



The Hemlock

Volume 10 Issue 1 (Fall 2016)

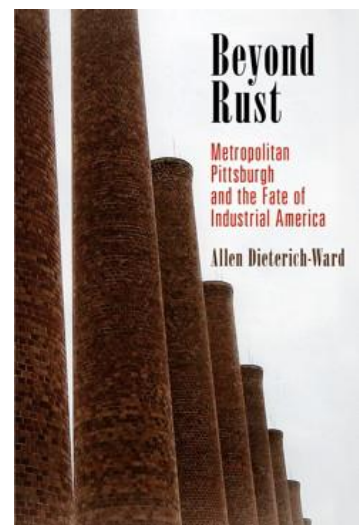
"The unknown, the inaudible forces that make for good in every state and community—the gentle word, the kind act, the forgiving look, the quiet demeanor, the silent thinkers and workers, the cheerful and unwearied toilers, the scholar in his study, the scientist in his laboratory—how much more we owe to these forces than to the clamorous and discordant voices of the world of politics and the newspaper!" ~John Burroughs (1916)

Challenging Times

I think we can all agree that this has been one of the most stressful fall semesters that we've experienced at LHU. I hope that this issue of the *Hemlock* will help ease tensions by reminding us of our connection to the university, to each other, and to the natural world. Might I suggest that a walk in nature does wonders to put problems in perspective? Thanks as always to our outstanding writers for their contributions.

Environmental Historian Allen Dieterich-Ward

On Wednesday, November 9, at 7 pm in Greenberg Auditorium, Professor Allen Dieterich-Ward will present "Rust and Renaissance: A History of Pennsylvania's Working Landscapes Since 1945." A native of southeastern Ohio, Dr. Dieterich-Ward's research explores the intersection of environmental, political, and urban history with a particular emphasis on the cultural and natural landscapes of northern Appalachia. An Associate Professor of History at Shippensburg University, Allen currently serves as Vice President of the Pennsylvania Historical Association and as a member of the Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage Project. He is the author of *Beyond Rust: Metropolitan Pittsburgh and the Fate of Industrial America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).



The Old Red Oak

~Joby Topper (LHU Library Director)

The Old Red Oak at the south end of the University Commons is one of my favorite trees on campus. Earlier this year, I was worried that it would be torn down along with Sullivan Hall. I mentioned it to several friends and was happy to hear that others were already making sure the tree would be protected. Project manager Len Meckley and President Michael Fiorentino had issued special instructions to the Sullivan demolition crew to spare the Old Red Oak. Thank you, gentlemen. It is much appreciated.

The Sullivan Hall demolition revived my interest in figuring out just how old the Old Red Oak really is. Hoping to get an approximate age (and then tell my friends and show them how smart I am), I decided to reach deep into my memory and use some of my Cub Scout knowledge. I measured the oak tree's girth (at about chest height) to find its circumference (185 inches), divided that figure by 3.14 (pi) to determine its diameter (58.9 inches), then multiplied the diameter by the growth factor for red oak trees (4.0)—and got a result (about 235 years) that I knew could not possibly be correct based on what I've seen in old photos here in the Stevenson Library Archives. My guess is that the odd shape of its trunk defies my Cub Scout technique of learning the age of a living tree. Also, experts tell me that the precise growth factor of any tree depends in large part on where it is growing—in the center of a college campus, for example, as opposed to in the woods.

I've contacted Professor Heather Bechtold of the biology department. She and her students are willing to take a core sample of the tree next spring in order to learn its age. With that said, we have not yet asked permission from Facilities Manager Keith Roush. We don't want to do anything that might harm the tree. This is just an idea and not yet a plan.

