



# Steps in Time: Northwest Webster

HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

FIFTH IN A SERIES

Established by the  
Webster Groves Historical Society and the  
City of Webster Groves, Missouri

The Webster Groves Historical Society gratefully acknowledges these fine organizations whose support has helped to make this Webster Walk a reality for Webster Groves citizens and visitors, both today and for many years to come:

**Pioneer Bank**  
**Webster University**

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## Before You Begin Your Walk

Northwest Webster is a window into the history and culture of this community. Its eclectic neighborhoods represent a convergence of the wealthy and the working class, blacks and whites, farmland and the earliest subdivisions. In many ways, the area is a microcosm of westward expansion: As Americans moved west, development in this region was fueled by the growth of the railroad in the mid- 1850s and the building boom that followed the Civil War.

The oldest streets of Northwest Webster are influenced by its topography. The Rock Hill Military Road was laid out along the top of a ridge running south from Manchester Road to Jefferson Barracks. Kirkham Avenue, originally called Shady Avenue, follows Shady Creek, along the base of a steep hill. Gore Avenue, once called Church Street, was originally a path that early settlers blazed as a short cut to Rock Hill Presbyterian Church.

In 1832 John and James Marshall, brothers from Virginia, bought land along Manchester Road and the Military Road. Together they owned all the land from Bompert Avenue to Berry Road and from Litzinger Road to Lockwood Avenue. Their houses and cabins along Manchester Road served as a stage coach stop, a trading post, a post office and a school. Each of the Marshalls owned eight slaves. In 1845 the Marshalls donated land for a Presbyterian church and had their slaves build the church. Reverend Artemus Bullard, minister of the First Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, gave the first sermon, and he suggested the church be named Rock Hill Presbyterian Church. He was so taken with the countryside that he decided to establish a boys prep school and college, the Webster College for Boys, beside the Rock Hill Military Road.

At the end of the Civil War, the Marshalls gave land to some of their freed slaves and sold land to others. Black families owned land on Parsons, Slocum and Kirkham avenues, on the bluff above Shady Creek and in the neighborhood called North Webster. In 1866 blacks established the First Baptist Church of Webster Groves and started a school in the church. When the Webster Groves School Board was established in 1868, it took over the operation of the school.

After the Civil War, St. Louis businessmen began moving to Webster Groves to escape the heat and dust and cholera epidemics of the city. Alfred Lee was one of those businessmen. Born in New Orleans, his stepmother banished him in his youth, so he went to Boston and worked in a hardware store. He married in 1850 and moved to St. Louis in 1859. He started a seed company, but it failed, and he sold it to William Plant. Lee took a position with the Shapleigh Hardware Company, where he soon became a partner. Alfred and Sarah Lee had nine children, and six of them died before they were six years old, one every summer, until they moved to Webster Groves.

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In 1865 Lee purchased 48 acres (bounded by Bacon on the north, Rock Hill on the east, Foote on the south and Barron on the west) from John Marshall. Lee moved his family to a little cottage he built in the center of his healthy country property. In 1866 Lee subdivided his 48 acres into four-acre and five-acre lots and sold six of the lots to finance his large Italianate mansion which stood where Oak Manor Drive is today.

Most of the large Italianate mansions that were built in Northwest Webster are no longer standing. Some burned, and others, like Alfred Lee's, were torn down in the 1940s because they lacked indoor plumbing.

In the 1880s a housing boom began in earnest in Webster Groves. Frame Queen Anne houses for commuters were built throughout the community. In Northwest Webster smaller Victorian vernacular houses were constructed between the larger homes. Most families did a little farming, raising fruit, vegetables and chickens.

The city incorporated in 1896, and the Kirkwood Ferguson Streetcar Line was built along Kirkham Avenue and Shady Creek to Glendale and Kirkwood. It became a popular commuter route to the 1904 World's Fair and Washington University. When the streetcars stopped running in the 1950s, the right-of-way became part of Larson Park and the Algonquin Golf Club.

Sites on the Historic Webster Walks have been selected for their architectural or historical value, and they are identified in this book by the names of the people or businesses that originally occupied them. Distinguished sites have been awarded bronze medallions which are embedded in the sidewalks in front of those sites. Your guidebook notes the sites as follows:

- M** Medallion, distinguished site
- A** Architectural significance
- H** Historical significance

## Key Architectural Styles along Northwest Webster



Queen Anne



American Foursquare



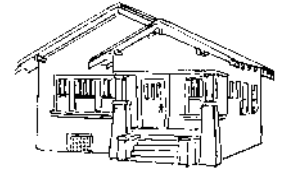
Italianate



Dutch Colonial Revival



Classic Revival



Bungalow



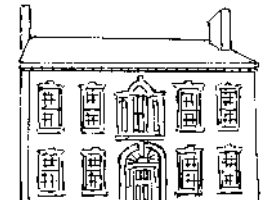
Mediterranean Vernacular



Craftsman



Georgian



Federal



Greek Revival



Shingle Style



Victorian Vernacular



Tudor Revival

## Steps in Time: Northwest Webster Walk

This Historic Webster Walk is a 2.2-mile tour that traces some of the key events and sites that defined early Webster Groves and continue to influence the community today.

