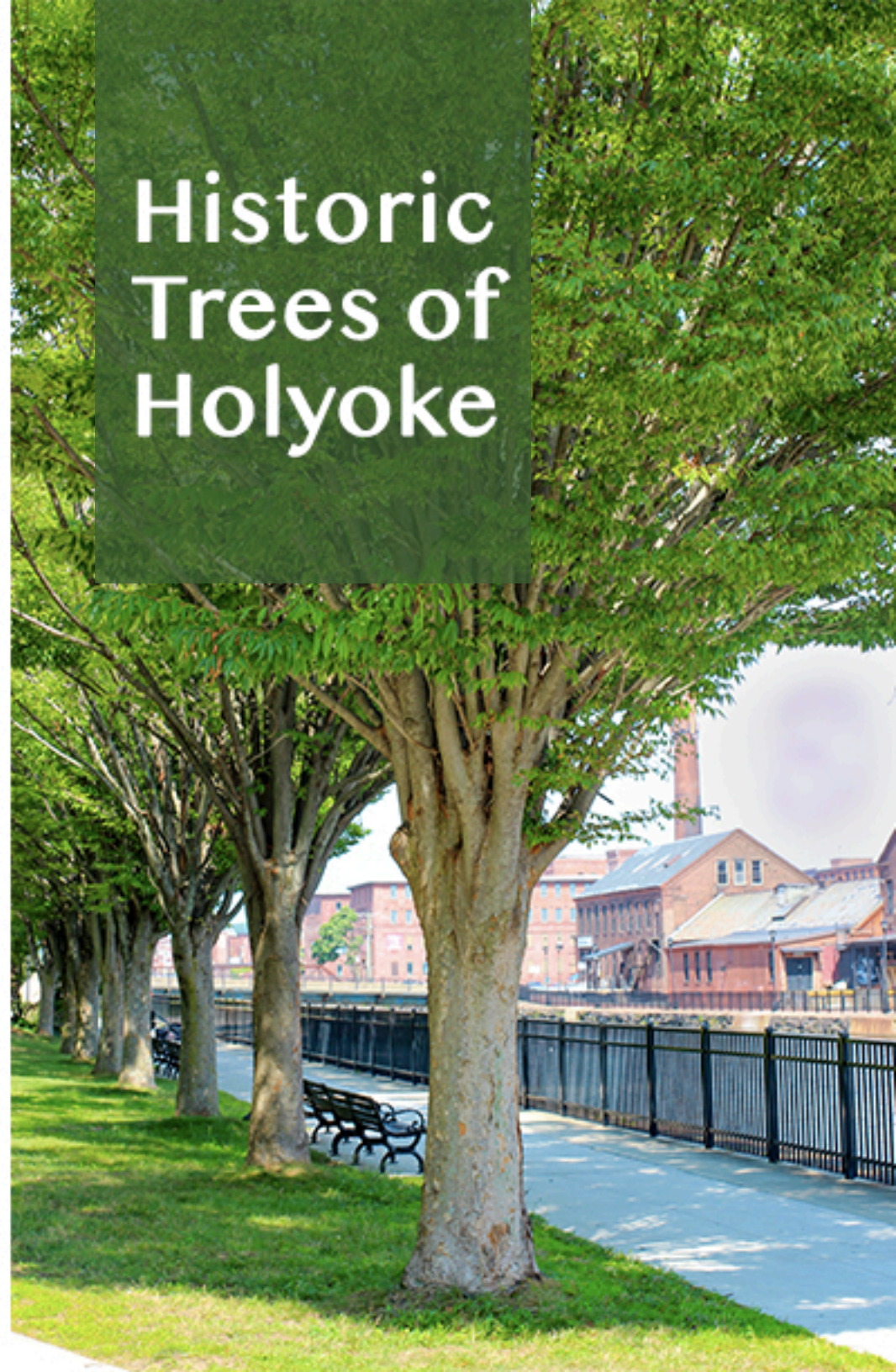


Historic Trees of Holyoke



“We are the Trees.
Our dark and leafy glade
Bands the bright earth with softer mysteries.
Beneath us changed and tamed the seasons run:
In burning zones, we build against the sun
Long centuries of shade.”
-Mary Colborne-Veel

We may not always notice them, but the trees quietly lining Holyoke’s streets, yards and forests are hard at work: cleaning air and water, providing shade and habitat, and fighting climate change by pulling carbon dioxide from the air and fixing it in the soil. In spring trees fill the city with blooms, and in fall, they provide a cascade of autumnal color. In all seasons, trees stand as places of social gathering, landmarks, points of memory and a source of pride for locals.

