

"PERUSIN' THE PENNYRILE":  
SADIE PRICE, 19TH-CENTURY BOTANIST

CAROL CROWE-CARRACO

With botany "the science thought most suitable for Victorian young women," a number of 19th-century American females displayed a serious interest in the study of plant life.<sup>1</sup> However, rarely did they qualify as professional scientists. Instead they filled the ranks of active amateurs, making significant contributions to botany by collecting specimens, writing observational notes and occasional articles and books, and serving as a link to the future. While most of the identifiable female botanists lived in the northeast, where botanical clubs abounded, a few southerners, despite the restrictive mores of their society, also played a role in the developing science.<sup>2</sup>

Sarah Frances Price (1849-1903) of Bowling Green, Kentucky, was one of these creative women who pursued a "politely adventurous" career as an amateur botanist, artist, author, and educator in the south-central section of the state, an area of hills and ridges known as the Pennyryle.<sup>3</sup> "Miss Sadie," as she was called, acquired a herbarium collection of almost 3,000 specimens, approximately one-third of which she illustrated in watercolor,

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1 Emanuel C. Rudolph, "How It Developed that Botany Was the Science Most Suitable for Victorian Young Ladies," *Children's Literature* 2 (1973): 92-97.

2 For additional information and analyses, see Margaret W. Rossiter, *Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940* (Baltimore, 1982); Emanuel C. Rudolph, "Women in Nineteenth Century American Botany: A Generally Unrecognized Constituency," *American Journal of Botany* 69 (1982): 1346-55; Ann B. Shteir, "Women and Plants: A Fruitful Topic," *Atlantis* 6 (1981): 114-22.

3 See Harvey B. Lovell, "Biographical Sketch of Sadie Price," *The Kentucky Warbler* 35 (1959): 20-36; Lanna Gayle Martin, "Sadie F. Price: Artist, Botanist, Author, and Naturalist," *Western Kentucky University Honors Research Bulletin* (Bowling Green, 1980-81): 46-56; Exhibit Brochure: "Perusin' the Pennyryle Country: A Sampling From Sarah Frances Price," Biographical File, Missouri Botanical Gardens Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

pen and ink, and pencil sketches. Her observations and discoveries provided materials for three small books, a score of articles, some thirty-odd notes in various popular botanical journals and farm periodicals, and numerous commentaries in state and local newspapers.<sup>4</sup> On one of her collecting trips Price listened attentively as a local resident expressed regret that there was not time "to peruse these hills with you." Somewhat fascinated by colloquial speech, she decided that "peruse," which by definition implied detailed examination, was an appropriate description of her activities. "We certainly do peruse the country we visit," she became fond of saying to her nature classes.<sup>5</sup>

Born in 1849 and the third child of Maria F. and Alexander Price, Sarah Frances Price came with her family to the Pennyryle section of Kentucky in the decade prior to the Civil War. Residing in Russellville in 1850, the Prices soon moved to Bowling Green, the eventual center for railway traffic between Nashville and Louisville, which afforded more opportunities for Alexander's hardware and mercantile business. The family attended Christ Episcopal Church where Maria, according to parish records, joined the church's altar guild and often served as sponsor for baptisms and confirmations. Although frail, young Sadie attended local schools and undoubtedly led the uneventful life of many a girl in a small town. Unlike her older brother and sister, Frederick and Mary, she, however, early developed a love for out-of-doors, and she seemed to establish an almost personal relationship with flowers and trees. As a middle-aged woman

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<sup>4</sup> For a comprehensive listing of Price's publications, see Harvey B. Lovell, "Bibliography of Sarah F. Price, Kentucky Naturalist," *Transactions of the Kentucky Academy of Science*, 14 (1951): 121-28.