*The entire walk is paved and traverses both flat and hilly terrain. Portions of this walk are also covered by the Heart of Webster Historic Walking Tour No. 1.*

From the parking lot for the Shoppes at Old Webster, walk to North Gore Avenue. Look to the left, down North Gore Avenue, over the railroad tracks toward Kirkham Avenue.

This is where the city of Webster Groves began. When the railroad came through in 1853 it made the area accessible to the City of St. Louis. The Missouri Pacific Railroad built a small, frame station on the north side of the tracks for students commuting to the Webster College for Boys, and they called it the Webster Station. In 1864 Augustus Moody built his dry goods store and post office where Gore Avenue crossed the railroad tracks, and the town had begun.

In 1896 events transpired at this intersection that led to the incorporation of Webster Groves. Bertram Atwater, a young artist from Chicago who was designing promotional material for the new Union Station, took the train to Webster to meet his fiancée who lived on Lee Avenue. When he got off the train he asked two boys sitting on the platform to get his bags from the baggage car and bring them to the barbershop. The boys brought him his bags, and Atwater tipped them handsomely, flashing a large amount of cash. The boys, Peter Schmidt and Sam Foster, ran across the tracks to Brannon's Saloon where they told John Schmidt about the rich visitor from Chicago. The three planned to hold him up. They hurried ahead and hid under a wooden bridge over a ravine on Lee Avenue. As Atwater crossed the bridge, the boys jumped up and demanded his money. John Schmidt brandished a pistol. Atwater pulled a pistol and shot him. Schmidt shot back and killed Atwater. The three boys were caught later that night and barely escaped a lynching. The residents of Webster Groves were appalled at such lawlessness. They petitioned the state to become a city of the fourth class, so they could tax themselves and hire a policeman.

*As you begin walking north toward the railroad tracks, note the collection of commercial buildings that line the west side of Gore Avenue.*

### M 13-15 North Gore Ave.

#### **Trembley Wilson Real Estate Building**

*(1915, Vernacular/Classical Revival)*

Joseph H. Trembley and his son-in-law, Edwin Wilson, owned the Trembley Wilson Real Estate and Loan Company of Webster Groves. Trembley practiced law in St. Louis and built many houses in Webster Groves. He was the president of the Webster Groves Trust Company from 1907 to 1914. His daughter, Adele, was married to Edwin F. Wilson, the mayor of Webster Groves from 1929 to 1931. Henry C. Ames designed this building with fan lights over the storefront windows, and it was built by Ames and Ames in 1915.

### M 19 North Gore Ave.

#### **Parker Livery Building** *(1914, Classical Revival)*

William J. Parker founded the Parker Livery and Undertaking Company here in 1889. His brother ran a livery stable in Kirkwood. In 1913 the building burned to the ground, and shortly afterwards Will Parker had a heart attack and died. His wife, Laura, rebuilt the two-story building, adding four monumental cast iron columns to the front. She phased out the livery business and emphasized undertaking. She was an excellent businesswoman, and she sang at every funeral. In 1922 she bought the Ferguson mansion at 17 West Lockwood Ave. and used the first floor parlors for funerals, an innovation in the '20s.

In 1926, David Rudolph purchased the building to use as a dry goods store. His son, David Rudolph, Jr., ran the store with his wife and lived upstairs until the end of the century.

### M 21-25 North Gore Ave.

#### **Empire Building/Heritage Building**

*(1907, Classical Revival)*

Morton J. May lived on Lee Avenue in Northwest Webster and sold and rented real estate in St. Louis. He built the Empire Building for the Empire Real Estate Company in 1907. It had a cast iron storefront, and it housed the Empire Pharmacy, Wright-Gillmore Decorating, a cigar store and the Kinloch Telephone Company on the first floor. On the second and third floors were the Masonic Hall, the Webster Studio of Music and the city offices. The basement was used as the city jail. When the Gorelock Building, 101-113 West Lockwood Ave., was built in 1911, the city moved its offices there, causing Day and other Gore Avenue merchants to worry that the commercial center of Webster was moving from Gore Avenue.

