

# NEW HARMONY FIRE BURNS LONE PINE

by Rolaine King

The lone Ponderosa Pine, also known as The Big Pine, which greeted the first pioneers as they entered and explored the valley in 1849 burned in a wilderness managed fire August 29, three days after the Forest Service assured townspeople all was going as planned for a slow burn of the tangled undergrowth on top of the mountain. The fire started as a lightning strike on July 25 in the Pine Valley Wilderness area. It traveled southwest to the tops of Dam and Straight Canyons, but then went wildly out of control in one day racing down Straight Canyon along the stream course that brought the pine seed to rest "long before Columbus" according the poem by Alice Redd Rich.

It then burned the icon that spanned the generations: those who eventually left New Harmony, those who stayed, and those just beginning to learn of the Redd's story of the debris and boulder filled flood the tree



## *Remembering The Big Pine*

by Brent Prince

*Yes, you watched the first wagons, horses, pioneers and oxen drift into the New Harmony Valley. You have been a sentinel father protecting us for years, as the water of Main Canyon fed your twisted black roots. The big pine was my friend, always there, always strong, always sturdy. I have gazed at your strength and elegance for fifty years, expecting you to last well past my lifetime.*

*So many times I rode my horse by your trunk, gazed into the sky looking at your green ponderosa needles silhouetted against blue sky and marveled at your stature and dominance. But life has a way of teaching us that when we think we are in control we are not.*

*As the flames raced toward you I was hoping for*

parted saving the Redd farm duplex. The poem and story were being read each mid-March at the New Harmony Heritage snow flower and Big Pine Conservation hike--new traditions to bridge the generations.

The pine was a favorite hiking spot for the younger crowd, the summers being long, the small town quiet, and the Pine a novelty within walking distance of town. Many a proposal and engagement happened under her bowers. In *A History of Washington County*, published by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers reports the pine had "been struck by lightning on two occasions" and survived an ax chopping. "It can be seen for miles and is a Mecca for children's hikes." The fire also took out two houses and damaged others near the mountain.

*some kind of miracle to spare your life. I watched from Pace's meadow as the wave of fire enveloped you and the forest of oak below you. I heard the fire advance and crackle spitting hot ash into the air as I led five horses to safety Saturday evening...As the smoke cleared on Sunday morning I could see you there still tall and strong, smoke and flame, chewing away you stood still and silent, like a great warrior stabbed in battle.*

*Today we lost an icon, a part of me died with you! Our lives will go on, but never be the same. So my friend, go to heaven, send down some roots and maybe when we find you again, you will be alive and well, healed from the scorching flames of fire that took you away. There must be a Big Pine in Heaven for surely your spirit lives on...*

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