<sup>5</sup> Sadie F. Price, "Perusin' the Pennyryle Country," *The American Botanist* 2 (1906): 79; Lovell, "Price," 28; Martin, "Price," indicates that a "summary" of a taped interview with Mrs. J. O. Carson by Marjorie Claggett, 29 January 1959 is in Sarah Frances Price Mss, Kentucky Library, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky [hereinafter Price-KYL] — however this item cannot be located. For a listing of other folk sayings and beliefs collected by Price, see Sadie F. Price, "Kentucky Folklore," *Journal of American Folklore* 14 (1901): 30-38.

Price recalled that since childhood, "Tis my faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes."<sup>6</sup>

In 1861 the harsh realities of the Civil War brought twelve-year-old Sadie's idyllic existence to an end. As Union sympathizers with a son in the Federal army, the Prices found themselves in a precarious position, for although Kentucky was a Union state, a Confederate army of 20,000 occupied Bowling Green and surrounding areas between September 1861 and February 1862. According to family tradition, Alexander liquidated many of his assets, converting them into gold coins which were sewn into two money belts. When the Confederates arrived in Bowling Green in the fall of 1861, Maria Price took part of the family fortune, and she and her daughters went to Indiana, leaving her husband to follow later. Soon a financially destitute Alexander Price joined them, but he never revealed what had happened to the family's wealth. Perhaps he buried it, or perhaps there was no great fortune after all. In an unpublished, slightly disguised manuscript, on which she penned, "It is an o'er true tale," an adult Sadie related the wartime experiences of another Bowling Green businessman as he fled north out of the state. Fearing guerrillas, the fictional character entrusted his money belt to a friend who later claimed to have buried it along the banks of the Green River. The cache was never located, and Sadie's hero philosophically considered the loss a misfortune of war. In later years, friends often teased Price that her botanical excursions were subterfuges for her search for the family's treasure trove.<sup>7</sup>

The elder Prices returned to Bowling Green by 1863, but their daughters remained in Terre Haute to complete studies at St. Agnes Hall, an Episcopal Church school for girls. Although the female seminary's records have not survived, it can be surmised that in addition to the usual course of study which included

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6 Parish Records, 1860-1900, Christ Episcopal Church, Bowling Green, Kentucky; John Duncan, "Gardening: Principles Controlling and Practices Prevailing in Kentucky Horticulture Past and Present," *Louisville Evening Post*, n.d., Sarah Frances Price Mss., Missouri Botanical Garden Library, St. Louis [hereinafter Price-MBGL].

7 "Conscience Money," Price-MBGL.

literature, art, music, and needlework, some instruction in the sciences was provided.<sup>8</sup> Noted educator Almira Hart Lincoln had published *Familiar Lectures on Botany* by 1829, and by the 1860s it had gone through at least a dozen editions. In it, she wrote, "The study of botany seems particularly adapted to females. . . . It is not a sedentary study which can be acquired in the library, but the objects of the science are scattered over the surface of the earth along the banks of winding brooks, on the borders of precipices, the sides of mountains, and the depths of the forest."<sup>9</sup> Lincoln urged women to go outside, look and collect plants, and develop their own herbariums of dried, mounted, and systematically arranged specimens. Sadie Price's interest in botany may well have crystallized during her school days.

After graduating from St. Agnes in the late 1860s, Price returned home. The family resided in a spacious two-story house some two blocks west of the town square. They employed three servants, and the home's furnishings, according to the estate inventory, included "84 yards of Brussels carpet, two parlor sofas, six parlor chairs, and eight foot extension table for the dining room."<sup>10</sup> The 1870 census indicated that Alexander Price's personal and real estate amounted to \$25,000. The 1870s, however, did not prove to be happy years for the Bowling Green family. Financial reverses, possibly occasioned by the brother's poor business skills and the failure of the town's bank, brought the liquidation of much of the family property. At about the same time the never robust Sadie took to her bed with an undetermined back ailment. Perhaps she suffered from scoliosis; whatever the cause, she remained bedridden for more than a

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8 Thomas N. McCoy, "Sadie F. Price, 1849-1903: Kentucky Botanist" (unpublished monograph, 1946), 2, in Price-KYL.

