

Danvers ceremony celebrates Endicott Pear Tree

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By Sean Teehan, Town Correspondent

Four generations of Endicotts showed up for a celebration of the Endicott Pear Tree, the oldest living fruit tree documented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

More than 100 people gathered last night in the lobby of Massachusetts General Hospital/ North Shore Center for Outpatient Care, on whose property the tree sits, to hear presentations about the pear tree planted by John Endicott, colonial Massachusetts' first governor.

"It's one of the rarest things, a living historical artifact," said Wayne H. Eisenhauer, treasurer of the Danvers Historical Society. "Pear trees don't usually live for hundreds of years, so it's quite extraordinary."

The historical society teamed up with the Essex National Heritage Commission and Massachusetts General Hospital/ North Shore Center for Outpatient Care to host the lecture and viewing last night, said Annie Harris, executive director of the Essex National Heritage Commission.

"Typically what we like to do is have people realize what's in this region... and take care of them and celebrate them," Harris said yesterday.

Endicott is believed to have shipped the pear tree over from Europe and planted it in about 1630, Harris said.

On a rainy evening yesterday, people crowded the lobby for the presentation.

"It was literally standing room only," said Eisenhauer, who attended last night. Interest in the tree was strong enough that about half the people attending walked outside in the rain to get a close look at the pear tree, he added.

About 12 descendants of John Endicott from as far away as St. Louis came to Danvers for the event, Eisenhauer said. Those family members in attendance spanned four generations.

Presentations about the tree's history were given by Anthony Patton, a retired physician at North Shore Medical Center and a Danvers Historical Society member, as well

as Karen Krag, an oncologist at the hospital, according to Massachusetts General Hospital/
North Shore Center for Outpatient Care.

Saying the event went off without a hitch, Eisenhower reflected on the trees significance
during an interview this morning.

"It's a direct tie to the beginnings of the colony," Eisenhower said. "It's a direct tie to agriculture
in America."