

The Wyalusing Maple

The unusually large silver maple that stood on the ledge of Signal Point in Wyalusing State Park, at the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers near Prairie du Chien, had a terrific view. Hundreds of feet directly below ran a bottom land segment of the Old Military Road that linked Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien with Fort Winnebago at Portage and Fort Howard at Green Bay. The grandly bent maple was featured on early-day postcards of the park, with a man and woman stretching out their arms to span its girth of over 20 feet. Unfortunately it has long since been down. But the view is still magnificent.

The Mississippi River-to-Portage section of the Old Military Road was completed in the fall of 1835 by the Fort Crawford contingent of the Fifth Regiment of the U.S. Army, under the command of Brigadier General George Mercer Brooke. In most places it consisted of a track cleared of trees, but not stumps. While in timbered areas blazed trees marked the route, across the prairie stretches a traveler depended on a good sense of direction. Such a “poor excuse for a road” could be used only in winter when the ground was frozen or in summer when the weather was dry, according to an article by Harry Ellsworth Cole in 1925.

Source: Griff Williams, Prairie du Chien



Wyalusing Giant Tree

DNR