

Long Grove History

LONG GROVE LIVING
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The Long Grove of Trees

By Aaron Underwood · Long Grove Historical Society

Long Grove took its name from the “long grove of trees” that early settlers found here. That phrase appears literally on the first survey map of the area done in 1837. That map contains an oval across Ela and Vernon township and is labeled “long grove”. It is possible people started referring to this area as Long Grove, simply because that was something unique on the only map folks had. Ten years after that map was done, a post office was christened by that name and the Long Grove name became official.



GERRI CAMPBELL

With one of her well cared-for Shagbarks — the species that gives away an original-grove tree at a glance.

At least a few of you are probably now thinking about sending me an email, querying “Can you send me a copy of the original map so I can see if my trees are part of the original long grove?” The answer isn’t quite so simple. You see, Long Grove was a farming community and trees have to be removed to make way for fields. For sure, those first few farmers would have picked less forested land, but eventually fields covered most of Long Grove. Much of that “long grove of trees” was cut down years ago. But why, then does Long Grove seem so wooded? The farms gave way to managed open space and very low density housing, which is a great environment to promote tree growth and retention. A “new grove of trees” has been created.



What did the original “long grove” look like? Lots of oaks and hickories. The Shagbark Hickory is my favorite indicator, as it’s very recognizable, was common in the old “long grove” and is rare in new growth. Shagbarks typically live (in the absence of saw wielding farmers) 150 to 250 years. You can estimate the age of a Shagbark by multiplying its diameter in inches by 7.5, so a Shagbark from the original grove would be at least 24 inches in diameter (or 75 inches in circumference for those who are pi challenged). Pictured is “in the zone” resident Gerri Campbell and one of her well cared for Shagbarks.

SHAGBARK AGE · A FIELD ESTIMATE

$$\text{Diameter (inches)} \times 7.5 = \text{Age (years)}$$

24" diameter	~ 180 yrs · original grove	75" circumference	~ 24" diameter
16" diameter	~ 120 yrs	8" diameter	~ 60 yrs · new growth

To get an idea of where to look, I cross referenced the original 1837 map with 1930’s aerial photos to see what had been cleared. The map is posted on our LongGroveHistory.org website – go there to see if you are in one of that last stands of “the old long grove”.