



# The Vision of Tuxedo Park

HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

SEVENTH IN A SERIES

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

The Webster Groves Historical Society gratefully acknowledges Webster University 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:

Written by Ann Morris

Edited by Lee Walker Falk

Illustrated by Nicky Botger

Designed by Scott and Laura Burns Gericke of designlab, inc.

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For more information, please contact the Webster Groves Historical Society, 1155 S. Rock Hill Road, Webster Groves, Mo. 63119, 314.968.1776, [www.historicwebster.org](http://www.historicwebster.org)

## Before You Begin Your Walk

### The Vision of Tuxedo Park

The area known as Tuxedo Park began as three large subdivisions in the late 1800s. At the turn of the century, these neighborhoods gave rise to a thriving business district along Marshall Avenue, the Tuxedo Park School, three churches, two railroad stations and a streetcar line. But it was Tuxedo Station, the vision of businessman Lilburn McNair, that anchored the neighborhood.

Long before train stations and streetcar lines delineated these neighborhoods, the land rising up along Deer Creek was part of Louis Bompert's Spanish Land Grant, and the land south of Marshall Avenue was part of John Sarpy's. Slaves tended Bompert's land, and in 1845, Dr. William H. Brown, a Virginia physician, purchased 233 acres from Sarpy, and his slaves cultivated his orchards there.

The Missouri Pacific Railroad laid tracks through Dr. Brown's orchards in 1853 and built Fairview Station where the tracks cross Marshall Avenue. Everyone in the area began giving their address as "Fairview." Dr. Brown subdivided his orchards in hopes of creating a little village around the station, but with the Civil War looming, there were no takers. After the war ended, William Groshon, a St. Louis haberdasher, purchased the south end of Bompert's estate from Marshall Avenue to Deer Creek and created a subdivision called "Town of Fairview" in 1867.

In the 1880s businessmen living in the neighboring community of Webster Groves began building Queen Anne houses on speculation to attract other successful businessmen to the area. Then in 1887 *Harper's Weekly* wrote about the ultimate subdivision: Tuxedo Park in New York. The subdivision had its own country club and train station, and its residents wore gold oak leaf pins in their lapels. Inspired, Lilburn McNair, one of the biggest real estate developers in St. Louis, bought 200 acres of Dr. Brown's estate and laid out his own Tuxedo Park, east of the Missouri Pacific tracks. McNair was the grandson of Alexander McNair, the first governor of Missouri. He built the Tuxedo Park Station out of stone in the Queen Anne style. It was the finest local station of its time, and he gave it to the Missouri Pacific Railroad for \$1 so that his subdivision would be attractive to commuters.

McNair's subdivision had deed restrictions prohibiting houses that cost less than \$1,500, saloons and stores. McNair arranged for free excursion trains to Tuxedo Park for prospective buyers, and he published an advertising brochure in the shape of an oak leaf, called "Leaves of Tuxedo."

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When the Webster Park Subdivision was established just to the south in 1892, commuter trains were stopping every four minutes as they passed through Webster Groves. In December 1892 the Missouri Pacific Railroad announced that it would close the Fairview Station. There was such an outcry from the Fairview commuters that the railroad company sent a section crew to Fairview at midnight to remove the station from its foundation, place it on a flatcar and haul it away in the dark.

At the east end of the Town of Fairview lies the Zeta Dell Subdivision. Henri Picotte, a French fur trader, bought 25 acres between Marshall Avenue and Deer Creek and gave the land to his daughter, Celeste, before the Civil War. Celeste married Dr. Louis Pim, a prominent St. Louis physician in charge of the Confederate hospital system. After Dr. Pim died in 1890, his daughter subdivided the land, creating Zeta Dell, a subdivision with no deed restrictions. A small, vibrant commercial district grew up along Marshall Avenue, and in 1896 the Suburban Street Railway Company laid tracks for the Manchester Streetcar Line down Summit Avenue.

In 1896 the City of Webster Groves annexed Old Orchard and Tuxedo Park in order to increase the tax base to pay for sewers, water lines and paved streets. For the next 20 years residents of Old Orchard and Tuxedo Park tried to secede, fearing that incorporation would bring the evils of urban life. Today Tuxedo Park is an integral part of Webster Groves, a splendid example of the early suburban dream of planned subdivision development.

