

This walking tour results from the tree inventory which volunteers compiled in this neighborhood during the summer of 1994. Every tree located in the public right-of-way and in the front yards of private homes was identified, measured, and mapped on survey forms designed by committee volunteers. This information forms a database that will aid the city forester to determine more easily which areas need more trees and what species do best in certain locations. Trees notable for their size and age, the Heritage Trees, will receive special recognition.

In a second phase of the project, the group hopes to begin tree stewardship and educational programs throughout the city. The third phase of the project will use the inventory to create a master plan for future tree plantings in the surveyed areas: the Goosetown, Longfellow, and North Side neighborhoods; Woodlawn Circle; Plum Grove; and Oakland Cemetery.

The Heritage Tree Project hopes to serve as a model for other neighborhoods that share its goals of planning and planting for the Iowa City of the future. Many cities in the United States are currently initiating similar projects.

We hope that you will appreciate the beauty and diversity of these trees which contribute so much to the quality of life in Iowa City.

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**TOUR ETIQUETTE:** While you stroll and enjoy the beauty of this neighborhood, please be courteous. Many trees are located on private property, so please be content to view them from the sidewalk. Street addresses are given only to help you locate the trees. Please respect the privacy of the residents and do not disturb them.

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HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM  
c/o Neighborhood Services Coordinator  
Civic Center  
410 E. Washington Street  
Iowa City, IA 52240

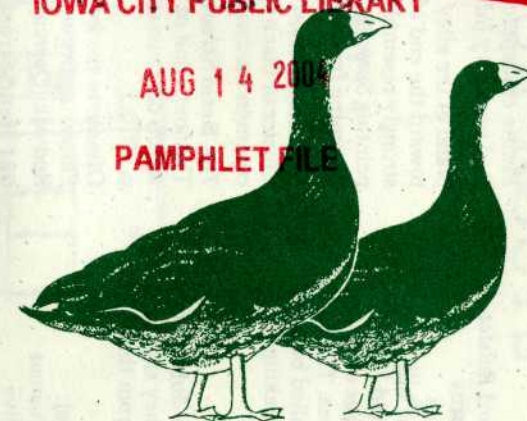
IOWA-  
Iowa City  
Trees

## A TREE WALK IN *Goosetown*

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AUG 14 2004

PAMPHLET FILE



## HERITAGE TREES OF IOWA CITY

HERITAGE TREES is a group of citizen volunteers who work with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, neighborhood associations, Project GREEN, the City Council and the Forestry Division of Iowa City to preserve, maintain, and replenish Iowa City's trees. We thank these groups for their contributions to the Heritage Trees endeavor.



# Goosetown and Its Trees

Goosetown and its environs (notably Oakland Cemetery and Hickory Hill Park, the old Irish Estate farms) were originally part of an upland savannah, wooded hills dotted with patches of prairie or meadow. The forest was mainly oak—white oak, swamp white oak, bur oak, black oak, red oak. But honey and black locust, American basswood, cottonwood, black cherry, silver maple, wild apple, wild plum, black willow, and eastern red cedar flourished as well. Native Americans from southwestern Iowa and northern Missouri regularly camped at springs near Ralston Creek on treks to Wisconsin to obtain high-quality flintstone for arrows and toolheads, twisting saplings into trail-marker trees to point the way.

