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LANDMARKSLETTER

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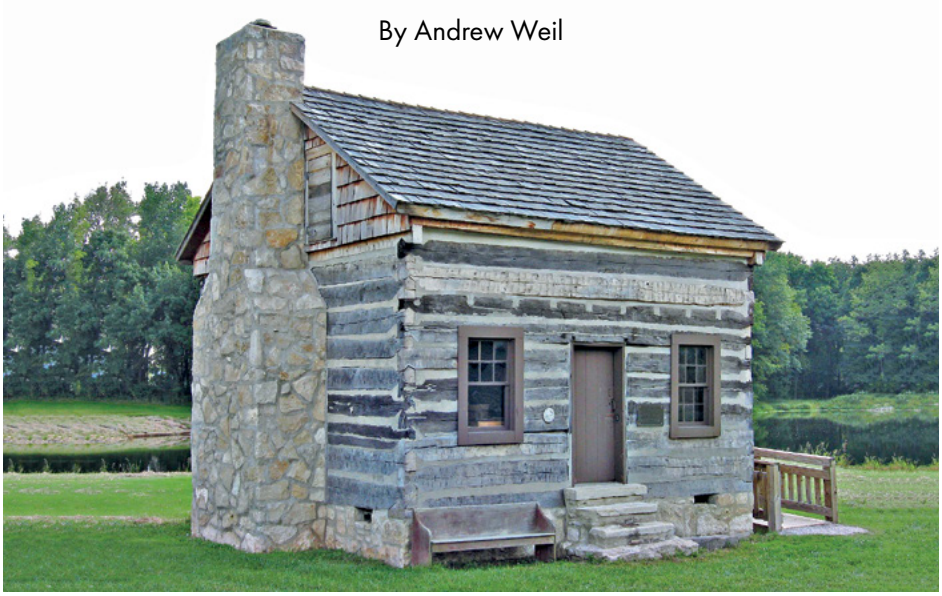
THE MCQUITTY SITE AND SOME EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHESTERFIELD BOTTOMS

By Andrew Weil



Collins Log Cabin in Columbia, MO. Constructed C. 1818. This is a rare surviving Territorial Period building that approximates the appearance of the McQuitty homestead.

This is the first part of an article that I have been meaning to write for many years. It's far reaching for the general area of operations for Landmarks Association of St. Louis, but I believe it will appeal to our self-selected audience of history buffs.

In my previous career, I worked as an archaeologist. "Cultural Resource Management" is what the field is called if you're not an academic archaeologist employed by a university. We called ourselves "shovelbums". After the "Flood of 93," planning was initiated to turn the Monarch-Chesterfield Levee in St. Louis County into a "500-year flood" system, because the previous levee had succumbed to the inexorable power of the Missouri River. However, developers "needed" the floodplain to build future outlet malls and "fast casual" restaurants. Why learn from our mistakes when we can repeat and subsidize them?

Because there were federal dollars and permits involved in the levee expansion, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and various other regulations required archaeological/historical assessment of the "Area of Potential Effect" (APE) and a literature review of previously recorded sites in the area. This is standard practice that is intended to prevent the tax dollars of the American people from destroying sites that are significant to the history and culture of those same American people.

In 2005, I had a shiny new master's degree in historic archaeology and was raring to go for this project because it was a Colonial/early Territorial Period site (not very common). This was one of the first projects on which I was considered a "principal investiga-

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Can you guess which building this star is from? See Elements on page 2

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LANDMARKSLETTER
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STAR POWER

By Andrew Weil

This star is located on a former Roberts Johnson and Rand shoe factory in Lafayette Square. Constructed between 1903 and 1922, the Roberts Johnson and Rand (RJR)/ International Shoe (ISC) Company complex at the northwest corner of Mississippi Avenue and Hickory street boasts this symbol of "Star Brand" shoes. The signature Star Brand line was a trademark brand produced by RJR in the early 20th century. The buildings were designed by famed St. Louis architect Theodore Link, who also designed Union Station among many other prominent industrial/commercial buildings, churches and homes.

The site of the factory was previously part of Schnaider's Garden, which was associated with the adjacent Joseph Schnaider Brewery. The last remaining building associated with the brewery is the former malt house on the north side of Chouteau near the intersection with Hickory that used to house the restaurant Vin De Set among others. The malt house recently suffered a fire, but renovations are planned.

In 1911, RJR merged with the Peters Shoe Company to become International Shoe, whose name was later engraved on the Star cornerstone. By the mid-1920s, International Shoe was recognized as the country's largest show manufacturer. The Mississippi/Hickory Street plant produced what was called "bottom stock" which consisted of the sole, counter, box toe, heel, welting and rands according to the National Register nomination prepared by Landmarks Association in 1984. Years later, it was converted for residential purposes and also houses the restaurant 1111 Mississippi. Go check out the star the next time you are in the neighborhood and let us know if you know where other "Star Brand" advertising still exists!

Turn of the 20th century ISCO advertisement

Go check out the star the next time you are in the neighborhood and let us know if you know where other "Star Brand" advertising still exists!

tor" and I was assigned, in part, to do the background history of the site. Under the tutelage of my mentors Joe Harl and Dennis Naglich, I "discovered" a remarkable history in the Chesterfield Valley and surrounding bluffs that literally spans thousands of years. Like a James Michener novel, the area around Spirit of St. Louis Airport, Centaur, Eatherton and Wildhorse Creek Roads has stories to tell that span the breadth of human occupation of St. Louis County. The good, the bad, and the interesting.

