

STORIES of New Jersey

the evacuation of Philadelphia.

In 1765 the Board of Trustees of Princeton ordered the planting of a row of sycamores before the residence of the president of the college. This was the year in which England passed the Stamp Act. For this reason the Princeton sycamores have ever since been associated with the War of Independence. Two of the trees still stand near the house occupied by the dean of the University. They are 90 feet in height and have a diameter of three feet.

In front of the Old Baptist meeting house in Hopewell, on land donated by John Hart, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, stands another great sycamore. Under its branches Colonel Jacob Houghton, a Revolutionary patriot, told the news of the Battle of Lexington, ending the stirring address with the cry: "Men of New Jersey, the redcoats are murdering our brethren of New England! Who follows me to Boston?" Tradition states that every man answered "I!" This fine old tree now shades the quiet burying ground where Hart and Houghton both rest.

At Shrewsbury there are ten sycamores of rare beauty. Originally there were 13 and it is believed they were planted to commemorate the original 13 colonies. They are cared for by patriotic societies of Monmouth County. A few years ago the Board of Freeholder undertook to lop off some of the branches spreading over a public highway. The women of the town, aroused, sent a messenger to Freehold to get an injunction that would stop the work. Men were already at work, but the women beguiled them by feeding them cake and ice cream -- even passing refreshments up to those in the uppermost branches. The trees were saved. Monmouth Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution then started a State-wide campaign to preserve them.

Probably the most famous tree in New Jersey is the Salem Oak, for not only has its great age and beauty gained for it a wide reputation, but its progeny is scattered throughout this country and abroad. There are standing orders for all the acorns, which are carefully gathered each year. This 400-year-old giant stands in the Friends' Cemetery in Salem, where for more than a century it has been cared for by the Society of Friends.

Measurements made in 1933 gave the height as 73 feet; circumference, 5 feet from the ground, 19 feet; spread, 10,516 square feet. In 10 years \$2,000 has been spent for surgery and care. Beneath its branches John Fenwicke is supposed to have made his treaty with the Indians in 1675 when he purchased extensive lands for the Quaker colony which he established. This treaty, made 6 years previous to Penn's famous treaty, was the first made by a white man with the Indians that was not broken.

Equaling the Salem Oak in beauty, age and size is a great white oak on farmland at the end of First Avenue, in Mantua, Gloucester County. It is said that Indians gathered under it for their councils, a tradition strengthened by the knowledge that they used the banks of Mantua Creek for a rendezvous. There is no historic event associated with this tree, nor has it enjoyed the care given the Salem Oak. Some of its powerful branches might be trimmed of dead wood, but the dense foliage testifies to a sound heart. Summer and winter it