



"WISHING TREE" AT WEST LAKE

The great maple tree shown above, growing near West Lake, is said to be the largest tree of the maple species in the world. The girth of the tree is over eighteen feet. The tree is thought to be about seven hundred years old. Residents of the locality who are familiar with local conditions sixty or more years ago, claim the tree was then about one hundred and sixty feet in height. Even so long ago as that the tree was of such fame that the road builders diverted the road around it rather than injure it.

Local lore claims that the tree was well known to the Indians. It is claimed that they would hold a small bit of bark in their hands and make a wish; then proceed to the tree and deposit the bit of bark either on a branch or in a crevice in the trunk. This gave to the tree the name of the Wishing Tree, and some fifty years ago a young lady novelist wrote a book on the subject, which was published in New York.

manufacture of beers. Contemporary with this were the days of milling here, when there were a large number of mills throughout the county, and much flour was ground.

Then came a period of the growing of seed peas for markets of the United States. This was for several years a very lucrative trade, until the time came when the canners in the States found sufficient seed in their own country.

With the ever increasing population, and the springing up of the villages and towns, a greater opportunity came for the development of the dairying industry, and this was then to become the most lucrative type of agriculture, and one which is still a leading one. With the increased dairying interests came the improvement of the dairying herds, and the introduction of the Holstein, for which this county became noted. This was followed by the introduction of the tuberculin testing. At about the same time a great improvement was made in the horses of the county.

The present era, which is now at its height, is that of the canning industry, which has wrought considerable changes in the agricultural programme of the county, and which has annually meant many thousands of dollars of a cash crop for the County farmers.

The Barley Days

One of the most outstanding eras of agriculture in Prince Edward County, is that now known as the Barley Days. During the 60's, 70's and 80's of the last century, the county was known far and wide as the barley district—this condition lasting until the McKinley tariff came into force, when the duty on barley was raised to such a degree that there ceased to be

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Wishing Tree Subject Of Paper

Mrs. W. H. VanAlstine gave an interesting paper on "The Old Wishing Tree in Prince Edward," before the Men of Trees Association in Toronto on January 29th.

The Men of Trees Society is composed of many prominent tree lovers, including Sir William Mulock, Col. H. A. Bruce, Most Rev. D. T. Owen, and others. Mrs. VanAlstine has been a member since its inception.

Her paper, which closes with a fine original poem, follows:

"Outside the Town of Picton, on the road to the Sandbanks, are two lovely lakes, known as East Lake and West Lake. As one drives along the West Lake Road, he comes to a place where the road divides—one branch going to the right and the other to the left—around the trunk of what one can see has been an enormous tree. This tree has been known to all the inhabitants for many, many years as "The Wishing Tree." Miss Eleanor Holmes, librarian at Picton, sends me the following clipping from the Centennial number of The Picton Gazette, published in 1930:

"The great maple tree growing near West Lake, is said to be the largest of the maple species in the world. The girth of the tree is over eighteen feet. The tree is thought to be about 700 years old. Residents of the locality who are familiar with local conditions sixty or more years ago, claim that the tree was then about one hundred and sixty feet high. Even so long ago as that, the tree was of such fame that the road builders diverted the road around it, rather than injure it. Local lore claims that the tree was well known to the Indians. It is said that they would hold a small bit of the bark in their hands and make a wish—then proceed to the tree and deposit the bark on a branch or in a crevice of the trunk. This gave the old tree the name of "The Wishing Tree," and some fifty years ago a young lady novelist wrote a book on the subject. Ever since the Loyalists came into the country in 1784 until very recently the tree has been tapped every spring for sap."

When I went to live in Prince Edward County, some twelve years ago, there were still branches of the tree spreading over each side of the road. We never drove under it without stopping to make a wish, and were told that we must not speak after wishing until we had passed the little white church about a quarter of a mile farther on toward the Sandbanks. It used to be quite difficult sometimes to keep quiet all that way, but of course your wish would not come true if you broke the rule!

A few years ago, the famous old tree was struck by lightning, and it was necessary to remove its branches. But the trunk remains—about 10 to 12 feet high, the bark bearing many clips and cuts and initials carved by visitors. The top is now capped with a sort of umbrella roof to preserve the now pathetic old veteran of our forest primeval, which has been famed in song and story for so many years.

My wish for you all is that you should know the great beauty of Prince Edward County, so come with me for a few minutes on a memory word picture of one of the loveliest parts of Old Ontario.

Prince Edward County, "the Land of Lakes and Bays," spreads out into Lake Ontario like a great hand, with its fingers spread, and between each finger beautiful bays, reaches and waterways make the scenery very varied and lovely. Lake, river and mountain, the famous Sandbanks, the Lake-on-the-Mountain, 160 feet above the level of the Bay of Quinte, magnificent trees everywhere, the apple orchards of Waupoos and Cressy, making it more like the beautiful Annapolis Valley of my native province, Nova Scotia than any place I have ever seen, and many more beauty spots—beaches, splendid fishing and shooting for the sportsman, etc., etc. lure the tourist to Prince Edward as soon as the spring opens. The inhabitants claim that there are so many beautiful scenic drives in the county, it takes nearly two weeks to cover them all. And now that the new Loyalist Highway between Trenton and Kingston is completed, with the free ferry at Glenora, taking you through Adolphustown and Bath, the home of the United Empire Loyalists who were, as you know, the first English-speaking white settlers in Ontario, it is a most unusually interesting trip for a week-end or a real holiday. To close I will give you these little verses about this county I love so well:

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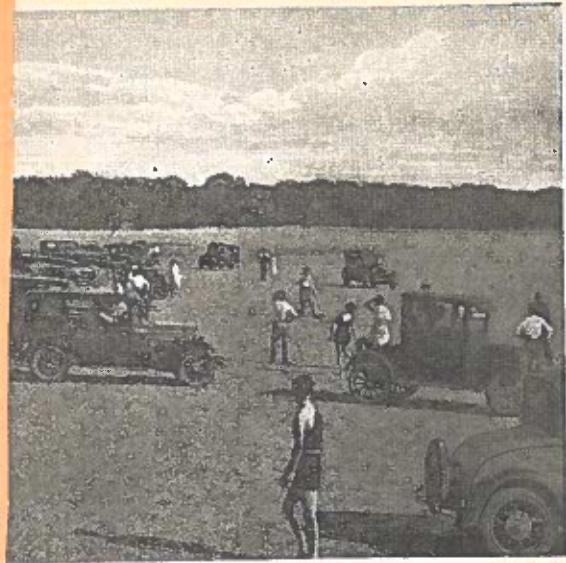
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OUTLET SAND BEACH

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Seed Peas

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in the Spring,
When the lilac and the apple are in
bloom,
When the birds are on the wing
And there's life in everything
And the air is filled with wondrous
sweet perfume!

Have you seen Prince Edward County
in the Fall,
When the leaves are turned to brown
and gold and red,
When tomatoes in great piles
Wait the canners' welcome smiles
And the cattle look so sleek and so
well fed!

If you have not seen Prince Edward
In the Summer, Spring or Fall,
Then you've missed the loveliest pic-
ture of them all,
For it is the fairest gem
In Ontario's diadem
And deserves a visit from you—one
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