This guide is proud to highlight some of Holyoke’s most exceptional trees. These trees were selected for their age, connection to historic events, local sentimental value, and outstanding seasonal beauty. With many of the trees on this list exceeding 100 years of age, Holyoke’s urban forest is a wonderful reminder of the resilience of nature in the face of Holyoke’s ever changing urban environment.



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The Holyoke Historic Tree project is a collaboration between Wistariahurst and the Department of Conservation and Sustainability, made possible by funding from a Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant. The project was completed September, 2021. All color photos by Michaela Wright, all historic photos courtesy of the Wistariahurst Archives.

American Elm, On Anderson Ave

Ulmus Americana - Several large street trees, with diameters over 48 in, survive in this area, on Mackenzie and Anderson, but the gem is the mature American Elm. A newspaper clipping from May 4th, 1900 indicates the planting of over 1,000 street trees, including many in Oakdale, by then-Board of Public Works Commissioner and Oakdale real estate developer, Orren D. Allyn. Allyn was an avid supporter of planting of urban trees, personally overseeing the planting of thousands of street trees in Holyoke in his lifetime. Allyn was possibly inspired by the popular "City Beautiful" movement sweeping through American cities in the 1890s and early 1900s, which advocated that beautification of urban areas, often through the planting of trees and flowers, would inspire "moral and civic virtue" among urban residents. *This tree was submitted anonymously.*

Catalpa Tree, Rock Valley Road

"Catalpa tree next to our property. Gorgeous probably 50-60 years old." -Christine Burn:

