

Stately Observers:

Witness Trees of Lake Forest



A Lake Forest Sesquicentennial Publication

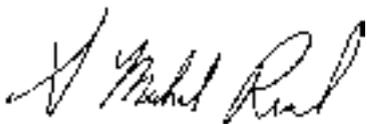
From The City of Lake Forest's humble beginnings to the historically and visually distinctive community of the present day, Lake Forest has had a longstanding commitment to its residents and the environment in which they live.

The City of Lake Forest was at the leading edge of tree preservation when it adopted an ordinance in 1988 to preserve the wooded streetscapes of the community. The Tree Preservation and Landscape Ordinance has been strengthened and expanded to cover more trees, to provide for a high level of tree preservation in conjunction with development and, to protect ravines, bluffs and conservation easements.

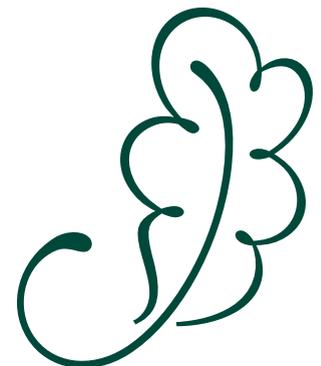
For twenty nine consecutive years, Lake Forest has been named an official Tree City USA and has celebrated Arbor Day with programs that encourage and support its commitment to the preservation and renewal of natural areas.

This booklet highlights the heritage and culture of Lake Forest, and the trees that have observed its evolution. It is fitting that this booklet debut during the Arbor Day Celebration of the sesquicentennial year when the official Arbor Day tree is being planted in Triangle Park, where the City's charter was signed in 1861.

An editorial gathering of trees, these silent sentinels of the community, have stood unspeaking witness to the celebrations of the community over the past one hundred and fifty years.



Mike Rummel
Chair, Lake Forest Sesquicentennial Celebration



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Stately Observers: Witness Trees of Lake Forest

What are "Witness Trees?" The term comes first from surveying; it means trees marked as a corner location. The National Park Service describes them as trees that were present during key events in history; in the United States they are especially linked with Civil War battlegrounds.

The name Lake Forest reflects the importance of trees in our local history. The natural beauty of the area was enhanced with extensive plantings by renowned landscape designers. From dedicated efforts to contain Dutch Elm Disease and other blights, through three decades of recognition as a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation, the City has never wavered in its commitment to the health and preservation of the community's trees.

As part of the celebration to honor the City's 150th anniversary, we present our own Stately Observers, 11 trees visible to all on a walk, bike or drive. These are but a few among the many arboreal observers of our past. They are beautiful as representatives of their species, and significant as witnesses to important milestones in our City's growth as an outstanding place to live.

1. Bluff's Edge Bridge

By Steve Bartram

Standing nearly as tall as the 120-foot span of the nearby Bluff's Edge Bridge is long, this Norway Spruce, *Picea abies*, is one of the largest trees in Lake Forest's Walden Ravine. As the tree's name implies, it is a native of Europe and the species is believed to have been introduced to the United States in the colonial times. With its conspicuously drooping foliage and stately presence Norway spruce has become widely planted here for its ornamental characteristics but in Europe it is prized as a timber tree.

Might this tree have been planted as part of Cyrus and Harriet McCormick, Jr's landscape plan for their 80-acre Walden estate? The stature of the tree implies an age that could be associated with the impressive plans that landscape architect Warren Manning laid out for the McCormick's in the late 1890's but the tree's size alone does not say enough to answer the question with any certainty. Regardless of the tree's age, its location has allowed it to witness a wonderful slice of Lake Forest history.

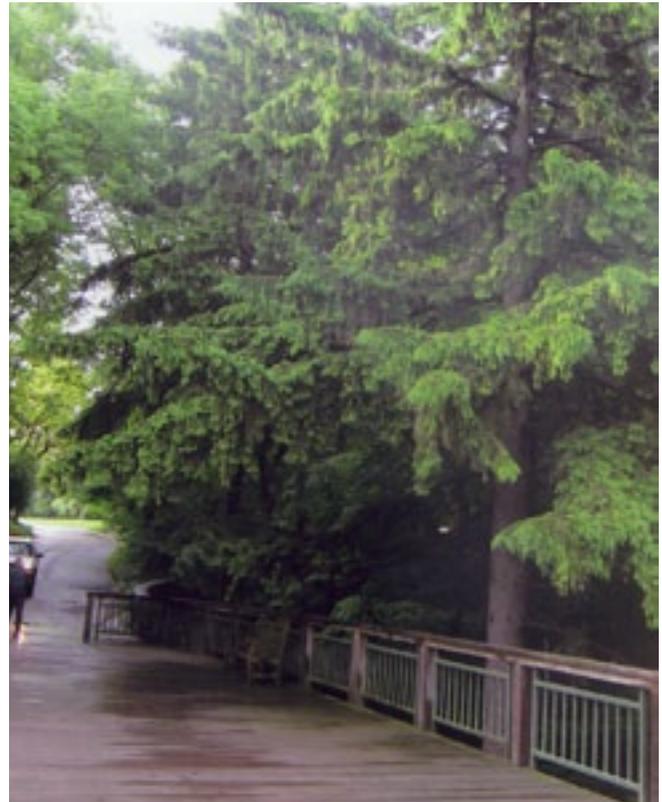
With her husband busy running the family business, the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, Harriet enthusiastically pursued interests ranging from worker welfare and women's suffrage to the great outdoors. She later included studying botany at Lake Forest College and working with Manning on the use of both native and exotic plants around the estate's tablelands, ravine and bluffs. The name chosen for the estate was the McCormick's doff-of-the-cap gesture to nature philosopher Henry David Thoreau's 1854 account of living near Walden Pond.

