

# michigan's famous and historic trees





**Message To Holders Of  
"Michigan's Famous And Historic Trees"**

The Michigan Forest Association is pleased to have you become the holder of a copy of our publication. We hope you will enjoy reading about some of the very special trees that have had such an interesting part in the history of our great state.

Since the dawn of time and the creation of trees the welfare of man and of society has been very much dependent upon, and greatly enriched through the bounty of trees. Perhaps you have at one time or another read of, or heard "*The Prayer of the Tree*." We do not know who first put it into words, but you might like to see and heed them again.

**"The Prayer of the Tree"**

*Ye who pass by and would raise your hand against me,  
Harken ere you harm me.  
I am the heat of your hearth on cold winter nights,  
The friendly shade screening you from summer sun,  
And my fruits are refreshing draughts  
Quenching your thirst as you journey on.  
I am the beam to hold your house, board of your table,  
Bed on which you rest, timber that builds your boat.  
I am the handle of your hoe; door of your homestead;  
The wood of your cradle, the shell of your coffin.  
I am the bread of kindness and flower of beauty.  
Ye who pass by listen to my prayer:  
"Harm me not."*

The voice of the tree did not speak simply for adoration. It sought, in addition to respect—care, and above all the best of use at the time of harvest. The Michigan Forest Association is grateful for the words of that unknown advocate of the tree, and now looks upon itself as the broad based voice for the welfare of Michigan's woodlands.

All people who love the forest as a place to grow trees, as the habitat for other living things, as a place for active or passive forms of recreation, as a place of beauty, a retainer of clear water, the voice of the wind and the provider of all good things that can be made of wood. . .all these folk have a place, a part to play, in the work of the Michigan Forest Association.

Respectfully yours,





**MICHIGAN'S FAMOUS AND HISTORIC TREES**

COMPILED BY

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## INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Forest Association is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to promote and encourage the management and protection of the forest and related natural resources for the best interest of this and succeeding generations. Its members include landowners, bird watchers, foresters, teachers — all who enjoy and use the forests of Michigan.

The Famous Tree Project was established as a program of interest to all citizens of the state. Too many times in the past important trees have fallen in the path of development such as freeways and factories. Once identified, these natural recorders of human history can be protected.

The categories of famous and historic trees which the Michigan Forest Association has adopted as established criteria for selection are as follows:

1. Trees associated with notable people.
2. Trees associated with the development of the nation.
3. Trees associated with eminent educators and educational institutions.
4. Trees associated with art and artists, literature and writers, law, music, science and the cultural life of the state.
5. Trees associated with churches and religion.
6. Trees associated with early forestry and conservation.
7. Trees with distinctive scenic and esthetic associations.
8. Trees historic or famous because of unusual size or age. Most trees in this category will already be on record in The American Forestry Association's Social Register of Big Trees, which includes the largest reported living specimens of native and naturalized trees of the United States. The Michigan Botanical Club runs a similar program in Michigan.
9. Trees that have gained prominence due to unusual form or botanical characteristics.

It was Michigan's trees that brought her fame and fortune in the 1870's when enough white pine was cut to pave a path from the earth to the moon. Since our trees contribute so much to our cultural and physical well-being, it is only fitting and proper that we honor them.

It is the intent of the Michigan Forest Association to keep permanent records of all famous and historical trees in Michigan. Hopefully, each unmarked tree can be designated in some small way.

Many important trees have already been lost to "progress". Some of these are mentioned later in this publication.

In the words of Norman F. Smith, "Of Michigan's Great Wealth of Natural Resources, few have been more important in the past or are more highly valued today than our forests and the trees that make them. Not only are they a continuous source of raw materials for industry and agriculture, but they affect the climate, water resources, and soil, furnish food and shelter for wildlife and are indispensable to our vast recreational and scenic areas."

Michigan has over 18 million acres of forest and wild land — more than half of the total state area. About one-third of this is in our State (3.8 million acres) and National (2.6 million acres) Forests. How fortunate we are! We can be thankful for the protection and management of our public forest lands provided by the citizenry through the funding of state and federal forestry organizations.





## SOME NATIVE SPECIES – WHICH MEANS THE MOST TO YOU?

### Northern White Cedar

The northern white cedar probably never has received the credit it deserves for the part it played in the development of the midwest. White pine receives all the glory for having built homes and barns but it was generally the white cedar shingles that kept the rain out of those homes and barns and they were often surrounded by cedar fence posts and rails.

The value of this tree was recognized by the King of France when he named it l'arbre 'de vie, or "tree of life". Upon Jacques Cartier's return to France after having spent the winter in the lower St. Lawrence River area, he related the following story. During that winter in St. Lawrence, many of Cartier's men died of scurvy. Things had looked very grim indeed until Indians showed Cartier how to make a brew from the leaves of the white cedar that would cure the disease. The tree is still often called "Arbor Vitae", which is the latin form for "Tree of Life", and it still lives up to its name – now as an important source of food for wintering white tail deer in northern Michigan.

### American Chestnut

Seventy-five years ago, one of every ten hardwood trees that went to the sawmill was a chestnut. The wood was prized by furniture makers because its warm yellow color mellowed without wax or any finish. Chestnut fence posts outlasted the farmers who drove them.

Now, only Michiganders past middle age are likely to remember the chestnut, although it once covered nine million acres of U.S. woodland. It was wiped out by a fungus that was imported with some Japanese chestnut trees in 1904.

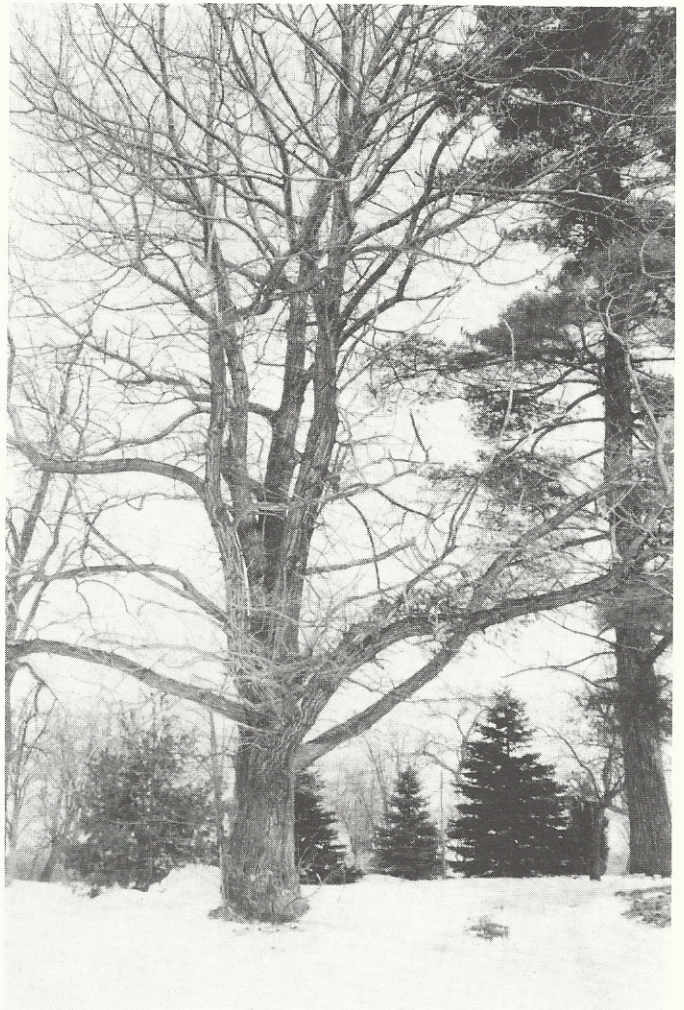
A few chestnut trees are still to be found in Michigan. If you should visit a chestnut tree, note carefully the beautifully elongated, sharp-toothed leaves, and the interesting large, round, heavily burred nut husks. These husks held the popular roasting nut held in such high esteem in the Eastern United States around the turn of the century.

### Jack Pine

During the late 18th century, jack pine was considered evil and thought to poison the ground on which it stood. Women and children were not permitted near the trees. Today we know that the tree is not responsible for the poor quality of the soil on which it grows even though it is often the only plant of any consequence that can survive on ancient beaches of former glacial lakes.

The jack pine is no longer considered a weed. Its sale for pulpwood and lumber contributes hundreds of thousands of dollars to Michigan's economy annually. Much effort is expended to regenerate jack pine after harvest so its survival is ensured.

Jack pine, in its younger stage of development, serves as prime habitat for the rare and endangered Kirtland's Warbler. Michigan's Lower Peninsula contains the only nesting population of these Warblers in the world – currently about 200 pairs. Continued commercial use of jack pine should ensure that there will always be jack pine of the right age and size to provide good nesting habitat for these Warblers.





## White Pine

As Michigan's state tree, this species was almost singularly responsible for the economic development of northern Michigan. It was initially predicted by some that the white pine in Michigan would last 500 years. But it didn't take 50 before it was nearly gone. More money was said to have been generated by white pine exploitation than by the California gold rush. The palatial homes of the lumber barons, who reaped this harvest, are in evidence throughout Michigan.

In recent years, white pine has been staging a comeback. In spite of insect and disease problems, white pine is reclaiming many northern acres to which it once held title. It promises again to occupy a place of prominence in Michigan's economy and with careful management, it should remain there forever.



