



Joyce Kilmer Avenue in New Brunswick was renamed from Codwise Avenue in 1963 in honor of **Alfred Joyce Kilmer**. Kilmer was an American poet, journalist, and literary editor who was born on December 6, 1886 in the house at #17. The house still stands and is a historical landmark you can visit!

The Kilmer family had moved to New Brunswick in the 1880s. Joyce was the fourth and last child born to Frederick Kilmer and Annie Kilburn Kilmer. His father became the first chemist at Johnson & Johnson (established in 1886), and soon became head of its Scientific Department. He is credited with developing the famous J&J baby powder.

Joyce attended Rutgers Prep and entered Rutgers College in 1904 at age 17 where his literary talents began to shine. He was a reporter and associate editor at the Targum, the college newspaper. After graduation from Columbia University in 1908, he embarked on a literary career. He married and had five children and became known for poetry that celebrated the common beauty of the natural world as well as his religious faith. In 1917 he left employment at the New York Times to enlist in the US Army during WWI. One year later, on July 30, 1918 at age 31, he was killed in action in France, and was posthumously awarded the prestigious Croix de Guerre (War Cross) for his bravery. Kilmer has been immortalized by his published works, most notably the poem, "**Trees.**"

(scroll down for poem)

TREES

by Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.