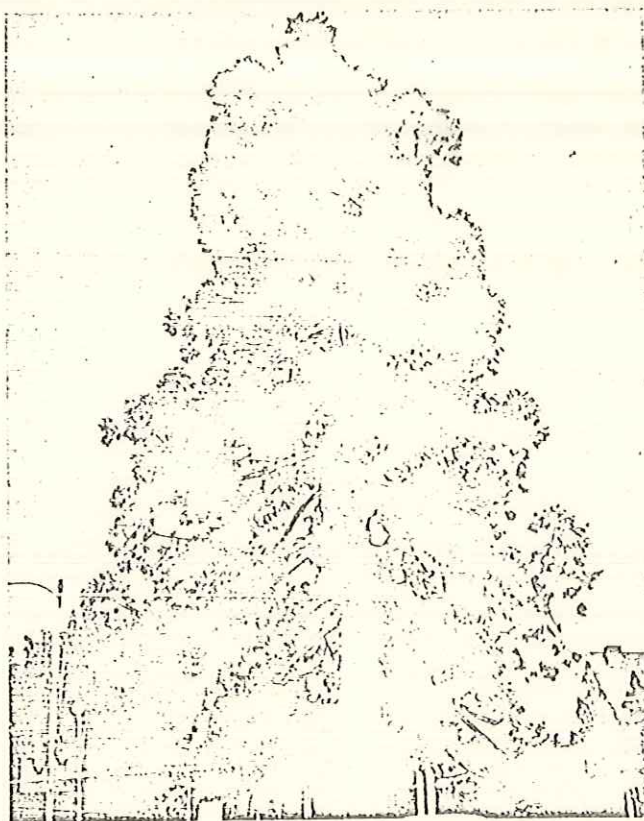


Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872 and is still one of the largest of American public preservations. In the same year William Waldo, of Salem, Oregon, planted a *Sequoia gigantea* sprout which was later to be preserved in one of the nation's smallest public parks. The Big Tree of Waldo Park, seen at the right, is now 76 feet tall and more than six feet in diameter at breast height.

Photograph by the author



Small Park for a Big Tree

By Glen W. Taplin

IN 1872 WILLIAM WALDO, PROMINENT citizen of Salem, Oregon, bought a tiny sprout of *Sequoia gigantea*, the California Big Tree, from a traveling salesman and set it out on his acreage just outside the city limits as they were drawn at the time. As the tree grew the town also increased in size, and the time came when Waldo's property was due to be platted and taken into the city. By that time, however, Judge Waldo's voice in community affairs was strong enough to enable him to successfully insist that the tree be preserved before he vacated his land for a State highway route. Judge Waldo died in 1911, and it re-

mained for others to perpetuate his interest in the growing Big Tree.

As has happened in all American cities and towns, proliferation of the automobile necessitated first the widening and then the paving of Salem city streets; and each accommodation with the ever-flowing tide of steel and rubber brought a fresh crisis for the tree. It was condemned several times as a traffic hazard, but each time loyal residents took up the challenge. Finally, the American War Mothers, supported by many of the city's leading citizens, succeeded in having the city council declare the tree and its site to be a city park. The council accomplished

this by a resolution passed in June, 1936. The new park was named after Judge Waldo, the man who first planted the sprout of *Sequoia gigantea*.

The tiny sprout is no longer tiny—it has reached a height of seventy-six feet, and measures seventy-four inches in diameter four and a half feet above ground level. As *gigantea* goes, perhaps this is still a sprout; two or three thousand years from now it will no doubt be necessary to increase the dimensions of the park! The plot now measures twelve by twenty feet, or .0055 acre; a size which should certainly qualify it as one of the nation's smallest public parks. □