## Others?

These are only a few of the important native species in our state. Which means the most to you? Perhaps you are a fan of the Hickories or maybe the oaks — black, burr, red, pin, swamp white or white. Some folks think the aspen is our most important species, others choose the black walnut. Birches, elms, maples — they all played a part in the development of a nation and a state — our state. What about hemlock, basswood, tamarack, or the ashes and spruces? Even the lowly ironwood has its supporters among our citizens.

Whatever your choice, this gift of God — the tree, touches our life each day.



## OUR FOREST HERITAGE

Did you ever peek into the history of the names of Michigan's Counties, Cities, Towns, Villages, Communities and Hamlets? Did you ever look at the close ties between the town names and the forests and the trees?

Some obvious ones come quickly to mind – Oak Park, Birch Run, Hickory Corners, Maple Rapids, Oakland County, Royal Oak, Paw Paw, Three Oaks, White Pine, Cedar Springs, and Burr Oak.

Some are cloaked in Indian Names that can only be recognized by the informed, such as Millecoquins in Mackinac County. Pronounced Milikoki, it means, in French, a thousand thieves being derived from the Indian Manana Koking, or Minakoking, meaning a place where hardwood is plentiful.

Quanicasse in Tuscola County has retained its Indian name meaning lone tree.

Copemish in Manistee County has a name that means big beech and the belief is that the Indians held councils under a large beech at the town site.

Other smaller towns still retain their "tree" names: Red Oak, Linden and Lake Linden, Cedar, Spruce, Pine River, Cedarville, Elm Hall (where the settlers lived in a long building or hall made of elm logs), Hazel Park, Hemlock, Maple City, and Holly.

Some extinct hamlets have interesting origins. An example is El Dorado in Crawford County, which means "place of wealth". However, it was originally

named Jack Pine. Another is Noble in Branch County, which originally was known as Hickory Corners, as several hickory trees stood at its crossroads.

Many more official post offices which existed at one time or another in Michigan were named after local forest conditions or trees. These include Yew (originally called Brown's Corners), Whitewood, Thornapple (near the River where the banks were lined with Thornapple trees), Walnut, Tamarack, Maple City (where a maple wooden shoe-peg factory flourished), White Oak Springs, Ashland, Balsam, Basswood Corners (now known as Reading), Beechwood, Butternut (the site of a butternut cheese factory), Popple (originally called Finger Board), Rock Elm, Mulberry, Maple Range, Larch and Green Oak.

Two other interesting town names are Birch Run and Forest Hill. Birch Run in Saginaw County was established in 1852. It changed its name to Deer Lick in 1863 and back to Birch Run in 1868.

Forest Hill in Gratiot County was platted in 1857. It was named because the area was heavily forested and on higher ground than that around it, but when an improved roadway crossed a site four miles away, the village was moved to it, retaining the name though there was neither forest nor hill.

Some wags insist that Bad Axe, Bark River, Branch, Pine Stump Junction, and Matchwood should be included as forest or tree related place names. That decision is left to the reader.





## THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The year 1876 saw a great and glorious celebration of the country's one-hundredth birthday. So moved was Governor John J. Bagley, that he issued the following edict as reported in "Michigan and The Centennial — Being a Memorial Record Appropriate to The Centennial Year" published by S.B. McCracken (Detroit—1876).

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
Executive Office  
Lansing  
February 22, 1876

To the People of the State of Michigan:

*Without the sanction of legislative authority, or established precedent, as a guide, I cannot resist the temptation that the Centennial year we have just entered upon brings to me, of asking your attention to a few suggestions and thoughts as to the use we shall make of it. Though as a political organization we cannot lay claim to even a semi-centennial age, yet as one of the younger brethren of the great household of states, we hold in grateful love our place in the family. We have within our borders no Mecca like Plymouth Rock or Bunker Hill, to which patriotic pilgrims turn their willing footsteps, yet a large proportion of our people are the descendants of the fathers of the Republic — the men who in council framed our form of government, and on a score of battlefields fought and died to establish it.*

*The lapse of time, the demands of business, the new life we are living, all tend to a forgetfulness of the old time, and of the history our fathers made with pen and sword. Is it not well, therefore, in this anniversary year, to pledge anew our affections to the "land we live in" — to rebuild the fire of patriotism on our own hearthstones and renew the love of liberty and country in our own hearts, that in the times of the Revolution warmed the hearts of our ancestors?*

*Have we not forgotten, in the hurry and strife of our money-getting, in the rapidity with which events have crowded upon one another in these latter days, the blessings that have come to us from the past, and the debt we owe it? Have we not taken the good that has come to us as rewards of our own merit, rather than the hard earnings of the early builders? Are we not growing thoughtless of our country, its institutions and government, and careless of its perpetuity? Political quacks imagine new diseases affecting the body politic, and invent panaceas for their cure, without a protest from the people. One urges that property should govern; another, education; another, birthplace. One desponds for fear the government is not strong enough, while another shudders at the centralization of power; and here and there perchance, is a misanthrope who has lost all faith in a government of the people.*

*Shall we not, on this hundredth birthday of the nation turn away from these teachers of false doctrine, resolving to hold fast, not only to the form, but to the spirit of the government as it was established in its simplicity and strength? So resolving and so doing, we need not fear for the future.*

*We of Michigan need to do our duty in this direction, and we cannot commence too soon. The history of the United States is not taught in five thousand of the six thousand schools of the State. It occurs to me that this is not the way to insure good citizenship in the future. If our children are thus educated — or rather, uneducated — we shall by-and-by become a nation of doubters and croakers. I hope the parents and children, the school officers and school teachers, of this State, will see to it that this be changed at once. If from the inspiration of the time this single reform shall be secured, the Centennial will indeed prove a blessing.*

*On Saturday, the fifteenth of April next, I urge upon every citizen of this State who owns a piece of God's ground, whether it be large or small, whether in city or country, town or village, to plant a tree, which our children and our children's children may know and remember as the tree planted by patriotic hands in the first Centennial year of the Republic. In a country of landowners, where the poorest man may, if he will, own the ground he stands on, this seems a most appropriate memorial act, and I earnestly hope our people will heartily unite in adopting this suggestion.*

*I am well aware that these are perhaps only symbols — external show — but will they not bespeak an inward glow of patriotic impulse, and may they not set in motion in the plastic minds of our youth, and perchance, of older folk, a current of patriotism and love of country that shall know no ebb?*

*Let us now resolve to cherish the legacies of free school, free church, free press, and free town meeting, left us by the fathers. Let us preserve simplicity and economy of government as cardinal points in our political creed, and thus make sure "that under God, government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth".*

JOHN J. BAGLEY  
Governor



One hundred years later seed was harvested from century-old sugar maples for use in scores of simple but significant Bicentennial projects statewide.

Near a fence row of these hardy trees on Portage Road just southwest of Niles on an historic Berrien County farm settled by the Gillette Family in 1844, more than 1,000 maple seeds were gathered to produce hundreds of maple seedlings that were planted in 1976 to commemorate America's 200th birthday.

In 1876, a hired man working for the Gillette family took part in a very similar yet unheralded commemorative event. He asked for permission from his employer, the grandfather of John Gillette, a descendant of the pioneer family and now a prominent Berrien County resident, to plant a stand of maples in the rich soil on the farm.

The hired man planted those seeds in observance of the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Now, as history repeats itself, the fruits of these same hardwoods have been distributed for future Michigan citizens to appreciate during the years of America's third century.

Through the cooperation of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division and the School of Forestry at Michigan State University, the crop was germinated in the university's greenhouse.

"The planting of these seedlings exemplifies the real spirit of the Bicentennial," observed Lt. Gov. Damman. "A simple, very personal act 100 years ago requiring considerable effort and a tremendous feeling of patriotism, is now bearing regards for this and future generations to enjoy."

Records of the locations of the planted Bicentennial Trees are kept on file by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

W.G. Milliken, Governor during the Bicentennial Celebration presented the following:

*Executive Declaration  
in Observance of  
June 11, 1976  
as  
Centennial-Bicentennial  
Tree Planting Day*

*In 1876, a row of sugar maple tree seedlings were planted near Niles, Michigan, by a farmhand as a personal Centennial observance. Those trees still stand. Seeds from them have been gathered and propagated and seedlings distributed to interested Bicentennial groups about the state for planting as a Bicentennial observance.*

*The Bicentennial celebration commemorates the past and looks to the promise of the future. The birth, growth and rebirth of the trees of our land are a classic symbol of this feeling of continuity, and hope.*

*It also is fitting to pay tribute to those who in 1876 were moved to express thanks that their country, founded on the principles of freedom, had passed 100 years — even as we this year are celebrating 200 years.*

*Therefore, I, William G. Milliken, Governor of the State of Michigan, do hereby declare June 11, 1976, as Centennial-Bicentennial Tree Planting Day and urge that Centennial-Bicentennial sugar maple seedlings be planted on this day.*

*Given under my hand on this twenty-first day of April in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred seventy-six and of the Commonwealth one hundred fortieth.*

*William G. Milliken  
Governor*

*Lt. Gov. Damman collects seeds from maple tree.*





## CROOKED TREE

“A tall, crooked pine tree overhanging a high bluff, served to designate what was probably the most important Indian village in the north, prior to the advent of the white man. “San-go-naw-ki-sa” – the Crooked Tree – could be seen for many miles by the occupants of approaching canoes. After rounding the northwest extremity of Emmet County, in the state of Michigan, on their way south, it was a familiar sight, and one that never failed to bring exultations of joy from the brave and daring Ottawas. Just where the Crooked Tree stood we have been unable to ascertain . . . .”

