, and adorns the medal conferred by the state upon the defenders of Fort Ridgely.

The botanical name of the flower is *Cypripedium*, taken from Greek words meaning the shoe of Venus. It is popularly called "Lady's Slipper," "Moccasin Flower" and "Indian Shoe."

About twenty-five species of *cypripedium* are known, belonging to the north temperate zone and reaching south into Mexico and northern India. Six species occur in the northern United States and Canada, east of

the Rocky Mountains, all of these being found in Minnesota, and about a dozen species occur on this continent. They are perennial herbs, with irregular flowers, which grow singly or in small clusters, the colors of some of which are strikingly beautiful. The species adopted by the women of the State of Minnesota is the *Cypripedium Spectabile*, or the showy lady slipper.

The ladies naturally desired that their choice should be ratified by the state legislature, and one of their number prepared a report of their doings, in a petition to that body, asking its approval. Whoever drew the petition named the flower chosen by the ladies as "*Cypripedium Calceolous*," a species which does not grow in Minnesota, but is purely of European production. The petition was presented to the senate on the fourth day of February, 1893. The journal of the senate shows the following record, which is found on page 167:

"Mr. Dean asked the unanimous consent to present a petition from the Women's Auxiliary to the World's Fair, relative to the adoption of a state flower and emblem, which was read.

"Mr. Dean offered the following concurrent resolution, and moved its adoption:

"Be it resolved by the senate, the house of representatives concurring, that the wild Lady Slipper, or Moccasin Flower (*Cypripedium Calceolous*). be, and the same is hereby, designated and adopted as the state flower or emblem of the State of Minnesota,' which was adopted."

In the Legislative Manual of 1893 appears, on page 606, the following:

"On April from the Women's Auxiliary presented to the state legislature by the house (Floral Flower) (*Cypripedium*) or floral emblem.

The word per; but, as I botany is not a foreigner. As simulated so in no trouble in the house did not mistake will in prosperity of I committees and dealing with the

We now have choose from, a

If the house senate resolution its journal or find.

Among the men's Auxilia H. F. Brown, statue for the of Minnesota's architect of the ture, and there which would be

"THE STATE FLOWER.

"On April 4, 1893 [should be February], a petition from the Women's Auxiliary to the World's Fair was presented to the senate, relative to the adoption of a state flower. By resolution of the senate, concurred in by the house (?), the Wild Lady Slipper, or Moccasin Flower (*Cypripedium*) was designated as the state flower or floral emblem of the State of Minnesota."

The word "*Calceolous*" means a little shoe or slipper; but, as I said before, the species so designated in botany is not indigenous to Minnesota, and is purely a foreigner. As we have in the course of our growth assimilated so many foreigners successfully, we will have no trouble in swallowing this small shoe, especially as the house did not concur in the resolution, and while the mistake will in no way militate against the progress or prosperity of Minnesota, it should be a warning to all committees and Western legislators to go slow when dealing with the dead languages.

We now have the whole body of *Cypripediums* to choose from, and may reject the *calceolous*.

If the house of representatives ever concurred in the senate resolution, it left no trace of its action, either in its journal or published laws, that I have been able to find.

Among the many valuable achievements of the Women's Auxiliary one deserves special mention. Mrs. H. F. Brown, one of the delegates at large, suggested a statue for the Woman's Building, to be the production of Minnesota's artistic conception and execution. The architect of the state building had disallowed this feature, and there was no public fund to meet the expense, which would be considerable. The ladies, however, de-