The history of the McQuitty Site begins with the western migration of the families of Abraham and Ephraim Musick to what was then the San Andre (later St. Andrew's) District in what is now the Chesterfield Valley in approximately 1795. These brothers of Welsh heritage originally settled in Albemarle County, Virginia. They both served during the Revolutionary War in North Carolina and later moved west to Illinois and finally Missouri sometime around 1795 (*Draper 1868: 22s172, 24s177*). Although it cannot be stated precisely, the Musick move was related to the migration of Virginians John and Elizabeth Lewis, as well as Lawrence and Priscilla Long, who came to the Missouri River bottoms in the late 1790s, Abraham Musick married Sarah Lewis, John and Elizabeth's daughter, in 1724, while still in Vrrginia. These various families shared many first names, intermarried frequently (continuing in Missouri), and all arrived in the Missouri River bottoms within a few years of each other (*Long 1971: 182; Wherry 1907*).

Among Abraham and Sarah Musick's children were a daughter named Terrell and a son named David. David became a famous Colonel in the War of 1812 and was instrumental in the defense of upper Louisiana. Terrell married her first cousin, also named Abraham, who was the son of her father's brother, Ephraim. Middle-aged adults upon arrival in Missouri, Terrell and Abraham had nine children during the course of their movement across the country. A Baptist preacher and founder of Fee Fee Baptist church, Abraham Musick "thought life too short to call boys by long names and limited his six sons to three letters each: Asa, Eli, Uri, Edi, Uel, and Roy" (Wherry 1907). Eli, while a young bachelor living in his father's house, received a grant (*Survey 419, Figure 1*) of 200 arpents within the Missouri River bottoms from the Spanish Lieutenant Governor Delassus (*American State Papers 1805:72*).

Eli improved the land and actively farmed his property, though he continued to live with his parents on the adjacent land tract within Survey 150 throughout his tenure of the property. He married Nancy Long (of the Bonhomme Long family) in 1803 and continued to farm the land through the growing season of 1804 (*Musick Family Papers 1962: Volume 1, pg. 10; American State Papers 1805:72*). It is unclear whether Eli Musick farmed the land during the 1805 growing season, but by October 26 he sold the property to David McQuitty. Musick later moved to land on Fee Fee Creek in Creve Coeur adjacent to other members of his family (*American State Papers 1811, Volume 2:728*).

David McQuitty was born around 1777 in Kentucky, and his older brother Andrew, who also acquired land in St. Andrews (*Survey 371*) was apparently born in Pennsylvania. Like the Musick family, the McQuittys moved west in search of cheap land

Figure 1: Location of Survey 419 Within the Missouri River Bottoms (Hutawa 1847)

and opportunity on the frontier (*Williams 2002; Anonymous 1882*). The brothers probably arrived together in the district of St. Louis around 1802 and began searching for suitable real estate (*Williams 2002*).

David McQuitty married a woman named Mary sometime around his arrival. Mary was born in Virginia (her maiden name was not recorded) although not much more is known about her. McQuitty appears for the first time in the St. Louis area in the minutes of the Board of Land Commissioners who were appointed to adjust Spanish land claims for the new American regime (*American State Papers 1811*).

Because he had purchased what was originally a Spanish land grant from Eli Musick, he was required to petition the board to recognize Musick's previous claim and thus prove the legitimacy of the sale. Before the board, he produced Musick's 1799 land concession signed by Carlos (Charles) DeLassus as well as a deed of transfer from Musick, which confirmed his purchase of the land. In addition, Musick's aging father Abraham (or Abram) showed up to testify about the validity of the original claim and subsequent sale. Despite all of this, the board rejected the claim.

To combat fraud in the adjustment of land claims, the American government initially made Spanish land claims very difficult to prove. McQuitty took his place among such other noted personalities as Auguste Chouteau and Daniel Boone who also had their claims rejected because of an inability to meet what was essentially an unattainable standard of proof set by the Americans. Fortunately for the landholders, the rejection of a claim rarely resulted in any kind of immediate and tangible action; most people simply continued to use their property and submit new applications to the board.

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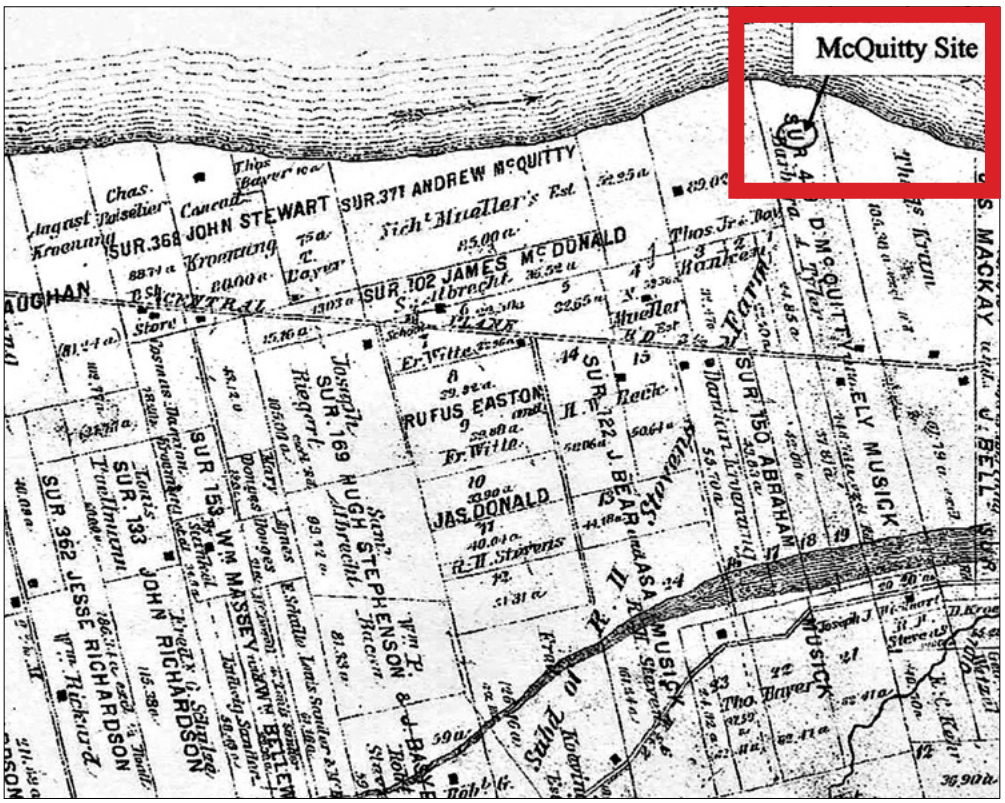