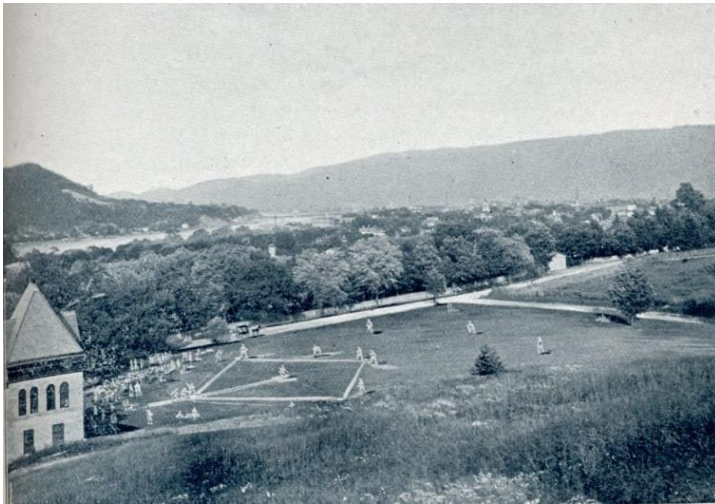
While we're waiting for real scientists (as opposed to former Cub Scouts like me) to give us an answer, I've pieced together a pictorial history of the Old Red Oak—albeit one that leaves tantalizing gaps—from photos in the Stevenson Library Archives. I hope you enjoy it.

Photo #1: The Old Red Oak in September 2016

Here's our starting point: the Old Red Oak as it looks today on the south end of the University Commons. Ulmer Hall and North Fairview Street are in the background, and the new amphitheater is in the foreground.



Photo #2: The Old Baseball Field in 1890



This photo of what is now the south end of the University Commons was taken in 1890 from Normal Hill, also known as “Price Knob” in honor of the original owner of the hill and the surrounding area, Philip M. Price. The photographer stood somewhere close to where North Hall stands today and gave us a bird’s-eye view of the school’s first baseball field. Do you see the centerfielder? Sullivan Hall (demolished just a few

months ago) stood just behind him. (The road behind him is Glen Road; the road to his right is North Fairview Street.) If the Old Red Oak were alive at this moment in history, it would be standing somewhere between the centerfielder and leftfielder—and there’s nothing there but grass.

Photo #3: View of University Commons from Highland Cemetery Gate in 1897

By 1897, the baseball field had been moved to where Durrwachter and the tennis courts are today. You can see the field (with its new grandstand) in the center of the photo in the distance, next to the railroad tracks. The dirt road in the foreground is Glen Road. Today, Price Auditorium would stand in the lower left. Our new amphitheater would be in the lower middle of the photo. The Old Red Oak, if it were alive, would be standing near those two men with their tractor and rake, at right—but it is not there.



Photo #4: Aerial View of the Campus in 1931

I haven't yet found a photo of the Old Red Oak between 1900 and 1930. I'll keep looking. At the moment, this aerial view of the old campus in 1931 is our first known glimpse of it. North Fairview Street runs horizontally through the



lower middle of this photo. At the far left, you'll see a two-story house on the near side (east side) of North Fairview. That's the old President's House. From the President's House, look directly across North Fairview and you'll see the "old" Red Oak about midway up the lawn next to a narrow access road. The tree

looks to be about 20 feet high. Do you see it? (This photo also gives us a view of the many other trees in the center of campus in 1931. The landscape has been altered dramatically since then.) The rectangular bare spots at the left edge of the photo are tennis courts. They were removed when the library (i.e., Sullivan Hall) was built in 1938-39.

Photo #5: The Old Red Oak and the New Library, Winter 1938-39

Here you see the Old Red Oak, at right, in front of the brand new library. This library became the administration building and was renamed Sullivan Hall when the current library was built in 1969-70. With the addition of the library and the auditorium at this end of campus in 1938-39, the Old Red Oak begins to appear (more or less by accident) in more campus photographs, which make it much easier for us to track its growth.