9 Almira Hart Lincoln[Phelps], *Familiar Lectures on Botany, Explaining the Structure, Classification, and Uses of Plants* (New York, 1852), 10. Kentucky Library holdings contain this book and handwritten comments indicate that it was used in Bowling Green in the 1860s.

10 Warren County Inventory — 1875, p. 339, Warren County Courthouse, Bowling Green.

decade. In addition death claimed four members of Sadie Price's family within a sixteen-month period; both parents, her brother, and a niece died between December 1873 and March 1875.<sup>11</sup>

By the summer of 1875 the Price sisters, their father's only heirs, augmented their dwindling inheritance in the traditional ways open to spinster women reduced to genteel poverty. Mary did fine embroidery work and tatting while from her bed and "invalid chair" Sadie taught watercolor and china painting. She used flowers and birds as subjects, and a local bookstore often displayed her works. Recommending her instruction as "offering opportunity rarely presented in the largest cities," the *Bowling Green Gazette* of 22 August 1883 announced that "Miss Sadie Price... who is entitled to substantial recognition from the patron of the finer arts... will begin a course of theoretical and practical lessons early in September." While she was bedridden, Price read voraciously, created and copyrighted an artist guessing game, and prepared a number of literary manuscripts, two of which, *Songs From the Southland* and *Shakespeare's Twilights*, would be her first publications in the 1890s.<sup>12</sup>

Physically impaired with limited financial resources, the slim, dark-haired Sadie Price easily could have become embittered had it not been for her intellectual curiosity and the desire to share her knowledge with others. The arts and sciences both attracted her solemn attention, and she parlayed these interests into a career which provided personal satisfaction and a meager income. Although she could not have read Georgia botanist Fanny Andrews's "Botany as a Recreation for Invalids" in the early years of her incapacitating illness, its 1887 publication in *Popular Science Monthly* may well have spurred her into action. Price might well have echoed her contemporary who declared that the study of plants "will put more life into a sick body than

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11 Ninth Census of the United States: 1870, III, 86; Christ Episcopal Parish Records, 1860-1900; Notes, Price-KYL.

12 S. F. Price, "Atelier: A Game of Artists with Some of their Chief Works," Price-KYL; S. F. Price, *Songs From the Southland* (Boston, 1890); S. F. Price, *Shakespeare's Twilights* (Boston, 1892).

all the drugs in the dispensary . . . and . . . prove a wholesome diversion from the imbecile fancy work."<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, perhaps it was the determination to visit the woods and observe, for example, "larkspurs . . . ten thousand saw I at a glance" once again for herself or the dislike of dependence upon students for plant specimens which caused Price to seek more adequate medical treatment during the mid 1880s.<sup>14</sup> After six months in Philadelphia, according to a traditional account, she returned to Bowling Green greatly improved and ready to assume a more active life.<sup>15</sup>

Declaring herself to be "patched up," the still fragile Price purchased a small frame house with a large garden area and in the late 1880s started her serious scientific career. Carrying a copy of a reliable manual, such as Gray's, Wood's, or, later, Britton and Brown's, and with the leather strap of a tin, water-tight vasculum on her shoulder, she made excursion through much of the countryside in the vicinity of Bowling Green and the surrounding counties of the Pennyrile to collect specimens for her herbarium.<sup>16</sup> These outings lasted for an afternoon, for a day or two, or for a week. True to the customs of the times, Price never went out alone but was accompanied by lads she hired or by members of her nature classes. Since she owned no conveyances, she rented horse and buggy or wagon from the local livery or depended upon the largess of friends.<sup>17</sup>

The botanical trips could not have been easy ones for the "tall,

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13 E. F. Andrews, "Botany as a Recreation for Invalids," *Popular Science Monthly* 28 (1886): 780; See also, Charlotte A. Ford, "Eliza Frances Andrews, Practical Botanist, 1840-1931," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 70 (1986): 63-80.