Figure 2: 1878 St. Louis County Atlas Showing Larger Tracts Having Been Subdivided (Pitzman 1878)

By 1810, when McQuitty finally had his land confirmed, the rules had been relaxed in application, and most claims that had at least a semblance of legitimacy were recognized by 1811 (*American State Papers 1811:704; Houck 1908:50*).

McQuitty likely moved onto Survey 419 in the fall of 1805. At the time, the surrounding area was occupied primarily by other Americans from the Upper South. The previously mentioned Lewis and Long families as well as Richard Caulk, James Richardson, and David Mathews and others made their home on the bottoms in St. Andrews. The name was variously applied to the rural district and to a cluster of buildings near the bank of the Missouri River somewhere in the immediate vicinity, though its exact location is unknown. John Bradbury, who traveled up the Missouri in 1810, described leaving Bonhomme Island and heading upstream before camping on the north shore of the river, "opposite the remains of St. Andrew, which is now abandoned" (*Bradbury 1904: 41*). Bradbury's description indicates St. Andrews was situated west of Bonhomme Island, perhaps in the vicinity of the present-day Daniel Boone Bridge.

Created in 1797, St. Andrews was in existence for only a few years. James Mackay, a native of Scotland who had been previously active in the upper Missouri fur trade, was appointed administrative head of the St. Andrews district in 1798. In November of that year, he wrote that "upon my arrival at the post I found all the people living in peace and plenty; indeed it is surprising to see the great clearing of land and the quantity of grain raised by so small a number of inhabitants" (*Nasatir 1990 2:587*). St. Andrews was abandoned by 1810 and according to Stephen H. Long, who voyaged up the Missouri in 1819, its site was by then "occupied by the channel of the river" (*Long 1905: 149*). It seems that the natural and inexorable movement of the Missouri River, the force that made the land so desirable in the first place, had reasserted its indisputable claim to the land between the bluffs.

While St. Andrews declined and disappeared, the surrounding rural district known as Bonhomme, named for the creek that emptied into the Missouri River bottoms at this location, continued to attract settlers. By the end of the Spanish period of governance, the bottomlands from the mouth of Bonhomme Creek to what is now Centaur had been entirely consumed by private claims (*Figure 2*).

David McQuitty's farm, like St. Andrews, was also short-lived. It is likely that he built a small cabin with timber from the surrounding bottomland forest (not dissimilar from the cabin Landmarks rescued a few years ago in Carondelet) and supported himself through farming. The land he acquired had already been improved to an extent by Eli Musick and McQuitty probably

continued the hard work of breaking new land for crops. The rich floodplain soil no doubt made the effort well worth the trouble. Enslaved African Americans may have aided McQuitty in his efforts, though their presence on the property cannot be confirmed. Later, when living in Boone County, the U.S. census of 1840 would record McQuitty as an established farmer with thirteen slaves (a relatively large number for his area), but during his stay in St. Andrew's, he was a young man, recently married and probably not financially capable of making the significant investment that enslaved labor required.

Though a small landholder and no doubt living in humble surroundings, McQuitty was literate and seemingly very self-confident man. In 1805, he and his brother Andrew served on a Grand Jury that heard charges against Rufus Easton (namesake of Easton Ave. in St. Louis, which is now MLK), who held property just west of their own (*Easton Papers 1805:10*). Easton became the first post-master of St. Louis, was a confidant of then President Thomas Jefferson, and later served as a territorial representative to the Federal government (*Primm 1998*). Though the Grand Jury on which the McQuitty brothers served indicted Easton for unscrupulous land dealings, the McQuitty brothers, in addition to several other jurors, dissented and formally protested the findings in the form of a long and complex legal brief. Together, they asserted that the charges and indictment were invalid for legal reasons, and that the entire situation had been precipitated by personal animosity and not legal malfeasance (*Easton Papers 1805:10*).

Despite the McQuitty's confidence in the man, Easton certainly did have his enemies, and his methods were often considered distasteful even by many of his unscrupulous peers. With a reputation for cudgeling land commissioners and an insatiable ambition, Easton was a true land pirate (*Primm 1998*). Though the case against him heard by the McQuitty's has been lost in the depths of time, his role in a land grab following the New Madrid Earthquake has not. At the time of the disaster, Easton was a congressional representative from the Territory. Masterfully, he helped to craft and pass an earthquake relief bill that authorized land grants as compensation for people whose property had been destroyed. Of course, from his perch in Washington, he knew that the act had passed long before anyone in Missouri knew that it had even been proposed. Shamelessly, he had his agents cheaply purchased vast amounts of earthquake damaged property, and then promptly collected the new land warrants for himself (*Primm 1998*).

