



America's Famous and Historic Trees: From George Washington's Tulip Poplar to Elvis Presley's Pin Oak

Jeffrey G. Meyer, Sharon Linnea

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Like many residents of Jacksonville, Florida, the Jeffrey Meyers family liked to picnic under the city's magnificent Treaty Live Oak. When their toddler handed them an acorn from the tree, Meyers, a nurseryman, planted it in their back yard.

That acorn was the inspiration for an immensely popular project, America's Famous & Historic Trees, sponsored by American Forests, the country's oldest nonprofit conservation organization. Through this program, Meyers and his volunteers have collected seeds from more than a thousand different historic trees, which are grown to sapling size in the project's nursery. The descendants of these famous trees have been planted on the grounds of state capitols, in schoolyards, and in back yards across the country. In this fascinating book, Meyers tells the stories of seventeen historic trees, describes their role in America's history, and tells how their seeds were collected and their offspring propagated. For readers who want to grow a replica of an important tree themselves, each chapter contains instructions for planting the seeds of that particular species.

Among the trees in this book are the Indian Marker Pecan, dating back to the 1600s, when Comanche warriors would mark a good camping spot by tying a young pecan tree to the ground. At the other end of the time line is the Moon Sycamore, grown from seeds that traveled to the moon in 1971 on Apollo 14.

Trees associated with presidents are George Washington's Tulip Poplar, Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address Honey Locust, Andrew Jackson's Southern Magnolia (planted at the White House in memory of his wife), and John F. Kennedy's Post Oak, which grows beside his grave at Arlington National Cemetery. Most of the original trees still stand, but in some cases all that remains of their place in history are the seeds propagated by Meyers and his group. These include the last Johnny Appleseed Rambo Apple tree and the last Lewis and Clark Cottonwood.

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