

History of the Lane Place Arboretum

The stand of trees on the five acres surrounding Lane Place is what is left of what was once known as "Elston's Grove". Originally it comprised a 40-acre field owned by Major Isaac Elston where he let his flock of sheep graze.

In 1835 Elston built a Federal-style family house in the center of the pasture. He and his wife, Maria, raised a family of nine children in the frontier mansion. As the children married, they built homes in the grove. Joanna was the first child to do so when she married Henry S. Lane in 1845. Their Greek Revival style mansion was literally built in a barnyard south of the Elston home and is known as "Lane Place".

Susan Elston married Lew Wallace and they built a home in the grove near the site where the Lew Wallace Study is located. Other Elston siblings built homes in the immediate area and in 1882, Joanna's brother, Isaac Elston II, built the last of the family homes east of Lane Place. His home is now owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution. The home of Major Isaac and Maria Elston was given to Wabash College in the 1960s and all of the subsequent college presidents have resided

there. Wallace built the General Lew Wallace Study in 1895 to house his artifacts. It is now a museum owned by the City of Crawfordsville. The Montgomery County Historical Society obtained Lane Place in 1935 and restored it to its antebellum grandeur.

At one time the large Elston family grove was a self-sufficient community with its own communal barn, stables, outbuildings, and trash dump. They raised their own vegetables, collected honey from a beehive and had a fish pond that was stocked with many varieties of fish.

Livestock continued to graze among the family homes in the Grove until the late 1860s. Water wells dotted the Grove but rainwater collected in large copper cisterns atop each Elston house provided the drinking water. The plumbing was crude, consisting of lead pipe. The Elstons had their own cemetery 100 yards east of Lane Place. The graves were relocated to Oak Hill Cemetery in the 1870s. The sidewalks and iron fence that we see today were not built until the 1890s. At that time the city of Crawfordsville had grown and absorbed much of the old Elston Grove.

Trees were not abundant in the original grove and Lane frequently complained about the lack of trees. When he retired from the Senate in 1866, he began making treks into local forests to collect saplings. He located many trees native to Montgomery County and planted them at Lane Place.

Many trees have been lost in storms and some have died and had to be removed. The MCHS has replaced some of the missing varieties and is in the process of planting trees native to Montgomery County.

The American Liberty Elm tree was planted Apr. 24, 2009 in front of the home. The tree was donated by the Elm Research Institute. Pat McDowell, Past Special Projects Coordinator, City of Crawfordsville, chose Lane Place as the recipient of the tree after Crawfordsville was designated as an Elm Tree Memorial town.

Lane Place Hours:
Tuesday 1 – 5 p.m.
Wednesday through Saturday
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Lane Place Tree Tour



**Montgomery County
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Tree Identification by
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edited by
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- 1. White Ash
- 2. Basswood or Linden
- 3. River Birch
- 4. Ohio Buckeye
- 5. White Cedar
- 6. Black Cherry
- 7. Weeping Cherry
- 9. Bald Cypress
- 10. Dogwood
- 11. Ginkgo
- 12. Hackberry
- 13. Bitternut Hickory
- 14. Shagbark Hickory
- 15. American Holly
- 16. Little Leaf Linden
- 17. Black Locust
- 18. Honey Locust
- 19. Black Maple
- 20. Crimson King Maple
- 21. Red Maple
- 22. Silver Maple
- 23. Sugar Maple
- 24. Red Mulberry
- 25. Chinquapin Oak
- 26. Pin Oak
- 28. White Pine
- 29. Tulip Poplar
- 30. Redbud
- 31. Smoke Tree
- 33. Norway Spruce
- 34. Sycamore
- 35. Black Walnut
- 36. Red Oak
- 37. American Liberty Elm
- 38. Eastern Hemlock
- 39. Sweet Gum

