

Only Live Oak Trees Over Century Old Are Eligible for This Unique Society; Its 'President' Is Elected 'By Girth'!

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)
THE recent celebration of the fifth anniversary of the founding of the Live Oak Society of Louisiana, unique organization fathered by the late Dr. Edwin L. Stephens, has called attention again to some of the famous trees that serve as living monuments to important events in the history of the United States.

Dr. Stephens, who was for many years president of Southwestern Louisiana institute, originated the Live Oak society while gathering data on the historical trees of his state during 1935. It shortly became famous throughout the world.

Only live oaks with an established age of at least a century are admitted to the society. The president is elected "by girth." The Locke Breaux oak on the Mississippi river in St. Charles parish, Louisiana, has held the office by reason of its size ever since the society was first organized. This oak is said to be the largest in America, having a girth of 35 feet at a height of four feet above the ground and standing 75 feet high with a spread of 166 feet.

It was beneath this moss-draped giant that LaSalle and his band of French explorers are said to have knelt to offer thanks for their safe arrival on their voyage down the Mississippi river in a land "where the fruit trees bear in winter."

High on the list of charter members of the society is the Evangeline oak in old St. Martinville, where descendants of the original Acadian exiles from Nova Scotia still carry on the traditions and customs of their French forefathers. Under this oak the heroine of Longfellow's "Evangeline" met again the lover she had sought through weary months and perilous journeying only to find that he had another sweetheart!

Famous, too, are the duelling oaks in New Orleans. In another era these trees looked down on many gallants who sought to avenge real or fancied insults with blades that flashed in the rays of the early sun. Often the spreading branches of these oaks sheltered a duellist who lay on the field of honor as his opponent strode off victorious.

Pay 'Dues' With Acorns.
Dues of member trees are acorns payable in November of every year. The acorns are planted in the society's own nursery and the young trees, treasured by garden and horticultural societies because of their distinguished parentage, are used for planting highways, college campuses and parks.

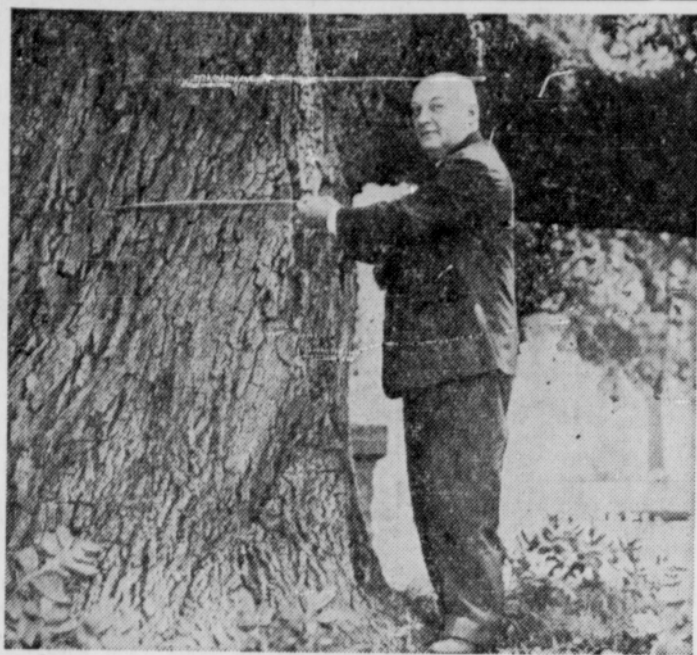
Other offspring of these aristocrats of the live oak family have traveled to many far-away lands. Some of them now stand on estates in South America. Others have crossed the Pacific to take root in the soil of Australia. Still others cast shadows over the bright tropical bloom in Hawaiian gardens and so provide a link between tree lovers of this Pacific island and the United States.

Live oaks are admitted to the society upon presentation of their "family tree" by someone who serves as an "attorney." Each new member is inducted with fitting ceremonies arranged by the garden clubs of Louisiana and in which state officials take part.

However, these Louisiana live oaks are not the only arboreal aristocrats of this country having a genealogy rooted in centuries when America was an uncharted wilderness and beneath whose branches have been enacted human dramas that changed the course of the nation's history.

Probably most famous of all historic American trees is the Washington elm in Cambridge, Mass. It was beneath this tree that Washington took command of the Continental army on July 3, 1775. The tree is thought to be a survivor of the primeval forest that once covered the region and in its youth was almost 100 feet in height, with a branch spread of 90 feet. When in 1872 one of the largest of the tree's branches fell as a result of a storm the wood was used for a pulpit in a nearby chapel.