**M 31-35 North Gore Ave.**

**Webster Groves Trust Company Buildings**

(1901, Cast Iron Victorian)

This was the location of the first commercial building in Webster Groves, Augustus Moody's Dry Goods Store and post office. In 1870 Moody was killed by a mail bag thrown from a train. Before the turn of the century, this was the site of the Allen Music Hall. The music hall burned, and in 1901 the Bank of Webster Groves, later called the Webster Groves Trust Company, built these buildings. The bank occupied the corner at 35 North Gore Ave. In 1909 the Webster Groves Trust Company moved to the northeast corner of Gore and Lockwood avenues. From the 1930s through the 1950s, the corner store was Jones' Market, a grocery store.

*Look across the street:*

**M 38 North Gore Ave.**

**Dr. Armstrong's Office** (ca. 1880 and 1931, Vernacular)

Dr. Armstrong, one of the three country doctors living in Webster Groves before the turn of the century, built a small, frame doctor's office here sometime in the 1880s. In the early part of the 20th century, it became a barber-shop, handy for commuters getting on or off the train. In 1931, Olaf Nelson covered the barbershop with brick for Philip Seris, the barber.

**M 44 North Gore Ave.**

**Missouri Pacific Railway Station**

(1904, Queen Anne railroad station)

A board-and-batten station was built on the northwest corner of Gore and the tracks before the Civil War. This Queen Anne station was built in 1904 and the old station, catty-corner to this one, was used for freight. Commuter service into St. Louis ended in 1961. In 1965 Harvey and Donna Kassabaum purchased the station and rehabilitated it as a dress shop called The Station. The station is now used as the Faith Academy Montessori pre-school.

**M 49 North Gore Ave.**

**Prehn's Grocery Store** (1880, Italianate, cast iron storefront)

Henry Prehn came to Webster Groves from Germany with his brother John in 1857. They boarded with Edward Avery, a teacher at the Webster College for Boys, and were day laborers for residents of Webster Groves until after the Civil War. In 1867 Henry Prehn built a frame grocery store and residence at this location, and he and his wife raised 10 children here. The store burned to the ground in 1880 on the day Prehn's daughter Carrie was born. His insurance had lapsed the day before. Prehn's friends and neighbors rallied behind him and helped him build this brick building. Prehn's Grocery Store delivered dressed chickens and calves and even accepted eggs as payment. The store was heated by a huge pot-bellied stove where children could warm themselves after sledding on "Prehn's Hill." In 1903 Prehn built 11 Marshall Place for himself and 17 Marshall Place for his son, Fred. Fred took over the grocery store when his father died in 1913.

**H 58 North Gore Ave.**

**Brockman's Blacksmith Shop**

(1892, Utilitarian blacksmith shop and buggy work)

Charles Brockman established his blacksmith shop and buggy works here in 1892. He operated the blacksmith shop on the first floor, and children watching from the doorway could smell the horses' hooves burn when the hot shoes were applied. During snow or ice storms, Brockman got up early to sharp-shoe the delivery-wagon horses. Brockman built buggies and wagons on the second floor, and because of the change in grade, he could roll the finished buggies and wagons out the rear at the top of the hill.

**M 60 North Gore Ave.**

**Schultz Feed Store** (1893, Utilitarian feed store)

Henry Schultz started his feed and grain business here in 1893. Schultz had exceptionally large horses and wagons to carry grain, so he branched into moving and storage. The top floor of his building was a huge warehouse to store furniture. Before helping to establish the Webster Groves Trust Company in 1901, Schultz kept money and important papers in his large safe for local merchants. Schultz lived on Marshall Place and was a member of the volunteer fire department.

In 1959 Schultz's daughter, Harriet, and her husband, Jim McMillan, turned the old building into Rolling Ridge Nursery, still run by the McMillan family today.

*Cross Kirkham Avenue. Turn right and walk toward College Avenue. Kirkham Avenue was originally called Shady Avenue, after Shady Creek which runs along the south side of the road. The limestone-bedded creek cuts through Webster Groves from Glendale to Brentwood where it flows into Deer Creek. In 1996, a grassroots group established Shady Creek Nature Sanctuary to preserve the six-acre tract of woods surrounding Shady Creek between Gore and Elm avenues.*

*Turn left on College Avenue. As you walk up this street, note the row of neat, brick bungalows that line the west side of College Avenue. Edward DeGrande built these brick bungalows in 1928. DeGrande was a contractor who worked with his brothers, Louis, a real estate agent, and Clifford, a civil engineer. The DeGrande brothers lived north of Webster Groves in the St. Louis County community of Pine Lawn and worked together as real estate developers before the stock market crash.*

*When you reach Thompson Place, look at the house to your right.*

**M 135 Thompson Place**

**A.B.M. Thompson House** (1869, Victorian vernacular)

Abraham Thompson commuted by train to St. Louis where he was the secretary of the Collier White Lead and Oil Company. He lived here with his wife, Rebecca, and their son and two daughters. Thompson served on the Webster Groves Board of Education and in 1886 became postmaster of the Webster Groves Post Office. Thompson had the house at the east end of Thompson Place built for one of his daughters.