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 in Tuxedo Park



Queen Anne



American Foursquare



Italianate



Dutch Colonial Revival



Classic Revival



Bungalow



Mediterranean Vernacular



Craftsman



Georgian



Federal



Greek Revival



Shingle Style



Victorian Vernacular



Tudor Revival

## The Vision of Tuxedo Park Walk

This Historic Webster Walk is a 2.3-mile tour through Tuxedo Park, a community anchored by distinctive churches and defined by railroad and streetcar lines, today a neighborhood of gracious Queen Anne homes and tidy 20th century bungalows.

*The entire walk is paved and covers both flat and hilly terrain.*

Park in the lot of the First United Methodist Church of Webster Groves, 600 Bompert Ave., and begin your walk in front of the church at Bompert and Fairview avenues. As Tuxedo Park was being formed, the Sunday School Movement was sweeping the country, creating a great interest in non-denominational Christian education classes. The Tuxedo Park Union Sunday School was established in 1893, and in 1895 the Sunday school split into the Tuxedo Christian Chapel, which met in local homes, and the Tuxedo Park Methodist Episcopal Church, the predecessor to this early 1900s brick church.

### M 600 Bompert Ave.

#### First United Methodist Church of Webster Groves (1909-1916, Jacobethan Church)

The Tuxedo Park Methodist Episcopal Church originally met in a small building at 667 Atalanta Ave. In 1908 Dr. Thomas Hagerty, a chaplain for city institutions, began preaching at the little Methodist church. Each Sunday, he rode out from St. Louis, built a fire in the stove, went door to door inviting neighbors to come to the service, then rang the church bell and preached the sermon.

Architect William A. Cann designed this Jacobethan church, and in 1909 the lower part of the building was constructed and the congregation met there for several years. Cann also designed the Lafayette Park Methodist Church in 1900 and the Frey Memorial Methodist Church in Clifton Heights in 1905. When Cann died in 1912, this church was still under construction and was mentioned in his obituary.

The upper part of the Jacobethan church was completed in 1916, and Dr. Hagerty conducted the dedication service. He had contributed a large part of the funds, so the congregation named the church Hagerty Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1917 Dr. Hagerty died penniless, at age 89. In 1930 the congregation changed its name to the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Webster Groves, and in 1960 it changed its name to the First United Methodist Church of Webster Groves.

*Cross Bompert Avenue and walk west on Fairview Avenue, named after the Fairview Station built on the Missouri Pacific line in 1853.*

### A 643 Fairview Ave.

#### Harry E. Clark House (1890, Queen Anne)

In the late 1880s, Dr. William H. Brown sold 6.26 acres of his original 233-acre tract to Harry E. and Susan Clark. When Dr. Brown was hit by a train and died in 1889, his son sold the rest of the tract to Lilburn McNair who laid out the Tuxedo Park Subdivision around the Clarks' property. The Clarks built a large house at the corner of Bompert and Fairview, but it burned to the ground around 1890. The Clarks built this Queen Anne house after the fire, and they subdivided their 6.26 acres, creating Clark's Addition, so that their six children could build houses in the subdivision. Harry Clark was a successful "drummer," or salesman, for the Rice Stix Dry Goods Company.

### A 633 Fairview Ave.

#### William L. Clark House (1910, American Foursquare)

William L. Clark was the son of Harry E. Clark and his wife Susan. William was a traveling salesman and commission merchant. He had his house built in the American Foursquare style, a national standard for the suburban lifestyle at the turn of the 19th century, largely replacing the fussier Victorian styles in new construction. Easy and economical to build, the Foursquare structure was an efficient answer to the suburban lot, resulting in a large house on a small lot. The simple Foursquare was often overlaid with elements from other architectural styles; this Foursquare incorporates a Shirtwaist Craftsman detail; contrasting materials from the first to the second floor.

### A 619 Fairview Ave.

#### Otto F. Lohaus House (1927, Shingle Tudor Craftsman)

Otto Lohaus built many houses throughout Tuxedo Park, but this is the home he built for his own family. The pendant from the gable that is repeated over the door and the knee brackets are indicative of the Shingle Tudor Craftsman style; Lohaus often incorporated these features into the homes he built.

