

Thoughts from Helen Lynn

(Monday, November 6, 2007)

They felled a mighty oak yesterday. All McCormick seemed to gather early in the morning in front of our house just across our tiny street. They brought many trucks, a front-end loader, chain saws and other pertinent equipment for what I thought was a tree-trimming project. Oak Street, as you might presume, boasts many Oak trees that line each side. Some died the death of trees leaving huge stumps, but mostly our Oak trees characterize our church and our home next to the church. Sturdy Oak trees shade us in the summer, shower us with beauty of fall leaves, stand stark and strong in winter with arms outstretched waiting for the spring when their leaves again clothe their limbs. As limbs leave out with their spring greenery, the trees rejoice in the new life they represent.

One tree across the street, tired from years of service, succumbed to the elements or lack thereof. For several years now, it has been evident that the tree had drawn all it could from its last root.

I didn't know they were to fell the tree yesterday. I thought they were just giving the trees a fall haircut, pruning away the dead limbs as good gardeners do. The process didn't really interest me very much except that the noise from chain saws and back up warning sirens cut the air all morning making conversation or thinking or studying distracting.

Then all of a sudden the house ***shook!*** I jumped up from my desk, and ran to the window, sure to see limbs destroying someone or something as they fell. Sure enough it was a limb all right, but not just a limb, it was half of the huge oak crashed to the ground and lay there freed from its base and its root. After quickly scanning the area to be sure nothing vital had been hurt in this process of limb elimination, my attention riveted to what went on next.

"They're not trimming the trees, they're bring one completely down". I thought. After a few moments, I returned to my work but couldn't get the tree off my mind. Shortly thereafter another ***BOOM*** sounded that shook the earth and the house and I nearly jumped almost as fast and as high as Wiggles, my Boxer, who had been watching the scene all morning. This time, certain something was destroyed, I ran once more to the bedroom window.

Where once stood a mighty oak, a huge naked stump, freshly cut protruded from the ground across Oak Street in front of my house. The tree had been stripped of its limbs, taken down by a chain saw, lying dead on the ground forever separated from its roots.

How long had that tree stood sentinel on this street? I don't know. Historians may remember the planting.

What do I care about these oaks? What is my history with them? All I know is that for these almost ten years we've lived in this parsonage I could lie down on my bed with the blinds open, curtains pulled aside and watch the long arms of the oak trees. Winter's bare arms stretched forth, spring's greening leaves shimmering in warm breezes, summers heat filtered through the dark and heavy emerald leaves, and the beautiful fall oak leaves that gently float to the ground making room for new life later on in this cycle we call life. The oak trees

have spoken to my heart many times, their strength encouraging me, their arms whispering in the wind.

Now, one of those oaks is no more; only the stump remains to remind us of a life well lived, a service provided, a completion of a mission.

The Apostle Paul, that sturdy oak tree missionary knew his mission neared completion as he went to Rome. He wrote letters of encouragement to those who would come behind him to fan the flame of their missionary zeal, to take up the baton and run the race toward the goal for the prize. He could no longer go and do but he could write from his prison house encouraging those who could still fight the fight, run the race, plant the seeds, harvest the fruit. His tree was about to be felled...

When that mighty oak fell, the world forever felt the results of the tree known as the Apostle Paul, who wrote God breathed Words of inspiration for all eternity.

Yesterday, a sturdy oak left its place and its earth's limbs were moved into another form for another service not known to me, but to its Maker.

A tiny acorn died many years ago and in its place grew a tall, stately, beautiful Oak Tree. It grew and served its purpose well for I don't know how many summers and winters, springs and falls. *Until this fall, it fell*, shaking the ground from which it derived its life with a loud **WHHUUMMMPPPP**. It will be remembered; the stump still sits strong. Someday that stump will be removed to make room for another.... I know not what. What I do know is that God's plan for acorns, oak trees and me prevail. Even as that great oak produced countless acorns from which other trees will grow, my purpose, my fruit bearing, my heritage, my 'acorns', will carry on when I'm felled. They will bear the fruit that feeds the lambs, shepherds the sheep, shades the summer, decorates the fall, stands firm when winter winds blow their bare branches. And in the spring life will come forth once again and again and again.

A powerful oak tree fell yesterday... it impacted my life.