**H 220 College Ave.**

**Mary Griffin House** (1907, *American Foursquare*)

This is the first in a cluster of homes in Northwest Webster built by various members of the Griffin family. Peers Griffin, Jr. became a successful businessman after growing up in the house next door to the north. He built this house for his mother, Mary, and his two sisters, Celeste and Emily, who both taught in the Webster Groves public schools. Peers Griffin, Jr. raised his own family in the older home next door at 224 College Ave.

**M 224 College Ave.**

**Peers Griffin House** (1867, *Federal Style*)

Architect Peers Griffin built this house for his family soon after the Civil War. That same year, his cousin and business partner, Jotham Bigelow, built a similar house for his family behind the Griffin house on what is now Claiborne Avenue. Although Griffin's wife, Mary, did not like this house at first because it was so far out in the country, they raised a son and two daughters here, and they all lived next door to each other throughout their lives.

Griffin was an architect-builder, who worked without formal architectural training. Like other craftsmen of the time, he likely relied on books, on his experience and on building traditions handed down for generations. Because of its classic design, the house plans for 224 College Ave. are recorded in the Historic American Building Survey in the Library of Congress.

By the mid-1990s the house had fallen into disrepair and was slated for demolition to make way for a multi-home development on the site. The community rallied to save the home, resulting in its purchase and renovation by a local contractor. New construction on the original lot was limited to the one new house to the north, which features architecture designed to blend with the century home.

*At the top of the hill is Home Avenue and the Rock House, the oldest original building in Webster Groves.*

**M 330 North Gore Ave.**

**The Webster College for Boys**  
(1853 and 1911, *Stripped Classical*)

In 1853 Artemus Bullard, minister of the First Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, built this building as the Webster College for Boys, a prep school and college which he hoped would someday rival Princeton. He named his school for Senator Daniel Webster, because Webster spoke eloquently in favor of preserving the Union. When the Pacific Railroad built a platform at Rock Hill Road, it was called the Webster Stop, thus the origin of the name for the town. In 1855 Artemus Bullard died, along with many other dignitaries, when a trestle bridge collapsed and the inaugural train to Jefferson City crashed into the Gasconade River. The handful of New England teachers, under the leadership of Edward Avery, continued to run the school as a prep school, but without its dynamic leader, the school closed in 1859.

During the Civil War the Western Sanitary Commission purchased the building and used it as the Soldiers Orphans Home. In 1869 the Soldiers Orphans Home merged with the St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum, and all of the children moved out to this building in the country.

In 1910 a devastating fire destroyed much of the building. The Rock House was rebuilt without the distinctive Italianate cupola in the center of the roof, and wings were added on each side. Today the building houses the administrative offices of the Edgewood Children's Center, serving children with emotional or learning disabilities.

*Head down the hill on Home Avenue toward Gore Avenue, past the John M. Fulton house on your left.*

**M 300 North Gore Ave.**

**John M. Fulton House** (1867, *Italianate*)

Peers Griffin and Jotham Bigelow built this house in 1867 for John and Mary Fulton. Fulton was a lawyer, an interpreter for the Mexican Counsel's office and a writer on Mexico. He was also one of the 15 men who helped organize the Webster Groves' first public school in 1868. The Fultons had no children, and, as many families did, they put the deed to their home in the wife's name so that the property could not be taken if Fulton declared bankruptcy. But in 1884, Mary died first, and her brother's two daughters inherited the house and its contents, forcing John to move into St. Louis. He died there in 1914 at the Memorial Home for the Aged.

From 1955 to 1970 this was the home of Clarissa Start, a columnist for the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*.

*When you reach Gore Avenue, turn right and walk up the hill. As you near Rock Hill Road, you'll see two large stucco buildings on your left.*

**A 220 and 226 North Rock Hill Road**

**Cyrus Peterson Apartments**  
(1918, *Mediterranean Vernacular*)

The 1878 Pitzman Atlas shows a farmhouse belonging to Rebecca A. Mack at this location, and by the turn of the century the Nettleship family lived in the house. In 1918 Cyrus A. Peterson built an apartment building around the old farmhouse. These were the first apartments in Webster Groves. Among its residents have been writers, philosophers and artists.

*Cross Rock Hill Road and turn left. When you reach Lee Avenue, turn right.*

**A 401-419 Lee Ave.**

**Merrill L. McCarthy Houses** (1919, *Bungalow*)

Merrill McCarthy was one of the three McCarthy brothers (out of ten McCarthy children) who moved from Ann Arbor, Mich., to Farmington, Mo., in 1907, and to St. Louis in 1917. They were partners in the McCarthy Construction Company, and they specialized in houses and barns until their move to St. Louis. After that they expanded to build post offices, courthouses and other government buildings. They even built locks for the Panama Canal.