Rooted in the moist soils of Walden Ravine, this Norway spruce grew in the shade of the Bluff's Edge Bridge. Of the four original bridges on the estate, the Bluff's Edge Bridge served as the entrance to the estate and is notable both for its innovative design and its recent preservation. Conceptualized by McCormick, the "curve of the arch was like the rim of a great wheel" with its supports at right angles to the arch rather than perpendicular to the roadway. In the late fifties the bridge became the property of the City of Lake Forest and was closed to vehicular traffic in 1972. By the mid 1990's the bridge's condition had deteriorated to the point where it was targeted for demolition but with the leadership of the Lake Forest Foundation for Historic Preservation and the City of Lake Forest funds were secured for a major restoration project and the bridge was spared.

Walden Ravine, one of Lake Forest's most extensive ravines, with its steep slopes and lush vegetation retains a wild natural beauty that continues to attract visitors throughout the seasons. Yet, despite the profusion of green all is not well in the ravine.

Walden Ravine, like the other 30 plus ravines from Wilmette to North Chicago, is a relatively young geological feature. Formed by streams cutting into glacial till left by a retreating glacier 14,000 years ago, the ravine's special microclimate --- cooler summer temperatures than those found on the surrounding tablelands, bluffs and beaches --- allowed it to support a unique assemblage of native trees, shrubs and woodland plants.

Today most of these plants have long since disappeared succumbing to a laundry list of threats: too much shade, too much water, competition from non-native plants and a variety of unsound land use practices. Where native shrubs like witch hazel and hazelnut once grew invasive plants like buckthorn and honeysuckle now dominate. And layers of yard waste and dense colonies of weedy plants such as garlic mustard have smothered the carpet of woodland wildflowers. Like the Bluff's Edge Bridge, our City's ravines Mayflower, Walden and McCormick help define Lake Forest and make it unique. Perhaps it's time to revisit Thoreau's message of observing and learning from nature and apply those lessons to restoring the health of the ravines so that they can be enjoyed for years to come.





Bluff's Edge Bridge, 1906. Witness tree not pictured. Photo courtesy of the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society.

2. Green Bay Trail (near LF Country Day School)

By Maren McKee

Green Bay Road, in the past also known as the Green Bay Military Trail and the Chicago and Milwaukee Road, has played an important role in the development of Lake Forest. The London Planetree, *Platanus acerfolia*, located on Green Bay Road across from Lake Forest Country Day School may have been witness to some parts of Green Bay Road's fascinating history.

The original Green Bay Road roughly followed a Potawatomi Native American trail and may have been located further to the west than its present site. Construction began on a road through the area in 1833 after General Winfield Scott suggested that a road was needed in that part of northern Illinois. In its first incarnation, Green Bay Road was little more than a blazed trail through the forest with simple log bridges over streams. It was used to transport military troops and supplies between Fort Dearborn in Chicago, Illinois and Fort Howard in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Later the road was used to deliver mail. It was especially useful in the winter when travel on Lake Michigan was often impossible.

Green Bay Road was crucial to the settlement of the Lake Forest area. After the Treaty of Chicago (1833) opened up northern Illinois for settlement, many pioneers followed Green Bay Road into the area and built homes near the future site of Lake Forest. In 1836, regular stagecoach service was instituted along the road and several taverns and relay stations sprang up. By 1850, five or six coaches traveled the road daily.

Sylvester Lind, one of the founders of Lake Forest and a future mayor of the city, was quite familiar with Green Bay Road. His business

frequently took him to Milwaukee and he often passed the future site of Lake Forest while traveling along Green Bay Road. Lind supposedly picked the site of his home on one of these excursions.

According to historian Edward Arpee, Green Bay Road was moved inside the Lake Forest city limits in 1865. This move took place to insure that the road had proper drainage for the ever increasing traffic that traveled between Chicago and Milwaukee.

Many prominent Lake Foresters built homes along Green Bay Road in the late 1800s. These residences include Ragdale, the Howard Van Doren Shaw home which was built in 1897 and Westleigh, the Louis F. Swift home which was built the following year.

Over time the London planetree has witnessed Green Bay Road transform from a busy thoroughfare connecting Wisconsin and Illinois into a much calmer street. In 1925 a city ordinance declared Green Bay Road to be a "pleasure driveway" and burden bearing vehicles were forbidden from traveling along the road. By 1968 Green Bay Road was described by residents as being a "nice poky road with lots of trees" and they were unhappy when the Lake Forest City Council voted to widen it; many residents were afraid the character of the road would change.

Green Bay Road is currently home to Lake Forest Country Day School. The school was founded in 1958 when Lake Forest Day School and Bell School were consolidated into one institution. Both of these schools had long histories in Lake Forest before joining forces. Bell School, originally named Alcott School, was founded in 1888 and Lake Forest Day School was founded in 1928. The London planetree now watches as approximately 470 children attend class at Lake Forest Country Day School each day.



Green Bay Road.
Witness tree not pictured.

Photograph courtesy of the
Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society.

3. Lake Forest City Hall

By Rosemary Troxel

The amazing American Elm, *Ulmus americana*, located on Forest Avenue outside Lake Forest's City Hall tower, is believed to be between 90 and 110 years old. This tree is amazing because it survived the Dutch Elm disease that has claimed over 40,000 trees on both public and private properties in our city in the past 50 years. During its years of maturation, this tree witnessed many events that have shaped the great community that Lake Forest has become.

The tree was planted alongside City Hall, designed by architects Frost and Granger and built in 1898. Edward Gorton was mayor at that time. The North Shore Interurban paid for the construction of our City Hall in return for being allowed to run their train through Lake Forest. It was financed by a \$10,000 franchise fee. From the tree's location, Halsey School was visible just to the west of City Hall at the intersection of Oakwood and Deerpath. In 1912, Halsey, named after John. J. Halsey, Superintendent of Schools, replaced West School that had been destroyed by fire. In 1955 Halsey School was torn down and Deer Path School opened.