Photo #6: The Old Red Oak and the Library, Spring 1949



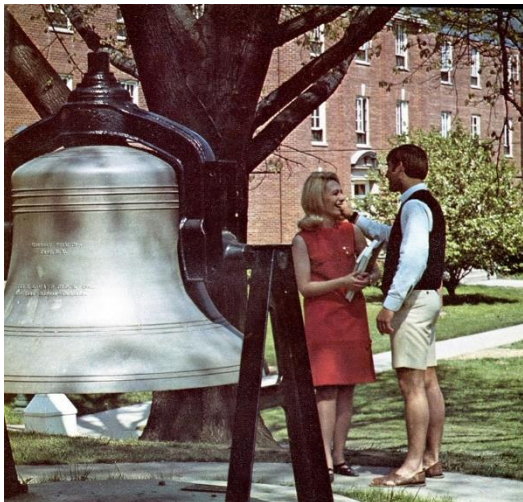
The Old Red Oak (at right, next to the steps) grew higher and stronger in the ten years between 1939 and 1949 (while World War II raged in Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific.) The man walking beneath it gives us a sense of scale.

Photo #7: The Old Red Oak and Russell Hall in 1960

This is a good view of the tree in 1960 from the Sullivan Hall side, looking toward Russell Hall. Russell Hall was built in 1952-53, so it was relatively new at the time. As in the last photo, the people give us a sense of scale. Russell Hall was torn down in 2015; Sullivan Hall was torn down early this summer (June 2016). The Old Red Oak has seen a lot of buildings, trees, and people come and go.



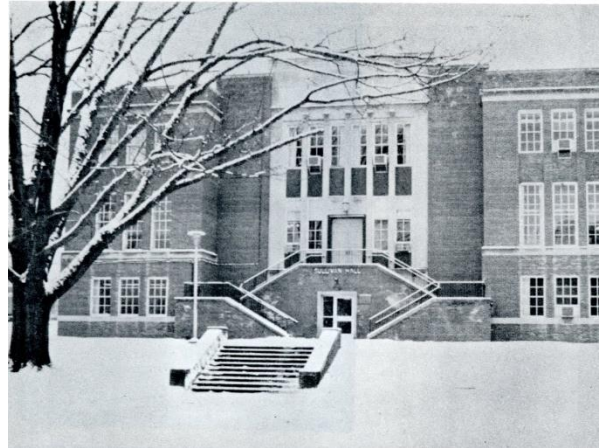
Photo #8: The Old Red Oak and the Old Bell in 1968



Here is our tree in 1968, with Russell Hall in the background and the Old Bell in the foreground. The Old Bell was set up as a memorial in front of Sullivan Hall in 1961 by the graduating class. (The bell was originally in the clock tower of the Old Model School from 1911 to 1952.) The students would ring the Old Bell after big victories in wrestling, baseball, basketball, etc. The Old Red Oak prefers peace and quiet, so it was happy when the bell was moved to the Milliken Bell Tower in 1982. The Milliken Tower stood just behind the stone sign at the entrance to Campus Drive. In 2008, the Old Bell was hung in the tower of the Durrwachter Alumni Conference Center, where it remains today.

Photo #9: The Old Red Oak in 1985

Here's a good view of the tree and Sullivan Hall in the winter of 1984-85. Some of the large branches in the photo have since been pruned. I wish the pruners could have spared one or two of the central branches so that the tree would now have a rounder, more balanced profile—but this opinion is coming from a former Cub Scout, not a dendrologist, so take my complaint with a grain of salt.



Conclusion:

Photographic evidence suggests that the Old Red Oak is about 100-115 years old. Assuming it is healthy, it could live another 100-150 years.

As much as I enjoy drawing attention to this tree, I want us to also pay attention to the hundreds of other trees on our campus—the old, the young, and the in-between. All of our trees, whether in the center of campus or in Ulmer Memorial Forest, are quietly providing us with shade, oxygen, and beauty. Let's show some gratitude and be good stewards.