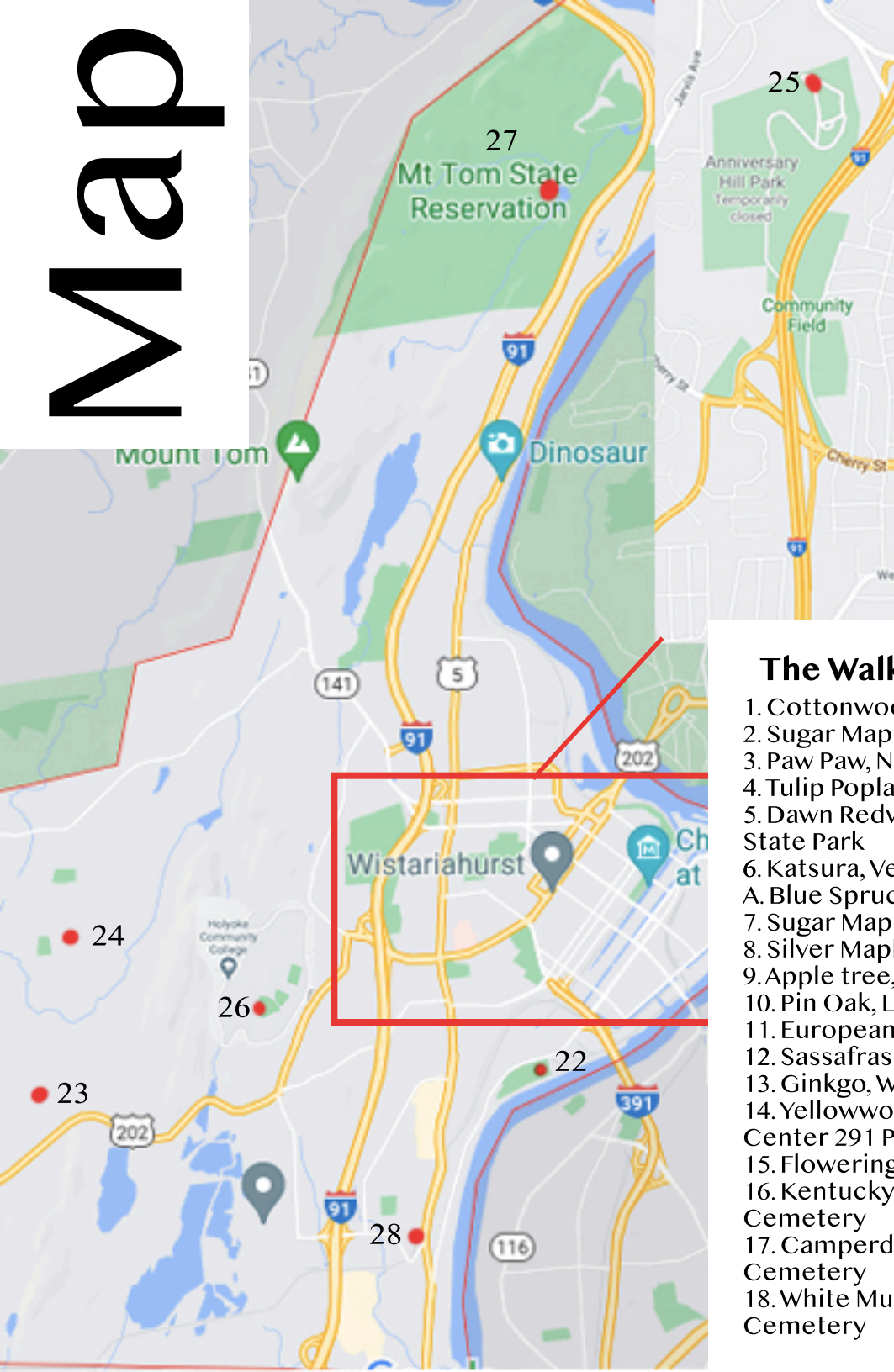


Ginkgo Tree, Hampden St

Family story goes that this Ginkgo was planted by the original owner of the house, a sea captain, who brought the specimen from his travels abroad. Local forester Tom Kass's great grandfather bought the house and tree around 1891, when he began work in the sealing wax business in Holyoke. This photo shows Kass' grand-uncle with the tree in 1918, and over 100+ years later, it is still alive today!



Map



The Walk

1. Cottonwo
2. Sugar Mapl
3. Paw Paw, Nu
4. Tulip Poplar
5. Dawn Redw
6. State Park
7. Katsura, Ve
8. Blue Spruc
9. Sugar Mapl
10. Silver Mapl
11. Apple tree,
12. Pin Oak, Li
13. European
14. Sassafras
15. Ginkgo, W
16. Yellowwo
17. Center 291 Pi
18. Flowering
19. Kentucky
20. Cemetery
21. Camperd
22. Cemetery
23. White Mul
24. Cemetery
25. Cemetery
26. Cemetery
27. Cemetery
28. Cemetery



Sourwood, 1010 Dwight
Oxydendrum arboreum, "The sourwood or sorrel tree, is the sole species in the genus *Oxydendrum*, in the family *Ericaceae*. It is about 15 years old. This was my favorite tree and then I met the owners who have an outstanding garden, even on their roof... and they had this wonderful photo of their tree which they both love dearly."
-Sara Krohn, Holyoke Resident



Sequoia - 25 Briarwood Dr., east yard against the road

Sequoiadendron giganteum - brought from California by the owners 30 years ago, this tree is uncommon for the region as it's native to the Western part of the US. Known for their colossal size and ability to live for thousands of years, sequoia rely on small wildfires to naturally reproduce. Their small cones only open to release seeds with the application of high heat, and seeds only germinate in full sun in soil cleared of brush - conditions found in the aftermath of small wildfires. Submitted by Olivia Mausel, Holyoke Resident



Big Oak, 25 Pearl Street - "A magnificent oak tree adjacent to our back fence, rooted in the yard of a neighbor. Reputed to be over 250 years old! I asked a 90-year old neighbor (in about 2007) how big it was in her childhood. She said it had always been that big. - Sandy Ward, Holyoke Resident

