

THE HISTORY OF  
**2005 OREGON AVENUE**  
FOX PARK NEIGHBORHOOD  
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

The first settlements in the St. Louis area were made by mound-building indigenous peoples of the Mississippian culture, followed by other migrating tribal groups such as the Illini, Missouri, and Osage. French explorers arrived in the late 17th century, followed by the Spanish. In 1764, a fur trading company led by Pierre Laclède and Auguste Chouteau established the settlement of St. Louis.<sup>1</sup> The Fox Park neighborhood originated as a part of the Petit Prairie of the St. Louis Common Fields.<sup>2</sup> These lands were composed of a series of strips, measured in arpens, and were allocated to the original French settlers of St. Louis for cultivation, livestock grazing, or as a source of firewood. The Petit Prairie was a true grass land, with the northern boundary around Russell Avenue and the southern border at Arsenal Street. Peoria Indians once encamped in this tract, thus giving it the alternate name, "Prairie du Village Sauvage".<sup>3</sup>

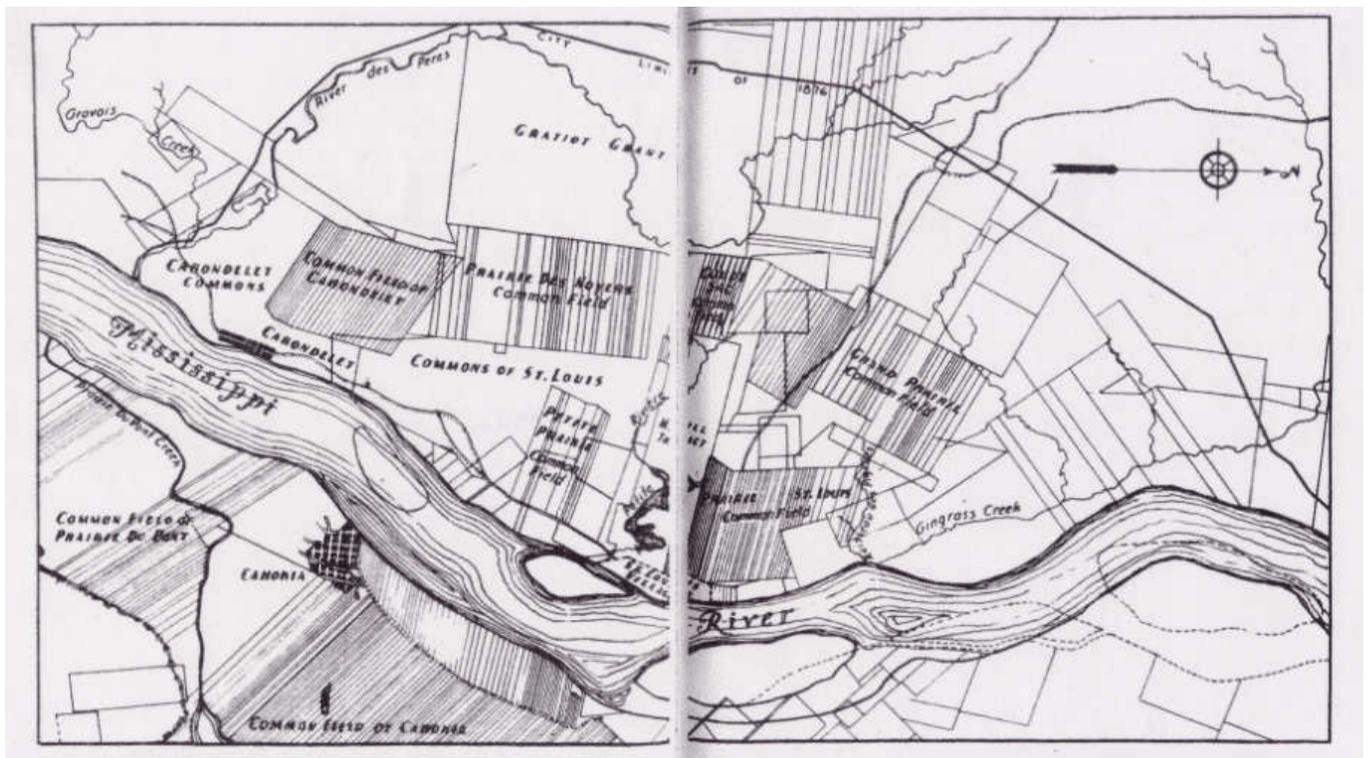


Figure 1: Peterson, Charles E. *Colonial St. Louis: Building a Creole Capital*. Saint Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1949.