14 "Wild Plants of Warren County: Buttercups, Poppies and Violets," *Times-Journal* [Bowling Green], February, 1904, Price-MBGL.

15 Mrs. T. H. Beard, "Sadie Price Resided in Cottage on 11th Street," *Park City Daily News*, 3 November 1963.

16 Asa Gray, *Gray's School and Field Botany* (Cambridge, 1887); Alfonso Wood, *The New American Botanist and Florist* (New York, 1870); Nathaniel Lord Britton and Addison Brown, *An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States . . .* (New York, 1896).

17 Lovell, "Price," 22-24.

sparse" Price who always wore long dresses and high top shoes. Often very weak, she had to be helped over fences, but "not one inch of leg above the shoes must show," and she turned a deaf ear to the suggestion that if she "jes had bloomers" her tasks might be easier.<sup>18</sup> Price particularly liked to botanize in the Mammoth Cave area because its karst topography with numerous caves and sinkholes yielded many unusual specimens. Frequent trips were made to the "gulf," a gulch near Chalybeate Springs, a favorite local spa. Because the ravine was almost ten feet across, the botanical group had to lower the wagon on ropes and then make their way to the bottom on foot before they could travel further to gather the area's unique vegetation.<sup>19</sup> On another occasion, unable to convince the children accompanying her to enter Wolf Sink because they feared it was "full of haunts," Price must have descended the 90-foot depth herself on its natural tree ladder and gathered the specimens since her note in the September 1893 *Garden and Forest* indicated the names of the plants located there.<sup>20</sup>

On her excursions, Sadie Price revelled in the loveliness of the countryside and the plants she found declaring, "I shall not forget these early mornings . . . when we heard the birds at their matins and watched the dew drops that transformed the homely weeds about us into things of beauty."<sup>21</sup> She wrote an almost lyrical tribute to native flowers, accusing the violets' seed pods of playing tricks "plainly saying, you may gather my bright blossoms as ruthlessly as you like, but I shall protect myself and ripen and perfect fruit independent of these and come again next year to gladden you."<sup>22</sup>

Despite her enthusiasm Price had to concede that, "It is this love of Nature that one must have to endure the discomforts

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18 Ibid.; Price, "Perusin' the Pennyryle," 81.

19 Lovell, "Price," 24.

20 "A Rare Fern, *Asplenium Bradleyi*," *Garden and Forest* (1893), n.p. Price-MBGL.

21 Price, "Perusin' the Pennyryle," 78.

22 Price, "Wild Plants."



*Sadie Price*

Western Kentucky University

of an excursion through the ridge country of southern Kentucky."<sup>23</sup> In describing her discovery of the rare Filmy Fern (*Trichomanes radicans*) she recalled:

A turn in the cliff, a lowering of the head, still lower, down on the knees, then I obtained a full view of the dainty beauty. But to collect it a humbling of my pride was necessary, as I had to cast aside hat and botanical equipment and crawl under the projecting rock, with scarcely room for head and shoulders to enter. It meant sore muscles and a fresh accumulation of mud on the dress that had already passed recognition, but it also meant a treasure to gloat over!<sup>24</sup>

Price's herbarium provided the subjects for her paintings, and during the early 1890s she prepared a series of watercolor and pen and ink sketches of Warren County plants for exhibit at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. Upon completing the work and mounting the pictures, Price held a reception at

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<sup>23</sup> Price, "Perusin' the Pennyrile," 76.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.



