

Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser

Trees are a constant source of inspiration for many people as they reach for heaven with their roots in the good earth. At this season of the year, many articles are written extolling the beauty of the yellow, orange and scarlet leaves. But, I'd like to write in a different vein and tell you what certain trees mean to me.

To start, there were many fruit trees in our yard at my home and gradually over the years they were blown down in wind storms. One in particular that comes to my mind is a big black cherry tree where my father had hung our rope swing. The problem here was that barefeet invariably stepped on ripe cherries that had fallen and were being eaten by honey bees. Oh, ouch, ouch.

Even though I admire great trees like oak, ash, poplar and sycamore, I'm one who likes to keep her feet planted firmly on the ground and therefore I'll let others do the climbing. We have a stand of beech trees along the Conestoga River with many initials carved on them. If trees could talk, they'd tell us stories of romance and intrigue.

There is an oak tree in the Donegal area that has managed to grow bark completely over a road sign nailed to it more than fifty years ago. And, the story is told of another oak tree in my area which is of huge proportions. It was not

always thus. About one hundred years ago, my great uncle, while taking a Sunday walk, decided to cut himself a cane and cut down this tree which now has sprouted again to a majestic size.

Some trees are almost one of a kind. There was a quince tree at the edge of our garden, a Sheldon pear near our house and a tree in our meadow with an opening in its trunk, near the base, that always contains water. As children, we probed its depths with sticks.

Then, there was the day my father came to visit and brought several papaw trees along. What a time we had trying to find a fencerow where they wouldn't be too shaded.

And so, I recommend planting a tree if you want to be remembered.

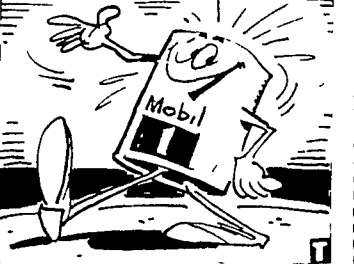
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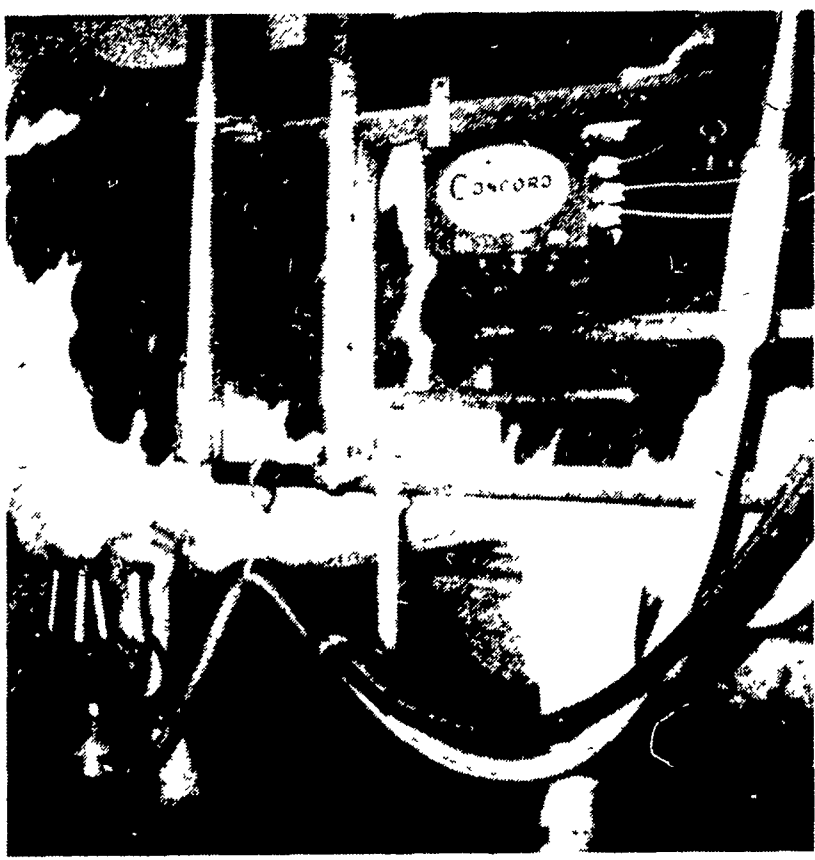
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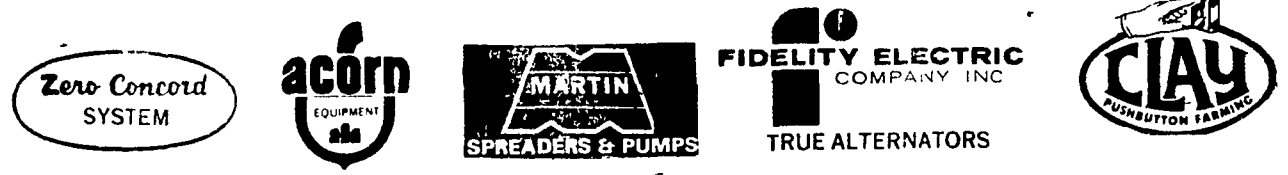
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