So wrote John C. Wright in 1917 in his book *The Crooked Tree – Indian Legends of Northern Michigan*. He indicates that, contrary to the message on the sign, the tree, called “L’arbre Croche” by the French missionaries, no longer stands. However, he goes on to say, “L’Arbre Croche village proper was located about thirteen miles further up the coast (from Harbor Springs) and at one time was the largest Indian village south of the straits of Mackinac. It was at that point where the Menominees, Chippewas and Ottawas held council, in July of 1763 after the massacre of Fort Michilimackinac, when the Ottawas had with them several English prisoners”.

The white pine pictured here, while probably not the original “Crooked Tree”, no doubt looks very much like it. It stands near the edge of the bluff along M-131 about 2 miles north of the village of Good Hart, or about 15 miles up the coast from Harbor Springs. Original or not, it represents perhaps the most famous individual tree in Michigan and deserves a prominent place in this collection of historic trees.





## THE REPUBLICAN OAKS

At Jackson, Michigan, a grove of oak trees figured in our national political history. This grove is known as Republican Party Oaks. According to James Rhodes in his *History of the United States*: "In response to a call signed by several thousand leading citizens of Michigan, for a State mass meeting of all opposed to slavery extension, a large body of earnest, intelligent and moral men came together at Jackson, Michigan, on the 6th day of July, 1854. The largest

hall was not sufficient to accommodate the people, and, the day being bright, the convention was held in a stately grove of oaks in the outskirts of the village." The story goes on to tell among other momentous recommendations and resolutions, that the members of this convention decided to be known as "Republicans".

Today, what is left of this grove stands near the northwest corner of Franklin and Second streets in the City of Jackson.

## THE MILLWHEEL TREE

"About a century ago (no one seems to know exactly when) the rim of an old mill wheel was left standing against a young tree on property now owned by the Weatherproof Body Corporation and adjacent to Bentley Park. As time passed on, the tree grew and took the wheel in, covering up about one-quarter of the rim with its mighty trunk. Today a portion of the rim is planted several feet into Mother Earth and the whole spectacle beckons public view and amazement. Truly a living antique of old mill days is to be found on this spot where once an old mill stood."

The above paragraph was taken from *Owosso Workshop*, dated December, 1930 and published monthly by the Owosso Chamber of Commerce. In a comparison of a picture in *Owosso Workshop* of 1930 and the pictures taken in 1970, there is very little difference. There seems to be no record of when the wheel was leaned against the tree.



The Mill Wheel Tree is located in Shiawassee County, City of Owosso. It is located approximately 200 feet to the west of the Universal Electric Plant located just off South Washington Street on Universal Drive. It is very near the Northeast corner of Bentley Park and stands nearly alone in the area between the factory and the park.





## DR. DORSCH'S GINGKO TREE

The Monroe County Historical Society nominated the Ginkgo tree in front of the Dorsch Memorial Library on E. First St., Monroe, for the list of "Famous Trees of Michigan".

Dr. Edward Dorsch, a German emigrant, a physician of considerable stature and a philosopher and scientist, is said to have planted the seedling in his front lawn in the 1860's. According to the story, it was presented to him by a Chinese ambassador whom Dr. Dorsch met in Washington, D.C. In a show of early detente, the ambassador brought the trees to the United States as a gift from his country and a row of the Ginkgos was planted along New Hampshire Ave. in the capitol.

The Ginkgo has been named as a prehistoric tree and was protected and cultivated by the Chinese as a sacred tree for centuries.

The Dorsch tree is a female of the species. The seeds of the fruit, roasted, are edible, sweet, although they have never been eaten in Monroe. The fallen fruit has strong odor.

The bronze plaque in front of the tree stating that it was planted by Dr. Dorsch in the 1860's was posted some 40 years ago, according to Miss Mary J. Crowther, then city librarian.

Mrs. Augusta Uhl Dorsch willed the home to the city at her death in April, 1914. In October, 1916, it was opened as Dorsch Memorial Library in honor of the doctor, who had died on his 65th birthday, January 10, 1887.

A considerable amount of material has been written about Dr. Dorsch, who was a writer, a newspaperman and a poet, as well. Harold G. Carlson, Ph.D., in his doctoral thesis, published in 1966, spoke of him as the outstanding German-American poet. The local histories record him and the Monroe Evening News has printed frequent articles in the Observer column and elsewhere as to this remarkable talent. In the collection of material which Mrs. Biliana Delevich, head Dorsch librarian, has on file are exquisite botanical drawings and paintings prepared by the doctor. Shortly after his death, the major share of his technical books on medicine and other sciences was donated to the University of Michigan.

It is said that Dr. Dorsch never lost a maternity case, his specialty, and that his services were rendered to rich and poor alike.

At the same time, his love of nature caused him to turn his home into a zoological garden. Trees, flowers, birds and insects were subjects for study and were friends, also. A large bay window was built on the east side of his home for birds, and some Monroe residents still can remember his widow being followed down First Street by one of his fat parrots.

Among his many horticultural efforts was the importation of lotus seeds which he planted in marshes near his Monroe home.

Dr. Dorsch was 27 (1849) when, having been a part of an unsuccessful revolution in Germany, he came to America seeking freedom from political tyranny. He arrived in Monroe with his bride, the former Sophia Hartung, in October of that year.

His trips to Washington are recorded in his own writings: "In the fall of 1854 I went with Judge Isaac Christiancy and a few others to the first Republican convention at Coldwater . . . I became editor of the German campaign paper at Monroe during the Lincoln campaign of 1860. Having been nominated as one of the electors of Mr. Lincoln, I deposited my vote for him at Lansing and went afterwards to Washington to witness his inauguration . . . .

"Having shaken hands with 'Father Abraham' I returned to Monroe to see before my window the drilling of the first company which followed the call of the President and for five years the examination of recruits and afterwards of invalids took away a good deal of my time. I was appointed and am yet examining surgeon to the pension office. To facilitate the examination, I had the human body in four different positions drawn upon the blanks of the report, where by dotted lines the examiner could give the way the ball (shot) took in passing through or into the body. This improvement is yet used by the pension office."

It is understood that Dr. Dorsch conferred in Washington about his diagrams and that they were still being used in 1913.







## WITNESS TREES

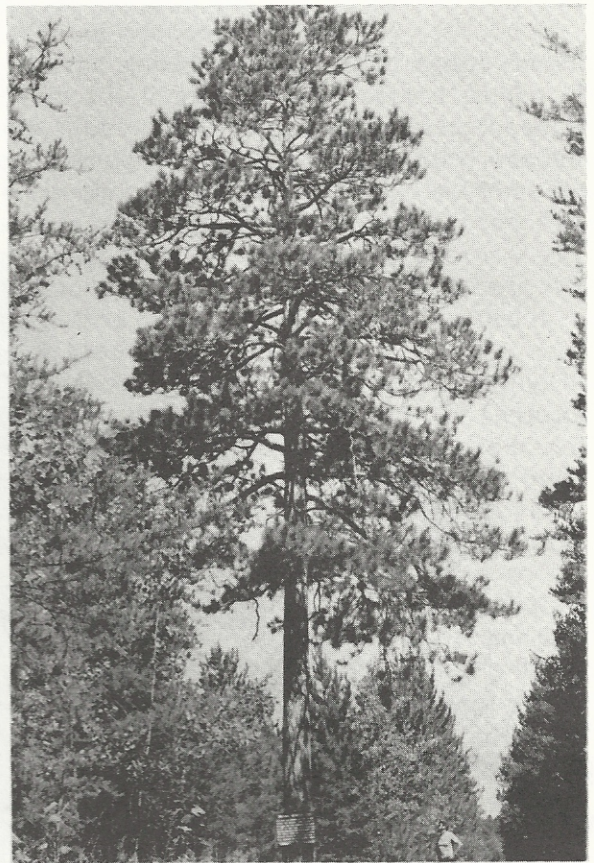
Witness trees are trees that surveyors use to mark corner points during survey. Such a survey will start from a known point and proceed in a determined direction. When the surveyors have gone a mile, they establish a section corner; and will ideally mark four trees that surround the corner point. If four trees aren't available, then rocks, nearby landmarks, or other natural objects are used. The corner itself is also marked with a stake, but in case the stake is removed or lost, the field notes and the witness trees can be used to relocate the corner point. The trees, rocks, or outcrops are described in the field notes by size, type, and by any distinguishing features to help later surveyors. Michigan was originally surveyed from about 1815 through the 1850's and the field notes of these surveys are still on file in the Department of Natural Resources archives.

Perhaps the most famous witness tree in Michigan is a red pine marked June 17, 1850 during the original land survey of Michigan. The tree diameter was eight inches at that time. The surveyor was that pioneer of Michigan land surveying, William Burt for whom Burt Lake was named. Located in the middle of a formerly open trail road, this tree marks the quarter section corner between sections 15 and 16, township 32 north, range 1 west, Pigeon River Country State Forest. The Forestry Division of the Department of Natural Resources has constructed a small parking lot near the tree.