By 1910 with the city's population at about 3,300, the tree witnessed the first professional fire department under the leadership of Mayor C. Frederick Childs. In its early days, the fire department was housed in City Hall, but in the mid-1920s the current South Gate Café building was more than doubled in size to accommodate the city's new fire engines and police station. In 1980, the building was purchased and rehabilitated to house the café.

In 1917 as Keene H. Addington became mayor, the building of Market Square was completed. Known as the first "integrated and artfully designed shopping center" in the country, Market Square's architect, Howard Van Doren Shaw, designed "the Square" to draw people to the heart of the town. Before Market Square was built, Lake Forest's

business primarily consisted of a disorderly row of unsightly shanties running along Western Avenue parallel to the Chicago and North Western railroad tracks. The tree witnessed much activity as business after business, beginning with that of barber Charlie Paulson, moved into their new shops.

By 1918, the tree had heard firsthand the news of the ending of the war. The bell ringer at City Hall was so enthusiastic in his endeavor, the bell was cracked and never used again. Sadly, sixteen Lake Foresters were killed in the war.

More sounds were heard beginning in May of 1919 with Henry A. Rumsey as mayor, when the city bought an electric siren and began daily testing at noon.

From its location, the American elm watched the construction of the Deerpath Theater that began in 1926 at a cost of \$175,000 and was completed in 1928.

An exciting event occurred in 1931 when Marshall Field's department store moved into the anchor position in Market Square. This was followed by the opening of the new post office in 1933.

The end of World War II was marked with the construction of the war memorial in Market Square between 1951 and 1954. Nearly 1,200 Lake Foresters served in this war.

The tree stands today, still witness to the many changes that are taking place in the area surrounding it. Market Square, first renovated between 1957 and 1960, continues to change. Who knows what the next 150 years will bring?

Lake Forest City Hall, circa 1938. Witness tree shown in center of picture. Photograph courtesy of the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society.



4. Triangle Park

By Jeanne Lane

This leaning Swamp White Oak, *Quercus bicolor*, gracefully bends over Washington Road, one of three streets which border what is now Triangle Park. In the 1850s, this peaceful park was a dense forest of trees destined for change as events converged to make it the hub of the newly-chartered town of Lake Forest. The town's first public building was erected in 1858 on a gentle slope near Walnut Road – the Lake Forest Hotel (later the Old Hotel). It cost \$6,400 to build and was designed by Asher Carter. The project was commissioned by the Lake Forest Association which had purchased 1300 acres of surrounding virgin land for a Presbyterian institution of learning. This was the impetus that stimulated what later became the City of Lake Forest.

The Lake Forest Association needed a place of lodging for both prospective land buyers visiting from Chicago and the construction workers who were building the town's infrastructure and new homes. Visitors got off the train from Chicago near Deerpath and had to walk through a clearing to the hotel. It was a popular picnic site for summer day visitors from Chicago and served as the meeting place where residents voted to incorporate the City of Lake Forest.

The white frame building served as the site of the first church services in Lake Forest which were conducted by Reverend Ira. W. Weed of Waukegan. On pleasant summer Sundays, Reverend Weed held worship outside in the shade of the oaks. In addition, Lake Forest Academy classes were held in the hotel from 1858 until January 3, 1859 when the Academy building on what is now the nearby Lake Forest College campus was completed. Academy students continued to eat their meals at the Old Hotel and it was here that one voraciously hungry student, John C. Patterson, consumed seventeen pancakes in one sitting.

The Old Hotel stood at this location for 38 years and along with some of the original trees in Triangle Park witnessed the transformation of Lake Forest from a tiny village to a thriving town. A Mrs. Everett was the landlady and presided over the hotel where some of Lake Forest's early and influential residents stayed while their homes were being built. Silvester Lind, Major T. R. Clark, Dr. Train, D.R. Holt and Lockwood Brown all passed through its doors. The building featured a balustrade front stairway, a second floor veranda accessed through glass doors and third floor rooms decorated with wallpaper.

The hotel became a popular destination for summer guests and parents visiting their students at the Academy. Soon a rear addition was added. The hotel's second owner was Samuel Whiting, a sea captain who had

accompanied Elisha Kent Kane's Arctic expedition to rescue the explorer Sir John Franklin who had attempted to chart and navigate a section of the Northwest Passage in the Canadian Arctic. The building changed hands a number of times and in 1872 it ceased to be a functioning hotel. When the original Lake Forest Association disbanded in 1870, its founders disbursed then-unsold property and in this way, the Old Hotel ended up in the ownership of a Mr. Pearson of Albany, NY who refused until his death to sell it. It gradually became a run-down temporary rooming house and offices for people who soon moved on to better quarters.

After Mr. Pearson's death, his heirs sold the property to a group of Lake Forest residents who banded together to purchase it. They were, E. Buckingham, C. Buckingham, B. L. Smith, E. J. Warner, J. H. Dwight, C. B. Farwell, H. C. Durand, D. R. Holt, G. H. Holt, John V. Farwell, John S. Hannah, D. B. Jones, T. D. Jones, M. L. Reid, A. Poole, David Fales, Calvin Durand and C. H. McCormick. The former Old Hotel building was then moved to a site on Wisconsin Avenue, where it stood until its demolition in 1973.

Most noteworthy for current Lake Forest residents who enjoy the park today, is the remarkable foresight with which Mr. Pearson's heirs made this stipulation upon the sale to the consortium:

“Should the managing trustees, or a majority thereof, their successors or successor, fail to appropriate the property to some charitable, educational, benevolent or public park purpose [our italics] within eight years from the date of purchase thereof, or should any said land at any time after such appropriation cease for two years to be used for the charitable, educational, benevolent or public park purpose by the trustees in manner aforesaid, the same shall pass to and belong to the Lake Forest University [now Lake Forest College] and shall be conveyed thereto by them.”





