

Living History: Normandy Oral History Interview Reflections
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Perhaps more than in any other space, university students do not often participate in community life where they live and learn. Simply, they commute to and hang out on campus. They do not think twice about what east of Natural Bridge Road and its surrounding neighborhoods hold. Through our work, we have discovered Normandy has so much to offer and to receive from the UMSL community. As students, we were excited to use our resources and skills, on behalf of the City of Normandy, to further immerse ourselves into this amazing community of people. Neighborhood functions such as fish fries at St. Ann's, garden workdays at the Wayside Community Garden, and casual gatherings of long-time friends opened themselves to us. We wanted to learn about childhood memories of Normandy. We wanted to learn about the history of local businesses. We wanted to learn about how our university had shaped and been shaped by this city. The following transcripts will show that we learned those things and so much more.

One unexpected theme unearthed itself throughout: similar feelings of the neighborhood feel of Normandy. From the lips of a one-hundred-one year old to a nine year old, everyone remarked that this little city is where their friends and families are. "It's just a nice place to live," as lifetime resident, Mary Blackard stated. We feel privileged to have stepped away from campus to be welcomed with open arms by this community. Normandy's history is vibrant and visible everywhere. So many more stories are in the community that should be recorded and shared. We invite you to engage in the living histories we have recorded and to add to the collection your own memories.