

NORMANDY BITS AND PIECES

Natural Bridge Avenue was named for the original trail from St. Louis to Florissant, just east of Jefferson Avenue. It passed over a natural bridge of limestone just above the creek that was named Rocky Branch. The road was known as Owen's Station in 1857. Natural Bridge was a plank road and a toll road. There was a tollgate at 7400 Natural Bridge at the wedge.

Arpent: A unit of measure often mentioned in the earlier stories about settlers in areas inhabited by French. It is the equivalent of .85 acre. The term is still used in French-Canadian areas.

Charles Clark (not related to William Clark) owned a plot of ground on the south side of Natural Bridge in 1882. There were several fine pine trees on his lawn and he named his home "Pine Lawn". When the Narrow Gauge Steam Railroad was built and ran from Grand and Olive to Florissant, it crossed Natural Bridge near Clark's place and the station became known as Pine Lawn Station. "Pine Lawn", his home, was at 6292 Stillwell Drive. Soon the entire area was known as Pine Lawn.

Bellerive, a town including Bellerive Country Club, was named for Captain Louis St. Ange de Bellerive, French Commandant who moved to St. Louis at its founding from Fort Chartres.

After the New Madrid earthquake, those who had lost their land could surrender their titles to their damaged land and receive a certificate entitling them to select tracts of like size from any public lands in the state. Of the public lands in St. Louis County, it has been said that it was given away, as some was sold for 15¢ an acre, while the lowest price of government land at the time was \$1.25 an acre. There is a record that shows some settlers purchased 640 acres for the price of one gallon of whiskey per acre. What is now Normandy School District was in the hands of a few landowners, making it inaccessible to small landowners. As late as 1884, there were only 200 persons paying taxes on its entire 10 square miles.

By 1895, all lands in Normandy along the railway lines (except 157 acres belonging to the Hunt estate) had been subdivided and offered for sale. There were only three pieces of land of more than 100 acres except those belonging to cemeteries, golf clubs and religious institutions.

With the coming of the automobile, public railroad systems and paved roads, new areas of land could be developed. The district continued to build until the depression in 1929.

Captain Thomas Turner owned a large farm near Normandy. His son was Henry Smith Turner III, who was the first auto dealer in St. Louis. He was also the chief publisher and editor of an off-beat magazine called "Much Ado". The statue of St. Francis of Assisi in Forest Park is dedicated to his memory.

In the early 1900's, the land west of and within the area bounded by Pennsylvania, St. Charles Rock Road, and Olive Street Road, was mainly farm land with an occasional homestead. The land west of Hanley Road and north of Page, included the subdivisions of Vinita Park, Spring Avenue Heights, and Wheaton. This land area was developed by the David Realty Company in 1910-1911. Harrison School was originally named Wheaton. In 1910, our present North & South Road was named Spring Avenue because of the many natural springs in the area.

In laying out Vinita Park, the streets were named for former presidents of the United States--Washington, Madison, Monroe, etc.

The McDonagh Family owned an extensive farm east of Walton Road in the area of North & South Road and Page Avenue. The donated an acre for St. Rita's Church.

The land on which Vinita Terrace is now situated was formerly the site of the summer home of Dwight Davis. Davis, who lived from 1879 to 1945, served as Secretary of War, Lt. Colonel in World War I, Governor of Philippines from 1929-1932. In 1900, he established the coveted Davis Cup as an international trophy for amateur tennis.

David Rowland Francis, former mayor of St. Louis, Governor of Missouri, promoter of 1904 World's Fair, Secretary of the Interior, and Ambassador to Russia, owned a home near Pine Lawn.

Can you remember - - -

Miss Helen Koragold announced that all orchestra meetings of the Normandy High School would be held in the auditorium every Tuesday at 3:00 P.M. All students in the district playing an orchestra instrument were encouraged to attend rehearsals.

11 Elementary schools marched in a parade to their picnic sites.

Mrs. Maude Priest was the first teacher at Garfield School.

Normandy schools ran for 10 months, even though the State law required only 6 months.

In 1914 there were 880 students enrolled in our schools.

Normandy Park and Normandy Hills area.

The dedication of the new six-lane Natural Bridge Road on October 15, 1950.

The opening of the Kroger Store--the most modern to be occupied by Kroger to date, with off-street parking for 185 automobiles.

Under the direction of Tom Bradley there was organized the first local Civilian Defense Control Center in the State of Missouri in World War II.

Sister Mary Jerome, a Catholic nun, was the first Postmistress and conducted the Post Office about 1857 from 7600 Natural Bridge.

The Northwoods Garden Club is over 25 years old. The Board of Aldermen of Northwoods in August, 1965, adopted a flag.

Page Blvd. was named for Daniel D. Page, a baker, miller, financier, railroad promoter, real estate man, and second mayor of St. Louis.

Natural Bridge was an arch of elms from Lucas-Hunt to Jennings Road. This was like a tunnel and the sun never shone on that section of the road.

Normandy Shopping Center was acres of trees belonging to the Passionate Fathers.