Old Hotel. Witness tree not pictured. Photograph courtesy of Lake Forest College Archives and Special Collections.

5. Lake Forest Cemetery

By Rosemary Troxel

Through the entrance gates into Lake Forest Cemetery, constructed in 1916, stands the largest tree in the cemetery. The tree is located behind the flagpole, which was dedicated to the veterans by the American Legion's George Alexander McKinlock Jr. Post. This stately White Oak, *Quercus alba*, estimated to be nearly 100 years old, was planted by the Lake Forest Cemetery Commission, made up of dedicated staff, inspired artists and architects, and appreciative visitors. The tree's location is due, in part, to O.C. Simonds, the prominent landscape architect who advocated the design of garden cemeteries. In fact, he was paid \$100 to plan and supervise the plantings.

The tree's location affords it the privilege of greeting those who pass through the cemetery's gates. Whether they come to jog, stroll down the shady, quiet lanes, sit under a tree with a book, or make it their final resting place, the tree has witnessed much of the history of this serene setting. This location also allows it to witness many changes to the landscape

Prior to becoming a cemetery, the Pottawatomie Indians inhabited the area. Then, in 1857, the stockholders of the Lake Forest Association instructed its Trustees to "lay out the cemetery grounds." This became the first public work authorized for the new community.

Although the cemetery was officially opened for burials in 1882, some burial stones suggest earlier deaths. For example, the earliest death date, "1848," can be found on the monument of Samuel James. The reason



for this contradiction lies in the fact that early records in the cemetery burial book do not distinguish between the first-time interment and a reinterment. Prior to the establishment of the cemetery, burials occurred close to where the person met death. Robert Fowler, an early landowner and First Ward Alderman who died in 1863, was discovered on his former property when the water plant was constructed in 1934. His body was moved to Lake Forest Cemetery.

East of Sheridan Road and west of Lake Forest Cemetery is St. Mary's Cemetery, once connected by a footbridge over a ravine. Formerly part of the original section of Lake Forest Cemetery, this land was deeded to the Catholic Bishop of Chicago in 1883.

The original gate to the cemetery stood on Spruce Avenue and can still be seen a few feet from the present gate to St. Mary's Cemetery. A path led from the gate along the southern border of the cemetery and was called Elder Path. Today this path has been sodded and eventually will become new burial plots.

This tree continues to stand watch as if to safeguard the cemetery's residents—many important and influential men and women—as well as those less well known, but all having made valuable contributions to Lake Forest and Lake Bluff.

Gates to Lake Forest Cemetery, 1994. Witness tree not pictured.
Photograph courtesy of the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society.



6. Lake Forest High School

By Jeanne Lane

This Honey Locust, *Gleditsia triacanthos*, was among the trees planted to enhance the landscape of the newly-built Lake Forest High School which opened its doors to students in 1935. Built on a site that was once an open field with a tree-lined creek on its north side (known as North Park), the high school would serve the needs of a growing town whose demographics were diversifying. Prior to its construction, any Lake Forest students who did not attend boarding school had to hop on a now defunct train nicknamed “The Northshore” to commute to the high school in Highland Park.

As the population of Lake Forest grew between the world wars, it became evident that a local high school was needed, but not everyone in town agreed. The first referendum to raise funds was held in 1930 and was defeated by just under 500 votes. In 1934, two events occurred which changed the minds of Lake Forest citizens: Lake Bluff voted to become part of the Deerfield-Shields High School District (joining Highland Park and Deerfield which both had high schools) and President Roosevelt initiated the Works Progress Administration (WPA), making funds available to build the school. The entire Lake Forest High School project was funded by this program.

Stanley D. Anderson and James Ticknor, both local architects, were hired to design a school that would blend with other Lake Forest properties and neighborhoods that included estates and homes designed by distinguished architects. Much planning preceded the building, including visiting different schools and conferring with educational authorities to ensure it would be among the most modern of high schools in the country. The resulting Georgian style building resembled an estate with a broad front lawn. The entrance to the school features a rotunda and a crest over the front door with the Latin phrase, “Abuent Studia in Mores” – Learning Becomes a Way of Life.

Students and citizens were said to be especially proud of the stunning library, complete with handmade cabinetry for books, an oft-used

fireplace and a chandelier – all overlooking the expansive front lawn. One newspaper dubbed Lake Forest High School “one of the finest schools in the country – beautiful in architecture and complete in the requisites of the modern school.” As the honey locust sapling grew, so did the student population. In 1937, two years after the school opened, its enrollment was 389 students. The high school teams were originally called the “Goldcoasters” but after a renaming contest in 1938, the name was changed to “Forest Scouts.”

When this honey locust tree was planted neither the basement nor the third floor of the school had been completed. The dirt-floored area of the basement served as an indoor track, rifle practice range and shot-put field. The third floor, which had rough brick walls, concrete floors and open beams, was outfitted with 12 ping pong tables for student recreation during lunch. However, the finished areas of the school were considered to be state-of-the-art. They featured one of the first two-way public address systems in any school in the country, modern boys’ and girls’ gyms, a lighted stage for theater productions, a fully-equipped typing room, a student bookstore, a spacious art room, a swimming pool which was tested daily for sanitation, a mechanical drawing room, and a textile and print shop. In 1937, the school staff included a physician, dentist and nurse, although just the next year, only the nurse’s position was retained.

