

# The Keeper of the Grounds

By Trail End State Historic Site Groundskeeper Rodney Adams; from *Trail End Notes*, November 2005

*Groundskeeper Rod Adams is a multi-talented fellow. Not only can he make Trail End and its environs look fabulous, he can turn a pretty nice phrase. Here is a piece he wrote in 2004:*



Trail End, 2004 (Courtesy of Rod Adams)

Walking the path to the back door, heavy frost and light fog loom in an early morning gloom, telling of a sun not yet risen.

Now inside, the old steam radiator is popping and hissing. I put my backside against it and revel in its warmth.

Time has come to start my chores. I'm out the door, the sun now arisen, with its streaming rays of gold, is making patterns of silver and green upon the lawn.

All this while maple leaves of orange, yellow and gold drift aimlessly to the ground in a light breeze that comes and goes like the sun as it peeks in and out as the clouds pass it by.

Now the rake is in my hand. It makes a hollow scratching sound as I drag it along the ground.

The noise frightens a great horned owl hiding in the old evergreen tree. He takes flight to safer height.

All the while I rake heaps of leaves into a pile at the base of the old maple tree. More leaves filter down from above, defeating my purpose for today but giving purpose to my tomorrow.

Gray squirrels scurry about looking for what they hid yesterday, in much the same way as I look for a tool that I laid down ten minutes ago.

The rumble of a railroad train and the low hum of an expanding city coming alive, as only it can be heard from above, rises from the valley floor, just beyond the brink of the hill, where a sunburnt mountain ash blushes a bright crimson in early morning sunshine.

A rooster pheasant struts across the north lawn, stopping to cock his head, looking and listening for danger.

His copper plumage, white ringed neck and deep red eye patches competing with the fall foliage, as if in a beauty contest.

The thud of a hammer from the new school building rising out of the ground where once a sturdy old school stood, just below the hill, reminds me of my distaste for the “down with old and up with new, in the name of progress” policy.

Maybe I feel this way because of my advancing age. Anyway, I thank God for the people who had the foresight to save this grand old house.

Tools shouldered, I move on to the sunken rose garden. Though November is only a scant week away, small red roses peak from a pile of leaves, asters of purple and pink mums of a color seen only in a fading morning sunrise or at the last glowing embers of sunset, hold forth against the coming winter.

Now shadows from the ash tree stripped bare to his skeleton by autumn frost, the giant blue spruce and the silver poplar, who has yet to part with his leaves, fall across the lawn from south to north, telling me an end of morning is near.

Noon has come. The birds twitter and flit about in the trees. A blue jay calls; he’s new hereabouts.

Warm sunshine fills the air and scenic beauty abounds.

Trail End, you’ve come a long way, from a Texas cowboy’s dream.

Today you have filled my eyes with your beauty and my heart with peace.

If I had one wish it would be that those who created this place could be here with me to share its beauty beyond compare.

Such is the lot of the Keeper of the Grounds.



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