*When you reach Cornelia Avenue, jog to left to continue on Fairview Avenue as it leads to the train tracks that carried residents to and from the city of St. Louis daily.*

### A 520 Fairview Ave.

#### Catherine Bannan House (1906, Victorian Vernacular)

Catherine Bannan was the wife of Samuel O. Bannan, a carpenter who built this vernacular house for his own family, using fishscale shingles in the front gable. Bannan also built the house at 424 Fairview Ave. in 1909.

### A 459 Fairview Ave.

#### G. L. Hawkins House (1912, Prairie Style, Craftsman)

C. Fischer designed this house for George L. Hawkins, the principal of the Oak Hill School in St. Louis.

As you continue on Fairview Avenue, note the one to one-and-a-half story bungalows along the street. The bungalow is distinguished by a broad, gently sloping gable roof that reaches down over a veranda across the front. Architects only count the stories that have windows under the eaves as full stories. A story that has dormer windows is considered a half story.

**A 425, 421 and 419 Fairview Ave.**

**Herbert Lafayette Spradling Houses**

(1921 to 1922, Bungalows)

Spradling was an architect and builder who constructed many houses on Fairview, Greeley and Newport avenues. He lived at the corner of Greeley and Glen avenues in a house he built. He began his career as a cabinet maker and exhibited furniture he built at the 1904 World's Fair.

**A 412 and 410 Fairview Ave.**

**Otto F. Lohaus Houses** (1928, Tudor Revival)

Like the home he built for himself at 619 Fairview Ave., Lohaus used the Tudor Revival Style in the construction of these two houses.

**M 405 Fairview Ave.**

**Bethany Lutheran Church**

(1904, Danish Queen Anne church)

Many Danes came to America in the 1880s to avoid conscription when the Germans invaded Schleswig-Holstein. Danish families built homes along North Elm Avenue in Webster Groves and along Glen Road in Tuxedo Park. They organized Bethany Lutheran Church in 1897 and built this shingle Queen Anne church with a Danish flair to its roof in 1904. It was designed by P. Petersen. Sunday services were in Danish until 1932. During the 1904 World's Fair, the church rented rooms in the parsonage to visitors from out of town. Girls from the congregation cleaned the rooms and changed the beds. An out-of-town visitor, who was an artist, painted the mural in the sanctuary.

Turn right on Glen Road and note the beautiful stained glass windows along the west side of the church. Continue along Glen Road to the stone train station.

**M Tuxedo Park Station**

(1892, Queen Anne/Richardson Romanesque Railroad Station)

When Lilburn McNair laid out Tuxedo Park, he built this impressive train station and gave it to the Missouri Pacific Railroad to attract commuters to his subdivision. It was the first stone station along the line. The massive stone construction with deep-set windows, flared hip roof, a single tower and broad eaves supported by wood brackets make it resemble the Old Colony Railroad Station in North Easton, Mass., designed by H. H. Richardson in 1881.

The Tuxedo Park Station served hundreds of businessmen, shoppers and families of Tuxedo Park. The ticket agent lived nearby and walked up to open the station before the first eastbound train in the morning, and he closed up after the eastbound shopper's special at 1:23 p.m. The ten daily eastbound trains started at 6 a.m., and commuters walked home from the station in the evening. By 1921 the Missouri Pacific had reduced the number of daily eastbound trains to six, and by 1940 to three. The fare was still ten cents. The Missouri Pacific discontinued its last commuter train in December 1961 and gradually tore down all of its small frame commuter stations. Because of its substantial construction, the Tuxedo Park Station survived and was used to store equipment until 1980, when it was scheduled for demolition. Mayor Jack Cooper persuaded the Missouri Pacific Railroad to donate the station to the City of Webster Groves, saving this classic reminder of the commuter origins of the city.

Turn right on Tuxedo Boulevard.

**A 405 Tuxedo Blvd.**

**James W. McDonough House** (1910, American Foursquare)

James W. McDonough was a contractor who built many American Foursquare houses throughout Tuxedo Park and neighboring Old Orchard.

Tuxedo Boulevard reflects the diversity of early Tuxedo Park, with smaller houses mixed in among the older, larger homes. This block is distinguished by several classic examples of Queen Anne architecture. This turn-of-the-century design typically features asymmetrical massing, bay windows, irregular projections, such as towers, and an open front porch across the front.