The historical photograph shows that the school’s lawn and sweeping semi-circular driveway were originally landscaped with trees, some of which still spread branches over the athletic fields today. The original school entrance went from McKinley Road past the north end of the school to Spruce Avenue. However, by the date of this photo (1936) it had been reconfigured which required the front lawn to be leveled and the tree-lined creek that had once run along the northwest portion of the park to be re-routed. We can only guess what changes the lovely honey locust will witness as Lake Forest High School continues to adapt to accommodate our ever-changing world.



Lake Forest High School, 1936. Possible witness trees shown on either side of drive.

Photograph courtesy of the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society.



7. Municipal Services Building on Laurel Avenue

By Judy Nickels

The magnificent tree in front of the former Municipal Services Building at 110 Laurel Avenue is a Swamp White Oak, *Quercus bicolor*. It was professionally appraised in 2007; the height was estimated to be 55 feet. The diameter measured 52.5". The average number of rings per inch for these trees is ten; using this average, the tree is thought to be about 260 years old.



The initial germination would have been about 1750, or six or seven decades before white settlement. At that time, the oak was part of the oak/hickory woodland east of a large area of marshland.

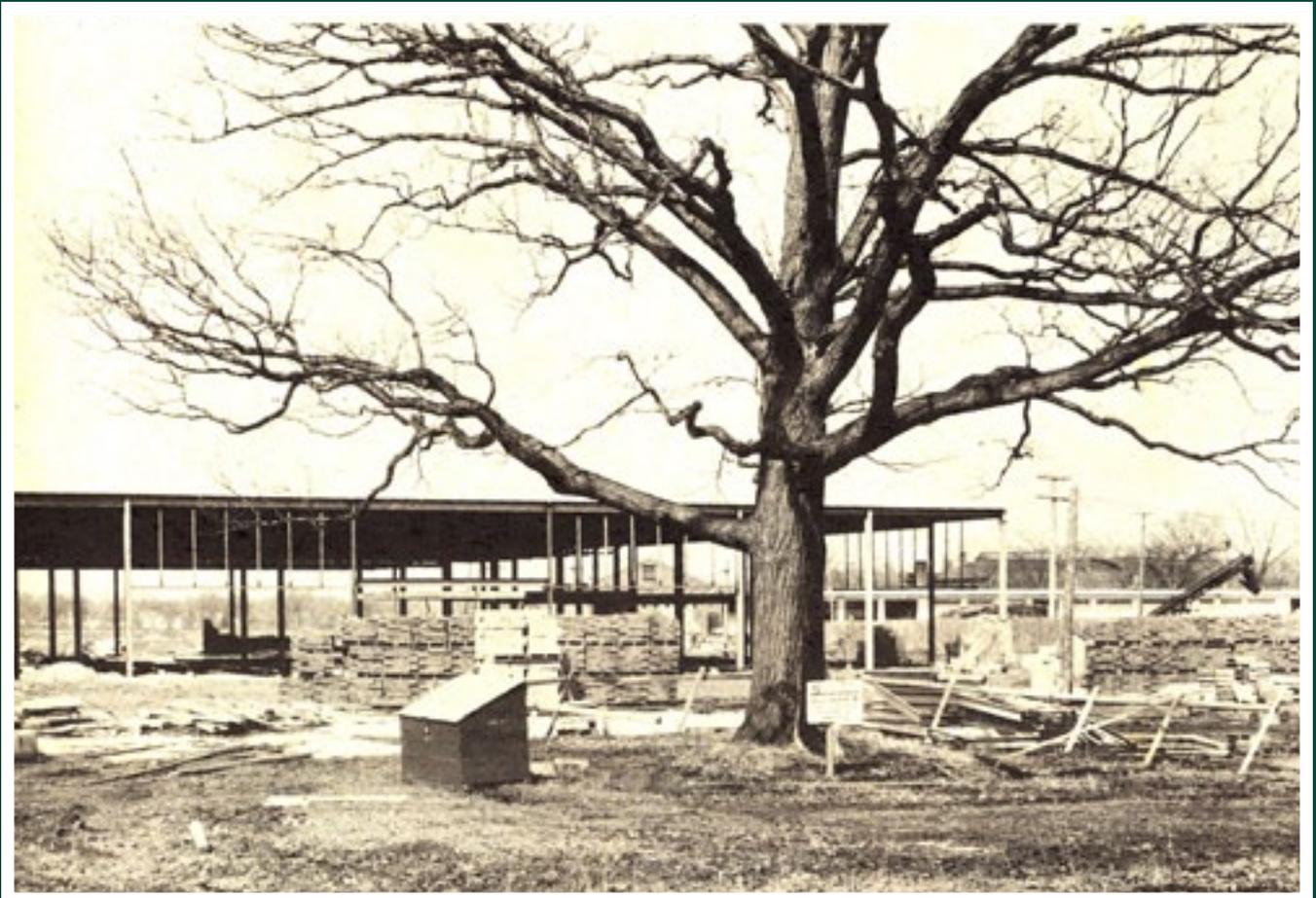
The tree was witness to the Municipal Services Building construction in the early 1960s. A groundbreaking ceremony took place in August of 1961. The building's architects, L. Rosemann and William Bergmann, Alderman Robert C. M. Hume and Mayor George R. Beach Jr. were in attendance.

This was a time of growth and prosperity for the City, and the old facility at 1170 Western Avenue was inadequate. The original plan was to finance the \$250,000 building from the sale of the city property. However, there were no buyers, and the site of the old facility is now Franklin Park, a small triangle just south of Crystal Point. The building was financed instead with funds on hand from various divisions of the Public Works department.

The building was to be completed in January, 1962. However, the Auburn Construction Company, which had submitted the lowest bid, defaulted in November of 1961, and in January of 1962, work remained at a standstill until another contractor could be found to take over the job.