Maryland's Liberty Tree.
Even more ancient is the history of the Liberty tree at Annapolis, Md. This tree, an immense poplar, stands on the campus of St. John's college and is entitled to fame both on account of its great age and size and because of the historic events that took place beneath it. Tradition records that in 1652 a treaty was made under the Liberty tree between white settlers and the Sus-



Dr. Edwin L. Stephens standing beside the Locke Breaux oak in St. Charles parish, La., "president" of the Live Oak Society of Louisiana.

quehannock Indians, thereby assuring the settlers of safety which left them free to develop the land and build homes and communities. When the colonists were discussing problems which led to revolt against England, patriotic meetings were held in the shade of the Liberty tree, out of which arose its name. Later still, General Lafayette was entertained beneath its shade when he visited Annapolis in 1824.

The Royal Oak or Tree of the Lighted Lanterns, near Easton, Md., also stands as a living memorial to this country's fight for independence and the right to her own trade. During the War of 1812, a British ship came to anchor at night opposite the town of St. Michaels in Talbot county and began to shell the town. The townspeople, who were unprotected, hung lighted lanterns in the tops of the high tree and so deceived the enemy into mistaking



Historic "Evangeline Oak" in St. Martinville, La.

them for lights of the town, with the result their shots passed harmlessly overhead.

A stalwart oak at Chesterfield, S. C., which was already a lordly tree in 1852, played a role in the Civil war. The first flag bearing the words "Immediate Separate State Action" was fastened to its branches and fluttered there until General Sherman took the town and ordered the flag down. Even before gaining fame in the Civil war the tree had been marked as one of Chesterfield's historic points of interest as it had served as a place for Indian parleys and their pipes of peace, together with stores of arrowheads, were found buried beneath it.

New York cherishes as its oldest tree, the Inwood tulip tree, on the northern end of Manhattan island. Said to be more than 225 years old, the tree was in its youth when Henry Hudson made his memorable voyage of discovery on the river that bears his name.

Corydon, Ind., claims one of the country's famous trees, the Constitutional elm, beneath which, on June 10, 1816, members of the Constitutional convention met to deliberate on the articles of law to be adopted for the government of the new state of Indiana. This tree is protected by law against depredations.

Roosevelt Oaks.
Even in our own modern era trees have their place in current history. When the final plans were drawn for the library of President Franklin D. Roosevelt at Hyde Park, in which his papers will be kept for posterity, the President decided to preserve the landscaping of the grounds so that future generations might see the place just as it exists today.

Thus, the landscaping plans necessitated preserving, in appearance at least, the six great oaks which surround the front of the library. These trees have stood for several hundred years and it was because of their beauty the library was erected on the present site. Accordingly, President Roosevelt decided to have young oaks planted next to each of the old oaks, so that when the old ones finally died and were removed, the young ones would grow in their corresponding places. The oaks chosen were a group of 19-year-old trees that

had been planted by the President's daughter, Anna Roosevelt Boettiger.

Of even more historic interest is the use of the trees which grew about the groups of Lincoln's childhood home to flank the white marble walls of the memorial to the Great Emancipator's memory. It was under these same trees that the boy Lincoln spent his childhood summers learning to read and write. Two of the huge shade trees which have been included in the landscaping were those under which two of the historic Lincoln-Douglas debates were held.

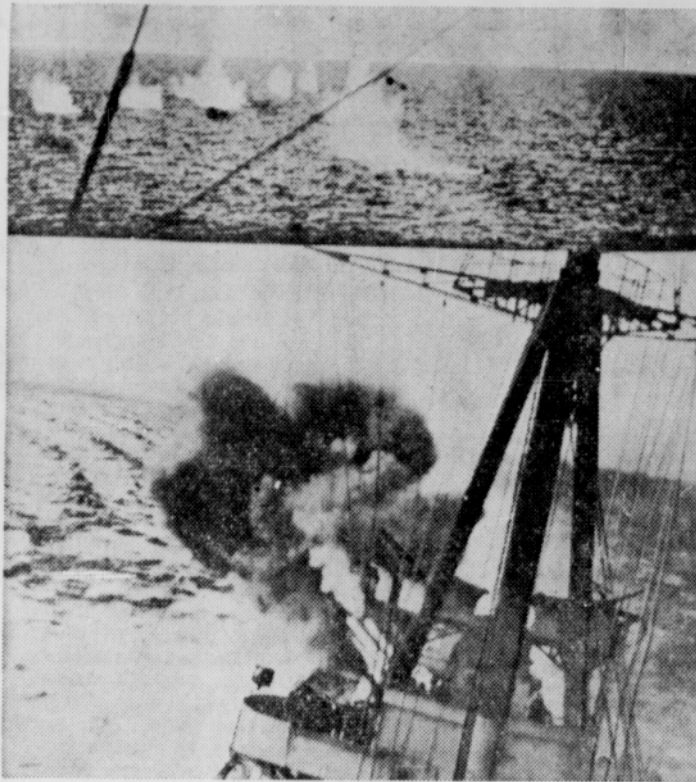
A tree which needed neither age nor historical background to bring it fame is the unique "Apple Annie tree" which marks the grave of Mary McGrath, for years a familiar and colorful figure in the theatrical district of Broadway. Mary McGrath walked New York's "Great White Way" for years, selling apples to passersby who included many of the great theatrical names of her era as well as the less great. She inspired a story and subsequent photoplay and when she died a few years ago the Broadway theatrical world mourned her passing. A group who had known "Apple Annie" through the years planned a unique memorial—a tree composed of the seven varieties of apples which had constituted her wares. The tree, which bears Astrachan, Gravenstein, Fall Pippin, Baldwin, Greening, Russett and King apples, now is planted on her grave.

