WPHA

WARD PARKWAY HOMES ASSOCIATION

The History of our Neighborhood

Welcome to Ward Parkway Homes! This booklet contains a group of articles explaining some of the history of the Ward Parkway Homes area, the city as a whole, and a few of the important movers and shakers of those early years, who had a major impact on the development of this area. We hope you enjoy reading this history and become an active participant in the Ward Parkway Homes Association, to help us build something even better for the future.

The Beginnings of our Neighborhood

In October 1843, Richard Wornall, his wife Judith, and their two sons George Thomas and John Bristow bought a 500-acre farm from John Calvin McCoy, the "father of Kansas City." The land, for which Wornall paid $5 per acre, stretched between present-day 59th and 67th streets, State Line Road and Main Street. Their son, John, would inherit the land and build what is now the John Wornall House Museum.

By 1900, the Wornall heirs had also acquired farmland from 69th to 75th Streets between Summit and Wornall Road. As real estate men looked further south along the Ward Parkway corridor for residential expansion, the Wornall heirs knew that their family farm was too valuable to remain farmland much longer.

Another large landowner in the Ward Parkway corridor in 1900 was the Armour family, who owned much of the meatpacking industry in Kansas City. Their large holding was adjacent to the Wornall farmland, and extended south to Gregory and west to the state line.

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*, a local investor living in the Coates House Hotel, for $16,000. Fifteen months later, in 1902, Orthwein sold the south half (40 acres) to Elizabeth Jackson for $20,000. Actually this was part of a land swap, as the previous 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. She lived in the farmhouse, near what is now 7410 Wyoming St., until 1907, when she sold the 40 acres to David M Proctor for $42,500.

**(The page 3 map shows the name as "Ortwein." The map is drawn from the 1907 Kansas City Atlas which also misspells the name).*

Famed Kansas City developer, J.C. Nichols, had begun to develop the area that would become the Country Club District in 1906. By 1907, he had expended modestly into a few subdivisions that would eventually stretch from the Kansas City Country Club (now Loose Park) west to Mission Hills, KS. In 1907, he began acquiring land in Bush Creek Valley that would become the Country Club Plaza.

In 1907, the Kansas City limits extended only as far south as Brush Creek. The area south of Brush Creek and west of Wornall was rural Jackson County and was almost entirely farmland.

By 1907, Annie H. Armour had acquired from the Wornalls all of their land from 69th to Gregory, plus a small strip of land south of Gregory to approximately 71st Terrace, from Summit to Wornall Rd.

In June 1907, the first subdivision in what would become the WPHA was created. Called, "**Norwaldo**," it stretched from Summit Street east to Wornall Road and from about 71st Terrace south to 72nd Terrace. It was established by the Inland Security Co. on land bought from Melville and William Aye who had bought it from the Wornall family in 1904.

Norwaldo did not include what are now the northern five lots in the 7100 blocks from Wornall to Summit, which still belonged to the Armour family, nor the southern four lots in the 7200 blocks of the same streets, which were owned by the Patten family.

Charles and Nannie Patten had purchased land south of the Aye family land from the Wornalls in 1907. In October 1907, the Pattens followed suit and created the second subdivision in the WPHA area called "**Waldo Heights**." Their land extended from the