Apple Trees

"There is a house on Pleasant street (I don't remember the number) that has two short apple trees and a delicious pear tree. A couple of years back some students, I think from UMass, were living there and they bought a press and made cider...they were always happy to share" - Paola Ferrario, Holyoke Resident



Community Submissions

Privately & publicly owned trees submitted by Holyoke residents as local favorites

Please view privately owned trees from the street



Blue Spruce, 71 Maple

Picea pungens, "My favorite tree can be seen as I sit on my porch at Edgewater Gardens. It is a tall pine/evergreen, ... that stands where Mater Dolorosa Church used to be. This tree and the others on [the] lot have witnessed a lot of history. I don't know how old it is but I know it has to be over 50 years old because it has stood there for as long as I can remember. Not all that long ago it witnessed the struggle to save a beloved church. Now that the lot is empty it provides shade to the occasional family having a picnic." - Elizabeth Szymonik, Holyoke Resident

Copper Beech, 1374 Morgan Str

Fagus sylvatica, Copper beech are a cultivar of European Beech, "A majestic copper

beech that reaches out over the street. It's huge and has a wide, old trunk and many branches. It has beautiful silver bark and deep red leaves."

- Drew L, Holyoke Resident

White Oak, 12 Steiger Road

Quercus alba - The stately oak here at 12 Steiger Road, located on a little grassy mound, was likely part of the Steiger estate, on the edge of the Wykoff Golf Course before the land was redeveloped into a subdivision. The tree's powerful spreading branches and trunk size indicate significant age.



"...my favorite trees are in the Forestdale Cemetery. The cemetery has so many great trees, including a very large black walnut and a huge catalpa but the coolest are the oaks. They are massive and each one produces a different shape and size of acorn. I am constantly amazed at the variety of nut sizes from trees that are so close in proximity. Just great." -Betsey Misch, Holyoke Resident



king Tour

od, 55 Jackson St
le, Bonin Field
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rs, 1816 Mosher St
wood, Holyoke Heritage

eterans Memorial Park
ce, 71 Maple St
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Pine St
g Trees, lining Beech St
Coffee Tree, Forestdale

lown Elms, Forestdale

lberry, Forestdale

19. Northern Catalpa, Forestdale Cemetery
20. Norway spruce, St Jerome Cemetery
21. Norway Maples, Crosier Field
22. American Elm, Springdale Park

Outliers

23. Shagbark Hickory, Corner of Apremont Hwy & Dupuis Rd
24. Eastern Hemlock in Gloutak Park woods
25. Eastern Redcedars, Scott's Tower via Anniversary Park
26. White Oak & Eastern White Pines, Holyoke Community College Athletic Fields
27. Eastern White Pines, Mount Tom State Reservation via Accessible Trail
28. Silver Maples & Sycamores, Corner of Lower Westfield Rd & Holyoke Family Rd



1) Cottonwood at 55 Jackson Street
Populus deltoides - Cottonwood trees are a pioneer species, meaning they are often the first to grow in environments that have been disrupted by things like deforestation, industry or fire, and are common in abandoned urban lots. Pioneer species typically grow in soils that lack the nutrients found in more developed ecosystems, and therefore are hardy and resilient. This particular specimen germinated behind what was originally the Parsons Paper Mill (built 1888) when it was still active, and survived the 2008 fire that destroyed most of the mill's nearby campus, now a solar field. The Cottonwood's name comes from the silky white material produced by the tree's female

flowers, that looks like cotton. This light-weight material allows the seeds to be carried long distances by wind or animals, distributing new seedlings far from the parent tree.

2) Sugar Maple at Bonin Field, *Acer saccharum*

Formerly known as "Germania Park," this green has been park land since the 1860s, when it was a central social hub for Holyoke's German Community, with Germania Mill housing and the German Lutheran church bordering the park to the north and east respectively. The park was later expanded to create the baseball diamond here now. However, a few trees along S Bridge Street, like this sugar maple and the neighboring Norway maple, remain from the park's earlier days, possibly circa 1894.



