



Delavan Founder's Oak

R. D. Durbin (1981)

The Delavan Founder's Oak

Another of Wisconsin's early pioneers, who kept a daily journal, recorded in it that on the night of July 2, 1836, he slept under a large bur oak tree. At the time, he was on an exploring trip in what became Walworth County. A few days later this man, Samuel Faulkner Phoenix, established a sawmill on Lake Delavan and founded the city of the same name. The next year Phoenix, a New Yorker, brought his family back to Wisconsin. He died here at the age of 42 in 1840.

The tree under which he slept is now estimated to be over 400 years old. It was a favorite roosting place for passenger pigeons from 1830 until 1870 when the

birds became extinct. Its symmetrical branches extend over a circle 90 feet in diameter. Because of its huge size, spread and symmetry, it dominates the park-like grounds (next to 509 North Terrace Street), and its fellow conifers and ornamentals, with kingly majesty.

Source: Y. Gordon Yadon, Delavan

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