The Municipal Services Building was vacated in 2009 for a larger facility at Conway. The tree stands before the now empty property waiting to witness the next use of the property. It has been well cared for by the City. It was drip-line mulched in the 1980s, had lightning protection installed in 2003, and is pruned every five years. In the summer, it receives about 2,000 gallons of water. The tree's remarkable size and perfect symmetry of roots and crown make it a special landmark that could, with continued attention, live another hundred years.





Municipal Services Building, 1962. Witness tree shown in center of picture. Lake Forester, March 29, 1962.

8. Ragdale

By Margie Juedes

This gorgeous cascading American Elm, *Ulmus americana*, may have been planted by Howard Van Doren Shaw or one of his daughters at their Ragdale home in Lake Forest shortly after he built the home in 1897. Many of the other elms planted on the site succumbed to Dutch Elm Disease, but this sturdy survivor has witnessed the building of a variety of sites to the west, along with a steady stream of art lovers and artists.

When Shaw bought the property it was a working farm. The property was barren of trees except for an apple orchard, two black locusts in front of the house site and hickory trees beside and behind it. Shaw planted the silver poplars that lean over Green Bay Road on the east for privacy, according to Alice Hayes, Shaw's granddaughter.

From the vantage of this old elm, one could see all the way to the horizon across a meadow, prairie land and the farm. The grandchildren recall that Shaw made a bowling green out back and brought beautiful mahogany bowling balls from England to amuse the children. He also built a sunken lawn tennis court so as not to spoil the view to the west. Shaw's daughters and friends in their long-white dresses enjoyed the game, although they often found themselves ankle-deep in mud because of the slope of the land and the water-filled pit after a rain!

Shaw's 50-acre site went all the way to the Skokie ditch to the west and, included an old farmhouse and a barn. In the distance, the Skokie ditch used to be a shallow stream meandering through the meadows. Shaw built a bridge and a dam across the stream to form a pond 40 feet wide and 3 or 4 feet deep, called "Shaw's Folly." Often Shaw, his wife, and daughters would come from Chicago in the winter and skate on this pond. During the summer, the children would play pirate on a raft. In 1927, the Skokie was dredged to aid drainage and the dam, bridge, and pond were destroyed.

In the early 1900s a railroad line was built near the Skokie ditch and Shaw had to sell right-of-way land skirting the west end of his property. Shaw's daughters recall that hobos would camp near the train tracks and received food in exchange for odd jobs. As late as the 1940s, horseback riders could be seen riding west across the tracks to the Des Plaines river.

Over the years, the Shaw family had some riding horses, a pony, chickens, pigs and lambs. A couple of cows kept them in milk and some heavy farm horses pulled the hay cutting machinery. In the late 1930s after Shaw and his wife died, Ragdale was divided into three parcels for each of the daughters and their families. One daughter, Sylvia, and her husband Clay Judson, kept chickens and sheep in the meadow.

Starting in 1908, this sturdy elm would have witnessed the annual Ragdale bonfire. The bonfire became an institution scheduled on the night of the full moon in the fall after an enormous pile of brush had been collected in the meadow. All the neighborhood children were invited. Scottish bagpipers and marshmallows were part of the tradition which continues today at another Lake Forest location.

The tree also witnessed the plays created by Shaw's wife, Frances, that were performed at the "Ragdale Ring," an outdoor theater that held over 200 people. The audience sat in chairs on the grass; the stage was elevated. Evergreens formed 'wings' for exits and entrances, Japanese lanterns provided light. Carl Sandberg and Rachel Lindsay may have been in the audience for one of the plays.

Well beyond the arching elm to the west just beyond the meadow, a pristine prairie was discovered in the late 1960s. The Shaw prairie is now recognized as one of few remaining sections of virgin prairie in the area now maintained by Lake Forest Open Lands.

In 1976, the Ragdale Foundation was formed by Alice Judson Hayes, Shaw's granddaughter, to preserve this special artist sanctuary for succeeding generations. Ragdale is a part of the National Register of Historic Places. In 2001, the Foundation received a 99-year lease from the City of Lake Forest to ensure the long-term future of Ragdale as an art community.

Today, this elm can watch writers and visual artists from all over the country who come for a quiet respite to work and enjoy this tranquil, setting. Twelve artists (both print and visual) are selected to stay at Ragdale for up to two weeks while they work on their craft. This towering elm will continue to witness the creative products of artists who come to Ragdale. It may watch the next bestseller or acclaimed artist get a start at this historic artist's refuge.





Ragdale, 1938. Possible witness tree shown in center of picture. Photograph courtesy of Lake Forest College Archives and Special Collections.

9. Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital

By Jean Greene

This unusual, large Bur Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, is located on the grounds of Lake Forest Hospital near the Westmoreland parking lot. This tree used to overlook the grounds of the Albert Blake Dick family home, "Westmoreland," built in 1903. The family property extended from Waukegan Road to the ditch along the east end of what later became the Deerpath Golf Course. At that time, the local hospital, Alice Home Hospital, was located to the east, on the grounds of Lake Forest College.

By the late 1930s the healthcare needs of Lake Forest had outgrown those available at Alice Home. After a number of alternatives were considered, the location of the present Lake Forest Hospital was chosen thanks to the generosity of the A.B. Dick family. In 1939, 24 acres were donated by Mrs. Dick, wife of A.B. Dick Sr., as a site for a new hospital. Stanley Anderson, a prominent local architect, was chosen to design the building. In 1944, Mrs. Dick further generously donated 60 more acres in her will. A.B. Dick Jr. was the first president of the Lake Forest Hospital Association and his son, A.B. Dick III served on the board for 29 years. Today, John Dick and Maddie Dugan, both great-grandchildren of the first A.B. Dick, continue the family tradition, dedicating hours of service on the Board and in numerous other significant positions.

