

Celebration Walk to “New Grove”

Sunday, April 23, 2023



CELEBRATING
250
YEARS
GROVE CHURCH
Praise for the Past... Faith for the Future

In commemoration of the birth of Grove Church on Saturday, March 13, 1773 in response to a sermon preached by Francis Asbury in the original grove of trees.

and

In celebration of the thriving “New Grove” which was planted in 2013 during the celebration of the 240th Anniversary by crew members Steven Estberg, James Hoffmaster, Carl Bangert, Owen Owens, Morris Farnum, Sylvia Fuller and Duane Green.

Opening Prayer

Rev. Alfred T. Day III

Guest Preacher of the Day and Former General Secretary for the United Methodist Church General Commission on Archives and History

A Walk Through Grove’s “New Grove”

Mr. Stephen Estberg

Mr. James Hoffmaster

Grove Church members and members of the “New Grove” Planning and Planting Team.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. *Jeremiah 17:7-8*



Sign Reads:

"In March, 1773, Francis Asbury preached to settlers in a grove of trees on this site, and Grove Church began! The last oak tree of that grove was felled in 2002. In April, 2013, these trees were planted to commemorate the 240th Anniversary of Grove Church."



**2013
New Grove
Planting**



2013 New Grove Planting Crew Back row L to R: Duane Green, Owen Owens, Sylvia Fuller, Steve Estberg. Front row L to R: Morris Farnum, Jim Hoffmaster. Not pictured but present: Carl Bangert.



2023 Steve Estberg (not pictured), Jim & Kathy Hoffmaster cleaned up the New Grove in memory of Duane Green, at the request of Betty Green.

Letter written to Pastor Bron Yocum by Duane Green

October 8, 2013

Pastor Bron: Last Saturday, Steve Estberg & I planted the last of the trees that completed the new grove. This brings the total planting to 18 trees, See attached map for locations and tree types. This map is the latest of the New Grove that your initiative got started.

I want to bring you up-to-date on some of the questions that folks have been asking as to why these trees were selected for the grove. The choices made were colored by my some 60 years as a professional forester. They reflect my work experiences and personal views.

First, the 18 trees now in the ground are all native of this area. All are expected to be long-lived (in excess of 150 – 200 years). Some like the white oaks can make it to 500 to 800 years of age. They will all grow large & tall (at least 24" in diameter and 100 feet in height). These species are relatively free from disease and insect pests, except the Oaks which are the Gypsy Moths' favorite food. Currently, the Moth is considered well under control and usually is no problem.

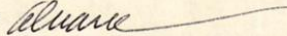
Second, these trees are "alternate budded" trees whose growth habits favor height growth rather than the "opposite budded" trees (maples and ash) which tend to grow more laterally. Also, the emerald ash borer has recently invaded our area and we don't know yet how to deal with it.

Thirdly, I wanted some beautiful fall color for the Grove, so I selected the Scarlet Oaks and the Sweet Gums for their crimson colors and the others for some orange and yellow-gold colors. All of the trees were supplied by Catherine Smith's Redbud Native Plant Nursery at Glen Mills, PA and all are excellent tree stock.

I wanted the Grove to be located close to the church so that it could be easily seen or walked to for those so inclined. Thanks to Jim Hoffmaster and the Grove Cemetery Group for making this possible. You couldn't have picked a better year to start a new grove of trees. They are all doing well. The location and the summer rains in the growing season have been just wonderful.

Stephen and I will continue to monitor the trees to make sure they enter the winter in good condition. Thanks to you, the Cemetery Board and our top-notch tree planters, it has been a pleasure to be a part of this project.

