

STORIES of New Jersey

is a picture of symmetry and beauty. It has a breast-height circumference of 19 feet 9 inches and looks like a miniature forest balanced on a single stem.

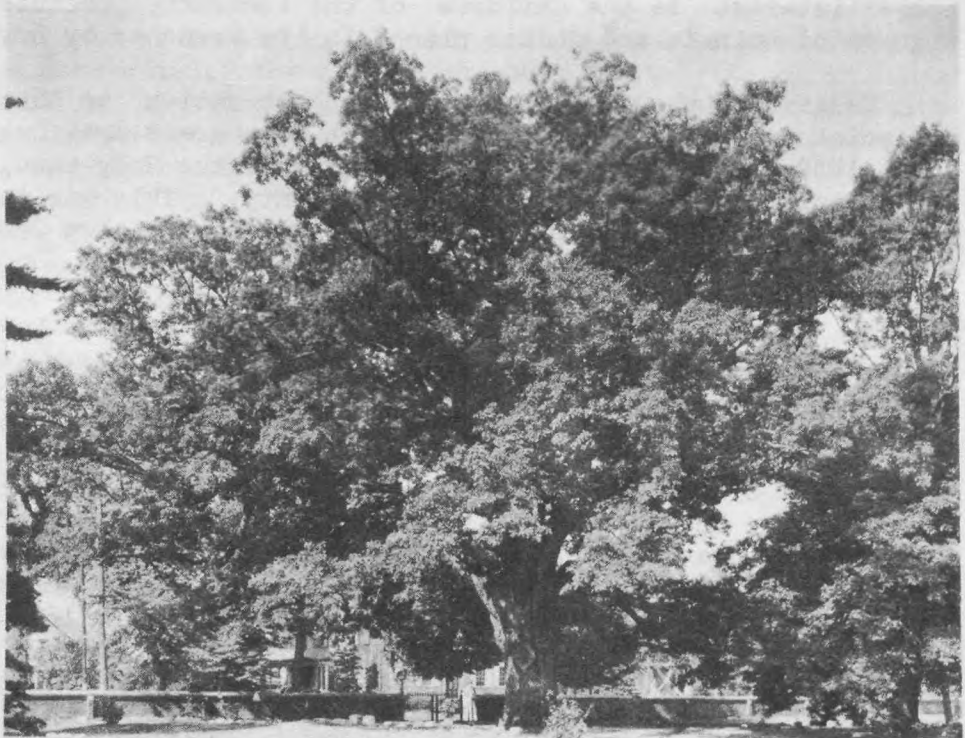
There is a white oak on the Hartshorne estate in the Navesink Highlands, not far from the Shrewsbury River, which was in its second or third century when Richard Hartshorne in 1671 bought the land from the Indians. In 1778 a troop of British officers with a 12-mile line of baggage and men retreated from Monmouth Battlefield to ships anchored off Sandy Hook. One of the officers -- tradition says it was Sir Henry Clinton -- saluted Richard Hartshorne, and complimented him on his holdings in the Highlands. Hartshorne is said to have answered firmly: "I intend to hold them, sir." His descendants still hold the land on which the oak stands.

Another ancient tree is at Basking Ridge. Known as "Old Oak," it is reputed to be about 500 years old. It stands in the yard of the Presbyterian Church, braced with numerous steel posts, its arching boughs extending out more than 100 feet from the trunk.

On a farm now known as "Poet's Dream," just south of Matawan, at Freneau, there is a grove of locust trees near the grave of Philip Freneau, the poet of the Revolution. The trees were a century old when young Philip played in their shade on his father's 1000-acre farm, which was called Mount Pleasant Hall. Later he walked under the locusts with Eleanor Forman, who became his wife; and it is said many of his poems were written in the grove.

The present owner of the farm cherishes these trees as much as he does the poet's grave, which is marked by a monument, although when he bought the farm 20 years ago he knew nothing about Freneau or the two landmarks that recall his memory -- the grave, and the locust trees.

Standing as a memorial to Richard Stockton, signer of the Declaration of Independence, is a row of fine catalpas on the lawn of "Morven," home of the Stocktons in



Salem Oak