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her home so that her acquaintances might view her work. A local newspaper called the collection "a unique and interesting one . . . of 720 different specimens" and further declared, "The exhibit is a perfect and accurate description of the botanical growth of Warren County."<sup>25</sup> After some deliberation, Price sent only the watercolors to the exposition, and the judges placed them in class #167 of the Horticulture Exhibit. Noting their presence in the building's domed gallery, the *Woman's Tribune* stated, "Miss Sadie Price of Bowling Green, Kentucky had devoted nearly four years to collecting and classifying the wild plants of Warren County. She has found in all 88 different orders and about 650 species."<sup>26</sup>

On 22 March 1894, after competing with more than one hundred other entries, Sadie Price won first prize in the herbarium sketch work exhibit. The award diploma stated, "A collection of water color painting of Kentucky plants comprising five hundred plates. The plants are represented true to life and the work is very artistic and highly meritorious."<sup>27</sup> In addition to a certificate, she received a bronze medal some four inches in diameter with her name inscribed on it.<sup>28</sup> Reporting her victory and the receipt of the medal, a local newspaper congratulated her on the honor saying, "The town should also consider her success a credit to itself."<sup>29</sup> Despite Bowling Green's pride in Price's achievement, her winning exhibit did not merit inclusion in the gallery of honor at the fair's Woman's Building.<sup>30</sup>

According to family records, Price discovered seven new species of plants. To obtain official recognition of a specie, Price sent type specimens, which included root, stem, leaves, flowers,

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25 *Bowling Green Morning Advocate*, 3 March 1893.

26 *Woman's Tribune*, 10 March 1894.

27 World's Columbian Commission Executive Committee on Awards Diploma, 22 March 1894, Price-MBGL; John Boyd Thacker to Sadie Price, 17 April 1894, *ibid*.

28 This medal was given to the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture in 1908; see Harrison Garmon to Mary Price, 7 May 1908, *ibid*.

29 *Bowling Green Morning Advocate*, 23 May 1896.

30 Jeanne Madeline Wiemann, *The Fair Ladies* (Chicago, 1981), 279-323.

and seed pods to the National Herbarium of the Smithsonian Institution, the Gray Herbarium at Harvard, and the New York Botanical Garden. At each institution a recognized authority verified the specific specimen as new and then described the plant, chose its official name, and published the findings. Type specimens were never returned to the collector but remained thereafter in herbaria. Price found new species of aster, clematis, dogwood, ground-nut, sour grass, and violets, and although the clematis were not named in her honor the other five were.<sup>31</sup> They received the following scientific names — *Aster Kentuckiensis* (aster), *Cornus Priceae* (dogwood), *Apios Priceana* (ground-nut), *Oxalis Priceae* (sour grass), and *Viola Priceae* (violet).<sup>32</sup> Although she was pleased each time her work gained recognition, Price was particularly elated to have her name associated with the violet she first found in 1899.<sup>33</sup> Deceivingly delicate in appearance, the petite plant was pale purple in color shading out to grayish white. Ironically, considering the Price family allegiance during the Civil War, *Viola Priceae* became known locally as "the little Confederate Gray."<sup>34</sup>

Although most of Kentucky remained unaware of Price's activities, she joined the National Science Club of the Smithsonian Institution and exchanged information with other collectors.<sup>35</sup> She also sent specimens to Columbia and Harvard universities, botanical gardens in Missouri, New York, and Washington, D.C., and agricultural colleges in Kentucky, Indiana, and Michigan. While she occasionally corresponded with people who wanted information on treating sickly houseplants or those who insisted that she tell them the name of the ferns growing through the

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31 Mary Price, "Notes," n.d., Price-KYL.

32 Because of continuing research, the specie name of plants is constantly changing; today only *Oxalis Priceae* still bears Price's name; interview with Marjorie Claggett, 28 May 1988.

33 *Park City Daily News*, 13 April 1905.

