

PRITCHARD HOUSE LAUREL OAK TREE TRUNK WILL BE RECYCLED by Roz Foster



If you haven't already noticed, the age old Laurel Oak Tree that graced the north east side of the Historic Pritchard House for many years is gone. The upper tree trunk was badly diseased, which provided a hazardous condition to the house and visitors. After examination and evaluation by the City Arborist, it was determined the tree could not be saved and the City hired a contractor to cut it down. A North Brevard Heritage Foundation Board Member suggested we try to salvage the lower tree trunk and to make something for the Pritchard House out of the lumber. She contacted Mow Muscle Tree Service owner Alex Larwat to ask for help. Alex volunteered to pick up the remaining tree trunk, transport it to their business site where it was stored, and made arrangements with friend Max Anthony - who owns a portable sawmill – to have it sawed into lumber. Volunteer Mike Myjak (who is knowledgeable about characteristics of wood) & I meant with Max Anthony and discussed how the tree trunk should be sawed & the center cross-sawed for maximum strength for our purpose.



Mow Muscle used their front end loader & operator to left tree trunk & position onto sawmill track, which was no easy task. Sawmill operator Max had to trim trunk down to size, repositioning the trunk with forklift each time & turning to saw into boards.



The center was cross-sawed to provide stronger boards, so the trimmed piece of trunk was cut into quads and "dogs" were built to hold triangle piece of trunk in place to cross cut. Each set of quad sawed boards were then stacked as cut, brushed of wet sawdust & restacked. Mike & I painted the ends to prevent cracking during the drying process.



Then stacks were front end loaded onto Mow Muscle truck for transport to our storage trailer.

Lumber & building materials already in the storage trailer were rearranged to make room to stack boards with spacers for drying. David Woods & I transferred boards from truck bed to trailer & stacked with spacers in a specified order to ensure they were even to prevent warping. Mike & I finished stacking & weighted finished stack to keep wet boards flat while drying.



In approximately 8 months from this past August the boards will be checked to see if they are "cured" & dried enough to work with.

Selected boards will then be planed and local woodworkers will make benches & tables for Pritchard House Gardens. How many depends on number and size of useable boards. Scrap pieces will be used to make bird houses & feeders for gardens as well as some wood turned pieces & maybe some hand carved items. In this way the age old Laurel Oak Tree will always remain & be a part of the historic Pritchard House.



The North Brevard Heritage Foundation appreciates the in-kind services provided by local businesses, Mow Muscle Tree Services & Max Anthony Portable Milling, and volunteers who support our historic preservation efforts. This is another wonderful example of Titusville Businesses and Community working together to preserve the past for the future.



A 15 ft. Live Oak Tree will be planted by the City of Titusville on the back lawn of the historic Pritchard House to give it plenty of room to grow and provide much needed shade. In collaboration with the City, The North Brevard Heritage Foundation, Inc., will hold a dedication ceremony on Florida Arbor Day, January 20, 2017 and the tree will be designated as the 150th Titusville Anniversary Tree to commemorate the founding of Titusville 1867 – 2017. The public is invited to attend this momentous occasion, and possibly photos of children standing in front of the young tree will be taken. Hopefully, the Live Oak Tree will flourish and still be around when Titusville celebrates the 200th Anniversary in 2067, and adults who had their photos taken as children will return for another photo opt.