They purchased the Rock Hill Quarry and moved their offices to the property in the 1950s. The international construction business bearing their name is still run from that location. Two of their most outstanding architectural achievements are the Priory Chapel in Creve Coeur, built in 1961, and the Salk Institute in LaJolla, Calif., built in 1996.

Note how the porches on this series of bungalows are varied to create an interesting streetscape.

**A 447 Lee Ave.**

**Louis F. Booth House** (1896, *Victorian Vernacular*)

Louis F. Booth grew up at 765 Kirkham Avenue, one of eight children of Frank D. Booth. Louis married Alfred Lee's youngest daughter, Ellen. He was an officer of the Webster Groves Trust Co. The house is an excellent example of Colonial Revival elements (the columns and pediment of the front porch) applied to the American Foursquare style. The Foursquare emerged in the 1890s, coinciding with the migration to suburbia and largely replaced the fussier Victorian styles in new construction. It is a dominant style found throughout Webster Groves.

**M 458 Lee Ave.**

**Morton J. Day House** (1905, *Colonial Revival*)

In addition to his many real estate ventures in St. Louis, Morton J. Day built the Empire Building, now called the Heritage Building, at 21-25 North Gore Ave. in 1907. The Empire Building housed the city offices on the second and third floors, a Masonic hall, the Kinloch Telephone Company, a paint store and pharmacy on the first floor, and the city jail in the basement. Day also built houses to rent in Webster Groves. Around 1910, Day said that if the funds he invested in St. Louis real estate had been invested in Webster Groves he would have received much larger returns. Day built the house next door at 450 Lee Ave. as an investment in 1908.

**A 464 and 500 Lee Ave.**

**Robert E. Funsten Houses** (1910, *American Foursquare*)

Robert Emmett Funsten came to St. Louis from Virginia with his wife and six children toward the end of the 19th century. After working as a wool commission merchant for fifteen years, in 1895 he began selling nuts and dried fruits wholesale. Funsten incorporated the R.E. Funsten Dried Fruit and Nut Company in 1900, and he employed many black women to shell nuts at his factory on Chouteau Avenue. During the Great Depression, his employees waged a notorious strike. Funsten built 464 and 500 Lee Ave. for two of his children in 1910, and he lived across the street in the old Lee mansion which was torn down in the 1940s.

**H 524 Lee Ave.**

**Ann Candler House** (1866, *Victorian Vernacular*)

John and Ann Candler came to St. Louis from Minnesota. John was a river boat man and Ann was the sister of Sarah Dickey who lived on Foote Avenue, a block away. In 1866 John and Ann purchased this home on three acres from John Marshall for \$450. In 1868 the Candlers sold the property to Philander P. Lewis for \$1,700. Lewis was from a prominent family of lawyers and politicians in Crescent, Mo., near Eureka.

**M 525 Lee Ave.**

**John Parsons House** (1867, *Queen Anne*)

John and Eliza Parsons moved to St. Louis from New York in 1862. John was an insurance agent and sold real estate. He built a small, rectangular farmhouse here in 1867. The long, straight driveway leading up from Kirkham Avenue became Parsons Avenue. In 1868 Parsons sold this house to Reverend R.M. Beach and his wife, Elizabeth, who was a physician. Mary A.S. Fishback, a divorcee, bought the house in 1876, and in 1884 she sold it to William J. Wellhouse, a bachelor, and his mother. John H. Magner, a publisher of law directories, bought the house in 1912. Magner had come to St. Louis to represent the Wurlitzer Organ Company at the 1904 World's Fair. His son, Marshall Magner, a world famous entomologist and longtime community activist, grew up in this house and then built a house on Bacon Avenue for his family, directly behind his boyhood home.

#### H 532 Lee Ave.

**John Prehn** (1877, *Victorian Vernacular*)

John Prehn was born in Bremen, Germany, and immigrated to America with his brother, Henry, in 1857. The brothers boarded with Edward Avery and were day laborers for residents of Webster Groves until after the Civil War. When Henry Prehn opened his grocery store on North Gore Avenue, John Prehn opened a carpenter's shop across the street. John was also a justice of the peace and a leader of the Republican Party, organizing large torch light parades on election eves.

Prehn built many frame houses throughout Northwest Webster. He built this vernacular house for himself and his wife, Mary, in 1877. He built a larger home for his family at 155 Parsons Ave. in 1881, and it was there that he and his wife raised their six children.

#### M 537 Lee Ave.

**Barney Harris House** (1902, *Queen Anne*)

When Barney Harris built this house in 1902, his wife's parents, Nathan and Rosa Bry, already owned two homes in the neighborhood. The Brys had built a summer home at 524 Bismark Ave. in 1887, and in 1900 they purchased the Lee mansion, which stood just to the east of this home. The Brys used the Lee mansion as their permanent residence and turned their summer home on Bismark into a convalescent home and summer camp for disadvantaged children. The summer camp became The Miriam School, the first school for children with learning disabilities in the St. Louis area. The school is named for the Miriam Lodge, a national organization for Jewish women.