34 Interview with Claggett, 28 May 1988.

35 See Laura O. Talbot to Sadie Price, 1 July 1890; Joseph Gilder to Sadie Price, 19 December 1898; E. D. Beadle to Sadie Price, 9 June 1899; J. J. Abell to Sadie Price, 11 March 1899, Price-MBGL.

crevices in the backsteps, her activities also brought recognition in the botanical world.<sup>36</sup> Having received fern specimens and a written description of a new specie of ground-nut from Price, the director of the Missouri Botanical Garden wrote, "The latter makes me greedy. Haven't you a spare duplicate that can go into our herbarium?"<sup>37</sup> A Pennsylvania botany publication called her "a careful observer of Kentucky flora," and the *Fern Bulletin* recognized her as a "prominent student of botany" in 1900 and asked permission to publish her picture.<sup>38</sup>

As the range of Price's activities increased, so did her desire to share her findings with other collectors. In 1893 she published *Flora of Warren County, Kentucky* which contained a listing of 714 species of vascular plants; during the next ten years she would identify some 250 or more species, adding them in a handwritten addendum to several copies in her possession.<sup>39</sup> In 1896 the *Fern Collectors Handbook and Herbarium* appeared.<sup>40</sup> Published by the Holt Company and costing \$2.25, this work contained seventy-two full-page drawings of the ferns of the eastern United States with blank pages opposite each illustration. Price planned the publication for use by collectors who would mount pressed samples of each specie in the provided space. The *Fern Bulletin* recommended it to all beginning botanists declaring, "By its use one who knows nothing about botany may identify any fern in the region . . . by merely turning the pages . . . until

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36 G. A. Woolson to Sadie Price, 11 November 1896; Luther Burbank to Sadie Price, 8 February 1903; Mary Day to Sadie Price, 13 April 1899; B. L. Robinson to Sadie Price, 24 March 1896; Charles Pollard to Sadie F. Price, 24 June 1901, *ibid.*

37 William Trelease to Sadie Price, 26 November 1898, *ibid.*

38 William N. Clute to Sadie Price, 19 November 1901, *ibid.*

39 Sadie F. Price, *Flora of Warren County, Kentucky*, "With Addendum" (New London, WI, 1893), Price-KYL; See also, Marjorie Clagett, "Nomenclature Revision of Sadie F. Price; *Flora of Warren County, Kentucky 1893*" (Bowling Green, 1968), Marjorie Clagett Mss., Kentucky Library, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.

40 Sadie F. Price, *The Fern-Collectors Handbook and Herbarium* (New York, 1896).

the illustration... matches the specimen."<sup>41</sup> Somewhat more discerning *The Nation* lamented that Price lacked "a steady hand," for had she taken more care "the axis" of the fronds of various ferns would not have been "thrown away."<sup>42</sup>

Two years later in 1898 Price's third book *The Trees and Shrubs of Kentucky* appeared.<sup>43</sup> It contained references to "255 woody plants of which 145 are trees and 110 shrubs or woody climbers." As an amateur botanist, Price was unaware of the fierce rivalry developing between scholars who used the traditional Linnean system of nomenclature for identifying plants and those who preferred the non-Latin reformed system; she chose the latter classification for her publication. In the preface she stated, "I shall in this list use the new nomenclature as given in Brown and Britton's New Flora." The next year she must have been shocked to receive a letter from B. L. Robinson, curator of the Harvard's Gray Herbarium, who decried her choice. After applauding the use of Latin nomenclature as an important means of international communication, the Boston botanist noted, "It seems rather an anomalous thing to receive hundreds of plants from England, Germany, Russia, Cape of Good Hope, Australia and New Zealand all bearing readily intelligible labels and be obliged to translate and rewrite the labels... of our American colleagues."<sup>44</sup> Sadie Price perhaps at least took comfort in being being categorized as a "colleague."

Price also began to publish short botanical notes on her discoveries as well as newspaper essays. In the notes she gave measurements of specimens, without benefit of a microscope, and precise information on location as befitting a scientific collector, but she often could not resist adding extraneous material which revealed much about her personal attitudes toward preserving

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41 "Book Announcement," *The Fern Bulletin* (October 1897), n.p., Price-MBGL.

