

Fort Atkinson's Crooked Oak

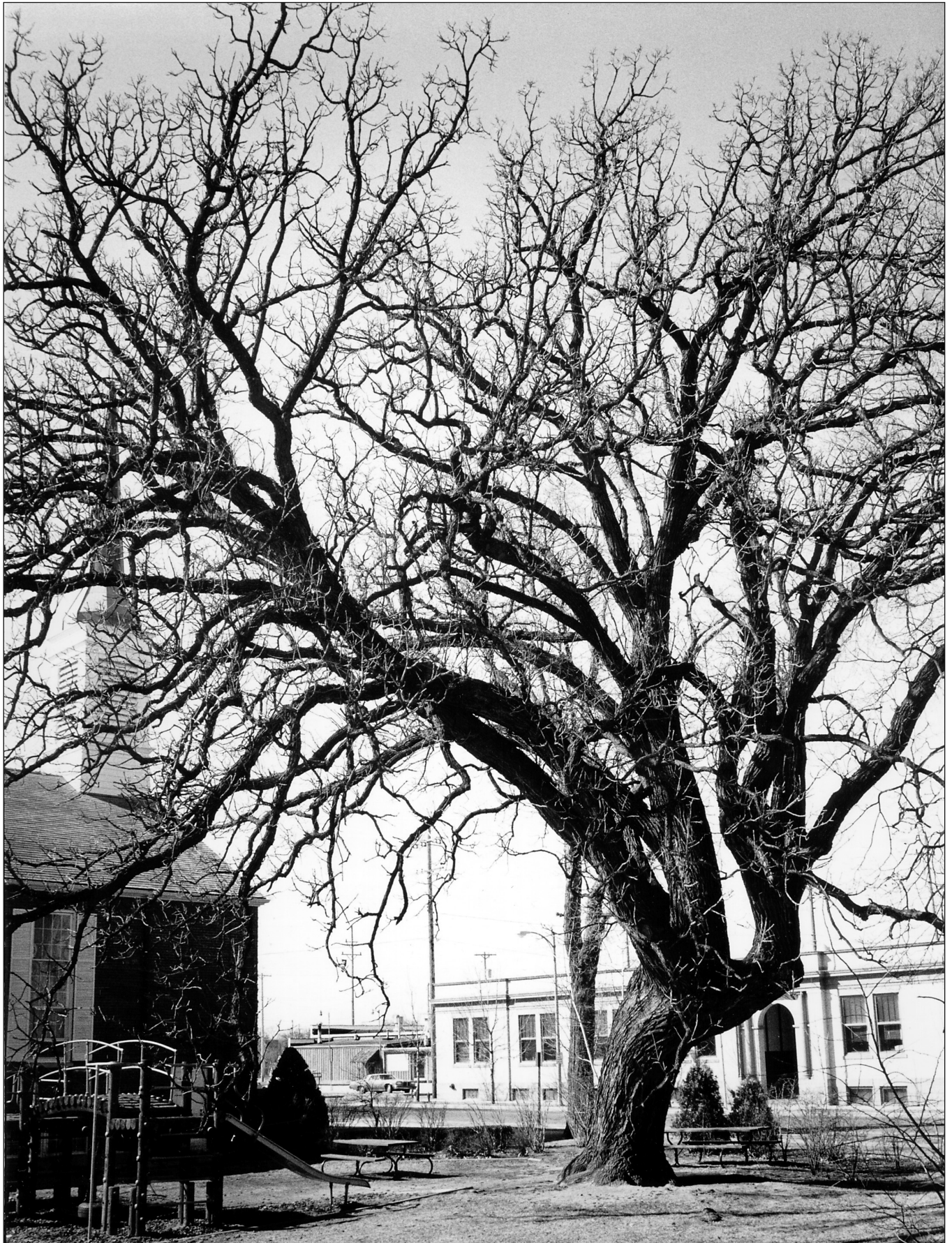
The huge misshapen bur oak on the lawn of the Congregational Church on Milwaukee Avenue in Fort Atkinson is one of a very few trees left from a once-big grove. The Fosters and the Joneses were two of the first families in Fort Atkinson and the trail linking their cabins passed the crooked oak. If travelers went off the path in the thick woods, they could always find their way back by looking for the oddly bent giant.

No one knows for sure how the tree was bent, but some say that Indian children must have played on the tree while it was still young, causing the trunk to grow in a crooked manner.

In the 1830s, the lawn under the tree was the site of the first Fourth of July celebration in Fort Atkinson. Now surrounded by buildings instead of woods, the tree stands across the street from the W. D. Hoard Company, "home of *Hoard's Dairyman*," the outstanding dairy magazine.

When the church administrators enlarged their building in the late 1990s, they carefully protected this remarkable oak.

Source: Hannah Swart, Fort Atkinson



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R. D. Durbin (1981)