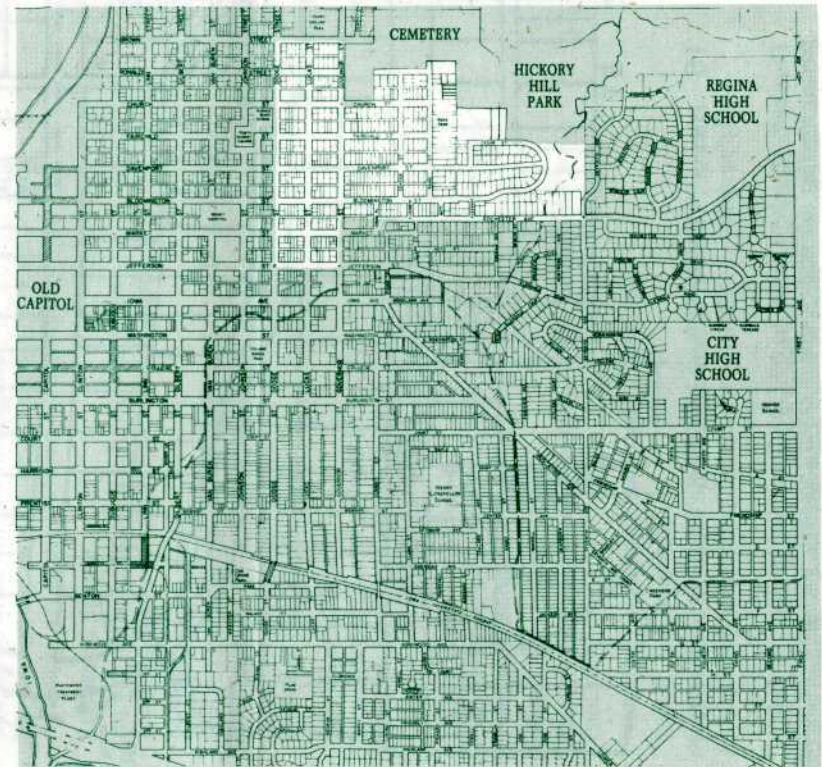
In the 1830s, a New England whaling captain, Frederick Macy Irish, arrived to build a home and farm, which extended about from what is now Hickory Hill Park to Reno Street. Parts of the forest were no doubt cleared for planting fields, parts culled for lumber and fuel, parts relegated to "timber" for grazing livestock. The western edge of this property was subsequently sold off (including the original log cabin now in the dining room walls of 1310 Cedar Street) and planted in orchards.

In about 1855, Bohemians, ancestors of today's Czechs and Slovaks, as well as some Germans, began settling what was to become Goosetown, a semi-autonomous, spread-out ethnic village within the city limits, just east across Dodge from St. Wenceslaus Church. Farmers, artisans, and shopkeepers, early Goosetowners cleared the land of native trees for planting orchards, windbreaks, grape arbors, vegetable gardens, and flower beds to surround their clustered cottage homes. Daily, their children drove the geese out from their backyard poultry coops to graze in what is now North Market Square Park, then a patch of prairie. Seasonally, Goosetowners headed east to the Irish Estate farms to buy orchard fruits, eggs, butter, and milk, and to forage the woods for mushrooms, hickory nuts, hazelnuts, walnuts, black cherries, wild plums, gooseberries, raspberries, kindling, wildflowers, and curative roots.

Between the late 1950s and the early 1970s, three things happened to change Goosetown: Dutch elm disease arrived, city government approved duplex zoning for the area, and Miss Jane Irish, the last of the family to inhabit the farm, died. As a result, Goosetown's streets were planted up with new kinds of trees for shade and decoration—sycamore, hybrid ash, pin oak, bradford pear, and hybrid crabapple, mostly; many of its side yard gardens, poultry yards, and carriage barns were replaced by ranch-style duplexes and two-car garages; part of the Irish Estate was turned into a housing development and part of its old timber into Hickory Hill Park.

In recent years, development and population growth have leveled off in Goosetown, interest has risen in restoring its gingerbread cottages and gardens, and its street plantings have grown to form a new urban canopy that mingles with the old.