In 1967, the tree witnessed the addition of two new wings at the west end of the hospital. In 1975, the Westmoreland Nursing Center was added and the McGraw Medical Building in 1981. Deerhaven Childcare and Learning Center opened in 1989 followed by the Lake Forest Health and Fitness Institute in 1994. Later, in 1997, the Patient Services and Health Education Center was made possible with a gift from A. Watson Armour III. Finally \$15 million was raised to build a new women's hospital building with a new maternity center and a special care nursery. The Hunter Family Center for Women and the Posy Krehbiel Breast Care Center are named for these donors, whose generosity resulted in the creation of these centers.

Today, the tree observes the hospital's many visitors and employees as they pass through its doors. Its dedicated staff of more than 1,600 professional members and nearly 600 physicians serve patients throughout the region. In 1942 the hospital had 41 beds and the finest medical care available at the time. Today it has 205 beds. In 2010, Lake Forest Hospital formed a new association and became known as Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital. Now, in 2011, the hospital is in the early stages of developing an entirely new, expanded campus.

Lake Forest Hospital, 1947. Witness tree not pictured. Photograph courtesy of the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society.



10. Elawa, Middle Fork Farm & Open Lands

By Jean Greene

This enormous old Bur Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, dominates Lake Forest Open Lands property at Middle Fork Farm. Undoubtedly this tree was present when the entire property belonged to A. Watson and Elsa Armour, members of the prominent Armour family of Chicago who were significant industrialists. In 1917 the Armours built a country estate here and named it Elawa, a composite of their names. The farm complex was laid out by architect Alfred Hopkins, while David Adler designed the country house. Elawa was a weekend getaway for the family and was one of several gentlemen farms in the area, including Melody Farm owned by J. Ogden Armour and Arcady Farm owned by Arthur Meeker. While fully functional, these farms were built as an escape from city life and not intended for making a profit. For this reason they were also called hobby farms.

In 1954 Lelia and Wallace Carroll bought the estate and renamed it LeWa Farm, a composite of their first names, continuing the tradition started by the Armours. Over the years, LeWa Farm raised a large variety of animals including sheep, horses, cattle, Sicilian burros, Shetland ponies, Appaloosa ponies, Connemara ponies, white deer, skunks, foxes, turkeys and golden peacocks. The property operated as a gentleman farm until 1990.

Preserving as much of the Elawa Farm estate land as possible was a complicated process. In 1998 the Carroll family, who at the time owned all the Elawa property, Lake Forest Open Lands and the City of Lake

Forest worked together, cooperating in an endeavor to save the “63-acre savannah of pre-settlement age striking beauty.”

Elawa is now home to Lake Forest Open Lands which was founded in 1967 by a group of private citizens with a mission to save natural environments through land acquisition, habitat restoration, education and conservation advocacy. Lake Forest Open Lands now owns and manages more than 700 acres for public enjoyment year round.

Today, the old farm buildings of Elawa Farm have been restored and renovated for various usages by the City, Open Lands and others. The Bur Oak tree is seen and appreciated by many hundreds of people during Open Lands' Annual Bagpipes and Bonfire event..



Elawa Farm, 1920. From *Modern Farm Buildings*, by Alfred Hopkins. Witness tree not pictured. Photograph courtesy of the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society

11. Knollwood Club

By Margie Juedes

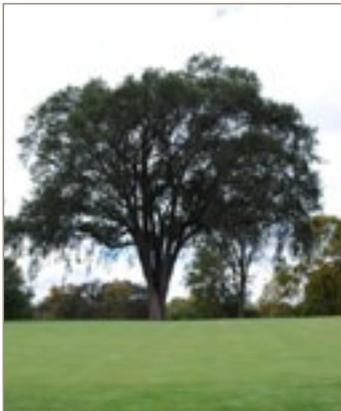
“A magnificent tree for a signature golf hole.” That is the description of the American Elm, *Ulmus americana*, watching over the 18th green at the Knollwood Club. This ancient elm has witnessed a great deal since Knollwood was developed in 1924, and long before, as it stood watch over the earlier farmland and prairie filled with native wildflowers.

In the early 1920s, the land surrounding Knollwood was rolling countryside and farmland. Originally, nine friends, all leaders of Chicago industry, joined to form a private club. Some of them had estates in Lake Forest, although most of these industry CEO's lived and worked in Chicago. They looked for land that had natural attractiveness, seclusion, and accessibility to train lines.

This founding syndicate provided all of the initial funds for purchasing the property from Mrs. Granger Farwell and Mr. A.C. McCord. The two adjoining farms, consisting of 248 acres and located on Telegraph Road (now Waukegan Road) and Creamery Corners (now the junction of Waukegan and Rt. 176), were purchased for \$600 per acre. To offset the cost of developing the Knollwood Club, the founding syndicate created 20 exclusive, multi-acre lots for country estates that were to be sold to prospective members. The club was incorporated in April of 1924.

Where the mighty elm once observed prized herds of cattle as they grazed beneath the shade it provided, an 18-hole golf course emerged. The first clubhouse was formed by joining the McCord and Farwell farm houses. The renowned architect Howard Van Doren Shaw completed the project by adding a large reception room and outside porches. Initially, the McCord swimming pool was kept for use by the members. The Farwell barn and barnyard were converted to stables and riding exercise areas. Stables on the property kept saddle horses for the season and year round.

The contour of the land was beautifully adapted for golf and Captain A.C. Alison of the English firm of Colt and Alison in London was commissioned to design the best possible course regardless of cost. In the early 1920s, many golf courses used no more than 120 acres, but Knollwood used 175 acres to give Alison total freedom to design a course where greens, tees and fairways were not too close.



Capt. Alison urged the founding members to cut back from their original plan of 27 holes to 18. “Eighteen good holes are better than twenty seven of mediocre quality,” he remarked. Alison told the members he had been able to plan for a course free from monotony. “No two successive holes run directly in the same direction and the player never has to return to the direction he came from.”

