Welcome to the Acton Tree Scavenger Hunt!

Created by Mothers Out Front Acton & their “Canary Trees” Campaign.
I was a chestnut tree described as “one of the original settlers of the town” and stood on Strawberry Hill Road by what is now Hapgood Lane. Later I was called “Thoreau’s chestnut” because he visited me numerous times starting in 1849. Thoreau measured me as 22 feet in circumference! Alas, I am no more. Please help today’s trees to grow strong and tall for, as Thoreau realized, we are all part of the same web of life!
THE ACTON TREE SCAVENGER HUNT

Can You Find These Trees?

A scavenger hunt is a fun way to discover new facts and places. Our scavenger hunt is a simple family activity which might provide a focus to a walk around the neighborhoods in our town. While our Canary Trees Campaign brings attention to trees in trouble, this scavenger hunt celebrates the many healthy trees and beautiful locations in Acton.

We have developed a list of 10 trees, some of which we know have a history behind them, and some which are just interesting and may have a history, but it is a hidden story. See how many you can find on our list. If you know of any other trees that should be on the list, please let us know through our website. Let’s get started. Good luck!
Can you find me? #1

CLUES:

I share the name of a street, Liberty Street, and a farm, Liberty Farm.

During revolutionary times, a huge Elm tree on this site was called “The Liberty Tree.” I am a replacement planted by school kids in 1915.

In the 1770s, the house here was owned by Simon Hunt, Jr., who fought at the North Bridge on April 19, 1775, the beginning of the American Revolution.

Fun Fact

One tree produces nearly 260 pounds of oxygen per year.
--Growing Air Foundation

How many trees do you need each year to get the oxygen YOU must have to live?
Can you find me?  #2

**CLUES:**

I live on Robbins St.

Somebody thinks that trees have personality! What do you think?

Look for our upcoming “Celebrate Trees Week” and consider decorating your own special tree. Be creative! And please be kind to the tree. Post a photo on #CanaryTrees.

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**Fun Fact:** Do you know that trees can communicate with each other underground? But not with sound!
Can you find me? #3

**CLUES:** I live at the end of Wheeler Lane. I mark the beginning of the TTT (Trail Through Time), also known as the Nashoba Brook Trail. There is a colonial house cellar foundation by my roots!

**Fun fact:** The 1st maple sugar was “boiled” by dropping hot rocks into maple sap in bark bowls. Did anyone tap ME for sap?

The first groups to fish and farm in Acton were the Nipmuc people of the Algonquian nation. Their villages were seasonal, for instance in March they might camp by sugar maple groves and make maple sugar candy to store. Small stone structures in these woods may also have been ceremonial prayer spots.

This is an amazing trail!
CLUES: Do you know Pratt’s Brook Conservation Land in Acton? Park at the end of Brewster Lane, enter the woods on your right, by a sign marking Pratt’s Brook, follow a yellow marked trail, and see if you can find me. I had three trunks until last winter, but part of me broke. If you follow this loop path, you might find other three pronged big pines and some lean-to’s, not to mention blueberry bushes? Yum!

Fun Fact: To the Iroquois, the 5 needle cluster of the White Pine represents the peaceful union of 5 different groups into the Iroquois Nation.
Can you find me? #5

CLUES: I live at the Acton Arboretum (visible from the parking lot), but my ancient ancestors lived in the time of the Tyrannosaurus Rex! We were thought to be extinct, but in 1944 a Chinese forester found a grove of live trees. I have the word, “Dawn,” in my name.

Fun Fact: One of my relatives is the tallest tree in the world!

What kind of tree am I?

Your Answer:
Can you find me?
#6

**CLUES:**

I am one of the best known spots in Acton.

I am a treehouse museum!

A pretend dinosaur lives by my driveway.

You pay to visit me, but check my museum for information about current visiting rules.

**Fun facts:** This treehouse museum involves DISCOVERY! There are STEM activities, science explorations, and great information about the “First Nations” people who lived here before Europeans arrived. You might learn how to make a stone tool as the Nipmuc people did 2000 years ago.
Can you find me? #7

CLUES:
I live at Nara Park on the south side of the lake not far from the bridge walkway. I am one of four trees in the Tree Huggers GC3BJAD geocache treasure hunt. My geographic coordinates are N 42 31.067 W 071 24.753. (See www.geocaching.com.) Some people associate me with wooden canoes!

Fun Fact: After the last ice age, birch trees were often the first trees to grow in the barren landscape. Then continue to be trees of the north with light bark adapted to keeping the trees cool in the long summers and protecting them from snow glare in the winter.