**M 515 Tuxedo Blvd.**

**Fred Hobe House** (1891, Queen Anne)

This classic Queen Anne home was built for Fred Hobe who was a salesman. While the irregular massing of the design is typical of the Queen Anne style, the Mansard-roofed tower suggests the influence of the Second Empire style.

**A 614 Tuxedo Blvd.**

**Louisa Beckard House** (1891, Queen Anne)

August Beckard was a carpenter and a builder; he built this Queen Anne house for his wife, Louisa, in 1891. Note the fishscale shingles and the sunbursts in the gable and the corners.

When you reach Bompert Avenue, stop and look at the church on the southeast corner, another Tuxedo Park landmark.

**M 700 Bompert Ave.**

**Tuxedo Park Christian Church**

(1908, Shingle Style Queen Anne Church)

Like the First United Methodist Church just to the south, today's Jubilee Church traces its beginnings to the national Sunday School Movement of the late 1800s. The Tuxedo Park Union Sunday School was established in 1893, originally focused on non-denominational Christian education. In 1895 the membership split to form the Tuxedo Park Methodist Episcopal Church and the Tuxedo Christian Chapel. The Tuxedo Christian Chapel built this Shingle Style Queen Anne church in 1908. The church grew and joined the Disciples of Christ, changing its name to the Webster Groves Christian Church. In 1954 the congregation built a modern church at the intersection of Lockwood Avenue and Berry Road, in the corner of the Westborough Country Club.

*Across the street from the church is the William S. Hull House on the northeast corner.*

**M 653 Tuxedo Ave.**

**William S. Hull House (1890, Queen Anne)**

William S. Hull was a superintendent for Bridge & Beach Manufacturing Company, makers of stoves. Irregular massing categorizes this home as a Queen Anne, but note the elegant simplicity of the porch detail.

*Turn left and walk along Bompert Avenue to Avery School, the same path that Tuxedo Park children have taken for 90 years. In 1916 the names of all the Webster Groves schools were changed so that they no longer referred to neighborhoods. Neighborhood loyalty was causing fights among the older boys after intramural games. The Tuxedo Park School became Avery School, named for Edward Avery, an early educator who lived in Webster Groves.*

**909 Bompert Ave.**

**M Avery School (1916, Jacobethan School)**

Mrs. Gilbert Fox conducted the first school in Tuxedo Park, a private school in her home on North Forest Avenue. When the Tuxedo Park Subdivision was laid out in 1890, the Old Orchard School Board built a four-room, frame school building at this location, across from a large pond on the east side of Bompert Avenue that was great for ice skating in the winter. Mrs. Gilbert Fox became the first principal and teacher. The Old Orchard School Board merged with the Webster Groves School Board in 1901, and the board added a four-room, brick addition to the Tuxedo Park School in 1902. The eight-room school served the eight grades, until architect M. P. McArdle designed this brick Jacobethan school in 1915, dedicated in 1916. The older building was torn down in 1920, and a gymnasium was added to the new building in 1922.

**M 1008 Bompert Ave.**

**Alexander Hequembourg House (1901, Queen Anne)**

Colonel Alexander Hequembourg earned his rank in the Union Army at Vicksburg. His wife was Emma Targee, daughter of Thomas Targee, the hero who gave his life to save the city of St. Louis during the Fire of 1849. They had four sons and one daughter, but all four sons died in childhood. Hequembourg purchased this land, sight unseen, during the Civil War. After the war he worked for the government testing whiskey. He built this Queen Anne house when he retired in 1901, and in 1904 he built 1018 Bompert Ave. for his daughter, Ida, and her husband, Everett Hurd Smith. When Hequembourg died in 1911, Ida and Everett Smith moved to this house to live with Ida's mother. Ida and Everett had twin boys, and one of them, Everett Jr., a lawyer for Southwestern Bell, lived in this house into the 1980s.