The McQuitty's alignment with Easton is not surprising when taken in consideration of the power struggle that dominated St. Louis during the period of American assumption. The brothers were part of the vanguard of an American push into the Louisiana Territory following the Spanish/French concession of power in 1803 (*Houck 1908*). The American influx generated great tensions between the traditional French Creole power brokers and ambitious American immigrants. No doubt, the McQuittys were aware of the political and economic forces that were arrayed against them and their countrymen in the form of the established St. Louis families. Therefore, their alignment with Rufus Easton, a lightning rod for the conflict and an advisor to St. Louis' predominately French patriarchs, allows a certain understanding of the McQuitty's situation within the political, economic, and cultural framework of early American St. Louis.

By 1805, David McQuitty must have been settling into his own as a citizen of St. Andrews. He had at least begun to establish himself politically, and though probably not yet thirty years of age, he was confident enough to co-sign a letter addressed to President Thomas Jefferson presuming to recommend successors to Territorial Governor Wilkinson (*Territorial Papers 1948:Vol 13*).

Despite his growing standing within the community and the confirmation of his land claim in 1810, David McQuitty appears to have moved to western St. Charles County by 1811 (*Wesley 1927-28*). Part of the impetus for the move was due to the change in the Missouri River channel, which began to threaten McQuitty's home and others associated with the community of St. Andrews within the bottoms. But McQuitty, like so many other pioneers, apparently kept his eyes on the horizon in anticipation of greater opportunities as the frontier pushed ever westward.

Emigration to the Bonhomme area in general began to diminish with the outbreak of hostilities associated with the War of 1812. British envoys just prior to and during the war encouraged indigenous tribes allied with them to raid the scattered farmsteads on the frontier, like those within the Bonhomme district.

Unlike the earlier French settlers who tended to cluster together into more defensible communities, Americans used a more dispersed settlement pattern making them easier prey for Native American raids. In order to protect themselves, many settlers enlisted in militia units that participated in the sporadic, yet savage fighting that beset the frontier. They also established local "forts," which typically consisted of a home, tower, or a stockade containing provisions where local residents could gather for mutual defense during an attack. As the result of one such raid, McQuitty and his family were forced to retreat to Pond's Fort near Wentzville in 1811 (*Anonymous 1882*). By 1812, McQuitty had joined the St. Charles militia under William Head.

Obviously an enthusiastic volunteer, he was recorded as providing his own rations and forage (*Williams 2002*). By 1814, he was serving in the Boonslick region and had joined Captain Sarshall Cooper's company of mounted militia (*Williams 2002*). It appears that he still was residing in St. Charles County at the time as the following year he was sworn in as a Justice of the Peace in

In order to protect themselves, many settlers enlisted in militia units . . . They also established local "forts," which typically consisted of a home, tower, or a stockade containing provisions where local residents could gather for mutual defense during an attack.

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Bonne Femme Township and was certified to administer oaths of office (*Territorial Papers 1948: Vol 15*). Later he lived and was stationed in Fort Hempstead (or McClain's Fort) one mile north of New Franklin in central Missouri, and by 1815 he was serving as paymaster of the Booneslick Battalion under Captain George Jackson (*Territorial Papers 1948: Vol 15*).

It seems that McQuitty's experience in the region encouraged him and by 1816 he and his brother Andrew had relocated to Howard County where he was sworn in as a Justice of the Peace on March 4th, a position he held for at least two years (T*erritorial Papers 1948: Vol 15 Williams 2002*). Finally settling in the vicinity of Rocheport, David and Andrew McQuitty were founding members of Bethel Baptist Church and both became successful farmers in the region. David McQuitty died and was buried in Bethlehem Cemetery, Boone County, Missouri on September 14, 1849. His wife Mary was buried next to him in 1871 (*Williams 2002*).

Though many other people owned the property, the family of David McQuitty appears to have had the only residence on the northern portion of Survey 419, where the archaeological site was located. Though the chain of title is not complete, McQuitty almost certainly divested himself of the land upon his relocation to St. Charles County sometime around 1811. Two references for him selling land along Bonhomme Creek were located, though both are ambiguous as to when the land was sold, and to which property they refer. Historian Daniel Long quotes an advertisement from the *Missouri Gazette* February 1, 1817: "James Gordon and his wife Mary sell to John Lewis, all of Bonhomme Township, 100 arpents for $100.00 bought by Gordon originally from David McQuitty, adjoining the lands on the east by Andrew McQuitty, South by Frederick Bates, also land of Gabriel Long, North by Missouri River" (*Long 1971*). Likewise, in 1834, a deed was recorded in the St. Louis Circuit Court whereby one William Thompson finished paying off the cost of 400 arpents of land on Bonhomme Creek to David and Mary McQuitty (*St. Louis Circuit Court Case Files n.d.*). It seems that John Murphey originally purchased this land, but that the land, and debt, was later transferred to an Alexander Thompson, and through his death to his son William. It cannot be determined if this property contained some or all of Survey 419.

Around 1817, John Long bought a portion of McQuitty's property (though possibly not part of Survey 419) to be used as farmland. At about the same time, Long also opened a ferry across the Missouri River, its south bank located on what is now the northeast corner of Howell Island (*Long 1971; Hutawa 1847*). The ferry prompted increased travel across the bottoms and the improvement of roads in the vicinity. In 1851, a corporation was formed to build the Central Plank Road, which extended from St. Louis, across this portion of the Missouri River bottoms (where the Bottom Road once existed) ending at Howell's Ferry. Howell took over operation of the ferry from Lewis in 1845. The Central Plank Road stockholders included several residents of the Bonhomme District, but it was not very successful and was soon sold to St. Louis authorities in 1858 (*Howell 1845, Watchman-Advocate 1934*).