3) Paw Paw at Nuestras Raices - 329 Main St, *Asimina triloba* - These trees produce the largest edible fruit native to North America. In natural forested environments, Paw Paw trees typically grow in the understory, however, these specimens are thriving in sunny downtown Holyoke, in the Nuestras Raices' urban garden office on Main Street. Nuestras Raices is a grassroots organization that works to create access to agriculture for the local community, creating healthy environments and advancing community power for a more just and environmentally sustainable future through multiple community gardens around town.

(CONT.) habitat for over 120 different species of wildlife. Gloutak Woods was purchased by the City as a recreational nature preserve in 2019, with funds from the Community Preservation Act, and is protected from development through a Conservation Restriction held by Kestrel Land Trust.

27) White Pines of Mt Tom State Reservation, 125 Reservation Road, via the Universal Access Trail

Pinus strobus - Towering over Lake Bray, and growing along Mount Tom's accessible trail, are some of Western Mass's most impressive White Pines. Measured by international tree measurement expert and Holyoke native, Robert Leverett, several of these pines reach over 140 feet tall - a height Leverett calls "impressive" for this region. White pines were once a primary component of the region's forests pre-contact with Europeans, with old growth specimens exceeding heights of 250 ft.



"The greatest asset of the Mt. Tom Range is its species-rich natural environment. Twenty miles of walking and hiking trails weave their way through rare plant communities, old-growth forests and a variety of unique and bio-diverse habitats. Champion trees, waterfalls, wooden footbridges crossing mountain streams, amazing views, indigenous footpaths and numerous historical remnants can all be found in abundance at Mt. Tom." -Bill Finn

28) Silver Maples & Sycamores Corner of Lower Westfield Road & Holy Family Rd, *Acer saccharinum* & *Platanus occidentalis*

- Trees have long served as boundary markers and waymarkers, along property lines and roads, frequently outliving the places they mark. These silver maples line what was originally the front entrance to Holyoke's "Almshouse," renamed City Farm in 1899. City Farm was a city-run institution that, according to the city register of 1899, provided "a good and comfortable home for those who are no longer able to maintain a home of their own." Generally, this meant the elderly poor and people who needed assisted living. The grounds supported a fully operational farm, including an orchard near the train tracks to feed residents,.



24) Eastern Red Cedars at Scott's Tower, 1 Community Field Rd.

Juniperus virginiana- Scott's Tower and Anniversary Park around it, were constructed and financed by the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression. When the



tower first opened in 1939, the hill was completely cleared of brush and trees, and a row of redcedars along the path to the tower comprised some of the park's only plantings, as visible in this photograph here (ca. 1940-45). Today a row of the original cedars remain among the brush and trees that have grown up around them in the intervening years. A core sample from one cedar, shows tight, thin rings, numbering about 82, or the equivalent of at least 80 years of age, consistent with planting in the late 1930s.

25) White Oak & Eastern White Pines, Holyoke Community College athletic fields

Quercus alba - This white oak is a remnant of the Holyoke Community College land's previous life as open pasture of the Sheehan Family dairy farm. When New England was cleared of most of its trees in the early to mid 19th-century to make way for pasture and farmland, singular large trees like this Oak were often left in fields to provide shade to grazing animals and birds. Jim Sheehan remembers growing up here, dodging cow pies and hanging out under the (cont.) the big oak and the grove of old pines at the top of the hill, already mature in size 60 years ago. The land was purchased by the college in 1968 following the burning of the previous community college building located at Sargent Street (now the Holyoke Senior Center).

26) Eastern Hemlock, Gloutak Woods

Tsuga canadensis- Though Eastern Hemlocks are abundant in Holyoke forests today, their continued survival is seriously threatened by their poor ability to adapt to climate change's warming temps, and a new insect, the Hemlock Woody Adelgid (HWA) spreading quickly East from the Rockies. This magnificent specimen is likely an old-growth tree, over 120 years old, that escaped logging in the area, probably due to the steep terrain here. The many branches and hollow parts of older eastern hemlocks provide important



4) Tulip Poplars behind 1916 Mosher St

Liriodendron tulipifera - According to local Bob Comeau, the tulip trees growing behind 1916 Mosher, have stood here for "as long as the school building has," or since 1917, when the building first opened as the School of the Immaculate Conception. Tuliptrees get their name from the tulip-like yellow and orange flowers that decorate the tree in early-mid summer, and are actually in the magnolia family despite their common name. *Tulipifera* are some of the tallest trees in the Northeast, with straight trunks that made them ideal material for American Indians of the Northeast to carve canoes from.