42 "Book Announcement," *The Nation*, n.d., *ibid.*

43 Sadie Price, *The Trees and Shrubs of Kentucky* (New London, WI, 1898).

44 B. L. Robinson to Sadie Price, 13 May 1899, Price-MBGL.

plant life. After describing various Pennyryle ferns for several popular botany publications, she castigated "fern vandals," the hotel guests at local resorts, as well as the "ubiquitous sawmill and the agent for the cross-ties" along with "the officers of the experiment station" who destroyed plants and their shady environment.<sup>45</sup> In a newspaper essay Price expanded her vandal category to include "the so-called professional tree trimmer," who practiced "rude surgery... as long as the trees hold out."<sup>46</sup> Municipal leaders and local farmers did not escape her wrath either. The former allowed "the town cow full privileges as a citizen, so it roams at will... grazing on wild flowers," and the latter destroyed natural vegetation by plowing land not needed for cultivation and prepared the way for "aggressive foreign weeds."<sup>47</sup> As for society in general, Price complained, "We think the Goths and Huns barbarians to destroy the art treasures of Rome, but we are more barbarous toward our beautiful native trees and shrubs."<sup>48</sup>

The answer to the question of plant preservation for Price was education. Dedicated to sharing her lifework, limited as it was, Price taught nature classes for some two decades. The classes, which may have cost \$5.00 per quarter, met once a week and usually had ten to twelve female participants.<sup>49</sup> Although instruction was informal, remarks like "Miss Sadie I saw a bluebird on a bush" did not please an instructor who expected genus and specie as part of any identification.<sup>50</sup> To simplify learning the necessary nomenclature Price created a card game called "Phaenogamia" which gave complete scientific names along with

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45 Sadie F. Price, "Contributions Toward the Fern Flora of Kentucky," *The Fern Bulletin* 12 (1904): 66; Sadie F. Price, "The Poisonous Plants of Kentucky," *Western Farmers Almanac* (1900): 44, Price-MBGL; Sadie F. Price, "Two Rare Ferns — *Asplenium Bradleyi* and *Trichomanes radicans* (1896), n.p., *ibid.*

46 P. F. S., "A Plea for Trees," *The Courier*, 6 March 1896, *ibid.*

47 Sadie F. Price, "The Wild Flower Preservation Society of America," *Louisville Post*, n.d., *ibid.*; Price, "Wild Plants," *ibid.*

48 Duncan, "Gardening," *ibid.*

49 Lovell, "Price," 30.

50 *Ibid.*; interview with Claggett, 28 May 1988.

commonly recognized examples.<sup>51</sup> In her classes, Sadie Price urged that all Kentuckians be informed "of the beauty of our native flora, the duty of preserving it and best way to enjoy it."<sup>52</sup>

As a body Price's students constituted a popular botanical association. They, like similar groups around the country, encouraged private learning, mutual growth, and contributions to local education and conservation. In 1903 they formed the Sadie Price Nature Club which continued to meet for fifty years after their instructor's demise.<sup>53</sup> Today, Price's students, albeit several generations removed, perpetuate the tradition in the Pennyryle. They belong to various garden clubs, make spring pilgrimages to see wildflowers along area streams, and participate in an annual Papaw (*Asimina triloba*) Sweepstake in Bowling Green. In attempting to evaluate Price's impact upon her own avocation, a local octagenarian recently remarked, "There is a continuum. . . . What else can a true teacher expect?"<sup>54</sup>

The year 1903 marked the apex and conclusion of Sadie Price's botanical career: she declined an offer of employment as the curator of an Illinois museum; her name appeared in *Who's Who in America*; and a widely read periodical listed her as one of four publishing biologists in the southern United States.<sup>55</sup> The *Popular Science Monthly* article stated, "The South is hardly represented in the biology field at all . . . from Kentucky Morgan and Miss Sadie Price; Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Virginia do not appear at all."<sup>56</sup> Morgan was probably Thomas Hunt Morgan, future famous geneticist and 1933 Nobel Prize winner, and the linking of Price's name with his could lead to speculation on unrealized acclaim for her as well.