Another of many examples is a white cedar with a diameter of 16.5 inches, located one-half mile north of the corner common to the three counties of Alger, Delta and Marquette in the Upper Peninsula. The original survey notes indicate this tree was scribed as a bearing tree on July 9, 1841 by John Burt, Deputy Surveyor, for William A. Burt, while running township lines in the area. This tree is located at the east 1/4 corner of Section 36, Township 44 North, Range 23 West, Marquette County. It is on state forest land in the Escanaba River State Forest.

Even a brief account of surveying in Michigan would be incomplete without mention of a few of the more notable surveyors for whom the many miles of accurate township and section lines of the state stand as permanent monuments.

William A. Burt, whose five sons joined him in surveys, ran the Michigan principal meridian across the Straits of Mackinac and also surveyed the final segment of the Michigan-Wisconsin boundary in 1847, a task of such importance and involving such rough terrain that he received \$18.00 per mile, the highest rate ever paid for public surveys in Michigan. Even this was regarded as "a small amount of money for a large amount of work."



Burt's other contributions included the official discovery of iron ore in the Upper Peninsula on September 18, 1844, and the invention of the solar compass and typographer, forerunner of the typewriter.

John Mullett worked longer and surveyed more of Michigan's lands than any surveyor. A large lake in northern lower Michigan is named in his honor, although few vacationers know of his deeds. Much of the prime farmland in Calhoun and Kalamazoo counties was covered by his surveys, and Battle Creek owes its name to a minor skirmish his party had with Indians at that site.

Lucius Lyon, one of Michigan's first United States senators, combined surveying with large-scale land purchases, town platting, experiments at sugar beet growing, exploration for salt wells, and a lively career in politics. For Lyon there was "nothing like energy and industry to help along in such business," and he was known to accomplish more than eight miles of surveyed township lines per working day. In 1845, after his term in the Senate, Lyon was appointed surveyor general, and it was under his able direction that the difficult and important surveys of the Upper Peninsula mineral lands were completed.



## GREENSKY HILL MISSION TREES

In the 1840's the Chippewa Indian missionary, Peter Greensky, established a Protestant Mission in an area where legend says Indian chiefs once held their councils. It is located in Charlevoix County, some four miles northeast of Charlevoix, off old US-31. New trees have been planted in an arrangement similar to that of the trees that made up the original council circle. Mission services first were held in a rude building of boughs and bark, and in the 1850's, the Indians built the present church. It is a fine example of the old log style construction with

hand-hewn timbers and notched corners. Windows, doors, and much of the lumber were brought by canoe from Traverse City to Pine Lake (now Lake Charlevoix) and then carried two miles to this site. Methodist services for the Indian congregation have been held here regularly to the present.

Why were the trees bent in such a peculiar fashion? Some say the Indians felt this would protect the trees from the white man's greed for lumber. Others believe this was a symbolic shape of reverence, a posture of worship. We choose to believe the latter.





## MOON TREES

After making the closest-to-target landing of the Apollo moon missions, U.S. astronauts Alan B. Shepard, Jr., Edgar D. Mitchell and Stuart Roosa returned to earth in early 1971 with 96 pounds of rock for scientific study.

Also accompanying the astronauts from their nine day Apollo 14 mission was a small box containing seeds from sycamore trees, which Command Module Pilot Roosa carried as a symbol of the nation's need for forests in America's space age future.

Following propagation at forest nurseries in Mississippi, these two foot high seedlings were known appropriately as "Moon Trees". Four sycamores were planted in Michigan in commemoration of the nation's Bicentennial celebration during the spring of 1976.

Similar events took place in about 35 other states during Arbor Week. "These events will promote both the Bicentennial and tree planting efforts, while focusing attention on the importance of trees and forest resources to the nation," according to a Michigan Bicentennial Commission news release. "This event is particularly noteworthy in this State, because of all of Michigan's great wealth of natural resources, few have been as economically or recreationally significant as our forests and the trees that make them," said a Commission spokesman.

Not only are forests in Michigan a continuous source of raw materials for industry and agriculture, but they affect the climate, water resources, and soil, furnish food and shelter for wildlife and are indispensable to the State's vast recreational and scenic areas.

"As a nation, Americans have relied on wood products to thrive," noted the Commission. "Two centuries ago, some men signed their name to a tree produce, a piece of paper, and called it the Declaration of Independence. In contrast, a tree product, cork, was part of the vital cover that protected the Apollo command module surface from heat during its outbound flight through the earth's atmosphere."

While commercial value of sycamores in Michigan is less than that of many other hardwoods, the tree is distinguished by the fact that it grows to a greater size than any other deciduous tree in North America. Fastgrowing, sycamores are also moisture-loving and are most commonly found along streams or in rich, wet bottomlands of Southern Michigan. Four trees were originally planted. One was planted on the capitol lawn and another in the City of Wyoming. They did not survive. One is alive and well at Fernwood in Niles. The fourth was planted in Jackson.

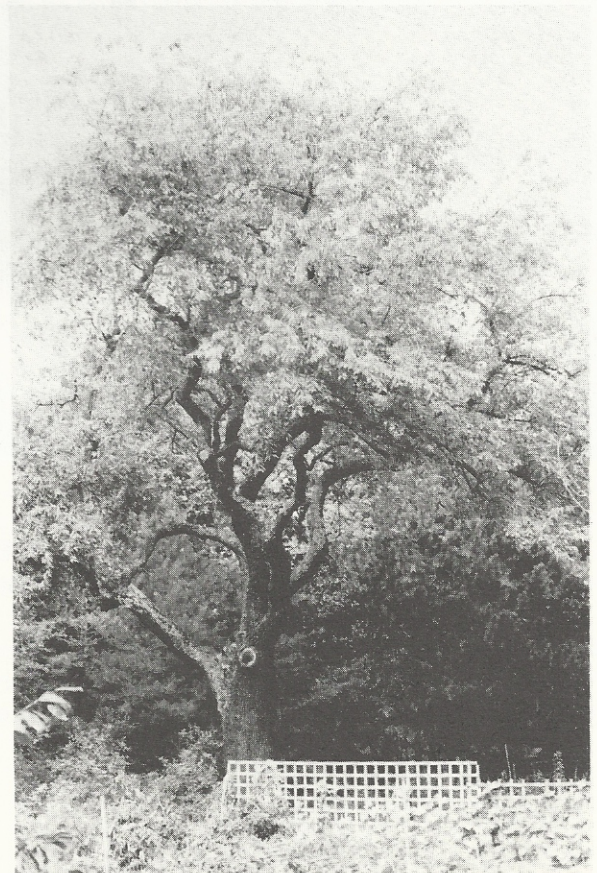
## INDIAN GATHERING TREE

Local lore has long hinted that this black cherry marked a traditional indian campground. As recently as the 1920's local indians were known to have camped here periodically, but how far back into history was not known.

To settle the question, Mrs. Margaret Peschel, a school teacher and of indian descent herself, undertook a small excavation in 1974 at the tree's base with her Anthropology class from Leland High School. They carefully dug to a depth of five feet and were still finding bits of charcoal and occasional arrowheads and other artifacts. This certainly seems to substantiate the legends.

Mrs. Peschel's grandfather had told of being scolded as a boy for crawling out on the tree's spreading branches and peering into other families' pots to see what they were having for dinner.

The tree stands on a secluded lot in the village of Leland on private property owned by Harlan Bartholomew.





## JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD TREE

The Harmon-Patridge Park in Owosso is the home of the Curwood Tree. Prior to its designation as a city park, James Oliver Curwood, author and conservationist, would walk to this area from Owosso, a distance of about 2 miles. It was then a pasture and a quiet secluded area away from people but near nature and the wild animals that Curwood loved so much. The owner of the farm permitted Curwood to enter

his property and write anytime he wished. He sat under the tree and wrote some of his most famous tales.

James Oliver Curwood was born in Owosso on June 12, 1878 and died there on August 13, 1927, at the age of 49. In addition to being an author, Curwood was also the chairman of the Conservation Commission of Michigan. His most famous works are stories of the North, particularly "Green Timbers".

## FREE EDUCATION TREE

A strong sense of history is evident in the City of Marshall in Calhoun County. Stately 19th century homes exist in renovated near-mint condition.

Near one of these homes, the Fitch-Gorham-Brooks house at 310 North Kalamazoo Avenue, stands a white oak which marks the birthplace of Michigan's public school system. The Reverend John D. Pierce, first man to preach a sermon in Marshall and Isaac E. Crary, Attorney, held informal discussions under this tree in the summer of 1834. Together at this time, they mapped out a plan for the public school system of Michigan, based upon the Prussian System.

Reverend Pierce became Michigan's first superintendent of Public Instruction, while Crary was an influential member of the State's first constitutional convention in 1835. As chairman of the educational committee, the latter drew up the ordinance which gave the trusteeship of school land (Section 16 of each township) to the state rather than to the township as was the former policy. He later served in the State legislature and in the United States House of Representatives.

*Arbor Day circa 1900 in front of the Free Education Tree*





## AMERICAN SPRUCE

*Question: What is red, white, and blue, but "green" all over?*

*Answer: The American Spruce.*

Michigan State University scientists have come up with a combination salute to the nation's Bicentennial and a major improvement in tree genetics. It's the red-white-and-blue American Spruce.

The new tree is the first successful tri-hybrid cross among three important spruce species that grow naturally in different areas of the United States — the red, white, and blue spruce.

The first American Spruce seedling was planted on the ground of the United States Capitol on April 29, 1976 as an M.S.U. commemoration of the Bicentennial. In May, 1976 one of the new trees was planted on the Michigan Capitol grounds in Lansing.