5) Dawn Redwood in Holyoke Heritage State Park, parking lot

Metasequoia glyptostroboides- Dawn Redwoods are an ancient species, commonly found in the North American fossil record dating back 150 million years ago. Thought to be extinct, an isolated population was discovered in Sichuan China in the 1940s, where an old-growth specimen served as a local shrine. Since then, the species has been enthusiastically propagated, often as street trees. Like larches and bald cypress, dawn redwood is a deciduous conifer that sheds its foliage in fall. This young specimen was planted in 2018 by the DCR Urban and Community Forestry Greening the Gateway Cities program. This state program plants and with low tree cover and high renter populations. The program helps build healthy urban forests in order to reduce heating and cooling energy costs in local households, improve air and water quality, and generate a sense of community



6) Katsura, Veterans Memorial Park

Cercidiphyllum japonicum- Veteran's Memorial Park is the oldest park in Holyoke, dedicated to the City by the Holyoke Water Power Co on March 15, 1861. Though none of the park's original trees remain here, locals remember a time when Holyoke residents sat under the big trees of Veteran's Memorial Park and listened to Sox games on a radio, nestled into tree branches. Katsura may be humble in size compared to the lofty pin oaks nearby, but this Japanese native tree puts on an exceptional fall display. In autumn, Katsura's heart-shaped leaves turn a deep apricot yellow, and, as they drift to the ground, give off a uniquely sweet scent, variously described as cotton candy, burnt sugar, or even cinnamon.



7) Sugar Maple, North End of Pulaski Park

Sugar Maples are one of the most important tree species in the Northeast, both ecologically and economically. The sugar maple's dense and spreading crown provides shelter and shade to numerous critters, who live in the tree or munch on it's bark. As its name suggests, *Acer saccharum* has a 2x higher sugar content than any other maple species. The tree produces a sweet sap that is boiled down to create maple syrup, a multi-billion dollar industry in the US & Canada. The north end of Pulaski park contains two sizable old sugar maple trees, 49 and 40 inches in diameter; the smaller one covered in gnarly burls, the tree's attempt to ward off an attack from insect or fungus. These trees are lucky survivors of the severe storm of 1938 that took out dozens of mature trees in Holyoke.



8) Silver Maples at Avery Field

Acer saccharinum - The Silver Maples lining the south side of Avery Field show remarkable size, the largest being over 53in in diameter - a good indication of Silver Maple's ability to grow quickly. A 1911 map denotes this land as a "playground" indicating its use as parkland for at least 110 years, and it's probable these maples have been here as long, providing shade to generations of childhood recreation. During the Great Depression, children's programs on drama, crafting, and even magazine production, were hosted here throughout the summer, drawing upwards of 20,000 visitors in 1936.



9) Apple Tree, 784 Dwight

Corner of Dwight & Pine Streets
Malus, probably *domestica* - A mature apple tree grows in the middle of the city, on a lot previously used as a community garden. Laden with green apples, this tree's edible fruit ripen in September, a snack for any passing pedestrian. Many locals commented on this project that they'd like to see more edible public trees like this one, in the city.

22) American Elm, Springdale Park 844 Main St

Ulmus Americana - A variety of Holyoke's grandest trees line the edges of this park, many surviving since 1907. Designed by the preeminent landscape designers of the time, the Olmsted Brothers' original plans for Springdale had scattered plantings of Oak, Maple, and Linden, with American Elms lining the park's paths. Many of the Oaks, Maples and Lindens survive to this day. However, Dutch elm disease was introduced to the US in 1928, and by 1989 the fungal disease had decimated 75% of all North American Elms. This mature American Elm is a rare survivor and wonderful example of the species' trademark **morphology**: graceful branches that grow sharply up, giving the tree an overall vase-like shape, with leaves cascading down. Coincidentally, before becoming "Riverdale Park" in 1906, this area was a race track for cars and horses, and a 1905 photo records a large elm standing in the center of the park, not far from the present-day elm's location.