Thanks, fungi, for sending my roots good nutrients!

Thanks, birch tree, for giving us sugars!
CLUES: I live on Massachusetts Ave near Kelley’s Corner (intersection of Rt. 27). I stand near the 1st driveway on the right as you head west on Mass Ave.

As you may know, Acton is planning to expand this intersection, which used to be full of apple trees when Acton was a more rural community. Members of our group had asked the town to save the mature oak trees here. Unfortunately, current plans call for the removal of all the trees along the block. Many recent studies, including Boston University research published this spring, note the role of mature street trees for people’s health. We hope that cutting mature trees will become an action of last resort.

Fun Fact: A shade tree can help cool your house by 20 degrees in summer!
Can you find me? #9

CLUES:

I can be found in Acton’s largest cemetery, which has many lovely trees.

Turn left at the entrance. If you stand by the big Conant family monument, you can see me.

It looks like I have a stripe down my trunk. I probably have a little infection, like a cold, that I am trying to flush out. You could say I am blowing my nose!!

Fun Fact

Oak trees support 280+ insects & animals.

I love the yummy bugs on Oak trees.
Can you find me? #10

**CLUES:**

I was once a gracious Avenue of the Trees, like the “grande allees” of famous French gardens.

My maples & chestnuts were planted by Sophia Faulkner Campbell in the 1890s.

The Faulkner Homestead in Acton dates to 1707 and is now owned by Iron Work Farm. To find out when house tours are offered, go to ironworkfarm.org.

The Faulkner family started a textile mill and were one the earliest to produce wool cloth on a large scale. In 1775, Francis Faulkner was the commander of the West Acton Militia and fought at the North Bridge and Battle Road.

Sad fact: A blight killed 3-4 billion American Chestnut trees from 1905-1950.
Many thanks to all of the individuals who helped us with this Scavenger Hunt, including Anne Forbes, Bob Ferrara, Bill Klauer, Bettina Abe, Nyanna Tobin, and Carole Enright, not to mention the websites of the Acton Historical Society, the Acton Land Stewardship Committee, the Pine Hawk Site, the Iron Work Farm and the Acton Arboretum. Also, thank you to the Acton Memorial Library for its Pine Hawk collection and its lovely photo exhibit based on the book, *Thoreau and the Language of Trees*, by local author Richard Higgins.

Linda Blanco and Karen Watkins
Who is Mothers Out Front Acton?

We are a group of Acton residents dedicated to creating a liveable future for all children. Our main focus is on natural gas leaks in our community. Each leak, from the aging pipes that supply “natural” gas to heat many of our homes, contains primarily methane gas. This escaping methane has many negative consequences. It is a potent greenhouse gas, adding to climate change; the methane kills trees, old & new; and growing research indicates that it indirectly undermines public health, esp. for people with underlying respiratory issues.

Our current campaign—Canary Trees—highlights street trees along the gas lines. These trees are like canaries in a coal mine, warning us that gas is escaping as the methane suffocates tree roots and gradually kills the trees. All trees are important! We invite you to enjoy this Tree Scavenger Hunt and to join our campaign. You do not have to be a mother or even a woman. Working toward a liveable future needs all of us! Go to www.CanaryTrees.org for more info..

Fun Fact: Mothers Out Front is active in 12 states and amongst military moms.
Footnotes

Tree #1 - The current Liberty Tree is a replacement for the original elm tree, which probably had been planted when the house was built in 1715. During the Revolution, the elm tree was declared the “Liberty Tree,” modeled after the Boston Liberty Tree. The current maple tree was planted around 1915 due to concern about the health of the old elm. Well-known Acton resident Reubin L. Reed procured the 4 foot maple, which was planted by all the 8th grade Acton students. The children declared the new tree the “Peace Tree.” The old elm survived another ten years, dying around 1925.
Footnotes (continued)

Tree #3 - The Nipmuc people, a group related to the Algonquians, lived seasonally in our area. It is thought that the confluence of the Assabet, Concord, and Sudbury Rivers made a prime hunting and fishing location. In North Acton the heritage trail, Trail Through Time, connects a series of archeological sites from indigenous culture and colonial settlers. Research suggests that the area was sacred to the Nipmuc, including a number of small stone ceremonial structures. The Trail Through Time also includes a stone chamber probably dating from colonial times, but possibly from native culture. In addition, the trail includes colonial home foundations and the site of an old mill. The Trail Through Time is well marked and includes great educational kiosks and signage.