The Brys owned a dry goods store in St. Louis, and Harris worked for his father-in-law. The Brys and the Harrises moved back to the city in 1910, and the Lee mansion was torn down in the 1940s.

The Harrises sold this Queen Anne house to John Massengale, owner of the Tennessee River Packet Company, a steamboat line. Captain Massengale had intended to buy the old Lee mansion from the Brys, but the Lee mansion did not have indoor plumbing, so he bought the Harris house instead. In 1912 Captain Massengale remodeled the Kerruish house (540 Lee Ave.) and built two houses (546 and 550 Lee Ave.) across the street for three of his children. In 1930 a fourth son, George Massengale, built a house (545 Lee Ave.) next to his parents' home.

#### M 540 Lee Ave.

**William Kerruish House** (1866, *Victorian Vernacular*)

William Kerruish was born on the Isle of Man, Scotland, and came to America in 1859 at the age of 19. In St. Louis he stayed at Elizabeth Richardson's boarding house on the levee and fell in love with Mrs. Richardson's daughter, Mary. Kerruish married his sweetheart in 1860, and they had eleven children. Kerruish and his son, George, were carpenters. Kerruish built this house, and he and George built houses on Oak Street and on Plant Avenue near Swon Avenue. Kerruish built a new house for his family on Sylvester Avenue at Kerruish Place in the 1880s.

Turn left on Slocum Avenue. Slocum Avenue was named for T. L. Slocum who lived at the top of the hill. Slocum was one of the 15 men who called a meeting at the railroad station to organize the Webster Groves School District in 1868, and he was the first principal and teacher of the Webster School.

When you reach Foote Avenue, turn left and walk toward Parsons Avenue. There are several houses of interest on Parsons Avenue; you can pause here and read about them or turn down Parsons Avenue and then return to Foote Avenue to continue your walk. The first site is at the southeast corner of Parsons Avenue.

#### H 168 Parsons Ave.

**Francis Goddard House** (1871, *Italianate*)

Francis Goddard was an agent for the American Powder Company. He built this house for his wife, Susan, but sold it just four years later and moved back into the city of St. Louis. The home was purchased by Daniel Waldo Woods who worked in the *St. Louis Globe Democrat's* circulation department and later served as business manager and secretary-treasurer of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. Projecting bays and a low roofline are clear signs that this house was originally built in the Italian style.

#### H 155 Parsons Ave.

**John Prehn House** (1881, *Italianate*)

A carpenter from Germany, John Prehn bought this lot in 1881 for \$100. He and his wife, Mary, raised six children here. They had a pond and an orchard behind the house. In 1891, Prehn built the house next door, at the corner of Parsons and Foote avenues, as rental property. Prehn served as justice of the peace, a notary public and a member of the Webster Groves School Board. His brother was the grocer Henry Prehn, whose store was featured near the beginning of our walk at 49 North Gore Ave.

#### M 465 Foote Ave.

**Sarah Dickey House** (1862, *Federal Style*)

James Dickey, a farmer and butcher from Pennsylvania, married Sarah in 1859 and built this house for her in 1862. He died in 1867, leaving Sarah to raise four young children. Sarah auctioned the farm to raise money to support her family. They remained in the area, members of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, until 1884. In the 1930s Colonel Francis Rickley, a veteran of World War I, purchased the house. He built a studio over the garage for his wife, Jessie Beard Rickley, an accomplished artist. Jessie helped to found an art school in Ste. Genevieve, Mo.

Artists Arthur Osver and Ernestine Betsberg owned the house over 40 years, during Osver's long tenure at Washington University and his retirement. Osver and Betsberg met at the Chicago Art Institute and, after their marriage, practiced their art in New York and France. Osver won the Prix de Rome, was awarded two Guggenheim Fellowships and served as Artist in Residence at the American Academy in Rome, before coming to St. Louis in 1960 to teach painting at Washington University.

**M 433 Foote Ave.**

**Oliver Dixon House** (1872, *Vernacular with a gambrel roof*)  
Elizabeth and Hans Hanson bought five acres, including this lot, from John Marshall in 1863. They built a large house on Lee Avenue near Rock Hill Road and sold it to Samuel Turner in 1866. Turner subdivided the five acres in 1868 and sold Lot 2 to Donald McLeod for \$2 and shares in the Kirkwood Hotel. In 1872 Nathan Allen, a real estate tycoon, sold the east half of Lot 2 to Oliver Dixon for \$250 and the west half of Lot 2 to Oliver's father Ruben for \$250.