The elm watched as Knollwood's membership changed. In 1924, there were 80 members; by the time the golf course was completed the number jumped to 150. By 1926, the limit of 300 members was reached. Then came the crash of 1929 and the long depression which hurt Knollwood and most other private clubs.

Just as the Club overcame the loss of members and income during the depression, it ran into an even more serious problem during the war years. With food and gasoline rationing, few Chicagoans could drive up to the club. Also many members enlisted in the war. The membership dwindled to below 100. Happily, after the war, prosperity returned to the club with full membership.

Times have indeed changed. Initially, only men played golf at Knollwood; women started golfing there in 1927. In the 1933 yearbook, the warning is found that “no wines or intoxicating liquors shall be served or allowed on the premises during the Prohibition era.” Caddies received 30 cents per hour on weekdays, Saturday, Sunday and holidays and 45 cents per hour for double bagging. No tipping was allowed! Caddies could not keep found balls and had to give them to the member they caddied for.

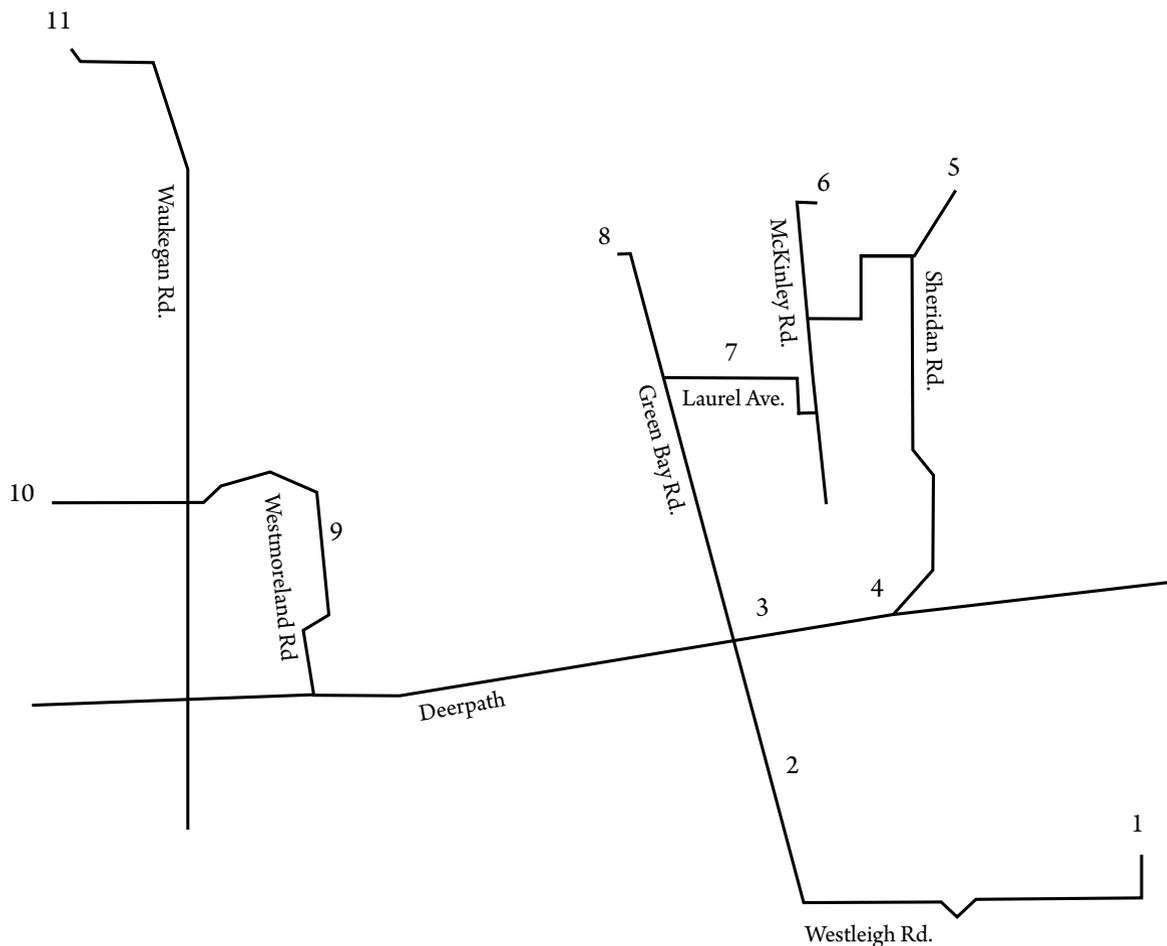
Like the Knollwood Club, the magnificent tree that watches over the 18th green has seen many changes and survived many challenges since the Knollwood Club was developed 86 years ago. They are both survivors.

Entrance to Knollwood Club, circa 1930. Witness tree not pictured.
Photograph courtesy of the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society.



Witness Tree Map

Starting at Bluff's Edge Bridge



1. Bluff's Edge Bridge
Bluffs Edge Dr.
2. Green Bay Trail near Lake Forest
Country Day School
145 South Green Bay Rd.
3. City Hall
220 East Deerpath
4. Triangle Park
Deerpath & Walnut Rd.
5. Lake Forest Cemetery
6. Lake Forest High School
1285 North McKinley Rd.
7. Municipal Services
on Laurel Avenue
110 East Laurel Ave.
8. Ragdale
1260 North Green Bay Rd.
9. Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital
660 N. Westmoreland Rd.
10. Elawa Farm
1401 Middlefork Dr.
11. Knollwood Club
1890 Knollwood Rd.

* Map is not to scale and excludes some roads.



This book of witness trees was developed as part of the
celebration of the sesquicentennial of
The City Of Lake Forest
in 2011.

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