

## THE WILLIAM PENN ELM TREE

The *Tulsa World* of May 2, 1933, contains an account of the ceremonies connected with the planting of an elm tree upon the campus of the University of Tulsa, on Monday, May 1st, 1933, in which Mrs. Eugene B. Lawson, a granddaughter of Rev. Charles Journeycake, last tribal chief of the Delawares, presented the university with the tree. This scion is a lineal descendant of the Elm under which William Penn made the famous treaty with the Delaware Indians in 1682. This young tree was presented to Mrs. Lawson by J. Henry Scattergood, assistant commissioner of Indian Affairs. Mrs. Lawson presented it to the university as "a living link in American history." Chancellor John D. Finlayson accepted the tree for the university.

Mrs. Eugene B. (Roberta Campbell) Lawson of Tulsa, a member of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, sends to the *Chronicles* the following tribute to this little elm tree.

"Little Elm Tree from Pennsylvania, I wonder if you know just who you are. No? Then I shall tell you:

"You are the lineal descendant of a noble elm tree which stood two hundred and fifty years ago in Pennsylvania on the banks of the Delaware River in what was later known as Kensington, now a part of the great city of Philadelphia. You were a gift to me by Mr. J. Henry Scattergood, Assistant United States Indian Commissioner.

"Little Tree, you have heard Mr. Ferguson and Dr. Weeks tell of that wonderful man, William Penn, and those equally wonderful Delawares, a tribe of the Algonquin stock of American Indians; of how they met in solemn conference, making a treaty of peace and friendship which was never sworn to and never broken. Hence, it is recorded, not a drop of Quaker blood was ever shed by an Indian.

"This ceremony, Little Tree, was in November, 1682, with the lately fallen leaves forming a carpet for the feet of that solemn, friendly group.

“Little Tree, as the winds of the ancient past blow through your tiny branches, can't you hear the whispered echo of the wise and kindly words of William Penn, when he said:

“The Great Spirit who made me and you, who rules the heavens and the earth, and who knows the innermost thoughts of men, knows that I and my friends have a hearty desire to live in peace and friendship with you and serve you to the utmost of our power. It is not our custom to use hostile weapons against our fellow creatures, for which reason we have come unarmed. Our object is not to do injury and thus to provoke the Great Spirit, but to do good. We are met on the broad pathway of good faith and good will, so that no advantage is to be taken on either side, but all to be openness, brotherhood, and love.’

“And then, Little Tree, that great Delaware Chieftain, Tam-i-Nend, stepped forward, extended his hand in faith and friendship, pledging brotherly kindness, saying: ‘The Indians and English must live in love as long as the sun and moon shall endure.’

“Because of this sacred treaty, your ancient ancestor, Little Tree, was protected from the woodman's axe, but in 1810 a storm uprooted that noble elm and today, in its stead, stands a marker, with this inscription: ‘Treaty Ground of William Penn and the Indian Nation, 1682, unbroken Faith.’

“It is springtime now, Little Tree, and nature is sending forth her message of unbroken faith and everlasting love through the tender green of your leaves and the life-giving sap in your veins.

“You are a living link in that part of American history which reaches from the day of the great Indian Nation to the small band of Delawares who love and mourn their last great Tribal Chief, Charles Journeycake, in this Cherokee Nation which is now Northeastern Oklahoma. And now, Little Tree, as a granddaughter of our beloved Delaware Chieftain, I christen you the ‘Lenni Lenape Elm,’ the marker which bearing your name, is riveted to a stone from

Chief Journeycake's residence.

"Send deep your roots into the campus of the University of Tulsa, Little Tree, because I am presenting you to the university through its chancellor, Dr. John D. Finlayson.

"Dr. Finlayson, I hope this little tree will grow in size and importance to its ancient ancestor, and that on this campus it may be known as 'The Tree of Friendship and Good Will to All Peoples.' In time may its spreading branches bring cooling breezes and welcome shade to the student body of this university which was so long ago founded in this Indian country."

—Roberta Campbell Lawson  
1008 Sunset Drive  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
May 1, 1933.