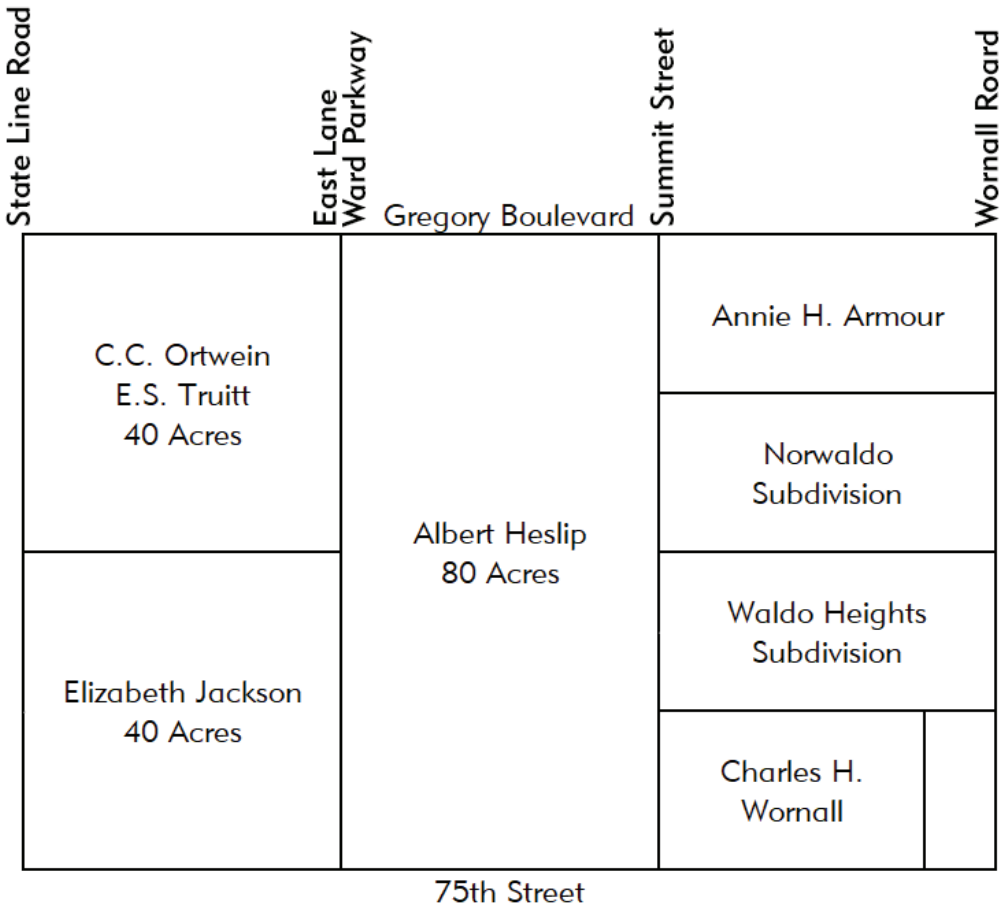
Norwaldo subdivision south to almost 74th Street. Interestingly, the homes between Summit and Wornall which face 74th Street, do so because the lots were not part of **Waldo Heights** but are part of a later subdivision.

Both **Norwaldo** and **Waldo Heights** were named after a prominent early landowner who had once owned more than 2400 acres between Holmes Street and State Line Road, Gregory Boulevard and 91st Street, **Dr. David Waldo**.

David Proctor:
Developer, Attorney, Mercier Street Resident

David M. 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. Ambitious and young, Proctor, saw that Kansas City was poised to grow, especially south of Brush Creek. The farms in that area would be ideal for new residential developments. And land prices were a bargain.

The following map shows the landowners in the WPHA in 1907 when Proctor began acquiring land. Proctor's first purchase was the 40-acre farm owned by Elizabeth Jackson.



In 1909 Kansas City more than doubled its geographical size by annexing a large area of land from Brush Creek south to 77th Street and from State Line east nearly to the Blue River.

This major step in the city's growth took in all of what is now the Ward Parkway Homes Association area. The farms then in the WPHA area were soon worth more as potential development property than as farmland.

Charles H. Wornall, son of John Wornall, owned a tract of land from just north of 74th Street south to 75th Street. In 1909, Charles Wornall sold land in five separate transactions to David Proctor (twice), William Boorman, Clay Duincan, and W. W. Whitehill. Proctor, Boorman, and Duncan formed the third subdivision in the WPHA areä, "**Waldo Ridge**," in October 1909. Jackson County land records show at least nine more transactions by Charles Wornall, in addition to the five already mentioned. The land was sold and resold to others.

Waldo Ridge includes all but three of the homes which face 74th Street between Summit and Washington, and eight of the homes in the 7400 block of Pennsylvania. Other developers were also interested in the Wornall land, and today it includes parts of five separate subdivisions between Summit and Washington.

David M. Proctor

In November 1909, from the south half of the land he had purchased from Elizabeth Jackson (74th Street to 75th Street), Proctor created the fourth subdivision in the WPHA area, called "**Westmoreland**." The farmhouse both Jackson and Proctor had lived in was later moved to the southeast corner of 75th and Pennsylvania Streets.