The culmination of eight years of research under the auspices of the M.S.U. Agricultural Experiment Station, the American Spruce has important scientific and practical implications. Dr. James Hanover, professor of forestry at M.S.U. and a nationally recognized expert in tree genetics who developed the hybrid, says that the new tree combines the best qualities of its parental species.

"We hope that the American Spruce will show the rapid growth of the red spruce, the disease resistance of the white spruce and beautiful color of the blue spruce," Dr. Hanover said. "If verified by future research, the result will be an extremely versatile tree with multiple uses, such as pulpwood and lumber production, ornamental plantings or Christmas tree production."

Development of the American Spruce began in 1968 when Dr. Hanover succeeded in making the first documented cross between blue spruce and white spruce. When these hybrids produced their first cones last spring, they were fertilized with pollen collected from red spruce growing in Vermont.

The seeds produced by this cross were planted in the summer of 1975. The seedlings were grown under special environmental conditions, including prolonged lighting, that accelerate tree growth.

After further propagation and testing by M.S.U. scientists, the American Spruce will be made available to forest research laboratories and commercial nurseries.

In announcing the development of the American spruce, Robert Perrin, M.S.U.'s vice president for university and federal relations and chairman of the university's Bicentennial Coordinating Committee, emphasized that the new tree is not a routine development to which a Bicentennial label has been loosely applied.

"The American Spruce is truly unique and truly American," Perrin said. "We believe it represents the successful combination of basic research and practical application that characterizes so many scientific investigations at M.S.U."

## WISCONSIN-MICHIGAN TREATY TREE

All that remains today is a rotted stump partially filled with concrete where the Treaty Tree once stood. The Treaty Tree, a large Tamarack, marked the spot where Captain Thomas Jefferson Cram made a treaty with local Indians in 1840.

Captain Cram, with the Corps of Topographical Engineers, was leading a survey party to mark the boundaries of the young state of Michigan, when he was discovered by a party of Indians. They permitted the survey party to continue in exchange for a guarantee that all future parties would bring gifts. This proved an embarrassment to Surveyor William A. Burt, who, in 1847, was confronted with the treaty by a group of Indians while on a surveying expedi-

tion. Burt shared his supplies generously, we are told, and continued the survey without further incident.

The site, about 1/4 mile south of the Brule Lake picnic ground, was referred to on the maps made by Burt's survey party, as the "Treaty Tree". On the tree was said to have been inscribed,

"W'm A. Burt  
June 4, 1847  
State Boundary"

The site is presently owned by the United States Forest Service and is maintained by the Ottawa National Forest.



## HUDSON MOTOR CAR TREE

Louis Cook, Detroit Free Press Editorial writes of the Hudson Tree:

"It is the time of year when some Detroit sentimentalists make their annual inspection of all that remains of the once mighty Hudson Motor Car Company plant on East Jefferson. It is a tree that now grows on Belle Isle, and it is a pleasure to find it in good shape, all things considered.

The old plant was upriver from Conner, next to the Chrysler East Jefferson assembly plant. The last Hudson came off its lines in 1954. For a time the plant just sat there, a subject of earnest study by demolition experts.

The plant was built to last down the ages, although the Hudson corporate structure unfortunately, was not. The massive floors were supported on huge pillars of reinforced concrete that rang like a gong when tapped with a sledge hammer.

Finally the work began, and it took months. The headache balls bounced off the flinty surfaces like ping-pong balls. The place finally came apart, but grudgingly, chip by chip.

The administration building out front was no problem, a conventional office structure that gave up easily.

In front of the building, however, was a planting of Austrian Pine trees, all but one of which were mashed by the bulldozers. One hung in there, a pathetic sight. Its top torn out by a wild swing of the wrecker's ball, but definitely a survivor type.

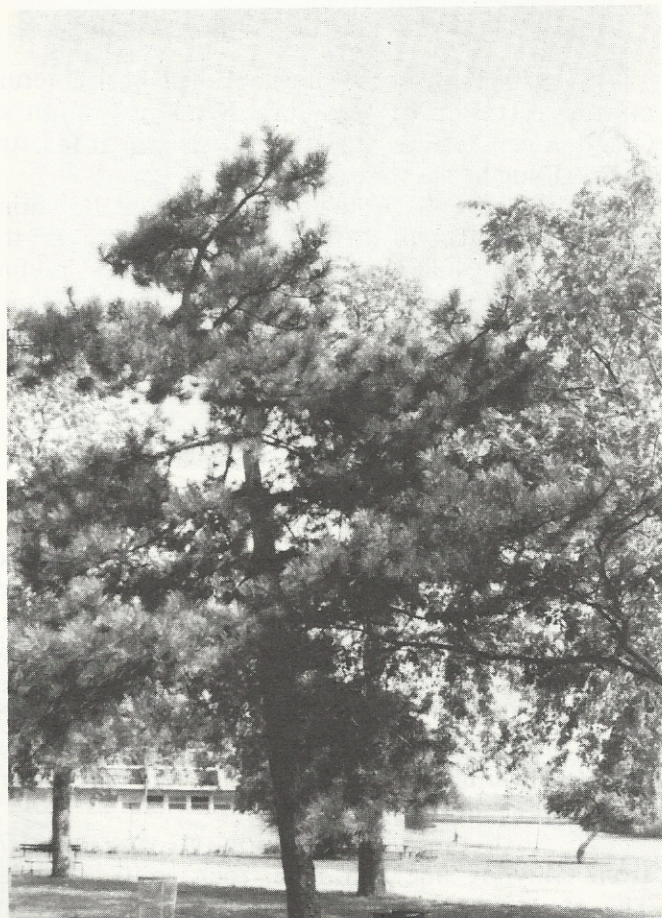
A passerby reported this to the late Hardy Crowell, then second in command of the city Parks and Recreation Department and later superintendent from 1959 to 1966. Why not transplant the tree to Belle Isle, so there will always be a spot in Detroit that is Hudson? Why not, indeed, said Hardy, a man of merry disposition and great imagination.

The next morning a platoon of parks employees showed up with an excavator and a flat-bed truck and the tree was loaded up. It was bigger than it looked, especially atop its ball of roots and dirt.

Linemen had to be called in to prop up overhead wires. Just how everybody accounted for the expense of this mad adventure is not known.

But, finally, Hardy led his triumphant procession into Belle Isle and selected a spot for the tree just north and east of the skating pavilion, where two other Austrians had already been set out.

The Hudson pine was the ugly duckling of the trio, and still is, with its mashed crown. But while Hornets and Terraplanes are mostly museum pieces anymore, the pine has dug in its roots to stay."





## William James Beal Plantations

William James Beal left more than his name in the pages of Michigan History.

Little did anyone know that when the young Harvard graduate returned to his home state in 1870 to become Professor of Botany at Michigan Agricultural College that monumental changes were in the making for the small school.

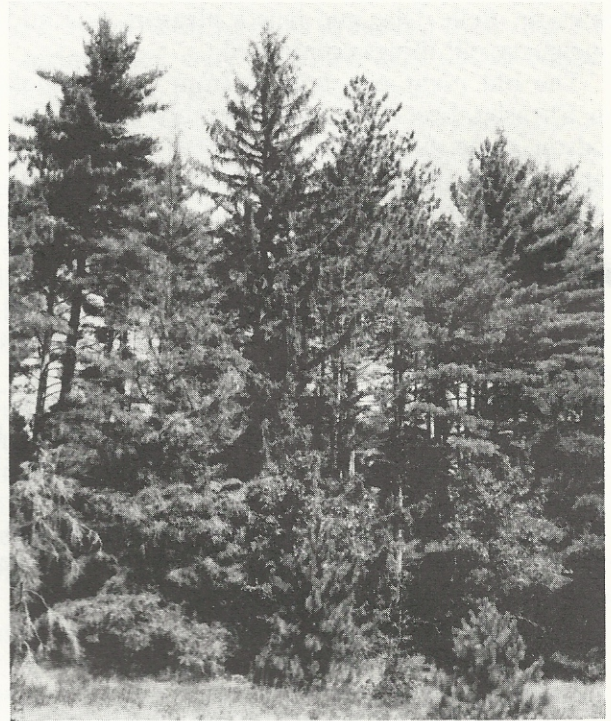
In his 40 year career at the college, Beal brought prominence to M.S.U. through his teaching and research. One of Beal's first acts was to establish his botanical garden in 1873, now recognized as one of the best of its kind in the country. Today, the Beal garden covers nearly five acres of the campus, contains more than 5,000 plant species and is the oldest continuously operated botanic garden in the country.

While better known as a botanist, Beal was also a forester and held the title of Professor of Botany and Forestry from 1883 to 1896. In 1875, Beal established a campus arboretum by planting 150 species of trees and shrubs along Michigan Avenue.



Beal was concerned over the need for more knowledge about the best methods and species to be used for reforestation. "Lumbering in our state has been conducted on a magnificent scale," Beal said, "But many of the processes are wasteful. Rivers are dammed, lakes overflowed or drained, the forests deprived of young trees that ought to be left to produce more timber for the future."

Another concern of Beal's was the control of weeds, such as quackgrass, which hampers crop production. Beal's son-in-law, Ray Stannard Baker, once remarked that Beal had "only three enemies in the world: alcohol, tobacco and quackgrass".



