

THROUGH THE LENS

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The Fall Of The Jackson Prayer Tree by Nikki Fox

Submitted by [Nikki Fox](#) on Friday, June 10, 2011 [3 Comments](#)



A tree that was present at the encampment of Confederate Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson’s army near Middle River in June 1862 has succumbed to disease and time. The towering white oak that was known locally as Jackson’s Prayer Tree toppled to the ground overnight May 27, said Donna Miller, daughter of the owner of the property in northern Augusta County where the tree was located.

“We’ve been anticipating this for some time,” Miller, 55, said Thursday of the tree’s death from disease that caused it to rot inside.

The Prayer Tree’s age was unknown, but Miller said her daughter, in completing a middle school project 10 years ago, estimated the tree’s age at more than 300 years.



This photo illustration, which was a landmark for local residents and Civil War history buffs, is how the tree looked in 2006.

According to local lore, Jackson used to pray under the tree that toppled to the ground last week, hence its moniker as Jackson's Prayer Tree, during his spring 1862 encampment after the Shenandoah Valley campaign. His army of 15,000 men rested after nearly six weeks of hard marching and fighting that resulted in Confederate military victories at McDowell, Front Royal, Winchester, Cross Keys and Port Republic.



Woodturners of the Virginias member Starke Smith of Fishersville makes a cut into the fallen Jackson Prayer Tree. The group will use the wood to make items to sell and the proceeds will benefit veterans.



Pete Johnson of Mount Jackson cuts the top of the Jackson Prayer Tree, which fell uprooted into a corn field, into manageable pieces.




Nathan Hawkes of Charlottesville counts the number of rings from a branch about 15 feet from the base of the of the fallen massive oak. He counted 204 rings.



Members of the Woodturners of the Virginias load pieces of the fallen Jackson Prayer Tree to haul away. Ironically, the white oak that became known because of a Southern general toppled over to the north.

3 Comments »

-  *Barbara says:*
[June 11, 2011 at 11:35 am](#)