After the United States' acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase in 1804 and the subsequent colonization of the area by Anglo-Americans, confirmations were secured by various prominent St. Louis families, who later sold their tracts to land speculators.<sup>4</sup> A section in the Petit Prairie was acquired by John Mullanphy, however it remained largely undeveloped for the next few decades .

John Mullanphy, an Irish immigrant, invested heavily in real estate. Prior to the War of 1812, he held seven tracts of land in St. Louis comprising 750 acres and soon added plantations and plots of 3000 more acres near St. Louis and Florissant to his ledger. His family became known for their philanthropy, funding orphanages and schools.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1850s much of the developed property in the area was owned by German Catholics, recent immigrants from Germany's 1848 civil war. Subdivisions were platted upon which many middle-class German merchants and manufacturers built elegant homes as well as seeing modest two-story dwellings and flats for the burgeoning working class German immigrants. Both ranges showcased the art of brick construction and craftsmanship which is typical of St. Louis neighborhoods.<sup>6</sup>

Just east of the neighborhood, Compton Hill Reservoir was created in 1871 to address the growing metropolitan area's demand for water. The location was chosen because of its high elevation, permitting gravity distribution of water to a wide area of St. Louis east of Grand Boulevard. The first horse car line running out Gravois and Arsenal to Grand provided public transit to the area which also propelled the post Civil War residential development.

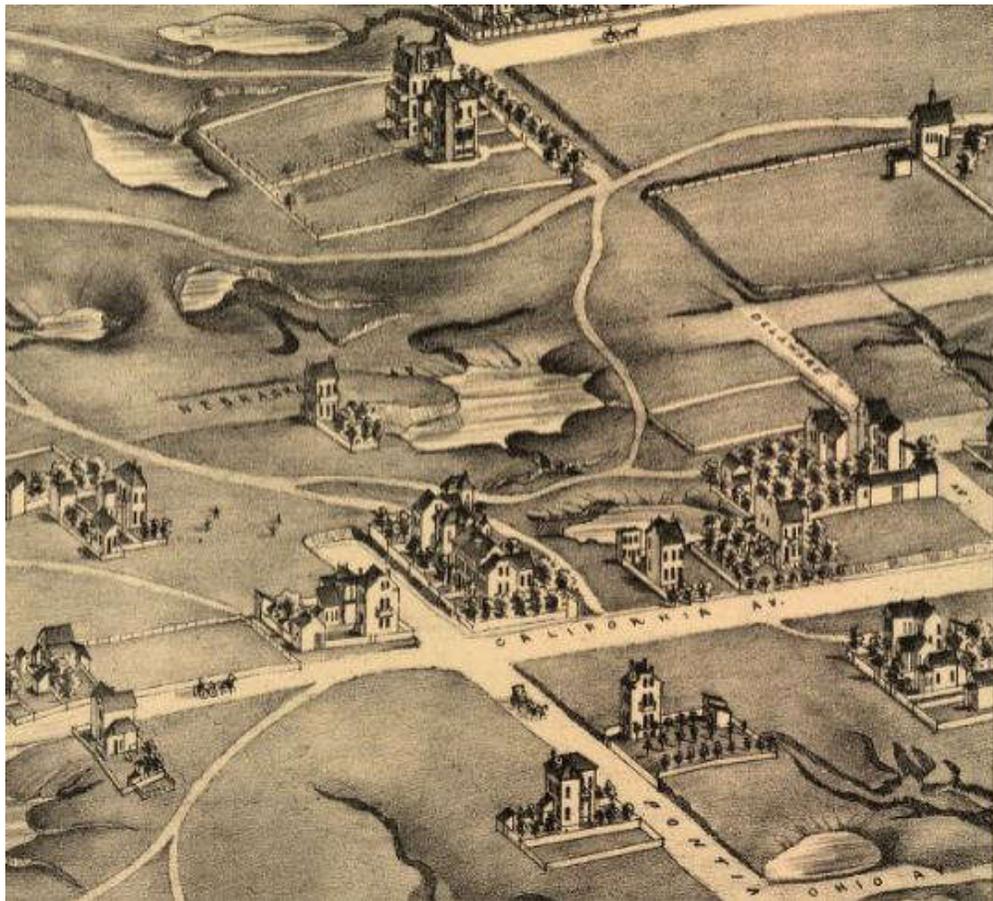


Figure 2: 1875 Compton & Dry's Pictorial St. Louis, Note the street names- Russell for Pontiac, Geyer for Delaware

