

Not St. Peter but Judas Is Last of Apostle Trees

By GARNET WARFEL

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For the sake of sentiment it would be nice to record that several hundred persons gathered Thursday at Gladwin Park, and with proper and touching ceremonies paid homage to St. Peter, a tree.

No common tree by any means, but a tree tied up with the earliest history of Detroit and the lone survivor of an ancient orchard of 12 giant pear trees planted in the park by an early French settler and named after the 12 Apostles.

However, for the sake of accuracy, it must be told that the tree around which an almost devout group assembled to have a part in the planting of its seedlings, is not St. Peter, but Judas—the tree that was set apart from the other 11.

Members of the Detroit Historical Society, the Jesuit order, local garden clubs and city officials who, with the pupils from the Lingemann School had taken their places in the very shadow of the old Water Works Tower and near the dying tree, were first apprised of the St. Peter to Judas switch, when George W. Stark, the Old Timer of The Detroit News, in his opening master-of-ceremonies talk, made the announcement.

CONSTERNATION FELT

To say the news was a surprise is putting it mildly, for in the faces of the men, women and children, came looks of consternation as if the very mention of the name of Judas robbed the occasion of some of its glory.

It might have been that the persons assembled, and many others, would have gone on until the end of their days believing the tree, now beautiful with snowy blossoms, though rived by several strokes of lightning and nearly filled with cement, was St. Peter. But because a certain woman tuned in on Station WWJ-The Detroit News, last Sunday and heard Stark's Old Timer broadcast about the tree plans, all that has been changed.

She is Mrs. Howard Lewis French, 70 Kerby road, and she knows Judas from away back.

Mrs. French was present at Thursday's ceremonies and explained to the assemblage that she was born on the Gladwin Park site, formerly Waterworks Park, her grandfather, John E. Edwards, having designed and built the first engines used in the power house.

SWING IN TREE

"My mother was Florence Edwards Nash," she went on, "and she had a swing on that tree which we knew as Judas. I had a swing on it when I was a little girl. My grandfather built that red brick house pointing to the one nearby and in which now lives Harry W. Gould superintendent of the pumping station). I grew up in the lore of these trees and my grandfather told my mother many times that the 12

Apostles were planted in a circle where the pumping station now stands. He used to say that Judas stood apart according to the Bible and I KNOW this is Judas."

Mrs. French pointed out that the tree had been hit by lightning many times, and that although everything possible has been done to prolong its life, it is dying.

St. Peter or Judas, as the case may be, will live on in the 20 new trees planted directly after the ceremonies, Mrs. French helping to plant the first, less than a stone's throw away from its 63-foot forbear.

C. E. Brewer, general superintendent of the Department of Parks and Recreation, presided and introduced Stark, who, after explaining the St. Peter-Judas mixup asked Fr. A. H. Poetker, executive dean of the University of Detroit, to speak.

SYMBOL OF PEACE

It will be remembered it was a Jesuit priest who had to do with the planting of the 12 Apostles, and Fr. Poetker spoke of the tree being symbolic of peace and its especial significance now.

Ruth Mosher Place, Garden Editor of The News, spoke about trees, and said the oldest living thing was a tree—a 5,000 year old one in Mexico. She urged the audience, particularly that part made up of children, to learn trees and to love them.

Stark introduced Orla B. Taylor, trustee of the Detroit Historical Society, who spoke briefly. There were other introductions and then Mrs. French, the revealer, was presented with a cutting from the Judas tree by Mrs. Walter R. O'Hair, of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

As Mrs. French turned the first shovelful of dirt about the seedling the sun slipped out from the shadows of the great trees nearby and gave its special benediction to the May Day and the cause for which young and old had assembled.

Nine other seedlings were planted in Gladwin Park and 10 more in Gabriel Richard Park.