In addition to serving as monuments, historical trees have themselves inspired monuments. A bronze monument marks the site of the old Liberty elm in Boston. The tree was planted by a schoolmaster long before the Revolution and, dedicated by him to the independence of the colonies, was a favorite meeting place for patriots. When at last it fell the bells of all Boston churches were tolled. A monument was erected to the memory of a tree which in its turn had served as a living memorial to the fight our forefathers waged to make this a free and independent nation.

Modern methods of tree surgery have helped to preserve many historic trees which, without man's help, would have died of the ravages of time, storms and insects. The new tree surgery with rubber, originated by the noted horticulturist, George Van Yahres, and subsequently developed by engineers of the B. F. Goodrich company, was used to preserve the life of the old Washington walnut tree in New Jersey. Tradition has it that the first President frequently hitched his horse to an iron ring embedded in the tree when he commanded the American Revolutionary forces. For more than 150 years the tree withstood onslaughts of weather. A few years ago decay set in and it seemed that the tree would go the way of other historically famous trees which have disappeared from the earth.

The Van Yahres method of tree surgery was employed, a new type of interlocking rubber blocks being used to fill up cavities in the tree caused by decay. Whereas concrete fillings formerly used in tree surgery give the tree a rigidity which makes it impossible for the tree to bend with the wind in a severe storm, these rubber blocks have such flexibility the danger of the tree cracking when buffeted by a wind was eliminated. In addition, bark grows more easily over rubber as the tree scar heals. After the insertion of the filling, antiseptic wax was injected by steam pressure to kill any lurking decay germs. Today, the Washington walnut tree gives promise of remaining as an historic landmark for another century or so.

Italians Claim Victory in Naval Battle



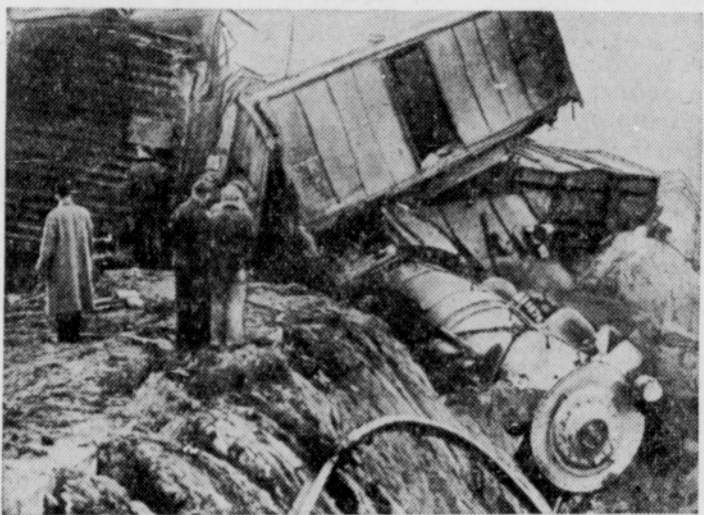
According to the Rome caption on these photos, they were made during a recent naval engagement between the British and Italian fleets south of Sardinia. Top is a view of the British salvo falling wide of its mark. Below, the Italian warship zigzagging (see wake) as it fires at enemy. British claim Italians ran away. Italians claim vice-versa.

Survives Bomb



Despite the fact that the interior of this infants' home in London was badly charred, this hobby horse is carried out seemingly intact by the volunteer firefighter. The building was struck by a bomb.