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51 Sadie Price, "Phaenogamia: A Botany Game," Price-KYL.

52 Duncan, "Gardening," Price-MBGL.

53 Lovell, "Price," 27; interview with Clagett, 28 May 1988.

54 Interview with Clagett, 28 May 1988.

55 John W. Leonard, ed., *Who's Who in America: A Geographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women of the United States* (Chicago, 1903-1905), 1197.

56 T. D. A. Cockerell, "The Making of Biologists," *Popular Science Monthly* 45 (1903): 515.

Continued successes seemed assured for the fifty-four-year-old woman, but she died of dysentery on 3 July 1903. The next day she was buried in the family plot at the local cemetery; a simple stone inscribed with her initials and dates and a few wildflowers marked the grave.<sup>57</sup>

After Sadie Price's death, her sister Mary oversaw the disposition of her estate. She sent her sister's notes for posthumous publication to several journals and gathered live specimens from the garden for friends and botanical colleagues.<sup>58</sup> In April 1904 she sold the herbarium consisting of "2,912 sheets of which 965 sketches, largely in color" to the Missouri Botanical Garden for \$438.85.<sup>59</sup> Unable to find a purchaser, Mary Price added another 250 paintings, mostly of birds and moths, to the collection of the St. Louis facility in 1908.<sup>60</sup> There they remain as a record of one 19th-century Kentucky woman's achievement.

In evaluating Sadie Price as a botanist, it is necessary to temper local tributes which called her "unquestionably one of the best informed women... in the State" and "Kentucky's leading botanist" with those from journals which referred to her as "a valuable field worker and intelligent collaborator" and commended her "zeal in furnishing materials for professional workers."<sup>61</sup> Isolated from research libraries, herbaria, and talented colleagues, Price depended upon the postal system to keep

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57 Gerard Funeral Home Records, 4 July 1903, p. 166, Kentucky Library, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.

58 William Trelease to Mary Price, 16 October 1904, Price-MBGL; Sadie F. Price, "Kentucky Oaks," *Plant World* 7 (1904): 32-36, Price-KYL; Sadie F. Price, "Bird Sketches from Southern Kentucky," *American Ornithology* 4 (1904): 146-50, Price-MBGL; Sadie F. Price, "Kentucky Birds," *American Ornithology* 4 (1904): 166-67, *ibid.*; Sadie F. Price, "Perusin' the Pennyrile Country," *The American Botanist* 2 (1906): 76-81; Sadie F. Price, "Perusin' the Pennyrile Country — Part II," *ibid.* 3 (1907): 105-112.

59 Board of Trustees Report, 11 May 1904, III, 106, Missouri Botanical Gardens, St. Louis, *ibid.*, IV, 20.

60 Mary Price to William Trelease, 15 June 1908, Price-MBGL.

61 Clipping, "Miss Price," n.p., n.d., Price-KYL; Mrs. Charles N. Crewdson, "Kentucky's Leading Botanist and her Life Work," *Park City Times* [Bowling Green], n.d., *ibid.*; *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 16 (1903): 125, Price-MBGL; Obituary Clipping, *Plant World*, n.d., *ibid.*



in contact with the scientific world. Few if any naturalists came to Bowling Green, and she rarely travelled far from her home. Although personal triumphs, her discoveries and writings were limited in scope and dealt only with the Pennyryle section of Kentucky. Her paintings and illustrations will never qualify as technically perfected works of art; they too often lack perspective and contain distortions. They did, however, provide an educational source for those who used them.<sup>62</sup>

A creative Southern woman, yes; a foremost American botanist, no. Still, Sadie Price's activities as a collector of herbarium specimens, a regional writer of botanical materials, and a local teacher place her in the ranks of important female contributors to 19th-century botany. Each spring in the Pennyryle when the wildflowers, especially the violets, bloom, Sarah Frances Price receives her recognition.

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<sup>62</sup> Lovell, "Price," 24.