Sincerely, Duane Green

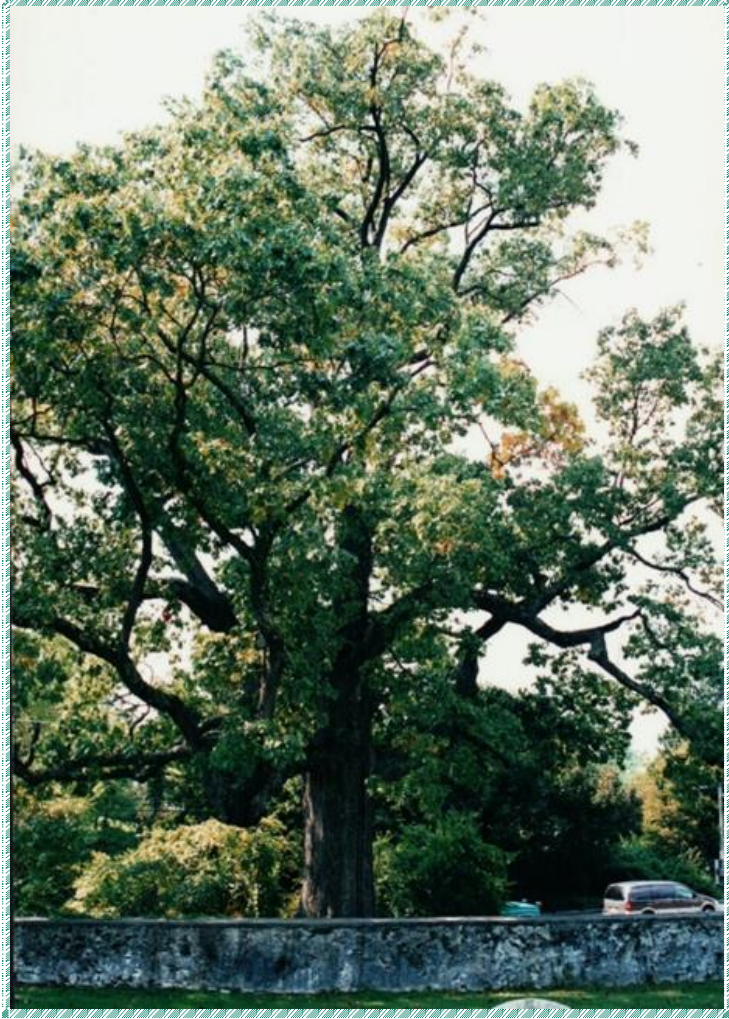


Enclosures: October 2013 Tree Map

Copies to:

Stephen Estberg, Jim Hoffmaster, Carl Bangert, Morris Farnum, Owen Owens, Sylvia Fuller

Sylvia, Thanks again for all that you do
Duane



**The Last Historic Tree of the Original Grove
Removed in 2002**



Duane L. Green

1236 Hawthorn Lane
West Chester, PA. 19380

Forest Resources

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(215) 696-1577

Grove UMC's Historic **Black Oak Tree, age 296**

This tree probably got its start as a seedling in the spring of 1705, about 22 years after Wm. Penn's arrival in October of 1682. When Francis Asbury preached here to the settlers in March of 1773, this Black Oak was about 67 years old and probably well over 60 feet in height.

Forestry text books state that under favorable conditions, Black Oak diameters can reach up to 60 inches (ours was 74 inches); heights of up to 100 feet (ours was 98 feet); and ages of 150 – 200 years. At 296 years, our tree was as large as & much, much older than most Black Oaks usually get.

When removed by Shady Tree Company on February 5-6, 2002, this last remaining tree of the original grove was mostly hollow with only 5 - 8 inches of live wood left to support the tree. In January 2002, when examined by myself & J. David Hucker, Registered Consulting Arborist, it was deemed a Hazard Tree. The decision was then made to remove the tree.

To be defined as a Hazard tree, there must be major damage visible, and there has to be a target present (people, homes, property, etc.) In addition, a tree must have at least 1/3 of its radius (37 ") in live, healthy vigorous wood to be a safe tree. Our Black Oak met all of the criteria to be a Hazard Tree. It had a major 30 foot large crack visible; it was only 30 feet from a well-traveled road; and it had less than 16% of its radius in live healthy wood. It simply had to be removed before someone was injured.

Because most of its interior had rotted away, tree growth rings were not present to count and determine the age of the tree. So I used a formula developed by the International Society of Arboriculture to estimate its likely age. For Black Oak, open-grown and able to grow normally the factor of 4 is used. This, multiplied by its diameter of 74 inches resulted in an estimated age of 296 years.

As of April 6, 2013, Grove Church members have planted and dedicated a new Grove, with a young Black Oak sapling as one of its prime trees. After 240 years of service on the corner of Boot and Grove Roads, it seems right and proper that Grove United Methodist Church continue what nature and Francis Asbury began here so long ago!