Outliers: Trees further afield

23) Shagbark Hickory, Corner of Apremont Hwy and Dupuis Rd, across from Union Mart,

Carya ovata - Easily identified by shaggy bark curling off the tree in long strips, *Carya ovata* produces the edible Hickory nut, a delicacy for animals and humans alike. In the outskirts of Holyoke you can find these tasty nut trees growing along roadsides, like this one, or as stand alones on old farms. Before colonization, hickories made up a large percentage of the native hardwood forests of Western Massachusetts, growing in conjunction with oaks, in what is called the "oak-hickory" forest type.



19) White Mulberry, Forestdale, 304

Cabot Street, *Morus alba*- The white mulberry is a Chinese native plant, once an abundant sight in Holyoke gardens. In 1830, New Englanders began planting Mulberry trees, hoping to 'get rich quick' by raising silkworms, who feed exclusively on white mulberry leaves, and selling their output of raw silk to the American silk industry. The craze died down by 1839, but the silk trade continued in Holyoke when the Skinner Silk Mill opened in 1874, relying primarily on raw silk imported from overseas rather than that locally produced. Mulberries are a short-lived tree, having a life span equivalent to humans, and it is unlikely any original trees remain, but historical records document their presence along Northampton and in Wistariahurst's gardens in the 1890s.



20) Norway Spruce at St Jerome's

Cemetery, *Picea abies*- St. Jerome's cemetery is filled with mature Norway Spruce with their drooping branchlets and long cones. Conifers are a common sight in cemeteries as their evergreen branches were meant to symbolize eternal life. Occasionally, pines or spruce growing without the protection of forest cover can be targeted by sun-loving weevils who like to munch on the very tip of the main trunk, called the 'terminal bud.' Thinking the tree's main stem is threatened, this stimulates other branches to grow upwards in an attempt to replace the trunk as "lead" – as we can see here with this spruce's multiple trunks.



21) Norway Maples, Crosier Field

Acer platanoides- Gracefully twisting upwards, with deep hued green and purple leaves, you would never guess that it is now prohibited to plant this tree in Massachusetts. The Norway Maple was introduced to the US in the 1700s, but gained in popularity in the 1950s-80s when it was planted as a substitute for the millions of Elms lost to Dutch Elm Disease. Widespread and common along streets, these shade trees spread aggressively and drop substantial leaf debris to the ground, suffocating native plants trying to grow underneath the tree. These maples were planted here in the 1930s, as memorial trees for Spanish-American War veterans, when the park was still called "Elmwood." Across the field, the wide-trunked Norway Spruce on MacKintosh Terrace is likely a survivor of a pine grove that grew here c.1904.

10) Pin Oak in Library Park

Quercus palustris - When the library was built in 1897, the grounds, previously used as an "athletic park," were completely bare with the exception of a few street trees. Over 120 years later, Library Park today is filled with beautiful mature shade trees. With a tall, straight trunk and tolerance of pollution and flood conditions, pin oaks like this mature specimen make great street trees. In fact, pin oaks are the most numerous oak species in Holyoke's urban tree canopy!



11) European Beech, 427 Maple Street, By "Our Lady of Guadalupe" Church

Fagus sylvatica, "Copper beech" are a variety of European beech, cultivated for their richly hued, red-purple leaves. An 1891 image of Sacred Heart Church shows a small tree-like bush, that possibly depicts today's stout tree in its younger years.



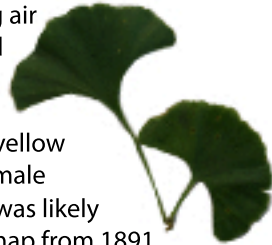
12) Sassafras, 245 Walnut

Sassafras albidum - The roots and resulting oil of this captivating native tree were used medicinally by Native Americans, and in the 1600s were a valuable export to Europe. Sassafras root also provided the original flavor for root beer, until it was determined to be carcinogenic in the 1960s. Local wildlife love it too- birds and bears eat the tree's berries, while deer munch on its leaves and twigs. The shape of *albidum's* large fragrant leaves are a bit of a mystery: scientists aren't sure why some leaves grow lobes, anywhere from 2-5 per leaf looking like mittens or dinosaur footprints in shape, and some remain oval. Throughout the seasons, Sassafras maintains visual interest: small yellow flowers emerge in spring, followed by big aromatic leaves that turn a brilliant red in the fall. In winter Sassafras maintains bright green twigs.