The Dixons were freed slaves from Virginia. Ruben had fought in the Civil War and received a government pension. Oliver and his wife, Ann, built this house with its gambrel roof in 1872. Dixon lost the house through foreclosure in 1885. The house was sold at auction to Francis McMaster for \$100.

**M 430 Foote Ave.**

**James Gray House** (1874, *Colonial Revival*)  
Note the multi-paned windows and elaborate doorway on this Federal Style home: James Gray owned a firm which sold window sashes and doors. His father manufactured the windows and doors in Beloit, Wis., and shipped them down the Mississippi River to St. Louis. Gray's partner, Joseph Hafner, owned the large house behind this one at 415 West Kirkham Ave. During the 1920s Robert C. Nelson owned the house and kept a cow on the property to provide milk for the family. In 1921 Nelson built 446 Foote Ave. for his son, Nathaniel Archer Nelson; and in 1927 he built 440 Foote for his daughter, Margaret, and her husband, Joseph Hyatte.

**A 424 Foote Ave.**

**Jennie Louisa Brooks House** (1899, *Queen Anne*)  
Clarence L. Brooks had this frame house built for his wife, Jennie Louise, in 1899. Clarence was a salesman, and he and his wife had lived southeast of here on Big Bend Blvd. in Old Orchard before moving to Foote Avenue. The wrap-around porch and irregular massing of this home mark it as a Victorian Queen Anne. Note the fishscale shingles in the gable.

**H 408 Foote Ave.**

**Alice Early House** (1908, *American Foursquare*)  
This American Foursquare, with its efficient, economical design, is typical of those built at the turn of the century, designed as a perfect fit for the smaller lots of the new suburban landscape.

The house was built for Alice Early, a niece of Jubal Early, the Confederate general famous for his leadership during Sheridan's Ride through the Shenandoah Valley. General Early built the big house behind this house, at 115 North Rock Hill Road, for his other nieces, Betty and Ruth Early. Alice Early built this house in 1908 to be near her sisters.

At North Rock Hill Road, turn right.

**M 140 North Rock Hill Road**

**Lucius Cheney House** (1869, *Victorian Vernacular*)  
Lucius H. Cheney was a teacher and then principal at the Intermediate School in St. Louis. Cheney and his wife, Francis, built this house in the country in 1869, and Cheney commuted into the city from the Webster Station. The Cheneyes had four sons and twin daughters, and Lucius Cheney served on the Webster Groves School Board. The Cheneyes moved back into the city in 1874 and sold their house to Calvin B. Hunn, the superintendent of the United States Express Company.

In the 1880s Colonel Albert B. Kauffman bought the house. Kauffman had a long black beard and was a veteran of the Mexican War, the Civil War (on the Union side) and two Indian wars. He had three sons and two daughters. For one of his daughters' weddings he rented a large, horse-drawn moving van to take the bridal party to Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

Leone Cooper, a well-known watercolor artist, lived here during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. The house faces Kirkham Avenue and originally had a long drive leading down to Kirkham, at the bottom of the hill.

**M 115 North Rock Hill Road**

**Jubal A. Early House** (1884, *Victorian Vernacular*)  
Thomas Sullivan built this house in 1884 for Jubal A. Early, the Confederate general who was famous for his leadership during Sheridan's Ride through the Shenandoah Valley and for his threatening advance on Washington, D.C., in 1864. Jubal Early never married or lived in Webster Groves. He bought this house for his two nieces, Ruth and Bettie Early, and transferred ownership to them for one dollar "in consideration of love." Bettie married George Deane, and they had two children, Hattie and Early Dean. They lived in the house for more than 40 years.

Like the Lucius Cheney House, this house faced south toward the railroad tracks and had an orchard and an elaborate flower garden leading down to Kirkham Avenue. Ruth Early lived with the Deanes. A third sister, Alice Early, built a house at 408 Foote, behind this one. The Deanes took in boarders, and the house was converted into apartments in the 1930s.

*When you reach Kirkham Avenue, turn to the right for a .4-mile loop that leads you past three important sites in Northwest Webster. The loop will return you to this intersection for the final leg of your walk which starts on page 17.*

**H** 415 Kirkham Ave.

**Charles L. Merrill House** (1870 and 1895, *Classical Revival*)

William Stokes built a house here in 1870. In 1874 he sold it to Joseph Hafner. Hafner and his partner James Gray who lived on Foote Avenue owned a firm that made window sashes and doors. In 1883 Charles Langdon Merrill purchased the house. Merrill was a cashier of the Bank of Commerce in St. Louis, and he served on the Board of the Webster Groves Trust Company. A fire in 1895 caused extensive damage to the house, and Merrill rebuilt it with Classical Revival details which were popular at the time. During the 1904 World's Fair, Merrill's son had a job driving money from the fair to the bank in a security wagon. The Merrills sold the house in 1917.