The first steamboats began ascending the Missouri with the ship "Independence" passing the St. Andrews district in 1819. It was either the Independence or another of the river's first steamboats which ran aground near the mouth of Bonhomme Creek and surprised a great many people who were as yet unfamiliar with the sounds these ships made. According to early settler James Long, the stranded boat blew its whistle, which sent local resident John Cunningham off at a run to the nearest neighbor exclaiming, "By the life, Captain, I heard a [mountain] lion roar, gather up all your guns and hands and lets be off." (*Draper 1868: 24s164*).

Despite the improvements occurring on the bottoms, the next large-scale movement of settlers into the Bonhomme District did not occur until the l 830s, beginning with the arrival of emigrants directly from Virginia. Unlike the previous group of settlers, who either owned no slaves, or owned very few, these Virginians were in several cases the owners of substantial numbers of slaves (from 20 or more). They acquired large tracts of land within the Missouri River bottoms sometimes covering over a thousand acres. The enslaved people were used to clear large sections of this land for grazing by a diversity of livestock and for planting a variety of crops; the most important of which was the cash crop hemp. Hemp became vital because it was used to make rope needed for shipping and for bailing cotton, but the crop was very labor intensive to grow and process. As large landholders acquired and consolidated holdings in the area, the settlement pattern changed. Where in the past many people had settled on the bottomland itself to be close to their fields and the Missouri River, which served as the main avenue of travel and commerce, these new landholders established their homes on the bluff top. Although slave housing was probably placed near these homes, it is possible that housing for some of the field hands was placed within the Missouri River bottoms close to the fields they were forced to tend.

One of the wealthy Virginian transplants was Henry S. Tyler who arrived in 1836.

Making his home in what is now Babler State Park. Tyler owned twenty-five slaves and held lands that extended from the bottoms north of Centaur south over the bluffs and to the east of the Wild Horse Creek Valley. By 1862, his son, Spencer Tyler made his home farther to the east along what would become Chesterfield Airport Road, and farmed lands within the Missouri River bottoms including Survey 419, David McQuitty's former land (*Hutawa ca. 1862:3; U.S. Census Agricultural Schedule 1850; U.S. Census Slave Schedule 1860*).

These new Virginia settlers were soon joined by immigrants from various principalities in what is now Germany, part of a large migration to Missouri beginning in the 1830s and continuing until the Civil War. The German immigrants operated more modest farms of around 100 acres and did not use slave laborers. Instead, the farm work was performed by the individual families along with some seasonal help (*Thomas 1911*).

With the coming of the Civil War in 1861, the local population polarized into opposing camps. Many Germans joined Union home guard and militia units while plantation families

Even within my lifetime I recall when The Smokehouse and the Airport were just about the only things in The Bottoms, but as early as the late 1700s people of African and European descent had already started putting down roots in the fertile soil.

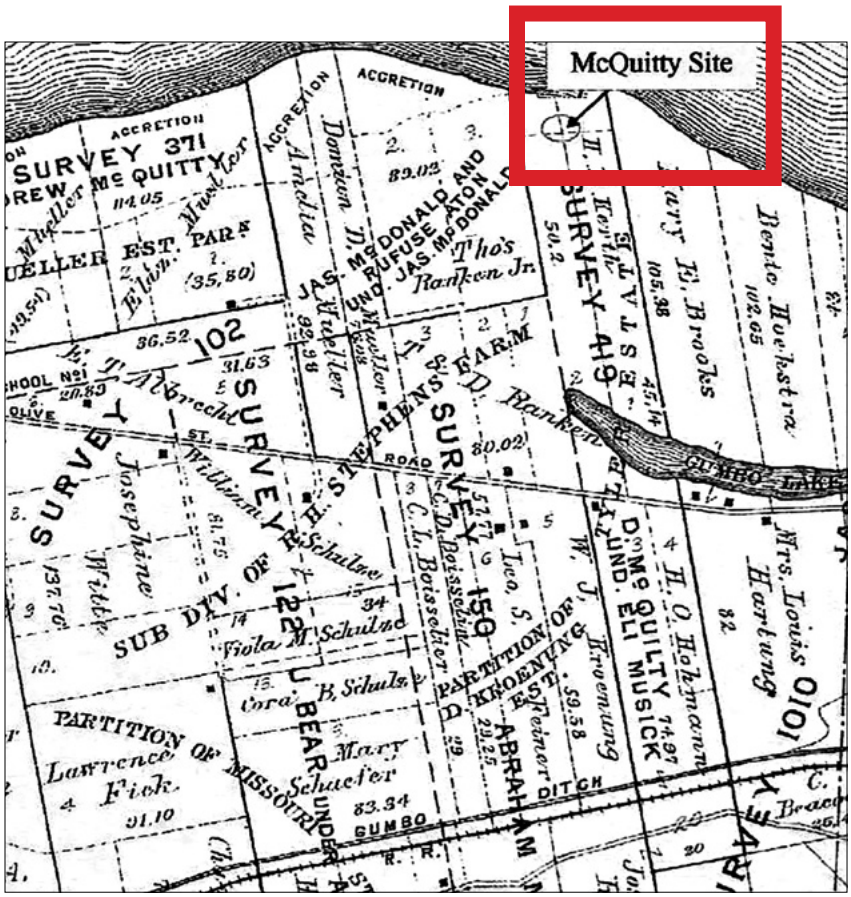


Figure 4: 1909 (Pitzman Atlas), St. Louis County

largely sided with the Confederacy. William Elliot Tyler, son of Henry Tyler, died while serving with Confederate forces. Some area slaves secured their freedom during the war by enlisting in the Union Army; among them were Henry Hicks, Louis Rollins Sr. and Elijah Madison who served in the 68th U.S. Colored Infantry, which saw action at the battle of Tupelo, Mississippi in 1864 (*Dyer 1959*).