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Despite the improvements, there were several tracts of land that remained uninhabited before the turn of the century. Parts of these served as a neighborhood recreational area unofficially known as South Side Park, where the Brotherhood Baseball League played and a racehorse track was operating near the future site of McKinley High School. C. Andrew Tilles, a noted realtor and horse track developer, acquired an interest in the South Side racetrack and experimented with arc lights to illuminate the track at night in what would be the first night horse racing in the U.S.

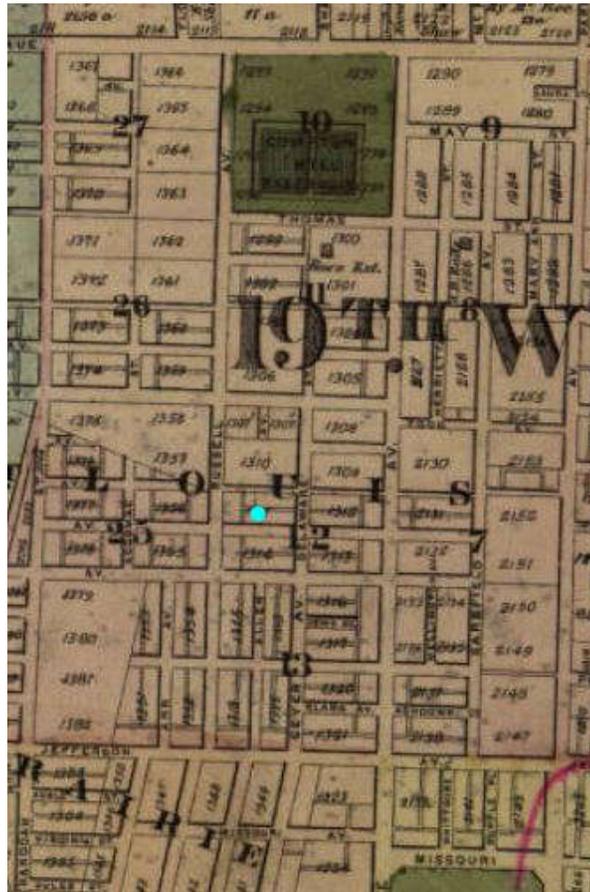


Figure 3: 1878 Pitzman's showing approx location of property

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Oregon Avenue was named after the U.S. state and fit with the convention of naming north/south streets in the area after states. Sidewalks were laid on Oregon Avenue between Russell and Geyer in 1883.<sup>9</sup>