**M** 500 Kirkham Ave.

**Emmanuel Cartwright House** (1869, *Victorian Vernacular*)

Emmanuel Cartwright, a Baptist preacher, lived in this house until his death in 1884. A free black before the Civil War, Cartwright was the preacher at the African Baptist Church in St. Louis and operated a school for blacks on a boat anchored across the state line in the middle of the Mississippi River. The school was founded by John Berry Meachum because it was illegal for blacks in Missouri to learn to read or write prior to the Civil War. When Meachum died in 1854, Cartwright continued Meachum's work at the church and the school.

After the Civil War, Cartwright organized the Rose Hill Baptist Church in Kirkwood and was a frequent preacher at the First Baptist Church of Webster Groves. Cartwright also organized the state association of black Baptist churches in Missouri.

**M** Larson Park

Jacob Larson, a professional horticulturist, moved to the Oak Grove Addition in 1912. He bought part of the old Daniel Harper farm and built greenhouses at the corner of Oak and Cherry. He introduced azaleas to this area, developing azaleas hardy enough to survive Midwestern winters. During World War I the National Guard drilled at Larson's Field. After the war the Webster Groves sewer department purchased Larson's Field for septic tanks, and Larson asked the city to develop a playground for children over the septic tanks. Larson and his sons maintained the playground, mowing the field with hand scythes and push mowers. The City of Webster Groves purchased additional property from the Berg family and dedicated the park in 1963. The city created a "Bug Kingdom" at Larson Park in 2004 in honor of Marshall Magner, a world renowned entomologist who lived in the neighborhood all his life.

*Turn around and walk back along Kirkham Avenue to conclude your walk.*

**M** 238 Kirkham Ave.

**Old Community Baptist Church**

(1866 and 1981, *Vernacular church*)

In 1866, the year after the Civil War ended, residents of Webster Groves organized four churches: Emmanuel Episcopal, First Congregational, Webster Groves Presbyterian and the First Baptist Church of Webster Groves, established by newly freed black residents. William Porter sold part of his subdivision to the church for \$100, and Charles Connon served on the first board of directors. Both men were leaders of the community and members of the First Congregational Church. Originally there were 19 members of the little church for blacks, including William Wright, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Brown, and Mrs. Louisa Bolden.

The church housed the first school for black children in St. Louis County, started in 1866. The church burned to the ground in 1892. The church was rebuilt that same year, and the school moved to Holland Avenue. In 1924, the minister and part of the congregation built a new church at 159 Kirkham Ave. Part of the congregation chose to remain at the old site. For years there were two First Baptist Churches of Webster Groves, until a lawsuit determined that the new church should have the name because it had the papers with the original charter. In 1954 the little group in the old building changed their name to the Old Community Baptist Church. The building has been renovated several times, especially after floods of Shady Creek. The church was totally rebuilt in 1981.

*Continue on Kirkham Avenue until you reach St. John Avenue. Look up St. John Avenue to the house at the end of the street.*

**M** 143 St. John Ave.

**Alvah Clayton House** (1876, *Victorian Vernacular*)

Alvah Clayton grew up in Ohio and Illinois. While living in Jacksonville, Illinois, Clayton heard Abraham Lincoln speak and became an ardent supporter of the future president. Clayton moved to St. Louis and worked for the Missouri Democrat, the R. P. Studley Printing Co., and, after the Civil War, his own printing company with his partner, Charles Babington. In 1876 Clayton and his wife, Frances, built this house with a long driveway leading to Rock Hill Road.

In 1875 Clayton became the first principal of Sumner High School, the first public high school for blacks west of the Mississippi. In 1879, when the St. Louis school board found a black principal to replace him, Clayton and his family moved to Jefferson City where he served for a year as the principal of Lincoln Institute, the secondary boarding school and college for blacks run by the State of Missouri.

Clayton returned to the printing business, and his family moved back to Webster Groves. In 1901 Marion Parker bought the house. Parker was a sports writer for the *St. Louis Globe Democrat*.

*At North Gore Avenue, turn right and return to Old Webster to conclude your walk.*





## **Thank you for taking a walk through Webster Groves history.**

The Historic Webster Walk Series has been created to provide residents and visitors with a look inside the unique character of Webster Groves, Mo. The walks and guidebooks are designed so that individuals, schools, scouts and other groups can tailor the walks to their own pace and particular interests.

Additional Webster Walks are available, each one focusing on a specific neighborhood. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to support this important project, please make your check payable to the Webster Groves Historical Society and mail it to 1155 S. Rock Hill Road, Webster Groves, Mo. 63119.

For further information or if you would like to become a member of the Webster Groves Historical Society, please write us at the above address, call 314.968.1776 or visit us at [www.historicwebster.org](http://www.historicwebster.org)