Duane
Duane L. Green
Registered Professional Forester
& Grove Church Member
May 31, 2013

CC. Pastor Bron Yocum
Grove Tree Planting Crew
Grove UMC History Committee

*Sylvia's mom
response THANKS for
always being helpful
Duane*

Church sadly prepares to level sick tree

2/4/02
WC
Daily
Local
News

300-year-old oak ordered taken down

By PATEEN CORCORAN
Staff Writer

WEST WHITELAND — A historically significant but dying tree will be removed from a cemetery at Grove United Methodist Church this week.

Although church members say they will mourn the loss of the old oak — which is an estimated 300 years old and has, for years, served as a pillar of the church's landscape — they say it is time for the tree, which is beyond re-

pair, to go.

"We hate to lose the tree," said church cemetery Treasurer Lane Jarrett. "We tried trimming one side and then another. Then (the state Department of Transportation) sent us a letter saying that it has to come down. That's why we really have to do it."

The tree is the only survivor of an original grove of trees at the church — hence the name Grove United — which was founded in 1773.

For many church members

the tree has long served as a



Staff photo by Bethany Stillner

Betty and Ivan Lichty look at the damage to the only historic oak tree left on the church property.

◆ See **TREE**, Page A4

Tree

(From Page A1)

symbol of the history of Methodism, since Grove United, at Boot and Grove roads, was the first Methodist church in the county. The church has a rich history, with its current building dating back to 1888.

Many years ago, original "circuit-riders," those who traveled on horseback to preach the sermon, delivered spiritual messages near the tree.

Church historian Betty Lichy and her husband, Ivan, who have been attending the church since 1956, have been investigating the tree's history. While unsure of its age, they believe it to be at least three centuries old.

"Someone came through about 10 years ago and said, 'This tree has been standing here longer than the people who have been buried here,'" said Lichy.

The tree has survived much,

including Hurricane Floyd in 1999. But it was badly damaged then, said Lichy. Recently, the trunk of the tree was found to be hollow, signaling its poor health, said Jarrett.

Restorative measures had been proposed to prolong the life of the tree, yet were found to be futile, church members said.

A tree service will remove the tree on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Church members have proposed several uses for the wood after the tree comes down, including making souvenirs or saving pieces of the tree to make crosses or benches, as a way for the tree to live on.

"There have been various proposals, but nothing has been decided," said Lichy. Members are also hoping to preserve the stump of the tree,

where they would like to place a plaque, she said.

Those who have become attached to the tree are already preparing for its demise.

"I took pictures of the tree," said Edward Kurkjian, who has been a church member for almost 50 years. "We're keeping them as a memento of what the tree meant to the area. Its age is the thing that people want to feel is part of the church."

However, now that the tree can be no longer saved, it is time to let it go, said Grove United Methodist associate pastor, the Rev. Ruth Woodlen.

"People are sad that the last part of that aspect of Chester County is going to be gone, but we don't have much choice," she said. "It's sad, but it's not a living thing anymore. And the church is about life."

300-year-old tree comes down after a full life

When a particular tree in the news is thought to have broken from the ground, our country wasn't a country but a number of English colonies. William Penn's Commissioners of Property, acting on behalf of King Charles II, was selling thousands of acres of land of what was then called Goshen Township to some very lucky colonists.

When this acorn turned into a sapling in what is now a cemetery of the Grove United Methodist Church in West Whiteland, Chester County was just 20 years old and sparsely populated by farmers.

As the tree grew, so did what would become the United States of America.

When the oak was about 75 years old, our ancestors declared their independence from Britain in a building set about 40 miles from the tree's roots.

At around the tree's 160th birthday, some of the "united" states decided to secede and a civil war was fought with the future of our country hanging in the balance.

By 1945, when the tree was nearly 250 years old, the United States had emerged as the most powerful nation on Earth and protector of freedom against the forces of tyranny.

Now, it's 2002 - the age of the Internet and unmanned missions to Mars and the tree's hours are numbered. It's dead and will be cut down today by recommendation of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, which understandably fears what would happen if the tree were to fall on Grove Road.

It's sad to see the tree's end but we can take solace in its long life and the period in which it lived. Its growth mirrored our country's growth. As was the case with our country, the tree's strength came from a strong root system begun more than 300 years ago. Like the United States, the tree persevered despite some very difficult years; and it continued to provide safe sanctuary. And the tree, like our country, survived because of the attention paid to it.

There is a difference. While the tree will soon be just a memory, our country survives and can continue to thrive, but it will need our attention and loving care.