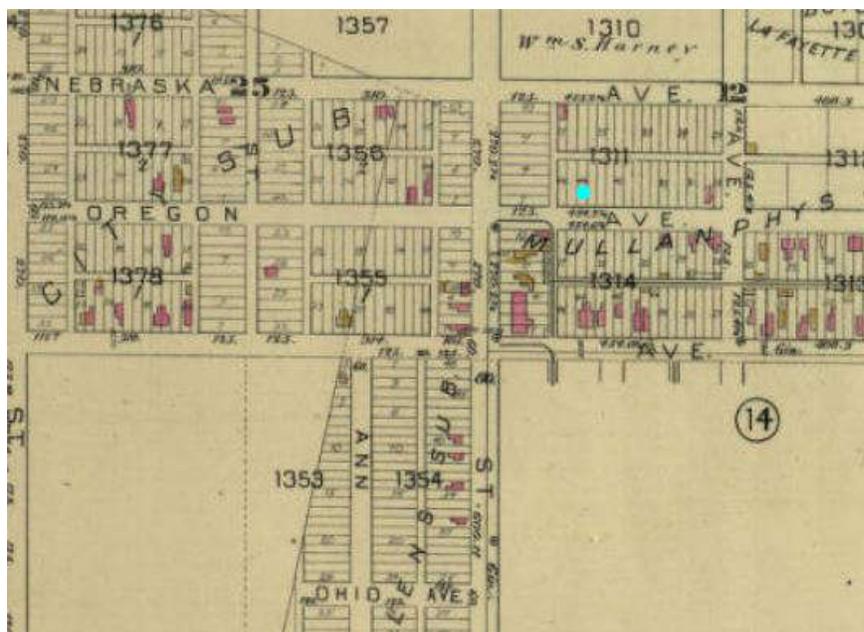


Figure 4: 1883 Hopkins Atlas showing approx location of 2005 Oregon

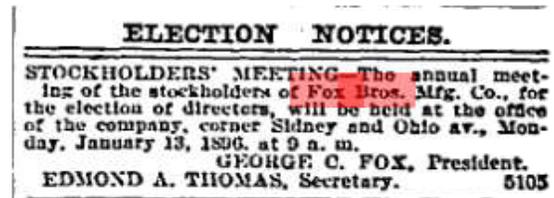
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In 1904, McKinley High School, the first public high school on the south side of St. Louis, was completed. The school introduced manual training workshops as an innovative experiment by School Board President Calvin Woodward, designed to reverse the high dropout rate that was currently standard in the public school system. McKinley was designed in the Jacobean style of architecture by William B. Ittner for around a cost of a half-million dollars and incorporated large shops for machinery as well as laboratories and classrooms. The school's enrollment rate for both night and day classes was so successful that a new school was commissioned three miles south soon after (Cleveland H.S.).<sup>11</sup>



Figure 5: McKinley High School, 1905, courtesy of Genealogy in St. Louis, David A. Lossos

The Fox Brother's Manufacturing Company set up shop in the area during this time. They built sashes, door frames, cabinets and other mill work items for the building trades.<sup>12</sup> The land formerly occupied by their large lumber yards at Shenandoah and Ohio were used for recreational purposes in 1917 and purchased by the City as a park in 1931. Thus was born the name Fox Park for the surrounding community.



2005 Oregon was built as a speculative dwelling by Austin P. Oliver, an agent of the George Truesdale real estate company in 1887. [It could have been intended as a 2-family flat, but was occupied by single families mostly; it did contain multiple households at one time] A.P. Oliver took out two building permits for city block 1311. Although these permits do not list a specific house number (only "west side Oregon between Geyer & Russell), and by matching residence dates and addresses in the city directories, we deduce that A.P. Oliver lived in the house he built in 1884 (2003 Oregon) and sold the one he built in 1887 to Walter F. McEntire.

Walter F. McEntire had married Julia Kalb on August 1, 1887 and probably purchased 2005 Oregon to set up their new household.<sup>13</sup> Their daughter was born June 13, 1888.

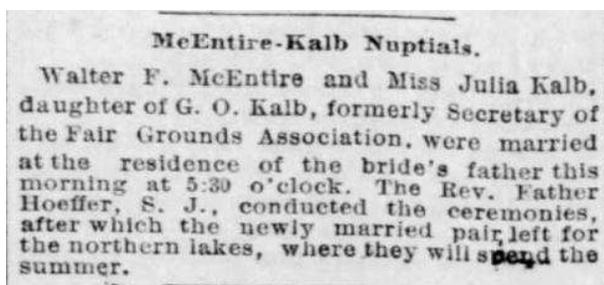


Figure 6: Aug 1, 18887 Post Dispatch

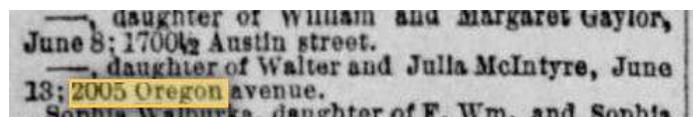


Figure 7: June 13, 1888 Post Dispatch

He was a prominent and active member of the St. Louis legal community, as detailed in this profile:

"McEntire, Walter F., lawyer, and a member of the St. Louis bar since 1881, was born in St. Louis June 4, 1861, son of Joseph and Morgiana Rosamond (Sheble) McEntire. The elder McEntire belonged to a Virginia family transplanted to the Old Dominion from the North of Ireland in colonial days. He himself came from Virginia to Missouri in the early 'forties,' and for many years thereafter was prominently identified with the river trade of the Missouri and upper Mississippi. His wife - the mother of Walter F. McEntire - was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was the daughter of Frederick and Rachel (Cumming) Sheble. She came of mixed Bavarian and English lineage, Jacob Sheble (or Scheibley), her immigrant ancestry in the paternal line, having come to Pennsylvania 1683, while the progenitor of the Cumming family left Warwickshire, England, for Pennsylvania shortly after William Penn obtained the famous grant which made him founder of the commonwealth which bears his name. Jacob Sheble was one of the colonists who founded Germantown - now a part of Philadelphia - under the leadership of the renowned Re. Francis Daniel Pastorius, friend and associate of Penn, who conducted a colony of German and Dutch Mennonites and Quakers to Pennsylvania, and who was thereafter until his death one of the most conspicuous figures in the colony. Succeeding generations of both the Sheble and Cumming families were orthodox Quakers, and have descendants with many of the characteristics of that admirable people.

Reared in St. Louis, Walter F. McEntire was educated in the public schools, finishing his academic studies at the High School. The trend of his mind was toward the law from boyhood, and soon after quitting school he began his preparation for the bar under the preceptorship of Nathaniel Myers, then of St. Louis, now a prominent member of the New York bar. He completed his law studies and was admitted to the bar in the autumn of 1881. Opening an office immediately afterward, he had the good fortune to impress himself at once upon both the bar and the public as a young man of superior attainments, with a genius for his chosen calling, and as a result established himself almost immediately in good practice. Since then he has progressed steadily and rapidly toward that sphere of professional labor in which Daniel Webster declared a lawyer could always find plenty of room, the charmed space occupied by those standing at the head of their profession. Physically and intellectually a vigorous man, vigorous thoughts and vigorous action have been distinguishing features of his career at the bar, and the cause committed to his care is championed in the chivalrous spirit born of devotion to his calling, and with the discretion of controversy. Studiously careful in the preparation of his pleadings, he is correspondingly forceful in the presentation and argument of his cases, a conscientious and able counselor and a well-equipped, well-rounded trial lawyer. Candor, fairness and evident sincerity are among his characteristics as a practitioner, which impress favorably both courts and juries and give added forcefulness and effectiveness to rugged oratory. As a public speaker he has on numerous occasions rendered important services to the Democratic party, in the principles of which he firmly believes, and he is known as one of the popular and effective campaign orators of Missouri. The fact that he has been a participant in politics as a champion of principles in which he believed has not, however, kindled in him an ambition to enjoy either the honors or emoluments of office, and the only official position which he has held has been that of member of the St. Louis school board. He was elected to this position in 1889, accepting it because of the deep interest which he has always felt in the advancement of the educational interests of the city. As a member of the department of the city government having in charge its public schools, he served on its most important committees and rendered such valuable services to the public as few men have rendered in the same capacity. He is an active member of various social and political clubs, in all of which he is an influential factor, and in most of which he has held official positions. Mr. McEntire married, in 1887, Miss Julia Kalb, daughter of G. O. Kalb, who was one of the founders of the St. Louis Fair Association, and for many years its efficient secretary. Their only child is Vera McEntire, born in 1888." <sup>14</sup>

In 1890, their daughter Vera was honored by having an Ancient Order of United Workmen (A.O.U.W.) lodge, of which her father was a member, named for her, although it seems she did not attend the ceremony.<sup>15</sup>



Walter and Julia McEntire sold 2005 Oregon to Frederick Heckwolf in 1893 and moved their family to Ferguson, Missouri and then on to Los Angeles, California.<sup>16 17</sup>

Frederick Heckwolf was a saloon keeper of German descent who resided at 2005 Oregon along with his wife Mary (Obert) and their children. In 1900, Fred Jr. (21), a dry goods clerk, Edwin (19), a druggist clerk, Franklin (17), a bill boy, Dora (15), Pearl (10), Roy (7), and Adolph (1) lived at the house with their parents.<sup>18</sup> Eldest son Fred Heckwolf Jr. was a track and field athlete, a member of the Missouri Athletic Club, and competed in the 1904 Summer Olympics. He placed fifth in the 100 m sprint competition where he recorded a time of 11.6 seconds.<sup>19</sup>

