



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Voyageurs National Park

P.O. Box 50

International Falls, Minnesota 56649

IN REPLY REFER TO:

K14

Mr. Robert Amft
7340 North Ridge
Chicago, IL 60645

Dear Mr. Amft:

Enclosed is information about the Ellsworth Rock Garden on Lake Kabeto-gama.

The only relative of Jack Ellsworth of which we are aware is his wife Mrs. Elsie Ellsworth, 4805½ North Hermitage Ave., Chicago, IL 60640.

Articles about the Ellsworth Rock Garden have appeared in the International Falls Daily Journal, Vol. 50, No. 46 and the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune
(date unknown) *Sept 6 1960*

Please feel free to contact me if you need more information.

Sincerely,

Michael Braley

Michael Braley
Ash District Naturalist

Aug 1962 ?

(from Michael Braley)

ELLSWORTH ROCK GARDEN

The Ellsworth Rock Garden was built in the wilderness area on the southwest shore of the Kabetogama Peninsula between 1944 and 1965 by Chicago contractor Jack Ellsworth, for his own enjoyment and recreation during his summer vacations. This location had been a former lumber camp at the turn of the century from which one cabin remained. The Ellsworths lived in the logging cabin while they began construction of the rock garden and summer home.

Approximately 62 terraced flower beds were constructed on the granite outcrop that were filled with more than 13,000 lilies of four different varieties at the peak of the garden's bloom. Twenty-eight other flower varieties augmented the flower beds. The terraces were connected by a series of walks beginning with a sign indicating "up" at the east edge of the garden. Ellsworth accented his landscape with statuary he created out of native rock and concrete as well as with the placement of interesting rocks and boulders. Well over 150 of these creations and unusual rocks existed throughout the garden. A number of rock tablets with the Ellsworth name also appeared in the rock garden. At the top of the garden were two stylized tepee structures of wooden poles. Both were covered with canvas having battery powered lights fixed in the apex to light the interiors.

The buildings associated with the garden were the Ellsworth summer home and outhouse, workshop, and the guest cabin and outhouse. The Ellsworth home, privy and workshop are all frame structures with half log siding with hipped roofs. A dock and signpost topped by a bird house marked the

landing to the rock garden. All foreign construction materials such as planed lumber, nails, cement, hardware and furnishings had to be brought to the location by barge across the lake from local resort landings to the wilderness area. He created the 62 flower beds by hand crushing rock to form terraces on the sixty foot high granite outcrop. Soil was brought in by wheelbarrow from surrounding areas in which to plant his flowers. By 1960 Mr. Ellsworth had spent 14,000 hours creating his garden. Adding to the beauty and impact of the rock garden is the fact that it was shielded by a screen of trees so that it blends in to the wilderness when seen upon approach to the location from the lake.