In 1870, Professor Beal established Beal Pinetum on the east side of Hagadorn Road just south of Grand River Avenue. It is the oldest known forestry test planting in the state.

In 1888, Dr. Beal made an experimental planting of a large number of different species of trees on the lands of the College experimental farm at Grayling in Crawford County (W $\frac{1}{2}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 17, Town 26 North, Range 3 West). The purpose was to find out what kind of trees could be grown on the jack pine plains.

Some of the trees were bought from W.W. Johnson of Snowflake, Antrim County. Many species of poplars and willows were originally from Russia and had been cultivated by Iowa Agricultural College.

Perhaps the most interesting fact is the variety of species planted. More than forty species were planted including hackberry, catalpa, Kentucky coffee tree, pitch pine and Russian mulberry. By 1915, less than one half of the species planted survived. Today red pine, white cedar, scotch pine, norway spruce, white pine, European larch, eastern red cedar, american elm and white ash are present – red pine having achieved the greatest growth.

To reach the Beal plantation, go west on M-72 from Grayling one half mile, then south .4 miles. The land is presently part of the Au Sable State Forest. It is clearly visible from Interstate 75 just north of Exit 254.



## First State Forest Plantations

The original state forest plantation resulted from a concern over the depletion of Michigan's forests. A Forestry Commission was created in 1899 and in 1903 the first state forest was established by the legislature on cut-over, burned-over lands in Roscommon and Crawford Counties. The same year saw the establishment of the Higgins Lake Nursery.

A group of scotch pine trees in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 36, T25N, R4W, near the corner of Roscommon Road and Oak Road were probably the first trees planted on state forest lands. Since that time, more than 332 million trees have been planted in Michigan's State Forests.



## Ringwood Plantation

Two miles south of St. Charles on M-52 to the Brant Road, then West one and one half miles, lies the Ringwood Forest which was donated to the University of Michigan in 1930. This land (S $\frac{1}{2}$  of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 14, and W $\frac{1}{2}$  of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 13, Town 10 North, Range 2 East, Saginaw County) was originally a part of the great pine forests of Michigan and was lumbered in 1862 by Eleazer J. Ring. Here one of the earliest forest plantations in the state was established by Ring's son, William Lee Ring.

The first plantings were of red pine, white pine, and Norway spruce in 1883. Between 1900 and 1910, Mr. Ring made various plantings of European larch, white pine, black locust and white ash. Some of the stock was grown by Mr. Ring.

Native hardwoods in the area were clearcut in 1920 by the Ford Motor Company. The logs were shipped to Ford-owned sawmills in the Upper Peninsula to be converted to lumber. After Mr. Ring donated the property to the University for "instruction, demonstration and research in forestry", planting continued for several years, mostly of pine species, but also white cedar and black locust.

## The Saginaw Forest

The Saginaw Forest is an 80-acre tract on West Liberty Road approximately two miles southwest of Ann Arbor. The tract was purchased in 1903 and deed to the University by the Honorable Arthur Hill of Saginaw, a lumberman and Regent of the University. It was stipulated that this tract, to be known as "The Saginaw Forestry Farm" was to be used as a forestry demonstration and experimental area. Virtually all but the swamp and marsh sites had been cleared and cultivated. Planting of trees in fallow, weed-covered fields was begun in the spring of 1904 and completed in 1915. These plantations have proved to be experiments of outstanding value, not only for empirical knowledge of the success of different forest species on the kinds of sites available within this small tract, but also for studies in the ecological aspects of silvicultural theory, successional relations of phytopathogenic fungi, and phytocoenology of forest tree plantations. Some species planted include Douglas fir, Japanese red pine and ponderosa pine.

## Other Famous Plantations

Also deserving of mention are Daughters of the American Revolution and American Legion plantations located throughout the state. Many of these were planted on state and federal lands with the costs paid by donations.

During the 1930's, the Detroit News undertook a project to help reforest the cutover tax reverted lands in state ownership. For \$100, a 40-acre parcel could be planted and designated as a memorial. Presidents, Governors, and several civic groups and schools were so honored.

The forerunner of the Michigan Forest Association, The Michigan Forestry Association, at one time had a very active president named Frederick W. Wheeler of Grand Rapids. He strongly participated in establishing memorial forests in Michigan as evidenced by the following Natural Resources Commission memoranda:



June 3, 1933

December 20, 1933

Memo to Mr. G.R. Hogarth, Director,

Attached hereto are a number of signed petitions submitted by Mr. Frederick W. Wheeler, 437 Eastern Avenue, S.E., Grand Rapids.

All that Mr. Wheeler is asking is that the State lands, aggregating about 4,000 acres, in certain Sections of the Fife Lake State Forest as indicated on the attached plat be designated as the Abe Lincoln Forest Memorial. This includes the State lands in Sections 11, 13, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, and 24, Town 27 North, Range 9 West, and Sections 18 and 19, Town 27 North Range 8 West. I can see no particular objection to this, provided Mr. Wheeler and his petitioners are willing to accept the following three amendments to their proposition:

1. That, if approved, the area so dedicated be not enlarged in the future. Their first proposal included approximately 800 acres but before that could be submitted for the consideration of the Commission the present request comes in increasing this to 4,000 acres. If this were allowed to continue it could easily soon absorb the whole north addition of the Fife Lake Forest.
2. That the word Forest be eliminated from their title. As it is, this is apt to be misleading where such a large acreage is concerned, and it should not be lost sight of that this is still the Fife Lake State Forest.
3. That all descriptions within this project that were planted under the Detroit News plan be eliminated as part of the Lincoln Memorial as it is impossible to dedicate the same piece of land to two purposes. Of these there are six descriptions as follows: NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 18, Town 27 North, Range 8 West; NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 13; NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ ; SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ ; SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ ; W $\frac{1}{2}$  of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 23, all in Town 27 North, Range 9 West.

With the above provisions I recommend that the petition be granted.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marcus Schaaf  
State Forester

It was moved by Mr. Schumacher, supported by Mr. Whiteley, that the above recommendation be concurred in. The question being stated by the Chair, the motion prevailed unanimously.

Memo to George R. Hogarth, Director,

Mr. Frederick Wheeler, 437 Eastern Avenue, S.E., Grand Rapids, offers to deed to the State seven forties in Sections 20 and 21, Town 26 North, Range 9 West in the Fife Lake State Forest. One of the stipulations is that we designate three forties in State Forest land in Town 27 North, Range 9 West, the same being the NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of SE $\frac{1}{4}$  and the W $\frac{1}{2}$  of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 16 as 1776 Memorial Forests. This is in line with several similar requests with which we have complied since other than the mere designation there is no particular obligation on our part.

It is, therefore, recommended that his present request be granted.

Marcus Schaaf,  
State Forester

It was moved by Mr. Titus, supported by Mr. Fletcher, that the above recommendation be concurred in. The question being stated by the Chair, the motion prevailed unanimously.





## SLEEPER NATURAL GRAFT TREE

In Huron County Lake Township is a most unusual natural botanical occurrence. A large red pine has a large branch that has not only grafted itself naturally, but is of another distinct species, white pine.

Only speculation can be made as to how this phenomenon happened. It appears as if a forked red pine was struck by a falling white pine causing severe mechanical damage to both trees. The terminal por-

tion of the white pine caught in the fork of the red pine approximately 25 feet off the ground and the natural graft took place.

The tree is located on private property in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , of Section 20, Town 18 North, Range 11 East, south of Albert E. Sleeper State Park. The owner is Robert Hyzer of Caseville, Michigan. Persons wishing to see the tree should stop at the Park office.

## ELEANOR ROOSEVELT GINGKO



On May 9, 1934, the Eleanor Roosevelt League of Women planted a ginkgo tree on the south lawn of the State Capitol to honor Michigan Pioneers for Women Suffrage. In 1970 this tree became a center of controversy as it was in the path of a new 132 space parking lot expansion proposed by legislators for their staff. Lansing Councilwoman Lucille E. Belen spearheaded the drive to save the tree. The removal of which would have permitted three more parking spaces. The tree remains today.



## INDIAN TRAIL MARKERS

Several trees have been submitted by various individuals from all parts of the State — all called “Indian Trail Markers”, or “Trail Trees”. It has not been possible to visit them all at the time of this writing, nor is it clear to the writers what was the precise function of the “Trail Trees”.

We know the locations of several “Indian Trails”, recorded in the 1840’s and 50’s by the Land Office survey crews. These hardy pioneers recorded all major landmarks they crossed as they sub-divided the townships into mile-square sections. Their notes may well be the only authoritative reference on the locations of these old trails. An atlas of Indian Trails and village sites was published by the University of Michigan in the 1930’s, but we believe their major source to have been the land office survey notes. Some of the trees submitted as trail markers coincide with these records; some do not.

If trails were well enough established to have been considered major landmarks by the early surveyors, why would it have been necessary to mark them with bent trees? Or, if the trails needed to be marked, how could enough trees have been bent to allow people to follow them? If the trees were used to mark junctions or forks in the trails, what was the code? Could a person have made his way from Houghton Lake to Mackinac without having been there before by reading trail signs? We have not yet found the answers to these questions — perhaps in future editions of this collection we will be able to present them.

The trail tree pictured is on the grounds of the Traverse City Civic Center. It is probably part of the old Mackinac Trail. Some other trees submitted, but not pictured are located in Tecumseh, Dearborn, East Lansing, Kawkawlin, and Benzie and Lelanau Counties.