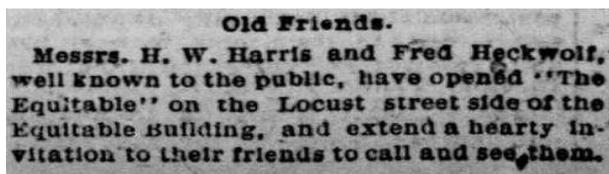


Figure 8: June 18 1893 Post Dispatch



Figure 9: Aug 14 1904 Post Dispatch

One more child was born to the Heckwolf family, Ralph, in 1903, as the oldest children married and left to start their own households. In 1910, Fred and Mary Heckwolf lived at 2005 Oregon with their children Dorothy, Pearl, a jewelry store clerk, Roy, a drug store salesman, Adolph, and Ralph.<sup>20</sup>

As the Heckwolf nest became emptier, Fred and Mary must have rented out some rooms in the 1910s. Thomas McCauley, a stenographer, and Kate Dame were tenants during that time.<sup>21</sup> 1920 found a retired Fred and Mary Heckwolf, their daughter Pearl, and sons Adolph, a coal company clerk, and Ralph, a fur company clerk, residing at 2005 Oregon.<sup>22</sup> In 1923, Ralph Heckwolf was victim of a robbery outside Forest Park, where he was parked with a lady-friend.

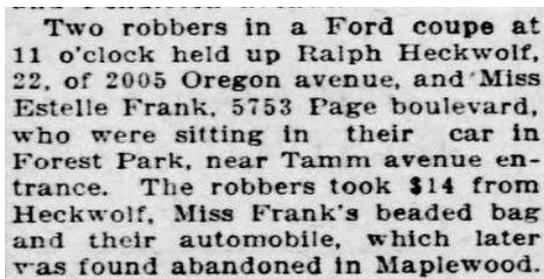


Figure 10: Nov 13 1923 Post Dispatch

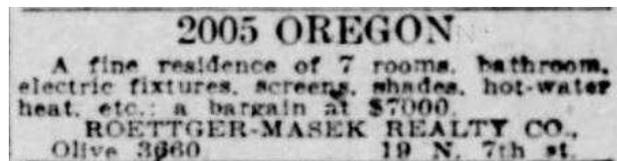


Figure 11: Jul 19 1925 Post Dispatch

The property was sold to Walter and Jennie Hooper probably around 1925 (see for sale advert).<sup>23</sup> The Heckwolf family had resided at 2005 Oregon for around 35 years.

In 1930, Walter Hooper, a coal merchant, his wife Jennie, and daughter Mary, lived in one side of 2005 Oregon while the other flat was rented at \$32/month by William Soloman, a coal driver, his wife Juanita, and daughter Jeannie.<sup>24</sup>

2005 Oregon was sold to a series of real estate companies and out of town buyers.<sup>25</sup> In 1940, it was rented out at \$16/month to Monty Dodd, a butcher, his wife Elizabeth, and son Monty. The other unit was rented by Earl Dodd, a shoe worker, his wife Olive, daughter Joan, and mother in law Esther Senter.<sup>26</sup>

The property was put up for sale and purchased in March 1946 by Mervin and Beadie Strahan.

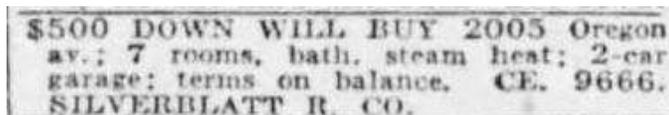


Figure 12: Jan 24 1946 Post Dispatch

They probably used it as a rental property as there were various residents listed at 2005 Oregon over the next 18 years. Mervin and Beadie Strahan sold the property to Anton and Virginia Brendel in 1964.<sup>27</sup> There were two more owners before Betty Dickey, who was a tenant of 2005 Oregon in 1974, became the owner in 1980.<sup>28</sup> After two more owners, 2005 Oregon was rehabbed in 1999 by James and Tanya McMullen at an estimated cost of \$40,000. A new garage was added in 2007 by owners Zenia Roberts and Brian May at an estimated cost of \$16,566.<sup>29</sup> The property changed hands twice more before resting in the hands of current owners Rebecca Aldrich and Robert Moreland. They have owned 2005 Oregon since 2015.<sup>30</sup>