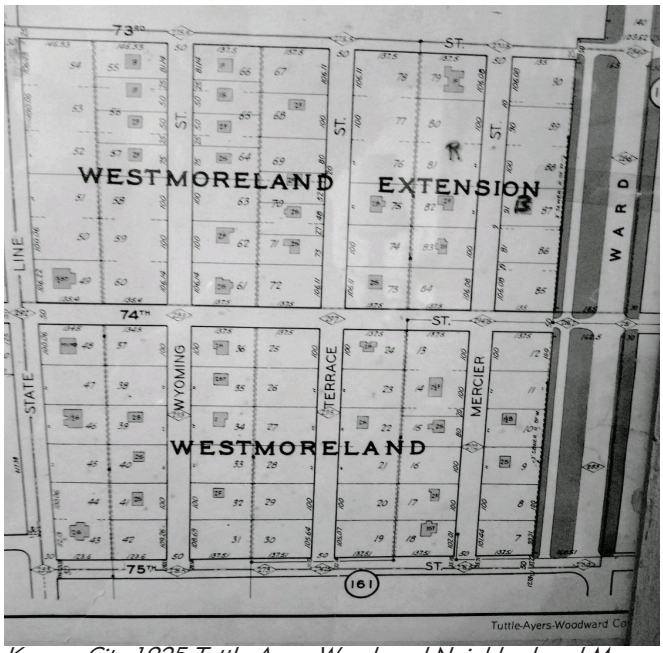
By 1910, Proctor had organized and become president of the Westmoreland Land and Investment Co. His goal was to create an attractive, high-quality residential neighborhood of single family dwellings, with no apartments or duplexes.

In November 1910, the Westmoreland Land & Investment Co. paid $47,500 for three-fourths of the south half of the Heslip Farm, 73rd Street to 75th Street. Albert Heslip, a Jackson County marshal, and his wife Emma had owned their 80-acre farm since before the turn of the 20th Century. Their gently rolling land originally extended from Gregory Boulevard to 75th Street and from Ward Parkway to Summit Street.

The Heslips retained one-fourth of the south half of their farm, their homestead from 74th Street to 75th Street between Ward Parkway to Belleview Avenue. The 1908 city directory lists their residence at 75th Street and East Prospect Place (now called Jarboe Street). Earlier maps also show the farmhouse approximately in the

7400 block of Jarboe Street. The Heslips further agreed, for an additional $100, to a restrictive covenant with Proctor, in which they would not subdivide or sell off their homestead tract unless it conformed to the street layout and restrictions Proctor had already established for his adjacent Westmoreland subdivision.

A month later, in December 1910, Proctor used this newly acquired land, shaped like an inverted "L", to create the fifth subdivision in the WPHA area, called "**Westmoreland Place**," which includes, at its southern corner, the WPHA marker island.



Kansas City 1925 Tuttle-Ayers-Woodward Neighborhood Map

Proctor also continued his systematic redevelopment west of Ward Parkway, using the remainder of the farmland he had purchased from Elizabeth Jackson in 1907. In February 1911, he created the sixth subdivision in the WPHA area, called "**Westmoreland Extension**," which runs from 73rd Street south to 74th Street and from State Line Road east to Holly Street, now the east lane of Ward Parkway.

In 1911 Proctor and his wife Dayse built their own home at 7404 Mercier St., a white, two-and-a-half-story neo-Georgain-style house. For many years, they owned the lots to the north (7400 Mercier St.) and south (7412 Mercier St.), keeping them vacant to serve as extended side yards. Proctor died in 1955, but Dayse lived there until her death in 1971.

David Proctor's home in undated photo on left and as it appears in 2019

The four subdivisions David M. Proctor established — **Waldo Ridge**, **Westmoreland**, **Westmoreland Place**, and **Westmoreland Extension** — comprise nearly 40% of the Ward Parkway Homes Association area. WPHA today is more a reflection of his careful planning and hard work than any other developer. His numerous land purchases and sales from 1907 to 1920 reveal that he was a developer first and an attorney second.

Albert Heslip, who had sold the land to Proctor that became **Westmoreland Place,** saw the increasing value of his own remaining farmland (from 74th Street to 75th Street between Ward Parkway and Belleview Avenue) as residential real estate. He sold off a 167-by-100 foot lot facing Ward Parkway to Minnie A. Washer in 1912.

In March, 1913, Heslip created the seventh subdivision in the WPHA area, "**Westmoreland Heights**." From the plat document, it would appear that his farmhouse sat on Lot No. 1. That lot is now the last three homes on the west side of the 7400 block of Jarboe. The lot he sold off previously to Minnie A. Washer, which is now 7419 Ward Parkway, is now the oldest home in the Westmoreland Heights subdivision.