Also, as we gather information about the Old Red Oak and other campus trees, let's keep that information on file—preferably here at Stevenson Library—as a resource for the current LHU community and for posterity. If it hasn't already been done, I would love to begin an ambitious research project to identify and describe (and photograph) all of our trees. We could start with the trees in the developed parts of campus, then consider tackling Ulmer Forest. Who's with me?

The Place Where You Once Lived

~Earle Layser

From space the nighttime Eastern Seaboard appears like anastomosing nerve cells radiating white light. Cedar Run, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, the idyllic place of my youth, remains an unlighted pocket within the conurbation. From its deeply rural environs, it is still possible to clearly view the night sky stars and satellites. Mountainous and heavily forested, it once epitomized Puritan minister Cotton Mather's "howling wilderness." When Lewis and Clark were making their way west along the Missouri, it still remained deeply backwoods defying European settlement. Not agriculture, but late 19th century lumbering and tanneries conquered this wilderness.

Transported by spring freshets and narrow-gauge railroads, its timber built Eastern cities, while bark tannin from its ancient hemlock trees served to process hides into the leather belts powering the steam-driven Industrial Revolution.



The fury of the assault on the area's forest resources literally laid the mountains bare, a great biological unraveling. Bleeding centuries of accumulated organic rich topsoil, the plundered denuded forest land was considered economically worthless and acquired by the Commonwealth for a dollar an acre. The area remained a sparsely populated economic backwater for nearly a century.

Gradually, resiliently, albeit diminished from the original grandeur, forests and wildlife returned. Today, surrounded by a densely populated urban environment, the public mountain land has become increasingly valuable for open space and wildlands---an outdoor recreation Mecca attracting urbanites seeking the sanity of nature, if no more than through the windshield or on a bike trail.

But stasis is illusionary and elusive. Subjected to contemporary ecological assaults, the habitat is changed and changing: acid rain, pesticides, climate change, Marcellus shale development, second-growth logging, recreation homes set within the floodplains, and a host of nonnative pests, pathogens, and invasive species---American chestnut blight, Dutch-elm disease, beech bark disease, emerald ash-borer, hemlock wooly adelgid, gypsy moth, Asian long-horned beetles; the list goes on--- eons of forest evolution and species adaptation silently wilting before the onslaught; followed by invasion of thickets of nonnative species: common barberry, multiflora rose, Russian olive, tree of heaven, and Japanese knotweed---aggressively marching across meadows and streambanks; a vast and rapid monoclonal supplanting of biodiversity and productivity.

Is nature as we know it being deposed by "weedy species," sensu David Quammen's *Planet of Weeds*? What passes for nature is no longer natural. Frequently unintended and random, the ecological narrative reflects an arrogantly assumed human ability to

control or manipulate all aspects of nature; an Anthropocene supposition, arguably Industrial Age myth.

Beyond geographically, does any place nowadays remain unchanged except within our minds? For people who only occasionally visit the area, and tend to perceive the forests and thickets simply as amorphous green background, it may make little difference. And Neo-environmentalists argue that while man's activities are destroying habitats, we are also creating new ones. However, for those who may have historical knowledge or an intimate memory of the prior environs---the land uses, natural vegetation patterns, habitats, and species--- it can be more personal and profound. Like the passing of old friends we knew and enjoyed, we mourn the loss of diverse landscape patterns and once familiar native species.

Hollyhock Ballet Troupe

~Guy Graybill (Photographer/Editor)



West Branch-Beaver Creek

~Susan Rimby LHU Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Education)

Sentry on the campus edge
I catalogued her moods.
When lonely, she found
Comfort in the company
Of joggers. On trying days
She walked until she shed
Her mood like snakeskin.
As she settled in, she came to see
My many wonders. She sauntered
Past the art students sketching
Autumn's palette. Gazed with
Awe at flight maps of bald
Eagle parents. Introduced
Two frisky dogs to lounging
College students. Photographed
The seasons with her lover.
Drove the rented Chevy to
My levee. And now she
Grieves at river's edge
With leaving on her mind.
"Take solace, friend, for where
You go, we share the same river."