Much more study needs to be devoted to this particular class of historic trees to properly document their significance. Let’s hope it isn’t already too late.





## GROSSE ILE TREATY TREE

Katharine Stanley Nicholson reported the following in 1920:

“The magnificent old basswood or linden tree of Grosse Ile, Michigan, the largest of the group of islands at the mouth of the Detroit River, was witness of an important transaction, two days after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The Island had long been a place of historic note. It was the home of the Potawatomie nation, and while Chief Pontiac besieged Detroit, afforded a camping ground for the Hurons. Other Indians, also made it their headquarters when attacking the boats that came from Niagara to relieve the garrison in a state of siege nearby. Grosse Ile was situated on the trade route connecting Albany, Detroit and Mackinac and frequented by white furtraders and Indians. Cadillac considered it as the site of the city of Detroit, Michigan but abandoned the idea, fearing there was not sufficient timber. In 1707, he deeded the island to his daughter.

The old linden had flung its shade over many a negotiation between the whites and the red men. Under its branches, on July 6, 1776, a treaty was signed, conveying the island to two merchants of Detroit, Alexander and William Macomb, who purchased it for a little money, blankets and tobacco. It was of great importance that the island should pass into American ownership, otherwise “division of the waters of the great Detroit River might have been changed”.

Several Indian tribes were represented on this solemn occasion, the Fox and Sacs tribes, the Kikapooos and Potawatomies all being mentioned. The chiefs signed the agreement by drawing their totems on the deed, a fish, bear, wild cat, doe, deer, fawn with one leg, etc. One of these totems is the first sketch of the American eagle known to exist anywhere. The chief's eldest sons, not yet warriors, signed by making their thumbprints. Tecumseh, “the torch of the North West” was one of the chiefs who signed the document.

*Replacement linden planted in 1906*

On June 1, 1811, the United States Government ratified the treaty, President James Madison granting by patent the land to John W., William and David Macomb, heirs of William. On July 3, 1901, the old Treaty Tree fell, the victim of a severe storm. Like many another veteran, it is represented by a younger generation, a sapling having sprung from its roots.

In 1906, on the 130th anniversary of the purchase of the island, the Woman's Improvement Association of Grosse Ile, marked the site of the old tree with a bronze tablet placed upon a large boulder. During the ceremony, the tablet was unveiled by a direct descendant of the Macombs. The inscription reads as follows:

“This stone marks the location of the Treaty Tree and commemorates the conveyance by treaty of Grosse Ile (known to the Indians as Kitcheminishon) and the adjacent islands to William and Alexander Macomb by the Potawatamie Indians.

The events of the past shape the pathway of the future.

Erected by the Woman's Improvement Association of Grosse Ile, 1906. The deed is recorded in the register of Detroit, No. 2, Vol 6.p.19”.





## THE OLD FRENCH PEAR TREES

The following is taken from "Historic American Trees" by Katharine Stanley Nicholson (New York, 1922):

In Water Works Park, Detroit, Michigan, stands an ancient pear tree, whose age is estimated to be at least two hundred years. It is the sole survivor of a farm, owned by a Frenchman who named the twelve "mission pears" on his land after the twelve apostles.

Not ordinary pear trees, these, or the others of the neighborhood, or their descendants, in any sense of the word; whether in point of size, quality of fruit produced, or reputed origin. Supposed to have been brought there by the early settlers, from Montreal, whether they had been imported from Normandy or Provence, they have been described as "the crowning glory" of the French-American orchard which was justly famed for more than one kind of superior fruit. Nearly every home possessed a pear tree. "Such was its size and productiveness that one specimen usually amply supplied the wants of a family." Strangely enough, the pears refused to grow, it is said, anywhere but in the region of Detroit and one other locality. In 1786, Colonel Francis Navarre, of Monroe, planted half a dozen or more on his farm on the Raisin River, where they flourished. One was noted for attaining a circumference of nine feet, two inches, and at four feet above the ground its trunk forked, one branch growing to a circumference of seven feet, four inches, and the other, five feet.

The old French pear trees were still conspicuous on the bank of the Detroit River, in 1887, when Bela Hubbard described some of them as eight or nine feet in girth, and eighty feet tall, prophesying, however, that their time was short, and that they would perish along with their old homesteads "which are so fast disappearing. Another half century will see the last of those magnificent trees — the pride of the French orchard; the mammoth of fruits, of which the world does not afford its equal".

The veteran tree in Water Works Park still yields thirty to fifty bushels of fine pears annually. It is one hundred and thirty feet high, and measures four feet around the trunk. Seedlings from it refuse to grow, and this "gnarled remnant" of a proud race bids fair to leave no successor to its former glory.

There is a quaint legend concerning the origin of the trees, which tells how their career began in the garden of an early Jesuit Mission, near the site of Detroit. The old priest sat looking out over the blue waters of the river, wondering why assistance was not sent to him in his arduous labors, in response to his earnest request. Lifting his eyes, he saw a young stranger approaching, a Frenchman, bringing with him a letter from the Superior of the Order. It contained a brief history of the young foreigner, who had fallen hopelessly in love with one of his countrywomen. She was unhappily married, and in retaliation for her lover's attentions, was murdered by her husband. Heart-broken, the former was seeking some means of forgetting his grief. "Put him to work," urged the letter, "and work him as hard as you will, or his life will be wasted".

The Father complied, and found the newcomer a valuable assistant, eager to fulfill all his duties. Often, however, at sunset, he would stand alone, looking wistfully over the river, and fondling a withered pear-blossom which he had brought from his home land.

Watching him long and thoughtfully, the old priest sought for the right word to speak, and at length suggested that he should plant the seeds hidden in the faded flower, and let them bring forth rich fruit for the good of the community, and thus do what was in his power to atone for his "unblest affection".



*Replacement pear trees  
planted in 1926 from  
cuttings taken from the  
last living "Apostle"*



## ANN ARBOR BURR OAKS

In July, 1974 the Ann Arbor city council voted unanimously to reinstate the seal design adopted April 11, 1870. It depicts a large Burr oak surrounded by the words "City of Ann Arbor, Michigan".

At that meeting, Mayor Stephenson presented to the council an article written by City Historian, Wystan Stevens, which quoted Dr. Benjamin H. Packard, who recalled his first view of Ann Arbor in 1925 by stating, "The Burr Oaks were so thick in Ann Arbor and vicinity that the whole looked like a complete arbor".

The new seal replaced one adopted in 1925 which mistakenly depicted a grape arbor with insignia representing religion, education and industry.

Eunice Hendrix, MFA Board Member, has persuaded city officials to designate a grove of Burr Oaks as official city trees so that future generations can reflect on their city's history. Future editions of this publication will outline the official Burr Oak arbor location.

Incidentally, the "Ann" in Ann Arbor derives its origin from John Allen of Virginia and Elisha Walker Rumsey of New York, the first settlers in 1823 who named it for their wives, Ann Allen and Ann Rumsey. The abundance of natural groves of arbors of Burr Oaks contributed the conclusion of the city's name.

## MEMORIAL TREES

In May, 1926, an elm was planted as a memorial to Professor Filibert Roth in Palmer Park, Detroit, in a ceremony conducted by the Twentieth Century Club. Roth was an expert on timber, Division of Forestry, U.S. Department of Agriculture 1893-1898, Assistant Professor of Forestry, New York State College of Forestry, Cornell University, 1898-1901, Chief, Division of Forestry, Department of Interior, 1901-1903, Chairman, Department of Forestry, University of Michigan 1903-1923, State Forest Warden, Michigan, 1903-1909, member Michigan State Conservation Commission, 1921-22, Fellow, Society of American Foresters, Vice President, 1902, President 1917-18.

Another Roth memorial consisting of a boulder surrounded by a semi-circle of young Norway Spruce trees was established at the Saginaw Forest, University of Michigan in the spring of 1927 by the faculty and students of the Department of Forestry. The boulder bears the inscription "In memory of 'Daddy' Filibert Roth, Head of Forestry School 1902-1923, by His Forestry Boys".

Maine born, Theophilus C. Abbot, came to Michigan Agricultural College in February of 1858 as Engineering Professor. He became president of the College in 1862 and served until 1885. Near Cowles House, the traditional home of the president on campus, a white pine was planted in 1870 to commemorate the birth of his daughter Beth, in 1870. When Beth was married in 1890, another still living white pine was planted. It is reported that a cedar was planted (year unknown) upon the birth of President Abbott's son, Rodney.

Many more memorial trees exist in the State of Michigan. We have some incomplete records and need more information on each of these living memorials.



*Many famous elms have fallen to disease*



### Meat Hanging Tree

An odd looking white oak stands on the shore of Round Lake in Van Buren County. Charles Patton of Benton Harbor interviewed Jewett Pokagon of the Pottawattami Nation. Pokagon explained that his people used to tie live trees of various sizes with deer hide thongs so they would grow in a horizontal attitude from which to hang meat and hides. The horizontal portion is some 14 feet above ground level.

This is in the Silver Creek Mission area where most of the well-known Pottawattamies are buried.

### Fire Tower Tree

Gordon Charles Reports the following:

"Realizing the damage that wild fires can do, early conservation agencies took steps to control them. This meant discovering little fires before they could become big ones. Lookout stations appeared to be the best solution then.