**M 1018 Bompert Ave.**

**Everett Hurd Smith House (1904, Queen Anne)**

Colonel Alexander Hequembourg built this house for his daughter, Ida, and her husband, Everett Hurd Smith, in 1904. Everett Smith was a court reporter, and he read German, Latin, Greek and French. He also created crossword puzzles. He served as the secretary to David R. Francis while Francis was the chairman of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition. He carried a cane and commuted to St. Louis from the Tuxedo Park Station.

**M 1027 Bompert Ave.**

**Leonard Blood House (1889, Queen Anne)**

Leonard Blood was an executive with an oil company. In the 1920s he owned a string of filling stations. Gus Orville Nations purchased this house in the 1930s. Nations was a lawyer and the Director of Enforcement of the Volsted Act, prosecuting bootleggers in St. Louis under President Warren G. Harding. He became a candidate for Attorney General of Missouri, but he died in a courtroom in 1942 at the age of 49. His son, Gus Nations, Jr., was also a lawyer and served as mayor of Webster Groves from 1960 to 1964.

**A 1033 Bompert Ave.**

**Cleveland Charles Leeman House (1916, Bungalow)**

C. C. Leeman worked for the Railway Mail Service, sorting letters in a mail car on the train. Every day he left from Lake Junction, at the end of Summit Avenue, and every evening he came home to the Tuxedo Park Station. His son, Wayne Leeman, was a reporter for the St. Louis Post Dispatch for 18 years.

*Barnickel Park marks the north end of Bompert Avenue where it intersects with North Forest Avenue.*

#### **M** Barnickel Park, 1964

William S. Barnickel graduated from the St. Louis College of Pharmacy, the best school of chemistry in the country at the turn of the century. He became a consultant to oil companies in Oklahoma, helping them to remove water from oil to prevent steam explosions during refining. Barnickel patented the formula for Tretolite in 1914, manufacturing it in a slaughterhouse in St. Louis.

In 1920 Barnickel purchased part of the Louis Bompert estate on a hillside at the end of Bompert Avenue. He built his manufacturing plant just beyond here, beside the Missouri Pacific Railroad tracks so that he could take advantage of gravity and bring raw materials in at the top of the hill, process them as they ran through pipes down the hill and then ship the finished product out on trains at the bottom of the hill. The buildings at the Tretolite Company were attractive, and the 12-acre site, which grew to 40 acres, was landscaped like a park, with tall trees, expansive lawns, tennis courts, a small golf course, picnic tables and hammocks under the trees. One of Tretolite's chemists, Dr. DeGroot, earned the second-most patents in U. S. history after Thomas Edison.

In 1930 Tretolite merged with the Petroleum Rectifying Company in California, changing its name to Petrolite. With plants in England and Houston, Texas, Petrolite was for years the only company in the world that separated water from all oil produced. In 1953 an explosion at the Petrolite plant on Marshall Avenue broke windows in houses on Bompert Avenue and North Forest Avenue. Today the Petrolite campus has been renovated and expanded into Owens Ridge, the site of state-of-the-art research facilities and offices.

Petrolite donated the land for Barnickel Park to the City of Webster Groves in 1964.

*Turn right on North Forest Avenue.*

#### **H** 627 North Forest Ave.

**Mathilde Lincoln House** (1908, Dutch Colonial)

This Dutch Colonial house was built in 1908 for A. G. and Mathilde Lincoln. A. G. Lincoln worked in the circulation department of the St. Louis Post Dispatch. He later became an editor of the Post Dispatch.

#### **A** 633 North Forest Ave.

**Charles D. Wright House** (1908, Dutch Colonial)

Like the house to the west, this is a Dutch Colonial, a popular style in American suburbs from 1900 to 1970. It features two striking characteristics copied from homes built by colonists of New Amsterdam in the 1700s: a gambrel roof, also common on barns, and a Dutch door, divided so that the upper half could open while the lower half remained closed to keep the barnyard animals out of the house.

#### **H** 632 North Forest Ave.

**Louis P. Eber House** (1902, American Foursquare)

Louis Eber had this American Foursquare house built for his daughter, Marie, after she married Oscar Rapp. Eber and his wife lived on Pacific Avenue, near Summit Avenue, and Eber wanted a bridge across Deer Creek to extend Summit Avenue north to Manchester Road. Julius Rapp, the St. Louis County Commissioner of Roads and Bridges, lived on Bompert Avenue and he, too, wanted a bridge across Deer Creek, but he wanted the bridge on his street. Neither bridge plan was ever carried out because of the opposition of the other, thus there is no major road running north and south through Tuxedo Park. In the midst of this stand-off, Julius Rapp's son fell in love with Louis Eber's daughter. The two were married and lived in this house — conveniently between Bompert and Summit avenues.