Following the War and the end of slavery, the hemp industry collapsed. The planter families, however, continued to operate successfully because unlike their southern counterparts who relied heavily on cash crops (e.g. cotton or tobacco), the Missouri planters raised a diversity of crops and livestock (*Thomas 1911; Long 1866*). Many former slaves who had worked on the plantations remained as well. Constrained by economic circumstances, they stayed and worked as sharecroppers or tenant farmers often for families who once held them in bondage. Over time some managed to acquire the means to purchase small agricultural tracts of their own.

Also at this time, some of the German families who had arrived during the antebellum years consolidated and expanded their holdings (*Long 1866*). Farmers in this vicinity would continue to thrive through the turn of the century; a local historian in 1883 described the neighborhood as "affluent" (Scharf 1883). Most homes within the Missouri River bottoms were placed along the Central Plank Road (present location of Chesterfield Airport Road) including two houses within the southern end of Survey 419 (McQuitty's former land, though no residence is shown near his old homestead (*Figure 2*).

Four years later, in 1887, the St. Louis, Kansas City, and Colorado Railroad was built through the area along the base of the Missouri River bluff line; hamlets such as Centaur, Monarch, and Gumbo developed as stops along its route (Figure 3). The railroad allowed the limited development of light industry in the local area including the Centaur Lime Company, which was founded by Anton Leiweke (*Rice 1969*). For a time thereafter, Centaur was promoted as a potential commercial center. A railroad booklet in 1909 touted it as "a place to grow in," and commented on its capacity to support a barrel factory or a brickyard (*Sebastian 1909*). Development, however, remained slight and the local economy, as well as settlement patterns, remained predominantly agricultural until the creation of the interstate highway system and the expansion of suburban St. Louis into the vicinity in the past few decades. After the completion of the 100-year Monarch Chesterfield Levee and the development of the larger 500-year levee, a boom in development has occurred within the Missouri River bottoms. Numerous commercial properties have been constructed within the once agricultural fields and more development will occur in the near future.

Even within my lifetime I recall when The Smokehouse and the Airport were just about the only things in The Bottoms, but as early as the late 1700s people of African and European descent had already started putting down roots in the fertile soil. They however were far from the first people to "settle" the Chesterfield Valley. In our next installment I will talk about the original residents of the Bottoms and the bluff lines and discuss at least two remaining Native American mound structures as well as a major Mississippian trade complex near Spirit of St. Louis Airport. (*Figure 4*)

HISTORY OF THE SUTTON FAMILY, NAMESAKE OF SUTTON AVENUE IN MAPLEWOOD

by Maplewood Historian Doug K. Houser

James Compton Sutton Sr.
Courtesy of Laura Varilek

According to James Compton Sutton's (JCS) son-in-law, William Lyman Thomas (WLT), writing in his 1911 *History of St. Louis County*, JCS was born in New Jersey, July 1, 1797. He arrived penniless in St. Louis in 1819 when he was 21 years old. His brother, John L., got here two years earlier in 1817.

They were partners in a blacksmith business at 323 South Second St. It seems to have been much more than an ordinary blacksmith shop for, according to Thomas, they also produced iron wheels for wagons, locks for the old Spanish jail, decorative railings for the old State bank, the first iron printer's sticks to be used in St. Louis, and plowshares. Regarding the latter, they were innovators who developed a proprietary design known as the Sutton Plow. The Mercantile Library has four of the company ledgers.

By 1825, JCS had made enough money to be able to buy 360 acres at $1.12½ or "one dollar and one bit per acre, there being no quarters in those days" according to his son, John L. About ten years later he bought 120 acres that adjoined his property giving him a total of 480 acres at an average price of $4 per acre. The boundaries of his farm included all of what is now Maplewood east of Big Bend Blvd. and extended into the city of St. Louis as well.

Also from WLT's *History of St. Louis County*, Pg. 49, in 1843, Sutton along with Samuel Black and James Culver erected the first steam flour mill in St. Louis. It was located at Fifth and Gratiot streets. Under the same roof, they manufactured lead pipe, sheet lead, flaxseed oil and steel plows. They were also engaged in the manufacture of yarn and the carding of wool, having 90 spindles in service.

In 1850, Sutton had four enslaved people. In 1860, he had five but only one appears to be one of the four people he held in bondage 10 years earlier. On April 28, 1860, Ann L. Sutton, James' wife, paid the equivalent of $33,350 for four human beings: a woman named Caroline about 30 and her infant child, a girl named Malinda about 6, and a young boy named William about 2½.

Like Sutton, I live in a stone house (3220 S. Big Bend) about 4 or 5 blocks from where Sutton' s homestead was located. The stone for my 1910 house came from a quarry directly across the street called Big Bend Quarry. I have no knowledge of when the quarry began operating.

I have knowledge that there was once a quarry on Charles Rannells' farm nearby. Rannells owned all the land that is now Maplewood west of Big Bend and north of Manchester. Rannells didn't purchase his land until 1848.

The Sutton home as pictured is a masonry building with both stone and brick bearing walls in different sections illustrating different building episodes and design directives. The primary elevation is faced with carefully dressed ashlar limestone with stone quoins at the corners that lock into the brick side walls. The 1.5 story home has a hipped roof, a wraparound gallery porch, raised basement, and a central chimney stack (in addition to multiple other chimneys that were probably added later as the building grew). Some of these features appear to express elements of French Colonial residential architecture, examples of which would have been much more common in the region when the home was constructed than they are today.

