

Alene Herrera and 7623 Maryland Avenue

Alene Herrera lived for years at 7623 Maryland. Alene's family, the Janis's, built the house, which was described as an "Italian farmhouse" style. They owned the lot at 7623 Maryland and the lot to the east, which was empty. The house is gone, and there are new houses on both lots.

Alene's mother was an artist and sculptor of note. Alene went to the southwest for health, and met and married Alfredo Herrera. They lived in the family house. Alene continued living there after Freddie died, eventually selling some years ago.

Here are her remembrances of the neighborhood.

The Wetzels lived on the west side of Hanley between Forsyth and Maryland, in a large white frame house. Another family lived next to them (the Parks?), and people often referred to them together. The Hanlons lived across the street, on the east side of Hanley, in a large stone house. Alene and her friend Billie Gephart (7621 Maryland) used to sell lemonade in front of the house.

The Janis family built first, then the Eggers built to the east. The Eggers had two children, Karl, a red-headed boy, and a baby. Mrs. Eggers had a hard time with the two kids. Then the Gepharts moved in there. The Pattons lived to the west. The Wallenbrachs built at 7627 Maryland. The white house west of 7627 Maryland was already there when the Janis family built. It is still there, although not white. The corner house was already there also. A German family, the Allemanges, lived there. There were cow pastures across the street.

The Stouts lived at 7606 Maryland. Mr. Stout was a professor at Washington U. Mr. J. Coates lived at 7611 Maryland. He had a drug store on the SE corner of Central and Forsyth. His wife was an invalid. There was a pond at 7605 Maryland. Alene used to catch tadpoles in the pond. 7535 and 7539 Maryland were already built in 1921, when the Janis' built. Clayton High School was built in the late 1920's or early 1930's. Gov. Caulfield made the speech at the ceremony dedicating the school, which was just to the east of the present day Bracken Building. The high school had very fancy colored tiles along the eaves - a children motif. A few frame houses were moved down the street, to make room for the school. They were frame houses, but were "coated" with brick facing. The house at 7616 Maryland is one of these houses. There was a little school around Jackson and Forsyth, old-fashioned, with a bell tower.

Also by the same corner, there were two very old houses, built of material from the World's Fair, with white columns. They were torn down around 1930. Jackson used to extend a little to the south of Forsyth. Then there was the Pevely Dairy Fountain along the south side of Forsyth, east of Jackson. The fountain was a floral basket, with changing colored lights.

The Bopp family took over the little church at Hanley and Forsyth. In 1961 they moved to Kirkwood. The Maryland School was built after 1921. The Santes lived at 7540 Maryland. They had a travel business. Their nephew went to Burroughs with Alene.

The Hemingways lived in a large white house on the northwest corner of Maryland and Hanley. They owned all the land from Hanley to Linden. They had a hard-working yardman, a very nice hunchback. They had one daughter, who went to Mary Institute. Chancellor Throop, of Washington U., lived in the house to the north. Across Maryland, there were two large homes. Percy Davis and his brother, bachelors, lived in one. Percy worked at the Art Museum. The Fentriss' lived across Linden, close to Maryland. The Palmer family lived on Hanley. Dr. Sudeth lived north of Maryland.

Alene said that Barbara Yore gave her a Christmas present, a scarf that Miss Bird had knitted. Freddie burned the wrapping paper, but then Miss Yore mentioned the map that had been included with the scarf. It must have been burned with the wrapping paper, and Alene never asked what it was of.

- February 2010 Telephone Interview submitted by Rosemary Hardy