Others also saw the increasing land values in the area. The remaining Wornall family land near 75th and Wornall was soon acquired by several different people in a complicated series of transactions. These subdivisions were small because the original landowner, Charles H. Wornall, realized the development potential of his farmland and sold it off in bits and pieces for a considerable profit.

In 1917, James Pickett, the executor of the estate of W. W. Whitehill, who had purchased land from Wornall in 1909, quickly subdivided the Whitehill land, creating the eighth subdivision, "**Westmoreland Terrace**," which consists of the west side of the 7400 block of Jefferson Street.

A large group of business owners created the ninth subdivision, called "**Waldo Center**", in January 1920. It extends from 74th Street to 75th Street and from Washington Street to Wornall Road. It was the first subdivision not restricted to residential use.

In July 1923, James and Harriet Stanwood created "**Stanwood Place**", the tenth subdivision in the WPHA area, also for commercial use. It consists of the commercial property facing 75th Street between Pennsylvania Street and Washington Street, including the present-day parking lot behind the buildings.

In the early 1920s, Annie H. Armour sold the land she had purchased from Wornall (from 69th Street to Gregory Blvd, plus a small strip south of Gregory to approximately 71st Terrace, from Summit east to Wornall Rd.) to the J.C. Nichols' Co. Together with the Rutledge Building Co., Nichols had also acquired the entire 7100 block of Washington and the East side of the 7100 block of Pennsylvania in **Norwaldo**. They combined these lots with the Armour land and in October 1923, created "**Armour Lawn**", the eleventh subdivision in the WPHA area. **Armour Lawn** was platted in two parts. The October 1923 portion extended from Gregory to 72nd Street and from Wornall to Pennsylvania.

In November 1923, a group of landowners, led by J.G. and Walter Warren combined their properties and created "**Warren Addition**", the twelfth subdivision in the WPHA area. It consists of the eight homes on 7400 block of Jefferson on the east side.

In December 1925, the second part of **Armour Lawn** was platted. It includes the north halves of the 7100 blocks of Summit (east side) and Jefferson (both sides).

The Most for the Least

N.W. Dible: the Napolean of affordability

By Greg Robinson
The Kansas City Star December 29, 1991

The year is 1927. You're a young couple with two children and a middle class income. If living in some American cities, your modest means would force your family to occupy a tiny, crowded flat on a busy, urban street. Instead, your family is proud owner of a gracefully proportioned home, exquisitely designed with timbered stucco, a steeply pitched roof and a cheerful interior atmosphere, resting on a tree-lined boulevard. You live in Kansas City. And like a growing number of area residents, you're living the "American Dream" in an N.W. Dible home.

Study the history of residential life in Kansas City, and familiar names like J.C. Nichols come to mind. And chief among these famous pioneers of the city's past is Napolean "N.W." Dible, one of the nation's top builders of his day, credited with bringing affordable, quality-built homes to the southern part of Kansas City.

Napolean "N.W." Dible

"He'd take the luxury elements of architecture and put them on a modest home so that average people could feel good about where they lived," explained his grandson William Hickok, current general partner of the Hickok-Dible Companies. "The whole package was one of elegance and stability."

Consider the year 1927, for example. If you were a home buyer at that time, Dible would have been happy to take you on a tour of his latest subdivision, called **Ward Park Addition**. There, you'd find a complete street of homes, each with its own unique look and costing under $10,000.

Dible promised to offer "The Most For The Least." As an advertising brochure from 1927 pointed out, each house was "finished throughout in mahogany, ivory, and white enamel. All interior woodwork (is) hand-polished (with) elegant lighting fixtures. Not less than 50 feet of ground with each home; garage and driveway, trees and shrubbery go with each. All street improvements in and paid for."

In a career that spanned 55 years—from 1905 until his death in 1960 — Dible built more that 5,000 homes in 37 local subdivisions. What made him unique among builders at that time was his effective ability to construct sturdy, elegant and well-designed homes that were affordable to average home buyers.

To do this, Dible was one of the first builders in the country to employ bulk purchasing of materials and assembly-line production techniques in order to mass produce homes that he could then sell at a very low profit margin.

Instead of contracting architects, carpenters, masons, and other needed professionals, Dible had a personal staff of more that 150 skilled workmen who could complete a project from the ground up. He bought vacant land, subdivided it, installed sewers, sidewalks, driveways and landscaping. His wholesale buying enabled Dible to sell a home for a price less than you could build for yourself.

