

Historic Beech tree, a Witness Tree, at 2424 Lincoln Street.



J.E. B. Stuart grew up at 2424 Lincoln Street, and played under the very old beech tree in their yard. He knew the story of the tree, which may have inspired his love of history. He and his Mother are pictured beside the beech tree in this photo on the left.

During the incursion of the Confederate troops to our area, just days before the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, two young soldiers were sent to scout the area in search of Union troops.

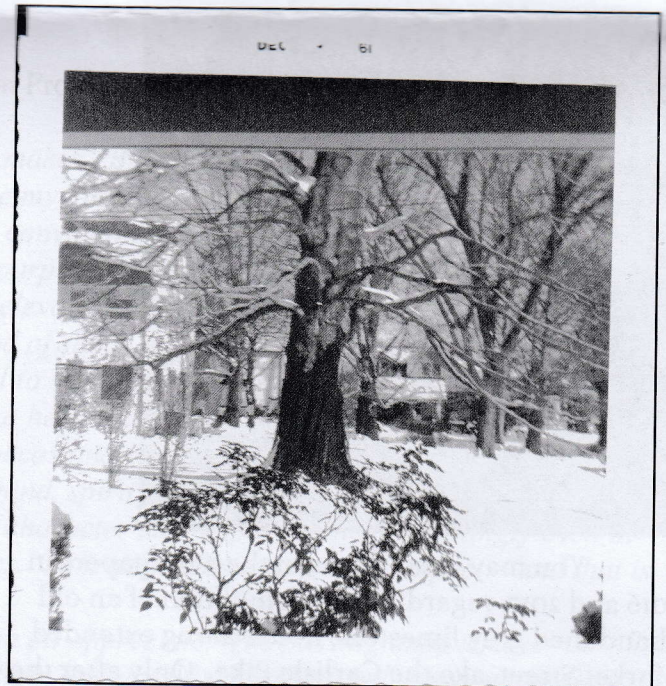
These two climbed the sturdy beech tree, to gain height, to assist their secret search before venturing forth and perhaps putting themselves into danger.

I can only presume they didn't see anything that startled them, because they stayed up in the tree long enough to leisurely carve a "heart" high in the tree! Many, many years later, one of these boys returned to Camp Hill during a commemoration event - a very old man - and returned to the tree (in the 1930's) where he asked a young boy to climb up to see if the heart was still there. It was! It was duely photographed. Many years later, when the tree was exhausted and had to be taken down, (1965) that segment of the tree was salvaged. Unfortunately, Mother Nature wasn't finished with that bit of history - the incredible log deteriorated and disappeared.

The photo to the right, shows the heart on the tree, at the highest point in the frame, just above the snow accumulation on the left angled branch. It's a challenge to find! Hint: the scar tissue of the bark is darker than the rest of the bark.

The Camp Curtain Historical Society placed two historical plaques in Willow Park, adjacent to the Sixteeners Monument (Alumni of the Soldiers' Orphans' School) a couple of years ago. This photo of the tree is on one of the plaques. The heart is circled on the plaque. You might wander by there to get a closer look. And if you are extra inspired, go visit Jim Schmick in his bookstore in Mechanicsburg called "Civil War and More".

Thanks again to J.E.B. Stuart.



Please phone, e-mail or write to the Editor with your stories/comments/suggestions:
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