- 1 Primm, James N. *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980*. Missouri Historical Soc. P, 1998.
- 2 National Register of Historic Places - U. S. Dept. of the Interior. *Architectural Survey of McKinley/Fox District*. St. Louis, MO., 1984. Web.
- 3 Missouri Prairie Foundation. "The Early Prairies of St. Louis." Apr. 1981: Web.
- 4 "Public Lands - Claims in Louisiana and Missouri" *American State Papers*, vol. 3, 1815-1824.
- 5 Faherty, W. B. *The St. Louis Irish: An unmatched Celtic community*. Google books, Missouri Historical Society Press, 2001.
- 6 Oestreich, Kenneth. *Architectural Survey of the Compton Hill Area*. 1977.
- 7 Compton, Richard J, and Dry, Camille. *Pictorial St. Louis: The Great Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley: a Topographical Survey Drawn in Perspective A.D. 1875*. Plate 57. Compton & Co, 1876.
- 8 Pitzman, Julius. *Pitzman's new atlas of the city and county of St Louis*, Page 10-11. Missouri. map. State Historical Society of Missouri. A.B. Holcombe & Co. Philadelphia, PA., 1878.
- 9 Woodward, Tiernan, & Hale. "St. Louis, Mo." *Journal of the House of Delegates*, 1883, Google books.
- 10 Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of the city of St. Louis, Missouri; plate 27*. map. 1883.
- 11 National Register of Historic Places - U. S. Dept. of the Interior. *Architectural Survey of McKinley/Fox District*. St. Louis, MO, 1984. Web.
- 12 Ancestry.com. "St Louis City" *U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989*.
- 13 *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, Aug 1 1887, newspapers.com.
- 14 *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, vol. 3. Edited by William Hyde & Howard L. Conrad. Southern History Co., NY. 1899. Google books.
- 15 *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 12 May 1890, newspapers.com.
- 16 1900 US Census. *Saint Ferdinand, St Louis, Missouri*; Page: 14; Enumeration District: 0128. *Ancestry.com*.
- 17 1920 US Census. *South Pasadena, Los Angeles, California*; Roll: T625\_119; Page: 5A; Enumeration District: 617. *Ancestry.com*.
- 18 1900 US Census. *St Louis Ward 12, St Louis (Independent City), Missouri*; Page: 1; Enumeration District: 0196. *Ancestry.com*.
- 19 "Fred Heckwolf". *Sports Reference*. Retrieved 2 July 2016.
- 20 1910 US Census. *St Louis Ward 14, Saint Louis City, Missouri*; Roll: T624\_818; Page: 6B; Enumeration District: 0219. *Ancestry.com*.
- 21 *Ancestry.com*. "St Louis City" *U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989*.
- 22 1920 US Census. *St Louis Ward 14, St Louis (Independent City), Missouri*; Roll: T625\_955; Page: 12B; Enumeration District: 283. *Ancestry.com*.
- 23 "Microfilm Roll 21." *St. Louis City Inactive Building Permits*. Records Retention. St. Louis City Hall.
- 24 1930 US Census. *St Louis, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri*; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 0032. *Ancestry.com*.
- 25 St. Louis City Deed Records. Assessor's Office. St. Louis City Hall.
- 26 1940 US Census. *St Louis, St Louis City, Missouri*; Roll: m-t0627-02196; Page: 7B; Enumeration District: 96-377A. *Ancestry.com*.
- 27 St. Louis City Deed Records. Assessor's Office. St. Louis City Hall.
- 28 *Ancestry.com*. *U.S. Public Records Index, 1950-1993, Volume 1* [database on-line].
- 29 "Building Permits" *Geo St. Louis*. [dynamic.stlouis-mo.gov/citydata/newdesign/prmts.cfm?handle=11311000270&Parcel9=131100270](http://dynamic.stlouis-mo.gov/citydata/newdesign/prmts.cfm?handle=11311000270&Parcel9=131100270).
- 30 St. Louis City Deed Records. Assessor's Office. St. Louis City Hall.