For more information about the Nipmuc Nation today and to read about history from their point of view, go to [http://nipmucnation.homestead.com/welcome.html](http://nipmucnation.homestead.com/welcome.html).
Footnotes (continued)

Tree # 4 - Two of the trees featured in this scavenger hunt are part of the Acton Trails—the Nashoba Brook Trail in the northern part of town and Pratts Brook Conservation Land in south Acton. However, there many other amazing trails in Acton, supported by the Acton Land Stewardship Committee and the Acton Natural Resources department. Thanks to all those folks for their beautiful efforts. Check out their website, https://trails.actonma.gov.

Tree #5 - Please consider exploring more of the Acton Arboretum. There are eighteen different gardens and two self-guided tours that you can print from their website, https://actonarboretum.org. It is a real gem in the midst of our community. (Please check the website for their social distancing guidelines.)
Footnotes (continued)

Tree #6 - In South Acton, the Pine Hawk site was discovered in the 1990’s when the town was doing excavation for a sewer. It is now considered one of the most significant archeological sites of Native American history in New England, with artifacts dating back 7000 years. The Friends of Pine Hawk is an ad-hoc organization of interested volunteers who have been instrumental in publicizing and saving many artifacts from this site. Today, artifacts and exhibits may be seen at the Acton Memorial Library, which has three large portable displays, and at the Acton Town Hall, which has a display of maps and photos outside the engineering office. The Acton Discovery Museum, where the tree house is located, has programs on stone tool design and on archeological processes which relate to the Pine Hawk site. Also, the Pine Hawk group remains active and sponsors an annual event on Native American culture in October. See the website hosted by the Acton Memorial Library:

https://www.actonmemoriallibrary.org/resources-research/local-history/pine-hawk.
Footnotes (continued)

Tree #7 - Geocaching is a popular online form of a treasure hunt. Deriving from the French word “cacher”, meaning to hide, a cache is something stored away or hidden. Geocachers look up certain areas on their websites, find clues and coordinates, then go to the location and find a little treasure someone else has left, such as a painted stone, a pine cone, or a little box. The person finding the “treasure” signs a notebook that is usually there and then leaves a little treasure for someone else to find. It can be a fun sleuthing activity that gets people outdoors in nature. Acton’s geocache is located in NARA Park and was created by Bettina Abe of the Acton Natural Resources Department. To find the NARA Park geocache, you have to solve a riddle first. See https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC3BJAD_nara-park-tree-huggers-cache?guid=8d19af31-6d37-4740-9e73-69c55f488e27.

NARA Park, formerly North Acton Recreation Area, has been renamed for Nathaniel Allen, a civil war hero who was part of the color guard, carrying the Massachusetts state flag at the battle of Gettysburg. Coming under heavy fire, his unit was ordered to retreat. When the soldier carrying the United States flag went down, Nathaniel returned to the battlefield, retrieved the flag and, carrying both flags, retreated with his troops. Half of the Union soldiers who were in this battle died. Originally from Boston, he survived the war and lived the rest of his years in Acton. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1899.
Footnotes (continued)

Tree #8 - The new version of Kelley’s Corner will include widened roads with bike lanes and sidewalks and new trees planted for shade.

Tree #9 - Woodlawn cemetery was founded in 1737. It is the largest cemetery in Acton and contains the grave of civil war hero Nathaniel Allen, for whom Acton’s NARA Park is named (see tree #7), along with graves of over 50 Revolutionary War soldiers. Other Revolutionary War soldiers are buried at the small Forest Cemetery in northern Acton. You can find a list of the Revolutionary War soldiers on the website of the Acton Historical Society. It might be interesting to find their grave markers.
https://www.actonhistoricalsociety.org/revolutionary-war-soldiers-buried-in-acton.html
Tree #10 - This colonial home and its grounds have a lively history. Originally built by Ephraim Jones, a South Acton mill owner and businessman, the house was purchased in 1742 by Ammi Ruhamah Faulkner, beginning six-generations and 202 years’ occupation of the house by the Faulkner family. The homestead was finally sold out of the Faulkner family in 1940. The McCabe family, who purchased it, sold off much of the land that used to belong to the homestead. Since the 1960’s, the Iron Work Farm non-profit has managed and maintained the property. It is the oldest home still standing in Acton.

One of the most interesting Faulkner family members to occupy the home was Sophia Faulkner Campbell. Trained as a teacher, she had a long career teaching in schools for the blind. In fact, she married blind music teacher, Francis Campbell, who was English. The Campbells moved to England and lived there for 40 years. After Francis was knighted, Sarah became Lady Campbell and was known by this title even in America, where she returned for summer vacations to the Faulkner Homestead. Lady Sarah added many plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowers to the homestead.