#### **M** 655 North Forest Ave.

**Nicholas Beaver House** (1873, Victorian Vernacular)

Nicholas Beaver was a steamboat captain on the Mississippi River for the St. Louis and Mississippi Valley Transportation Company during the golden era of river trade, around the time of the Civil War. When the railroads proliferated after the war, hauling freight and passengers from parts of the country that were inaccessible to steamboats, Beaver retired to the country. On summer evenings he liked to sit in his backyard on the heights above Deer Creek and listen for the whistle of steamboats on the Mississippi. As the sound floated over the fields and up the cliffs, he could identify each boat by its whistle.

#### **A** 670 North Forest Ave.

**Arthur A. Mahoney House** (1902, Concrete Block Vernacular)

Arthur A. Mahoney inspected meat for the United States Department of Agriculture. He built this house of concrete blocks, an innovative new building material at the turn of the century that was promoted at the 1904 World's Fair.

#### **H** 681 North Forest Ave.

**Hollis N. Allen House** (1930, Colonial Revival)

Dr. Hollis N. Allen was a pathologist and developed the first tests for blood coagulation and blood cholesterol. He served on the Webster Groves School Board for 14 years in the 1930s and 1940s. During the Great Depression he helped to put several of his sons' friends through college. He later underwrote scholarships for medical and nursing students. His brother, Henry, also a pathologist, lived at 655 North Forest Ave.

**M** 701 North Forest Ave.

**William Jamieson House** (1868, Victorian Vernacular)

William Jamieson was a landscape gardener at Sterling Castle in Edinburgh, Scotland. In 1858 he came to America with his wife, Anne, and his brothers, James and Andrew. Will and James worked in the clay mines on M. L. Christy's Farm near Gratiot. Will Jamieson built a small vernacular house here in 1868. He and Anne had three sons and four daughters, but only three daughters lived to adulthood. As his children were born, Jamieson added bedrooms onto his house, and when his daughters got married, he cut rooms off of the house and moved them back along Jamieson Lane and turned them into houses for his daughters. He planted fruit trees, formal flower gardens and built a greenhouse with a cupola. His wife died in 1892, and Jamieson buried her under the greenhouse until her body was moved to Oak Hill Cemetery.

Later Jamieson married Bess Fyfe, a Scottish cook working next door at the home of Judge Wiley Rutledge. They had three children, similar in ages to Jamieson's grandchildren.

In 1896, at the age of 63, Will Jamieson established the Jamieson French Fire Clay Company with his brother, James. On their eight acres at the end of Summit Avenue, north of the Missouri Pacific tracks, they plowed clay out of the ground with blind mules. They dumped the clay into large tanks half filled with water, and the old mules stirred the tanks so that the silica and iron would settle to the bottom and impurities could be washed off the top. They molded the clean clay into blocks, fired it, pulverized it, bagged the powder, and shipped it in freight cars to glass works in the east. It was the best clay available for making crucibles for glass factories and for lining furnaces.

**M** 707 North Forest Ave.

**William Beasley House** (1871, Italianate)

William Beasley was a steamboat captain on the Mississippi River. He bought this land in 1869, two years after the Town of Fairview subdivision had been created. In 1871 he took a deed of trust from Corra Vail to build the house. Vail, a salesman for the Browning King Clothing Company, lived in St. Louis. Vail's wife, Marion, a Confederate sympathizer, helped many Confederate prisoners escape from prison and was banished from the city of St. Louis.

In 1890 Gilbert Fox and his wife, Annie, purchased the property. Fox was the treasurer of the Goddard-Peck Grocery Company, and Annie started a private school in her home. In 1890, when the frame Tuxedo Park School was built, Annie Fox became the first principal and teacher.

**H** 742 and 746 North Forest Ave.

**John Higdon House and Barn** (1895, Victorian Vernacular)

John H. Higdon was a railroad engineer who commuted from the Lake Junction flag stop at the end of Summit Avenue. He had a small farm on North Forest Avenue. 746 was originally John Higdon's barn.

