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Last semester, our class did a project in Lederer Park. While we were there, our “guide” pointed out a large oak and told us that it was a resting tree. He then explained to us how these trees provided precious shade near or in the fields in which the farmers and the horses could rest. I would like to be able to do that; to look at a piece of the landscape and see the historical significance its pieces contain.

In order to know what pieces of a landscape are worth preserving, you need to know what is there. I might have, in a design for Lederer Park, decided to save the tree simply because it is old, but I would not have realized its significance. That tree was a clue to what that landscape once was. As landscape architects, we need to know how to read the clues of the landscape and understand what they really mean. Knowing how to read clues is the difference between having an old oak tree and having a resting tree. I want to have a resting tree.