One of the most interesting fire "towers" was located in Luce County in the Upper Peninsula in 1928. It consisted merely of a huge white pine tree into which railroad spikes were pounded for easier climbing. The lookout sat on a little platform near the top of the tree and watched for fires. Presumably, during heavy wind and thunderstorms, he got the heck out of there."

No record of the exact location of this tree has been found. It is believed to have fallen to age and the elements.

### Underground Railroad Magnolias

Vandalia, prior to the Civil War, was the junction of two important lines of the "Underground Railroad." Slaves fleeing through Indiana and Illinois came to Cass County, where Quakers and others gave them shelter. Fugitives seeking a refuge in Canada were guided to "stations" to the east. Many stayed here and built a unique Negro rural colony. Slave-hunting by Kentuckians in 1847 led to legal action and increased North-South tensions.

Apparently the freedom-seeking slaves brought from their homeland magnolia seeds. They planted them throughout Cass County. Several have been destroyed through road widenings. No exact locations of living trees have been determined.

### Cheboygan Council Tree

It is reported that an Indian Council Tree exists on Burt Lake in Cheboygan County. Reports indicate that custom dictated that the tree should be "topped" when chiefs were present at councils. This tree is sometimes referred to as the "Mifflan" tree.

### Upper Peninsula Split Rock Tree

Keith R. Montambo reports an Eastern White Pine that managed to find a home in a large boulder. As the tree grew, it split the rock and became a local landmark. It is located on a Department of Highway right-of-way at the junction of US-2 and County Road 424 in Iron County.

### The Freedom Tree

On the south lawn of the State Capitol in Lansing stands a blue spruce. At its base is a marker with this inscription:

"The Freedom Tree  
with the vision of universal freedom  
for all mankind  
This tree is dedicated to  
All the POW/MIAs of Michigan  
and all  
Prisoners of War  
and  
Missing in Action  
1973"





## Is There A Royal Oak?

Mrs. Nicholson, in her book, reported the following:

"A white oak bearing the distinguished name of Royal Oak stood on a plain northeast of the Indian trail leading from Detroit to the village of Pontiac and the township of Royal Oak of that neighborhood is named in its honor. The reason for its august title seems, however, decidedly obscure, as its associations are chiefly with doings of the red men.

There is a tradition that, beneath it, an unfriendly meeting occurred, Chief Pontiac and representatives of another tribe being the interested parties. As late as 1825, the scars of arrows, tomahawks and bullets were said to be visible in its wood. It figured, also, as a boundary tree, when in 1819 Governor Cass laid out a road "from Woodward Avenue, Detroit, to the end of the road built by the United States troops, then west to a large oak marked H, near Indian trail, then west to Main Street in Pontiac Village, then to the end of Main Street."

## Acme Honeylocust

A honeylocust, 81 inches in girth is located on the Dezelski property in Acme Village. It is alleged to have sprouted from locust thorns used to pin raw wool for the Acme Creek Woolen Mill.

## The Ten Commandments

The ten commandments, a white birch, is reported to grow on South Manitou Island. It is alleged to have ten large stems from one root system.

## Ashworth Burr Oak

The Luther Burbank of the North, Fred Ashworth, has perpetuated a species of burr oak which produces a sweet and edible acorn. This tree, mentioned in "Handbook of North American Nut Trees", edited by Richard A. Jaynes, is known as the "Ashworth burr oak". In 1970, Niles Township, adopted the Ashworth burr oak as its official tree. Approximately 600 seedlings and small trees have been distributed to township residents as part of annual Arbor Day program. In April, 1976, two Ashworth burr oaks were planted as Bicentennial trees in front of the township hall. An additional 200 seedlings were given out to residents and registered as Bicentennial trees with the state.

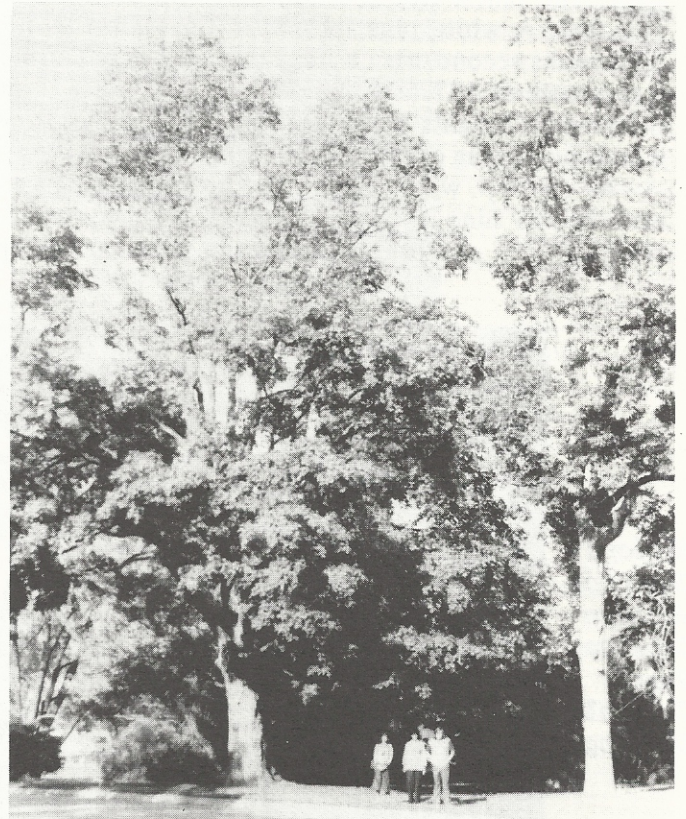
The Luther Burbank of the North has been rightfully honored by the midwest.

## Big Island Woods

James Fenimore Cooper, frontier novelist, used as setting in Book "Oak Openings" a portion of an area near Schoolcraft known as the Big Island Woods. Presently, a 24-acre site is all that remains of a 600-acre woods that sat in Michigan's largest treeless prairie, Prairie Ronde. The woods received its name because to the pioneers, it seemed an island of forest in a sea of grass. Today, the Michigan Nature Association is trying to preserve the Big Island Woods.

## Historical Maple

A maple tree believed to be 320 years old and once the subject of a controversy between city officials and historians now bears a new plaque declaring it a landmark in Oakland county. The tree, once believed to be a landmark used by the Indians, stands on the grounds of the Richard Klinkman home at 23080 Gill Road, Farmington.



## Michigan State Split Rock Tree

Split rock tree was halfway between Michigan Agricultural College and the State Capitol where students passed to rest in the 1860's. The cherry tree was a small shoot that grew in a slight crack in a huge boulder. As the tree grew and gained strength from the soil, the sun, and water, it mustered enough power to split the huge boulder. One half of the rock now reposes on the Michigan State University campus appropriately marked.



## CHAMPION TREES OF MICHIGAN

The following is taken from a report by Paul W. Thompson, Chairman, Michigan Big Tree Committee:

"The Big Tree project was initiated by the Michigan Botanical Club over 20 years ago. During that period the number of national champion tree species in Michigan has increased from three to sixty national champions. National Champions are designated by the American Forestry Association according to a point rating calculated by adding the girth (inches) at four-and-one-half feet and tree height (feet) to one-fourth of the average crown spread (feet). Until a few years ago, Michigan possessed more national champions than any other state in the Union. Florida, with approximately 70 champions, now leads the nation. Over 100 native species of trees are confined to the semi-tropical section of that state that are not native to any other state in the country.

The current listing includes 38 species with girths exceeding 15 feet. Twelve trees possess circumferences of over 20 feet and three exceed 25 feet in girth. The tallest tree is a tulip tree with a height of 189 feet. A white pine located in the Huron Mountains ranks second with a height of 186 feet. Third is a sycamore at 157 feet. As a class, white pines show the greatest heights with sycamores, elms and cottonwoods possessing exceptional heights.

As a group, willows show the greatest girths; this class claims nine national champions. Cottonwoods often possess exceptional girth, the national champ

showing a girth of 309 inches. Oaks also rank high in trunk circumference; Michigan has six species as national champions. As a group, the maples claim four national champion species for the state. State champions are based only on girth data.

Michigan's fine record of champion trees is the result of the cooperative assistance of conservation organizations, educational groups, foresters, newspaper publicity and that segment of the general public interested in the value of trees and their preservation.

As a class, the smaller tree species are often overlooked as potential "Big Trees". The Big Tree Committee needs more data on these species. Data on big trees should be sent to the committee recording secretary: Mrs. Julia Hunter, 4502 Cooper Avenue, Royal Oak, Michigan 48073. Data should include the kind of tree, its girth at four and one-half feet from ground level, its location (also distance and direction from nearest town), and, if possible, the name and address of the owner and the height and spread of the tree. Requests for tree lists or information about the big tree program can be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped, envelope to the corresponding secretaries, either Miss Mary Case of Helen Beaumont, at 8900 E. Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48214."

*National  
Champion  
Western  
Catalpa,  
State  
Capitol,  
Lansing*





## WHAT YOU CAN DO

This is not the end, not by any means. It is evident that the Trees recorded in this modest effort are but few of the famous and historical trees in Michigan. It is hoped that the reader will keep the Michigan Forest Association advised of any potential famous trees he encounters. It is helpful if we know the species, diameter four and one-half feet above the ground, exact location, reason for historical significance and present landowner.

Information of this nature should be submitted to the Michigan Forest Association, Three Oaks Drive, Corunna, Michigan 48817.



*The three oaks of Three Oaks Drive*



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