Flowing past her house
I see her pausing on the deck.
Wistfully she conjures up
The memory of colleagues past
Who walked upon your levee bank
Or pushed a jogging stroller.
Her mood as soft as twilight's fall
She drinks it in, the neighborhood
And sees my many wonders.
Children playing on the swings,
Flaming leaves at creekside's edge,
A heron gliding overhead,
Empty nester sparrow parents.
The Boston Terrier nudges her,
Smells and wants the evening meal
Simmering with her lover.
And still she wishes she could wander
One more time upon your levee,
Basking at the river's edge.
"Come walk along this creek, my friend,
Look north and know that in this place
We share the same river."



Hemlock Hike: Eagleton Mine Camp Trail

~Bob Myers (LHU Director of Environmental Studies)

We have featured short hikes from the Eagleton Mine Camp Trail (ECMT) in previous issues, but it seems like a good time to revisit the ten-year-old trail. On October 9th the first [Eagleton Mine Camp Trail Challenge](#) was run, and in preparation for the 25k/50k race, local volunteers did an outstanding job of trail maintenance. This hike is a two-mile, fairly flat loop that should take you about an hour to walk it. At this time of the year the leaves make it a great introduction to the ECMT.

To get to the trailhead, go west on Route 120 (Fairview Street) for exactly 7.1 miles. On the left you'll see a brown wooden sign for the Eagleton Mine Camp Trail. Follow the gravel Eagleton Road for 3.4 miles—at 2.3 miles you'll pass one of the trailheads for the ECMT, and at 2.7 miles, the ECMT will cross the road. At the second crossing (3.4 miles from Rt. 120), park off the road on the left.



Follow the red-blazed trail to the left (south). Almost immediately you will reach a powerline—a brown plastic marker indicates that you should follow the powerline to the right (west). In a hundred yards or so, another plastic marker directs you left, across the powerline, where the ECMT enters the woods. From here the trail is

a pleasant meander through a mixed-hardwood forest. It's mostly flat because you're on top of the plateau. You'll loop across a dirt road several times, but just keep following the blazes until you reach the gravel Eagleton Road—turn right and follow it one mile back to your car.

The EMCT was created in the Sproul State Forest in 2006 by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. In the October 2008 *Hemlock* Robert Zakula discussed the history of the Eagleton area: "The EMCT was formerly the village of Eagleton, a secluded, yet productive, mining community that operated from roughly 1845-1870. The original EMCT was part of the Eagleton Railroad system, which traversed along the West Branch of the Susquehanna in the Tangascootac Valley, and connected many other industrial towns to the small mining village on the Allegheny

plateau. The Eagleton Railroad, at that time, would have been considered an engineering feat for such a rural, underdeveloped region; the innovative railroad grade climbed seven switchbacks until it reached the top of the plateau where the village was located. It is also alleged that Prince Farrington, a notorious bootlegger during the prohibition-era, had built a still on top of one of the ridges near the mining camp. At its peak, Eagleton's production was heavily focused on coal and iron ore, and rarely, if ever, ventured into other crude and laborious industries. Like the other mining towns in the region, Eagleton curiously vanished with no sign of reviving a quickly dying industry."

Environmental Focus Group

Bob Myers (Chair), Md. Khalequzzaman, Lenny Long, Jeff Walsh, Barrie Overton, Todd Nesbitt, Jamie Walker, Steve Guthrie, John Reid, Lynn Bruner, Elisabeth Lynch, Kevin Hamilton, Keith Roush, Elizabeth Gruber, Joby Topper, Ray Steele, Michael McSkimming, Susan Rimby, Stephen Neun, and Scott Carnicom. The committee is charged with promoting and supporting activities, experiences, and structures that encourage students, faculty, and staff to develop a stronger sense of place for Lock Haven University and central Pennsylvania. Such a sense of place involves a stewardship of natural resources (environmentalism), meaningful outdoor experiences, and appreciation for the heritage of the region.