SITE OF THE GOOSETOWN TREE WALK





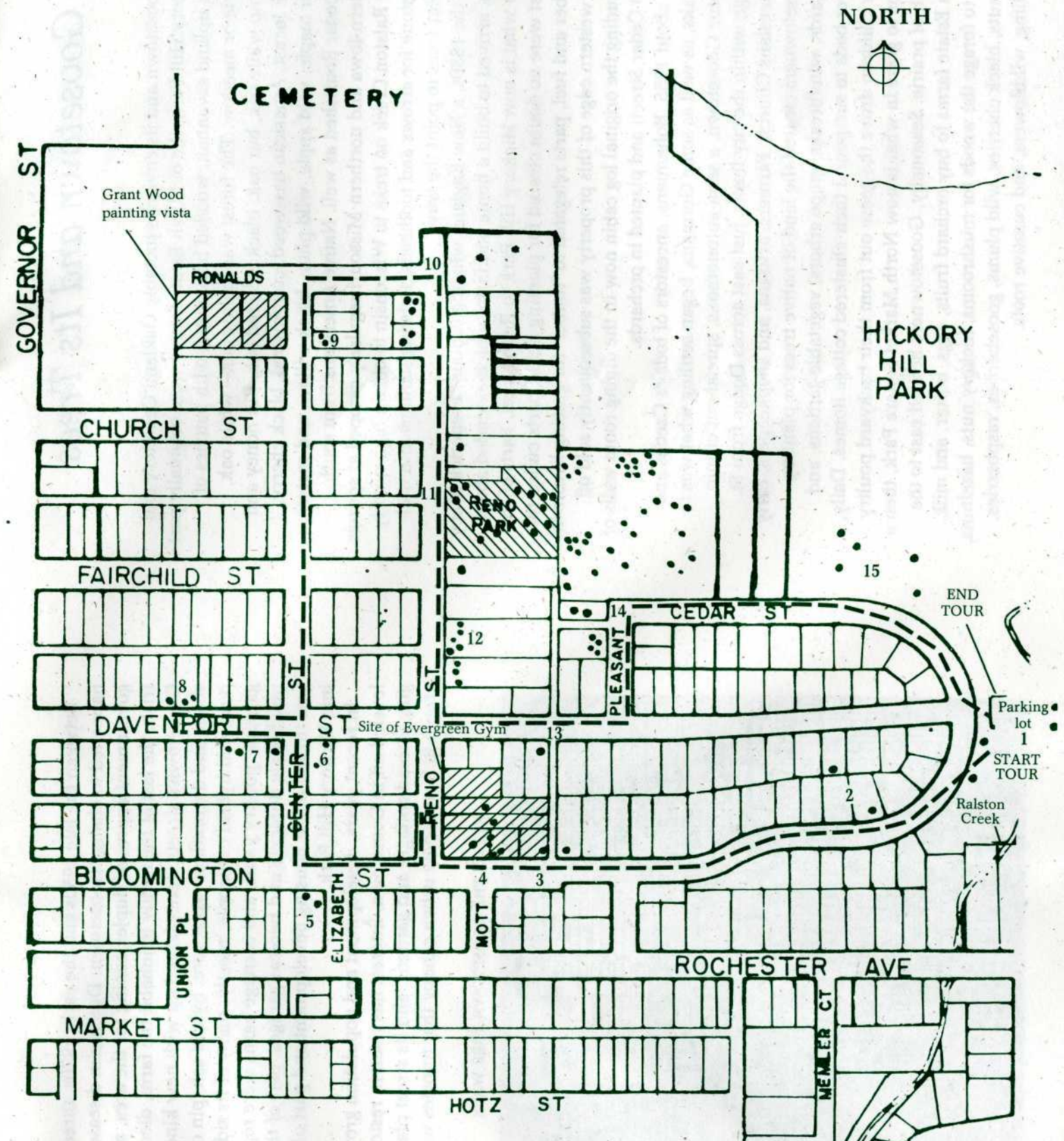
## GOOSETOWN TREE WALK

- 1 **Hickory Hill parking lot:** Stand facing east toward Ralston Creek. To your left on the flats where the creek turns northeast is the site of a migratory Native American campground with springs for drinking water in the hills behind it to the west. In front of you is a stand of old honey locust (note thorns), to your right a couple of old bur oaks—all remnants of the forest which once covered this area. The bank you'll climb to reach street level is Clay Hill, so called because settlers dug clay here to make bricks and mortar, baking the brick in a kiln where the park shelter now stands.
- 2 **1422 E. Bloomington Street:** White pine (*Pinus strobus*) c. 1845. Neighbors have dubbed this the Gulliver Tree, because of its great size; also, they say it is a "sugar pine," brought to Iowa City 150 years ago from the American Southwest.  
**1409 E. Davenport Street** (Bloomington frontage): Captain Irish's house and front yard. Black oak (*Quercus velutina*) c. 1795. This is all that remains of an Native American trail-marker tree, with only two of its five original main arms left. These branches of the sapling tree were permanently bent to point the way on the Indians' migratory trail from southwest Iowa to southern Wisconsin.
- 3 **1230 E. Bloomington Street:** American basswood or linden (*Tilia americana*) c. 1900  
**1226 E. Bloomington:** Honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthus*) c. 1920  
Note the long, branched thorns.  
**1222 E. Bloomington Street:** Silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) c. 1905
- 4 Remains of Lofka's Evergreen Gym nursery, c. late 19th–early 20th century. This was located from Bloomington north to 316 Reno, the Lofka home, and from Reno east to the deserted alley connecting Bloomington and Davenport streets. Peer around houses into back yards and you will see at:  
**304 Reno Street on Bloomington:** Norway spruce windbreak (*Picea abies*) c. 1925  
American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) c. 1920  
**310 Reno Street:** An old larch (*Larix*), a deciduous evergreen  
A big old horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)
- 5 **227 Elizabeth Street:** Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) c. 1935. A shapely specimen  
Northern catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*) c. 1875. Stately, and of a great age for the species
- 6 **328 Center Street:** Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) c. 1920  
Black maple (*Acer nigrum*) c. 1915  
Can you tell which is which?
- 7 **1029 Center Street:** Bird cherry (*Prunus padus*) c. 1980. Also known as the May Tree, as it blooms on May Day  
**953 E. Davenport Street:** Two paw paws (*Asimina triloba*) c. 1980. Unusual native fruit tree
- 8 **Note the size and shapeliness of this trio:**  
**934 E. Davenport:** Green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica lanceolata*) c. 1900  
**940 E. Davenport:** Two hackberries (*Celtis occidentalis*) c. 1875 and 1925