**H** 750 North Forest Ave.

**William Howard Brown Jr. House**

(1890, Victorian Vernacular)

W. Howard Brown, Jr., son of Dr. William H. Brown, built this Victorian vernacular house in the Zeta Dell Subdivision in 1890, the year the subdivision was created. Howard Brown was a clerk in a brokerage house.

Dr. Brown, the first physician in this area, had purchased 233 acres from John Sarpy in 1845. He cultivated a large orchard with the help of seven slaves. When the Missouri Pacific Railroad cut across his property in 1853, Dr. Brown subdivided his land in hopes of creating a small village next to the railroad. But only two parcels sold. In 1889 Dr. Brown was struck by a train and killed. Howard Brown sold his father's orchard to Lilburn McNair, who created Tuxedo Park, an attractive commuter subdivision.

*After you cross Summit Avenue, stop for a moment and look toward your left. A small wooden shelter, called Lake Junction used to stand beside the tracks at the end of Summit Avenue. It marked the junction where the Creve Coeur Branch of the Missouri Pacific Railroad broke off from the main line and ran north to Creve Coeur Lake. Lake Junction was a flag stop. Trains slowed down as they approached the wooden shelter, and if the engineer saw anyone waiting at the shelter, he stopped. Passengers bought their tickets on the train.*

*Now turn to your right and walk up Summit Avenue toward Marshall Avenue.*

**1012 Summit Ave.**

**George R. Reeves House** (1890, Victorian Vernacular)

- H** George Reeves was the traffic manager for the Chicago Lumber and Coal Company. He commuted to work from Lake Junction? His brother, J. Louis Reeves, a credit clerk for the Samuel Cupples Woodenware Company, lived on Marshall Avenue near Avery School.

*When you reach Marshall Avenue, stop for a moment at the corner and look to your right at the row of brick storefronts.*



#### **H 731 - 755 Marshall Ave.**

##### **Marshall Avenue Business District**

(1890-1927, Commercial Vernacular)

The new houses in the Tuxedo Park Subdivision created a market for stores, but deed restrictions in Tuxedo Park prohibited saloons and stores. This small row of commercial buildings stands across the street in the Zeta Dell Subdivision, which had no deed restrictions. Beginning in 1890 the stores that went up along Marshall Avenue included a confectionery, two grocery stores, a drug store, a dry goods store, a barbershop and later a tavern and a hardware store.

In 1897 the Suburban Street Railway Company constructed the Manchester Streetcar Line down the middle of Summit Avenue. It crossed the Edgebrook Bridge, the longest streetcar viaduct in the world and ran to Maplewood and St. Louis. In the evenings, at the corner of Marshall and Summit avenues, boys sold newspapers to commuters coming home from work.

*Continue on Summit Avenue, across Marshall Avenue to a series of brick American Foursquare homes on your left.*

#### **H 720, 716, 708, 704, 700 Summit Ave.**

##### **Streetcar Row, the Catherine Gregory Houses**

(1905, 1909, American Foursquare)

Henry E. Gregory, a painter, owned a paint-and-paper-hanging shop in Maplewood. He and his wife, Catherine, built the five American Foursquare houses in this block of Summit Avenue as real estate investments, two in 1905 and three in 1909. They lived at 716 Summit Ave. with their five sons who commuted into Maplewood on the streetcar and worked with their father. Theodore Plens, a salesman, built the Queen Anne cottage at 712 Summit Ave. for his wife, Virginia, in 1905.

*To reach the next site, walk on the west side of Summit Avenue. The street splits; stay to the right, walking two blocks on the shoulder to Fairview Avenue where you must jog to the right to a small lane running parallel to Summit Avenue. Locally known as Theater Lane, this street is home to today's Webster Groves Theater Guild, a vibrant community performance group.*

#### **M 517 Theater Lane**

##### **Suburban School of Music (1909, Victorian Vernacular)**

In 1909 Kate Mulroy's father, a local mailman, built this vernacular building as a business venture for his daughter. Students rode the streetcar out from the city for piano lessons, singing lessons and dancing lessons at Kate Mulroy's Suburban School of Music. She also operated a private nursery school there. Her father added the second story auditorium in 1910. The Webster Groves Baptist Church met here from 1913 until its church on Summit Avenue was completed in 1914. The Suburban School of Music was successful until it closed in 1921.

