

# Garden Has Grown Into Bird Sanctuary

APR 12 1985

The bird's mournful sound wafted through the spring air. Seconds before the bird was sighted, Wanny Hogewood said with certainty, "That's a white-throated sparrow. Listen to the mournful sound of its voice." Sure enough, it was.

It was just one instance in which Hogewood identified the bird by its sound on a walk through Wing Haven, the 3-acre garden and bird sanctuary in Charlotte's Myers Park, where she is curator.

Wing Haven has, of course, long been identified as the home of Edwin and Elizabeth Clarkson, who began working on it when they married in 1927. Back then, the garden wasn't much more than a sapling willow oak, a tree that now rises about 90 feet and spreads its leafy canopy over the walks, plants, statuary and scattered pools assembled by the Clarksons to welcome, shelter and feed the birds.

In recent years, Wing Haven, which attracts about 3,000 visitors a year, has been in transition. In 1970, to perpetuate the garden and bird sanctuary, the Clarksons gave title to it to the Wing Haven Foundation. A spring and fall garden shop sponsored by the Society of Wing Haven Foundation featuring plants, garden accessories and items for birds was begun and reopens next Thursday. Some plants in the sale are propagated from Wing Haven's shrubs. In the fall of 1983, Hogewood, whose degree from Wake Forest is in biology, came aboard as Wing Haven's curator.

## A Big Job

The job incorporates her long-standing interests in birds and plants. As curator, she supervises maintenance, coordinates work of volunteers, keeps the books and spreads the Wing Haven story.

Originally planned as a formal garden featuring long, straight walks and boxwood, the garden gradually evolved into a bird sanc-

tuary, reflecting Elizabeth Clarkson's interest. And so, the garden became lusher, more filled with plants and less trim and tidy as a way of attracting and keeping birds.

Quite simply, birds like the cover, security and food that a lush garden provides. Over the years, about 150 species of birds have been sighted in the garden, ranging from the usual doves and cardinals to the rarer birds, orioles and wood ducks. Except during the migratory seasons when there are more, about 40 species of birds is typical. A bulletin board near the garden's entrance displays pictures and information about birds currently in the garden.

Just behind the garden's purpose as a bird sanctuary is its role as a pleasure garden. Sprinkled throughout the grounds are quotations, statuary, plaques, sundials, pools, small fountains, wild flowers and benches. The wall and walks were made of about 350,000 bricks, gifts the Clarksons gave each other for birthdays and anniversaries during the garden's formative years.

## Favorite Color

Essentially a green garden dominated by boxwood, holly, ligustrum, mahonia and other evergreens year-round, the grounds are splashed in Elizabeth Clarkson's favorite pink during azalea season in spring and rose and crape myrtle season in summer.

Many of the plants, Hogewood notes, were placed specifically for the benefit of the birds. Some produce berries the birds like to eat; others with dense or prickly foliage provide shelter and protection. Even an occasional dead branch is left on the ground to attract insects favored by certain kinds of birds. Water is always there for the birds to drink and splash.

Not far from most of the pools and fountains, you can usually find a bench. "I always encourage visitors to take time to sit and listen," says Hogewood.

## If You're Going

Wing Haven, 248 Ridgewood Ave. is open to visitors Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 3-5 p.m., 332-5770. Group visits are by appointment. The Society of Wing Haven Foundation presents its garden shop, Thursday through April 20, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and April 21, 1-5 p.m.



Garden Party

Nancy Brachey