

David Proctor: Developer, Attorney, Mercier Street Resident

Part 2 of this series introduced David M. Proctor, who created the third subdivision in the WPHA area, Waldo Ridge. Proctor was a native Missourian, educated at William Jewell College and Columbia University in New York, where he received a law degree. He returned to Kansas City but soon found that being an attorney was not enough. His business acumen led him into real estate, a rapidly growing field in 1907. By 1910, Proctor had organized and become president of the Westmoreland Land and Investment Co. His numerous land purchases and sales from 1907 to 1920 reveal that he was a developer first and an attorney second.

Proctor's goal was to create an attractive, high-quality residential neighborhood of single-family dwellings, with no apartments or duplexes. The four subdivisions he established — Waldo Ridge, Westmoreland, Westmoreland Place and Westmoreland Extension — comprise nearly 40% of the WPHA area. The Ward Parkway Homes Association today is a reflection of the careful planning and hard work of David Proctor, more than any other developer.

In 1900, the land between State Line Road and the east lane of Ward Parkway, and from 75th Street north to Gregory Boulevard, was an 80-acre farm owned by Constance Bartholomees. In 1901, Mrs. Bartholomees sold the land to Charles C. Orthwein for \$16,000. Orthwein, a local investor who lived in the Coates House Hotel, sold the south half of the property (40 acres) 15 months later in 1902 to Elizabeth Jackson for \$20,000. Actually this was part of a land swap, as the adjacent page in the Jackson County deed book shows Orthwein purchasing parts of two lots in an existing Kansas City subdivision from Mrs. Jackson for \$11,500 on the same date. (The map in Part 2 of this series shows the name as "Ortwein." It was drawn from the 1907 city atlas which also misspelled the name).

Mrs. Jackson lived in the farmhouse, near what is now 7410 Wyoming St., until 1907, when she sold the 40 acres to David Proctor for \$42,500. In November 1909, from the south half (74th Street to 75th Street), Proctor created the fourth subdivision in the WPHA area, called Westmoreland. The farmhouse was later moved to the southeast corner of 75th Street and Pennsylvania St.

In 1911 Proctor and his wife Dayse built their own home at 7404 Mercier St., a white, two-and-a-half-story neo-Georgian-style house. They owned the lots to the north (7400 Mercier St.) and south (7412 Mercier St.) for many years, keeping them vacant to serve as extended side yards, and lived there until Dayse's death in 1971 (Proctor died in 1955). The present owners, Kevin and Laura O'Rourke, have extensively repaired and restored the home, and contributed much of the biographical information on David Proctor in this article.