13) Ginkgo Tree at Wistariahurst, 238 Cabot St
Ginkgo biloba - Fossilized remains of Ginkgo's gracefully fanned leaves have been found dating as far back as 270 million years. In fact the species *Ginkgo biloba* is so ancient, it's got it's own division in the Plantae kingdom, and its exact relationship to current living plants is uncertain. Ginkgos can tolerate many adverse conditions including air pollution, heat, and confined growing conditions, making them great urban trees. In fall their cascade of brilliant yellow leaves is unmistakable. This male



"maiden hair tree" as ginkgos were called historically, was likely planted here by the Skinners before 1959. A garden map from 1891 shows a Maple tree originally grew in this approximate location, with numerous Pear and Apple trees not far off.

14) Yellowwood, Sargent and Pine,

Cladrastis kentukea - In fall, the Yellowwood tree is easily spotted by it's brilliant yellow leaves, though the common name comes from the yellow-tint of it's wood. White, drooping flowers that fall in pannicles like wisteria, bloom on these trees only every 2-3 years in early summer. The Yellowwood is native to the Appalachian region of the US but is found happily scattered further north and west, including in Massachusetts, indicating it may have



had a wider native habitat before the last ice age.



15) Flowering Trees, Lining Beech Street

Many Holyoke locals like to reminisce that Holyoke's canals and nearby streets were once lined with beautiful flowering crab apples and flowering cherries. Today, flowering trees are still an important part of the springtime landscape, with cherry trees growing in Library Park, and along Race Street. Flowering callery pears line Beech Street, turning the street into a dreamy flower-filled corridor each spring. Planted extensively as a street tree in the 60s and on, the Callery Pear is now known to be an invasive species.

16) Kentucky Coffee Tree, Forestdale

*Cemetery, 304 Cabot, *Gymnocladus dioica** - You can spot this tall tree by its large but delicate opposite-growing leaves. The tree's branches take a bold and contorted form, with striking pink-bronze colored leaves in the Spring. Woody pods emerge from flowers in summer, and turn brown in the fall. Indigenous Americans taught early colonial peoples to roast these woody pods and make a coffee-substitute beverage, giving the tree it's curious common name. Before that, evidence suggests Native Americans of the midwest & northeast assisted with seed dispersal and cultivation of this useful tree. These Native North Americans also used the seeds as "dice" in a popular bowl-and-dice game and made a medicinal drink with the bark. Native to the northeast and midwest, but hardy to warmer climates this tree shows promise as a climate-change resilient option for local planters.



17) Camperdown Elms, Forestdale Cemetery

Ulmus glabra 'Camperdownii' - This tree species originates from a single specimen discovered in 1835 at Camperdown House in Dundee Scotland. As the elm could not reproduce on its own, the estate's forester grafted the elm onto Wych elm trunk to propagate it. It is a short, slow-growing tree that only reaches about 13' in height, with distinctly contorted branching that creates an umbrella-effect of branches and leaves. Camperdown elms were often planted as "curiosities" in mid-Victorian era gardens, and it's possible these two mature Camperdown Elms survive from some of the earliest plantings of the cemetery in the 1870s.



18) Northern Catalpa, Forestdale Cemetery

Catalpa speciosa - Tucked into a row of aged maples and oaks along the bottom of Forestdale Cemetery, is a mature Northern Catalpa. Originally native to the midwestern U.S., catalpa are now a common sight in New England. These trees have massive **cordate** (heart-shaped) leaves and large white flowers that bloom in early summer and give way to bean pods in late summer. From underneath, admire the tree's twisted branches that hoist umbrellas of broad light-green leaves over their angled form.

