**THE FAMOUS OAK IN SHEVCHENKO PARK**

**Rendered by *Valeria Grechanaya, October 2016 – May 2017***

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The Park in the heart of Kherson has always been a favorite place to go for a walk. For older Khersonites the very mention of the public garden is heart-warming: the memories of their bygone youth are forever associated with this park. Herein they met, fell in love… The park has always been a meeting place for the veterans of the Second World War. The recreation ground is always full of people, especially at weekends.

In the early 1950s, annual regional exhibitions of achievements in cattle-breeding were held here: bulls, fine-fleeced sheep, elite breeds of cows were exhibited. All these livestock were placed behind the forged metal fence, the exhibition occupying the entire block from Ushakov Avenue to Petro Kalnyshevsky street. Festivals were held in the park for young people. The entrance to the park was not free: all the money collected from the lotteries and merry-go-rounds was spent on the renovation of the park.

There are a lot of gorgeous trees in the park, but in the centre an amazing oak is located, which has always been its landmark… As time went on, the Park was rebuilt and renovated, but the Oak remained the focus of attention all the same. The Oak has become a place of meetings and visits. A lot of people took photos with the Oak in the background. People have always been attracted by the Oak.

Sadly, there is little information about the history of the Oak. It is mentioned that the Oak located in Shevchenko Park was planted in 1896, was taken under protection in 1972. The first trees were planted on this territory in 1869. However, the information about the Oak’s “birthday” is doubtful. In a pre-revolutionary postcard it was written: *«Kherson. The oak in the park was planted by Emperor Alexander III».* But it isn’t possible, because the Emperor died in 1894.

The story about the Kherson Oak became known in the whole county of the former Soviet Union some sixty years ago. This happened thanks to the writer Boris Gorbatov who wrote about the Liberation of Kherson from the Fascists in «The Pravda» (‘The Truth’, a newspaper) from March 14, 1944:

*«The old man was standing in the park and looking at the trees. Many trees were cut down by the Germans…*

*‘What are you looking for?’ I asked him.*

*He didn’t answer, continuing to look for something with his old eyes. Suddenly, he exclaimed happily:*

*‘Saved, saved!’*

*And I saw a pleased smile which appeared from under his moustache.*

*‘What is saved?’*

*‘Our Oak has survived! The famous Kherson Oak!’ and he pointed to it.*

Some twenty years ago the Park lost its former attraction, but now we are making every effort to change that! As before, a lot of interesting, amazing youth concerts are arranged in our Park. Actually, at leisure, people go to the park. And I am sure that if you visit our park, you will fall in love with it!

**Based on:**

**http//www.mycity.kherson.ua/avtory-ag/skorohod/park135.html**

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