

Shippensburg Continues “Legacy” Planting

By Jill Hudock

In January, 2000, Shippensburg celebrated its 250th anniversary with an historical re-enactment, centered at the Old Court House. The two story stone structure dates back to 1735 and is one of the town's most treasured landmarks. The Civic Club has maintained it and its grounds for the past 74 years, giving fascinating, pre-arranged historical tours upon request. Several old photographs on display depict the Court House's interesting history. Landscaping was not a priority in those days, as the dirt road (now US Rt.11/King Street) occupied the front yard. However, there are two small trees, along with an old picket fence, in several of these documents.

Over the years these trees matured, providing a continuous reminder of nature's beauty. They were sugar maples—spreading their gray-brown limbs over the busiest street in town. Spring witnessed their greenish-yellow flowers, daintily displayed against the cool gray Court House stone. Summer brought a wonderfully full canopy, an umbrella with its welcomed shade. And, fall's

Representatives of the groups responsible for planting two “Legacy” sugar maples at Shippensburg's historic Old Court House.

(L-R) Jill Hudock, SSTC; Lyan Alosi, Civic Club President; Peggy Ditzler, CC; George Hurd, Central PA Tree Assoc.; John Offner, SSTC; Norm Lacasse, PA Urban and Community Forestry Council.



PHOTOS: TRACY PANZER

crowning glory, heralded by vibrant orange-red-yellow leaves, was the town's first inkling that autumn had arrived. Long time Shippensburg residents revered these maples as one of the town's most loveliest sites.

Gradually US Rt.11 became more heavily traveled, filling the air with exhaust fumes. The Court House's corner location, at a busy intersection, experienced increased pollution. The maples began to decline. The Civic Club had arborists carefully remove dead limbs for several years. It became obvious to the Shippensburg Shade Tree Committee (SSTC) that the trees needed to be removed for public safety reasons. Even so, it was a very difficult decision for all involved. No one really wanted to say “good-bye” to those magnificent trees.

The decision was made to remove and replace them in the fall of 2000. All agreed that even though sugar maples were not the best choice for the environmentally challenged area, sentimentality ruled. Our new sugar maples aren't expected to live a “normal” life span, and

they too, will need replacing before the next century dawns. Planned obsolescence, if you will. This is one of many difficult decisions the SSTC has made over its ten-year history. Dealing with the public can sometimes present challenges. Not everyone agrees that a tree-lined downtown is an asset, much to the Committee's consternation. Even so, more than 160 trees have been planted.

We didn't do this work alone. Many groups made our success possible. Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry grants underwrote 43 trees of varying species, cover-

ing a wide area within Borough limits. The Borough Council provides \$500 annually, and private donations are always welcomed. The Civic Club donated monies for the two new 2½” caliper ‘Legacy’ sugar maples, in addition to the removal of the older specimens. A \$100 Central Pennsylvania Tree Association donation helped defray the cost as well. Planting the new maples was a perfect example of different groups working together to achieve a common goal, with beautiful results.

Since the SSTC is a small group (7 members on average), we truly rely on these sources to continue planting and maintaining. We have also been very fortunate to receive local trust funding from loyal citizens. These donations warm our hearts!

The SSTC is responsible for selecting planting sites, tree species, the planting and aftercare. Members voluntarily prune the newest additions. As the trees mature, the Borough supplies experienced personnel in highlifts for more difficult hard-to-reach light pruning. Borough crews also create sidewalks tree cuts, excavate, and plant with SSTC supervision. All specimens range from 2–2½” caliper. We deeply appreciate the borough crew's dedication. They always do a great job. When trees require major pruning or removal, we hire professional arborists.

Currently the committee is planning a detailed tree inventory to ascertain future maintenance/removal situations. Also, MTRP/GPU Energy representatives spoke at a recent meeting, outlining ways our community may benefit from their services.

It's been ten years since we started planting aggressively on King Street and the results are starting to show. We're all looking forward to another year of planning, planting, and enjoying the results!



Norman Lacasse presents \$100 donation to Jill Hudock.