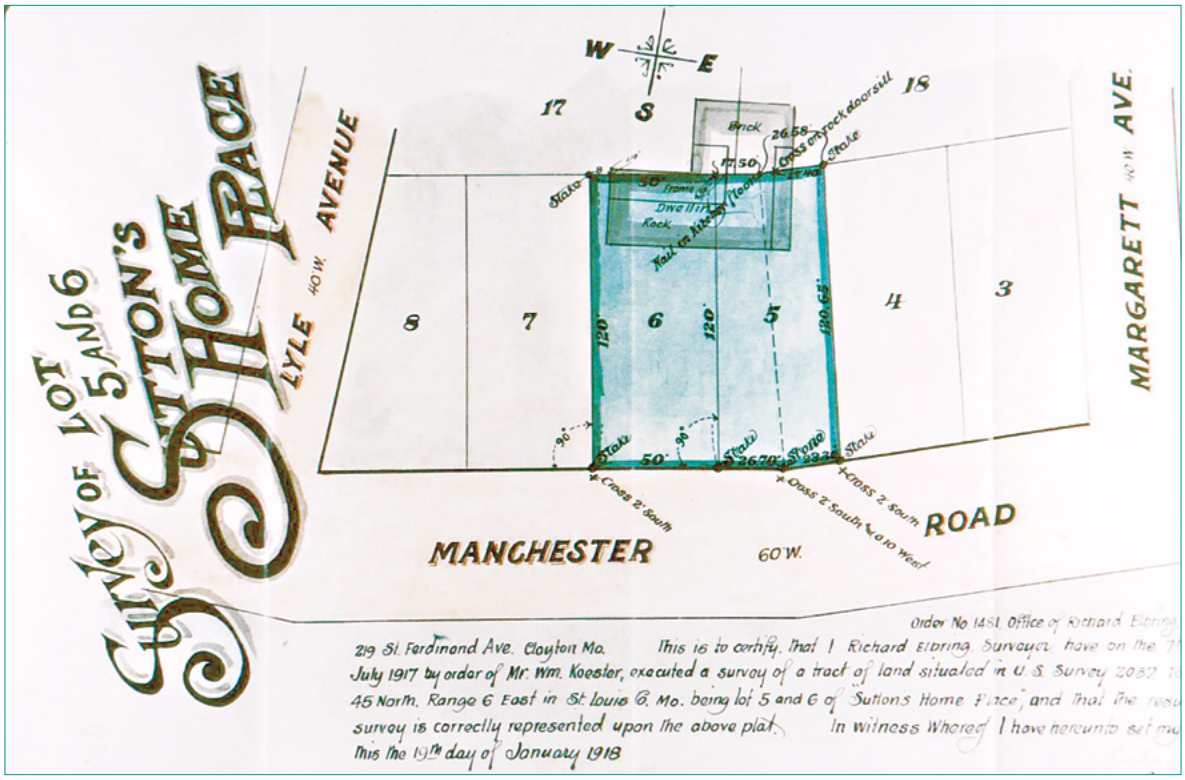
Today, the site of the Sutton home is occupied by a Dobbs Tire and Auto facility.

Sutton Mansion in the snow, 7453 Manchester, western gable end
Courtesy of Laura Varileki

James Compton Sutton Sr. and Ann L Wells Sutton
Courtesy of Dan Shelton

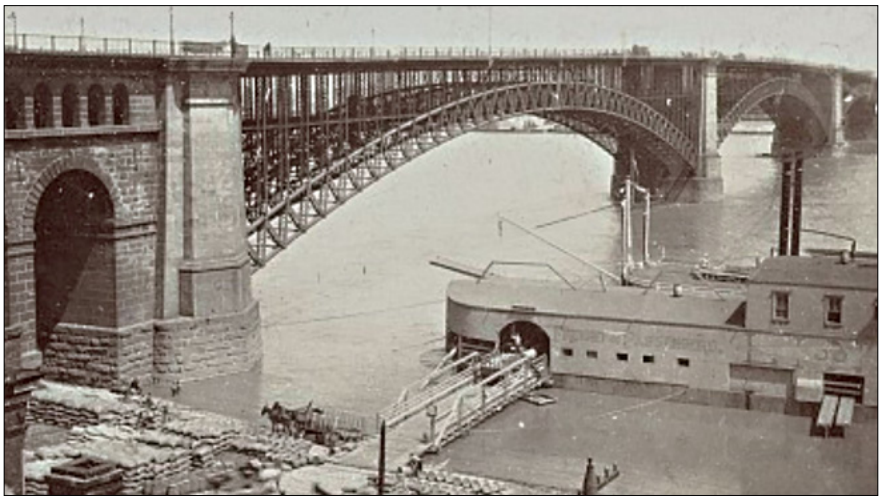
Sutton Mansion 7453 Manchester front (southern) facade
Courtesy of Laura Varilek

Sutton Mansion 7453 Manchester front (southern) eastern facade, 1897
Courtesy of Maplewood Public Library



