

Normandy History Has Colorful Background

The Town of Normandy has begun to compile a historical file to represent the Town's 155 year old history. Arnold Totter, building commissioner of the Town of Normandy and member of the Missouri Historical Society, initiated the effort to get a complete background of the Town's development. Totter stated that he has been aware that a good deal of historical information on the Town is not on file, and is desired.

Totter also, reported that there is no essential significance to claiming Normandy's history as 155 years old, which would then date back to about 1811, other than the fact that it was in this period that some recorded history was begun.

Prior to the turn of the eighteenth century, the Normandy area was inhabited by Osage and Sioux Indians, who kept no log of events.

During the early 1800's,

settlers spread to all areas of the present city and county. Many settled as far west as Saint Charles. This is significant because, even up to the year 1813, the edge of the city of Saint Louis (population at this time was about 3,000) was Fourth street.

The history of Normandy is essentially the history of the John Baptiste Charles Lucas family.

Early Settler

John Lucas was born on August 14, 1758, in Pont au de Mer, Normandy, France. It was in Paris that Lucas met Benjamin Franklin, and shortly thereafter left his family's ancient holdings at Pont au de Mer to come to Philadelphia in 1784. Within a few years, Lucas was elected to the Pennsylvania state legislature.

After the concession of the Louisiana Purchase to the United States, Lucas was appointed by President Jefferson

as Commissioner of Land Claims and Judge of the Louisiana Territorial Court. In 1805, Lucas moved with his family to Saint Louis, where he began investing in lands and lots adjacent to Saint Louis.

Saint Louis was a bustling prosperous river town, showing signs of greatness as a gateway to the west. It pulsed with travelers, fur trappers, hunters, and explorers. The city became a lively center of judicial and legal activity.

From this busy background came Charles Lucas, second oldest son of John Baptiste Lucas. Charles, opening a law office as his father had, had the chance to purchase "New Madrid Land Certificates" for land in southern Missouri. He purchased the land, and some eight years later, lost the land in earthquakes. In recompense, he was granted about 1,150 acres of land about nine miles north-

west of Saint Louis.

This land included Normandy, as well as the other modern day municipalities of Bel Nor, Bellerive, Norwood Court, Berdel Hills, Pasadena Hills, Pasadena Park, Northwoods, Beverly Hills, and Glen Echo Park. However, originally, all of this land went under the name of Normandy. The original boundaries were Union avenue, west to the Missouri River, Florissant avenue south to Delmar.

Downtown Property

Lucas also became owner of downtown property bounded: Market to St. Charles, Fourth street to Jefferson--the core of the St. Louis Business District. In addition, he owned a large tract of land in Bellefontaine and a twenty-acre plot in Clayton.

The origin of the Town's name dates back to 1811.

Charles Lucas rode out to survey this area of land

granted to him, and upon viewing this wide beautiful country he exclaimed: "Now I have Normandy of my own." Lucas was referring to his home Normandy, France, and since then the land was called Normandy.

Charles Lucas' life came an untimely end in 1817, martyr of dueling, which he personally opposed. As political opponent of U. Senator Thomas Hart Benton he became involved in a quarrel with Benton, which resulted in a duel in which Lucas was wounded. A second duel, which was to settle the first on cost Lucas his life.

The title to Charles' land passed to his brother James H. Lucas and Anne Hur Charles' sister who had married Captain Theodore Hur of the American Navy who was commander of the original "Hornet" American boat.

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ship. In 1832, Captain Hunt died and four years later Anne married the Captain's first cousin Wilson P. Hunt, explorer for John Jacob Astor.

Although the heirs maintained fashionable townhouses in Saint Louis, on the well-to-do Lucas Place, which is now Locust street just west of Fourteenth street, they had summer homes in Normandy.

Summer House

Mrs. Georgia Hunt, direct descendent of John Baptiste Lucas, lived in the gray colonial house at 7717 Natural Bridge Road. This was one of the summer houses of the Hunts, and is presently the Ursuline Villa de Angela. A yellowish document in the possession of Mrs. Hunt told of Anne Lucas Hunt--her husband's grandmother who lived in Normandy "when it was young."

The Hunts' original Summer Shelter and later homes were built on what afterward became the Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle. Since, the Cenacle has moved to the southwest County.

The general area, just east of Normandy, had been gradually becoming more settled. In 1845, a continuation of West Mound Street in Saint Louis was laid out. It was called Natural Bridge Road, taking its name from a massive limestone arch--a natural bridge--over Stony Creek in North Saint Louis. In 1852, con-

struction of a single track plank road was begun by the Natural Bridge Plank Road Company, which even included a branch to Florissant (the present Florissant road).

John Baptiste Lucas' fine Catholic training was shown in Anne Hunt's solicitude for the religious welfare of the little Normandy community. In 1854, she built a small frame church at a cost of about \$1000 and donated it with about 10 arpens (French acre) of land to the Society of Jesus. The church was named St. Ann's in honor of Anne Hunt's patron saint, and today, a more modern St. Ann's Catholic Church stands on those same grounds. The church was later turned over to the Passionist Fathers.

'Little Rome'

Normandy was often called "The Little Rome of the West" because of the many religious institutions located there.

A Sister Mary Jerome, a Catholic nun, was the first Post Mistress and conducted the Post Office about 1857, which was then located at 7600 Natural Bridge.

The first public school in Normandy was located on Ramsey's Farm located at about 9200 Natural Bridge.

Now 5,000

Today Normandy is a community of approximately five thousand people. It is predominantly a residential community with a small business area in the vicinity of Natural Bridge and Florissant roads. Known as the wedge, this intersection, according to old timers, is said to have had a toll gate. The well known Normandy grove, a well patronized picnic grounds was located at this wedge until developed into a High Class residential section.

Normandy was incorporated as a Village in 1945. Today it is bounded by Lucas-Hunt road on the east, Natural Bridge and Florissant roads on the north, Glen Echo Park on the South and Bel Nor on the west.

Some families of the early settlers are represented in the community at the present time in third and fourth generation: Null, Tighe, Koenig, Butz, Muellers, to name a few,

Rummage Sale In Overland

There will be a rummage sale on Saturday, August 6, at 2408 Woodson road in Overland, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The sale is given by Pedrotti-Vieth #6211 V. F. W. Auxiliary.

Proceeds will be used for a softball team.