

Ohio's Millennium Grove of Historic Trees

Chillicothe, Ohio

Ohio's Millennium Grove is approximately 10 acres of 100 historical trees, a half mile walking path and a picnic shelter. The grove was started at the turn of the millennium as part of the USDA project to honor the new millennium, a national project by the Clinton administration. Executive order 13072 in 1998 by President Bill Clinton created the Whitehouse Millennium Grove Council, headed by Hillary Clinton. The theme was honoring the past-imagine the future.

Ohio initially rejected the grove, the reason being it came from a Democratic source. Over time the decision was overturned, and Ohio gave the go ahead for the grove. Instead of five groves around the state, Chillicothe was given the entire grove because it already had a tree commission and was a Tree City USA. Incidentally, Chillicothe was also Ohio's first and third capital and has a great historical background.

The newest member of the tree commission was then, 74-year-old, C. Duane "Whitey" Coates. Although the newest member of the Tree Commission, Mr. Coates was quite the tree expert and known go-getter when given a task or project. He was a natural choice to spearhead the project. Mr. Coates left no stone unturned in picking out the best location and getting the land donated. He also requested and received seeds from all 100 historical trees. The original plan was to get five groves of trees to be placed at five different locations around the state. Each tree has significant historical ancestry and is a direct descendant of a tree that is in some way, related to an event, place or person.

Chillicothe received the 100 trees in the fall of 2001, seedlings 1' to 2' feet high. They were planted in the West Fifth Street nursery. In the fall of 2003, the Chillicothe Tree Commission transplanted the trees from the nursery to their current location, in the grove on North Bridge Street.

Ohio's Millennium Grove consists of 100 historical trees, divided into seven glades: famous men, famous women, civil war north, civil war south, the presidents, Ohio history and American history. The design of the grove was developed by landscape architect, Mike Deeter of Lima, Ohio. Mr. Deeter was the pro-bono architect assigned to the Ohio grove. In the 20 plus years since the conception of the project, the trees in the grove have matured and grown, giving it a good look that will only improve with time.

As Ohio's Millennium Grove continues to take shape, it is the most extensive and unique of all the groves established by Executive Order 13072. Most of the planned groves never got started and the ones that did, didn't last. It is possible that fewer than five of the original groves exist and none of them have all 100 trees. Making the grove located in Chillicothe even more unique.

To celebrate this special place and to give it the proper attention it deserves, overtime we will feature all 100 trees in the grove. The two trees that have been to the moon and back, are probably considered the most famous of the trees, and they do have a great story behind them, but all the trees have a great history.

We will start our featured tree with a willow tree that came from Napoleon's grave site, via President Andrew Johnson's estate.