Sutton Home survey

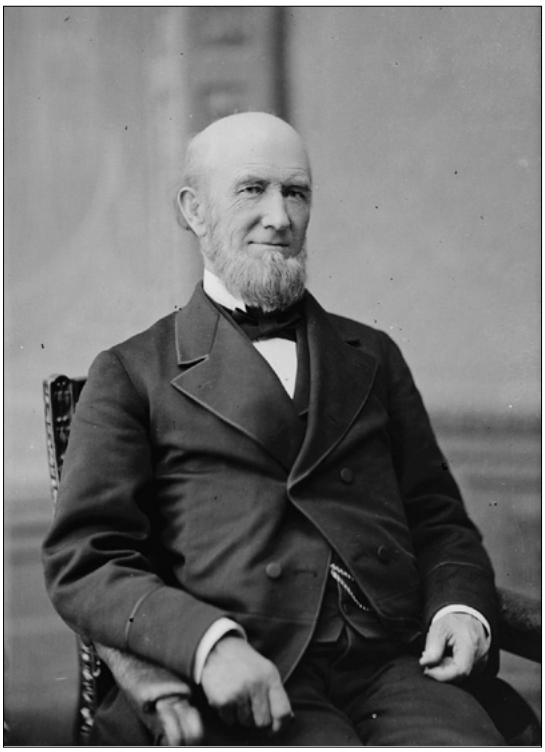
JAMES BUCHANAN EADS AND THE MAGNIFICENT EADS BRIDGE



The Eads Bridge

Construction of the Eads Bridge

Eads House courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society



James Buchanan Eads

THE EADS BRIDGE

By Robert W. Duffy

When I landed in St. Louis sixty years ago, the Eads Bridge, the glorious span connecting East St. Louis and St. Louis, carried automotive and railway traffic on its two decks, and to look at it, a casual observer couldn't guess its soon and sudden fate.

After my initial connection with this magnificent bridge, soon after I came to town, Eads Bridge went out of business, having fallen in practical terms to be obsolete and useless. All too often in America, uttering the words "obsolete and useless" summons the headache ball.

Fewer than 4,000 cars crossed the bridge connecting St. Louis with East St. Louis in a day, and that traffic was judged not enough. The train deck no longer had railway business. What could be done to rescue Eads Bridge?

In a genuine *deus ex machina* situation, the new light-rail Metrolink system's plans included a restoration of the bridge.

Metrolink, which may have saved the day, has sped along. Its completion was a grand public event, complete with a foot race that began on the bridge. Unlike the ceremonies in 1874 when the bridge was dedicated by President Ulysses S. Grant, there was no elephant in sight. . .

A 19th-century polymath named James B. Eads would be happy to know, against many odds, his architectural/engineering masterwork crossing the Mississippi continued to earn its keep, and it stood strong and majestic, linking Missouri and Illinois. The bridge and Captain Eads also are inextricably linked.

James Buchanan Eads was born May 23, 1820, in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. He died March 8, 1887, in Nassau, the Bahamas, where he was on vacation. Eads was named for his mother's cousin, the U.S. President James Buchanan. Reference books tell of him as an American engineer best known for his triple-arch steel bridge over the Mississippi River at St. Louis, MO, and another project that provided a year-round navigation channel for New Orleans. He was all that, but far greater than such an economical description.

To begin with, he was self-educated. He learned by working on and in the river. He designed a diving bell that enabled him to walk on the riverbed scouting for steamboat wrecks, which were numerous. They were so numerous that as a "wrecker" he built a tidy fortune on salvage. He was a loyal supporter of the Union cause and built ironclad gunboats for the Army in the Carondelet shipyards south of downtown St. Louis.

Construction of the bridge began two years after the Civil War ended. Thanks to his exploration of the river from its bed up to its surface, Eads knew its habits – its currents and eddies and enormous scouring strengths. He also knew materials, and in combination with river savvy and knowledge of steel and iron, he was able – with great difficulty – to complete the business of designing and building the first bridge over the Mississippi at St. Louis.

Because of his knowledge of the river and of the fabrication of iron and steel building materials, he secured, against opposition, the contract for a three-arch steel bridge over the river. The bridge's three spans – 502, 520, and 502 feet – were, are, extraordinarily graceful, indeed poetic.

Historically, they represent the courage of individuals and a community to gamble – after a certain period of dithering and conflict. As Howard S. Miller wrote in his and photographer Quinta Scott's valuable book, *The Eads Bridge*, "Architect Louis Sullivan drew lifelong inspiration from it's sensational and architectonic wedding of idea to actuality, form to function." Sullivan is architect of another St. Louis architectural treasure, the Wainwright Building at Seventh and Chestnut streets.

Before the war, Miller wrote, "Eads hadn't been particularly interested in bridge building: His lifelong interest had been in removing river obstacles, not adding one. But as he began to understand the grave economic consequences of Chicago's commercial strangling of St. Louis by connecting itself, to the east and west, with uninterrupted railroads, he took up the cause of a Mississippi River bridge between Missouri and Illinois at St. Louis. He also realized, as many civic leaders understood belatedly, that the reputation of St. Louis as one of the great cities of the nation was slipping badly"

The bridge "looked right" as well, and continues to be one of the three or four most visually affecting and satisfying buildings in the region, and among the greatest built achievements in the entire United States. The reason: an early application of the modernist creed of less being more.

As the critic Ada Louise Huxtable wrote, ". . . it is among the most beautiful works of man."

What survives as a visible, emotion-rousing, functioning member of our regional personality, a structure that hovers in the memory of pilgrims to it and ignites the passions of artists – and a monument in the rich history of the architecture of the world – is the bridge that bears the noble name Eads.

America's great poet, Walt Whitman, was a visitor to St. Louis. In 1879 he wrote this about the Eads Bridge:

"I have haunted the river every night lately, where I could get a look at the bridge by moonlight. It is indeed a structure of perfection and beauty unsurpassable, and I never tire of it."

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We sincerely thank everyone who supported or attended our annual fall event, *Savor the Past, Celebrate the Future*, held at La Verona at the Marketplace on Friday, September 20th. We were proud to honor Julius K. Hunter with the H. Meade Summers Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award for his remarkable contributions to historic preservation in St. Louis.

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