As you return to your walk up Center Street, note the general absence of trees in the side and back yards of these Goosetown cottages, also the ground's somewhat sunken appearance. Fruit and vegetable gardens once flourished here, requiring full sun.

- 9 **620 Center Street:** Prairie crabapple (*Pyrus ioensis*) c. 1910. Very old for an apple  
Red mulberry (*Morus rubra*) c. 1935  
Stand at the alley edge of this address and look across Center toward the end of Ronalds to the northwest. This vista strongly resembles the landscape in Grant Wood's 1941 painting *Spring in Town*, where a man turns his garden amid blooming fruit trees.
- 10 **627 Reno Street:** Cluster of black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) c. 1905–15. A very common hardwood in Goosetown  
**704 Reno Street—the Zettick homestead**, c. 1860s: The south half of this property once held a large orchard, of which one tree remains, a prairie crabapple (*Pyrus ioensis*) c. 1910.  
Of note in the house yard are:  
Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) c. 1940  
Red oak (*Quercus rubra*) c. 1885  
**621 Reno Street:** Saucer magnolia (*Magnolia soulangeana*) c. 1905. A popular ornamental tree  
Apricot (*Prunus armeniaca*) c. 1905. In side yard, very old
- 11 **528 Reno Street:** Black maple (*Acer nigrum*) c. 1885  
**Reno Street Neighborhood Park:** Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) c. 1910  
The other trees in the park were donated by friends as a memorial to Joan Scholes, formerly of Reno Street, when the park was built by the Goosetown neighborhood in 1971–73. They include Norway spruce, swamp white oak, white oak, silver maple, Norway maple, seedless green ash, pin oak, weeping willow, little leaf linden, and white pine.  
**502 Reno Street:** American persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) c. 1960. Unusual native fruit tree
- 12 **416 Reno Street:** Two European spindle trees (*Euonymus europaeus*), c. 1960. This slow-growing hardwood was brought over from Europe by early settlers to use in making needed implements like spindles. These two were found growing wild in a ditch in southeast Johnson County.  
Windbreak of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) c. 1895  
**410 Reno Street:** Remainder of century-old windbreak  
**405 Reno Street:** This Goosetown cottage is the oldest schoolhouse now standing in Iowa City. Its parking along Davenport was once lined with cherry trees. Directly south across the street where the three matching Arts and Crafts houses sit was Sterba's cabbage patch, where fruit trees and strawberries were also grown for sale.
- 13 **1225 East Davenport Street:** The abandoned alley edging this property marks the original boundary between the Irish Estate farms and Goosetown proper.  
**1304 East Davenport Street** (side yard): Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) c. 1930
- 14 **419 Pleasant Street:** Red bud (*Cercis canadensis*) c. 1940  
Saucer magnolia (*Magnolia soulangeana*) c. 1940–46  
Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) c. 1900  
These trees edge the curved rut of the old carriage road leading from town to 1310 Cedar, site of the original Irish log cabin, at the north edge of the present drive at 419 Cedar: Three black walnuts (*Juglans nigra*) c. 1910–1940  
Two larches (*Larix*) c. 1910

## TOUR ROUTE



**1310 Cedar Street:** Not much of the 4–5 acre historic property can be seen from the street, but it contains walnuts, a black locust cluster, wild plums, wild black cherry, hawthorn, mulberry, remnants of the original apple orchard, and several unusual specimen trees—tulip tree, Ohio buckeye, Japanese tree lilac—plus an abandoned miniature evergreen garden.

**15 Hickory Hill Park:** Remnants of the shagbark hickory grove (*Carya ovata*) c. 1890s, for which this park was named.

Thanks to Marybeth Slonneger and the Goosetown Archives for help in piecing together this history, and to Linda Dunahoo, who drew the geese.