In 1951 the Webster Groves Theater Guild purchased the building. The Theater Guild began producing plays at the Monday Club in 1927 and later produced plays at Webster Groves High School. For many years the Webster Groves Theater Guild awarded an annual prize for the best new one-act play. One of the winners was Washington University student Tom Williams, later known as Tennessee Williams.

*Next door to the Theater Guild, set back, is the Morning Glory Cabin.*

#### **H 515 Theater Lane**

##### **Morning Glory Cabin (1904, Log Cabin)**

In 1905 Justin Joy moved the Morning Glory Cabin from the 1904 World's Fair to this spot beside the Manchester Streetcar Line. He used the Morning Glory Cabin as his real estate office as he sold lots and contracted to build houses in the subdivisions of Crown Point, Fairview and Tuxedo Park. By the 1920s, Justin's son, Wilford, had modernized the cabin and lived in it. Wilford was also a real estate man. He built stucco houses all over Webster Groves and he always wore a tuxedo when he displayed his new houses on Sunday afternoons.

*Continue down Theater Lane to Newport Avenue, turning right on Newport. As you walk up the hill, you'll pass tidy bungalows lining both sides of the street. You are returning to Bompert Avenue, named after Louis Bompert. Bompert Avenue led to his home in Richmond Heights to the north. Turn right at Bompert Avenue and you'll see the Robert E. McMath House.*

#### **M 502 Bompert Ave.**

##### **Robert E. McMath House (1906, Shingle Style Queen Anne)**

Robert Emmet McMath was a civil engineer from New York. He served as the Deputy County Surveyor of St. Louis during the Civil War. He then worked for U.S. Rivers and Harbors from 1866 to 1880, the Mississippi River Commission from 1880 to 1883, the St. Louis Sewer Commission from 1883 to 1891 and as the president of the St. Louis Board of Public Improvements from 1893 to 1901. He built this Shingle Style Queen Anne house for his wife, Francis, in 1906 when he was president of the R. E. McMath Surveying Company. He built the Victorian Vernacular home at 512 Bompert Ave. for his mother.

*Continue north on Bompert Avenue to look at one of the most legendary homes of Tuxedo Park, nicknamed "The Spider House."*

511 Bompert Ave.

**Benjamin F. Webster House** (1898, *Queen Anne*)

Benjamin Franklin Webster came to St. Louis as a young lawyer sometime before the Civil War. He married Mary Bragg in 1868, and in 1870 they moved to Fairview on the Pacific Railroad line. Fairview was the address given for anyone who lived near the Fairview Station. Webster was a partner in the Sterling and Webster Land Title Office, with complete chains of title to all the land in St. Louis City and County.

Around 1877 Webster purchased a large brick home on Lockwood Avenue and in 1897 he sold it to the Sisters of Loretto for the Loretto Seminary. Webster purchased six acres at the corner of Bompert and Newport and built this house for \$7,000. The central window on the second story earned the grand home the name "The Spider House."

In 1907 Elwood V. Matlack purchased the property for his wife and only son. As an electrical engineer and president of the Laclede Power Company, Matlack designed many electrical plants. The Matlacks laid out formal gardens with a pool and fountain in the back, and one Christmas they put a live pony under the Christmas tree for their son.

In 1917 Matlack became involved in a scandal when he hired a Chicago woman to be his son's tutor. The woman claimed to have heard voices telling her that Matlack was her soul mate. The woman and her husband attempted to steal Matlack's money and were arrested. Mrs. Matlack sued for divorce and went home to her parents. Matlack declared bankruptcy and lost the house.

In the early 1990s, the home's lot was subdivided and new homes were built on both sides and behind the original house. The subdivision led to a Webster Groves law prohibiting "flag lots," lots situated behind an existing home and accessed by a driveway running through or between other properties. The subdivision of "The Spider House" estate led a new generation of citizens to take a more active interest in Webster Groves' architectural and historical heritage.

*Continue north on Bompert Avenue and return to the parking lot of the First United Methodist Church of Webster Groves.*



## 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)