Three Killed in West Coast Train Wreck



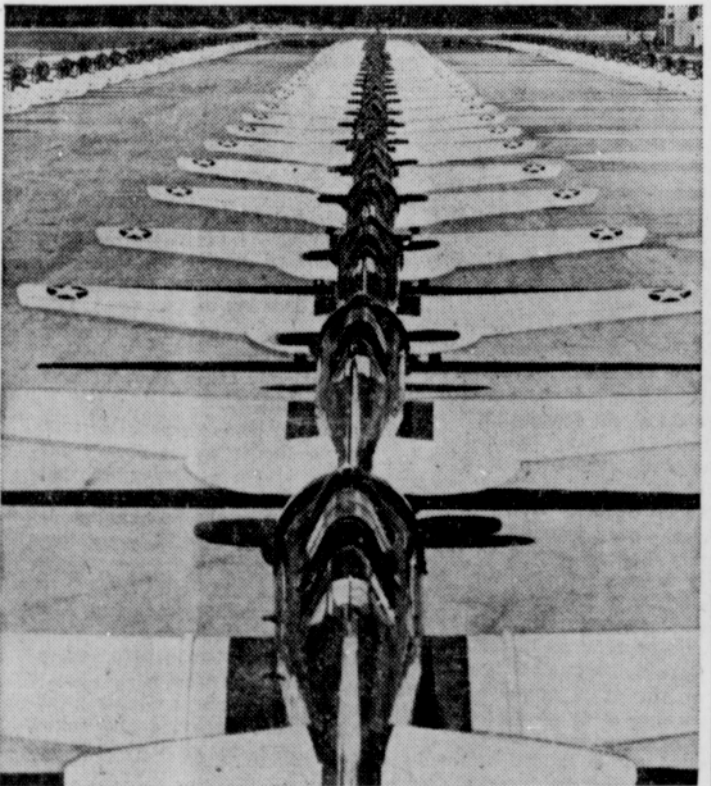
This picture shows the wreckage of the engine and three freight cars after a northbound Santa Fe freight train struck a "mushy" spot in the rain-soaked roadbed and crashed off the ledge into a sand bed, at Del Mar, Calif. Three of the train crew were killed.

Held by Japs



Corp. Francis Barber, of Dorchester, Mass., one of five U. S. marines held 17 hours by Jap police at Peking, China. Four of the five were beaten up before release.

Lesson in Perspective for Prospective Pilots



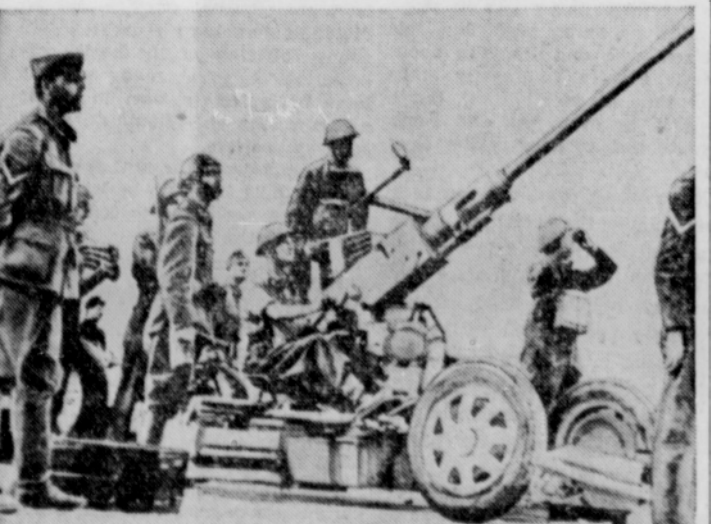
Remember how the railroad tracks seemed to meet in the distance? Well, nowadays a string of airplanes has the same effect. The imaginary line of the wing tips is drawing towards a point in the distance. These are some of the training craft at the "West Point of the Air," Randolph Field, Texas. The planes will be used for training the 500 flying cadets.

Electoral Votes



Here is Col. Edwin Halsey, senate secretary, receiving the presidential electoral votes of all states, just before the new Seventy-seventh congress convened. Election is not "official" until congress actually opens and reads these votes.

First Picture on Greek War



The first picture of Greek and British soldiers together in the war against Italy. This picture was made on the strategic island of Crete. Greek soldiers watch English soldiers man an anti-aircraft gun. The British use the island of Crete as a base for air raids on Italy.

Close Harmony



German Ambassador Von Stohrer (right) with Ramon Serrano Suer, brother-in-law of General Franco, on a tour of Madrid. Suer is said to be very Axis-minded.

Things to do



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Flag Display

According to the United States Flag association there are three known places where the flag flies both day and night. They are: The World War memorial in Worcester, Mass.; the Grave of Francis Scott Key, Frederick, Md.; the east and west entrances of the United States Capitol.

The only written statute or rule concerning the 24-hour display was set forth in the report of the capitol architect for 1938, which stated that the flag was to fly in all weather, all times over the Capitol.

INDIGESTION

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Needed Religion

Without religion, genius is only a lamp on the outer gate of a palace. It may serve to cast a gleam of light on those without, while the inhabitant sits in darkness.

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Past Is Gone

Look not mournfully into the past; it comes not back again!—Longfellow.

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