"He wasn't in business to make money, he was in business to make fine houses, " Hickok said. "He had thousands of cost-cutting schemes, but it didn't hamper the quality of the homes he built.".

Dible was an enlightened business economist, selling houses in volume for small profits, a concept uncommon in the early part of the century, Hickok said, pointing out the "he made less than a five percent profit on each house."

Aside from frugal building techniques, Dible incorporated architectural designs and interior elements that were new to the landscape of Kansas City. He was admired by fellow builders for his ability to turn a single floor plan into a hundred different houses.

As Dible once wrote in an advertisement for one of his subdivisions, "I want you to look up and down our streets, and see the style of our architecture — every house is different, no two alike. It is this diversity that gives our houses a distinctiveness that you will find nowhere else."

Though modestly priced, the front of each home had an elaborately designed exterior fashioned after the sophisticated mansions in the Country Club and Sunset Hill districts, making them appear as "mini-mansions," Hickok said. Some of Dible's earliest developments were a 500-home subdivision called Oak Park (near 40th Street and Prospect) and a 16-home subdivision in Brookside (built in the early 1920s).

"Dible was one of the first area builders to successfully create 'curb appeal,' a visually-appealing charm that each home had when viewed from the street," said Eugene Young, a local architect who has spent years studying Kansas City's building history and some of the architectural styles used by Dible. "He's responsible for a lot of houses that I have a lot of admiration for."

Inside his homes, Dible bucked tradition as well, incorporating spacious rooms, detailed woodwork, and pastel colors that replaced the previous use of dismal paints in homes built for this market niche. Other innovations— such as modern kitchens and bathrooms, larger furnaces, and air conditioning — were first seen in Kansas City in Dible homes.

"He wasn't really ahead of his time — he was right on the mark," Hickok said. "He always seemed to know exactly what the public was ready for. His attention to detail in designing comfortable kitchens and other elements reflected a marketing strategy that was based on the household needs of women. Comfort was very important to Dible."

During the 1920s, Dible introduced Kansas City to several architectural styles, including English Tudor, Southern Colonial, Midwestern, Dutch Colonial, and Prairie School, along with his highly-popular California bungalow design, influenced by homes Dible had seen while visiting the West Coast.

"Many of Dible's homes during this period were characterized by the use of stone and brick mixed together on the front of each house, with stucco on the remaining three sides, "Young explained. "When Colonial-English revival became popular in other parts of the country, Dible introduced his 'cottage motifs,' a 'story-book' look featuring a two-story design with fairly steep roofs, interesting masonry, and complicated facades."

A typical Dible Tudor House in WPHA

Though exteriors differed dramatically — even on the same block — Dible's interior layout followed a uniformed, yet convenient, floor plan, according to Anne Hickok, Dible's great-granddaughter.

Based on personal research of her great-grandfather's career, Anne Hickok described the typical Dible home of the '20s and '30s: A central hallway would be flanked by a living room on the left, a dining room on the right , and a kitchen and bedroom at the back.

These houses were narrow and long, with quaint breakfast nooks, big windows and at least one large open or screened porch.

Upstairs, you'd find two more bedrooms, along with a tiled bathroom that was larger than most found in homes of this era.

"These dwellings were a great native architectural style for residential living," Young said. "They were easy to live in and provided good value, a bit like the 'Model A of housing."'

As Dible's reputation grew, so did demand for his homes. While other builders suffered during the Depression, his company's sales soared. This, coupled with aggressive advertising and creative program incentives (like second mortgages), made Dible one of the nation's top builders. In fact, he sold more dwellings than any builder in the country in 1934.

After World War II, Dible embarked on his largest and most notable projects: a 1,000home addition (from Gregory Boulevard to 74th Street, and from Jefferson to State Line), and the 1,500-home Rockhill Gardens and Rockhill Manor (Gregory south to 81st Street and Oak Street east to Troost). With the post-war Dible homes, backyard patios replaced sweeping front porches; attached garages became standard.

"These later homes were bigger than the one's Dible built before the war," Young said. "The design was cleaner and simpler, with less mixture of stone on the facades and less of the story book or doll house look."

The last project he completed was Lea Manor at 97th Street and State Line. Until two months before his death on January 1960, Dible was still spending Sunday afternoons sitting in his new homes for sale, extolling the virtues of a Dible house.

"Kansas City is a better place thanks to the homes built by N.W. Dible," Young said.

A History of Hale H. Cook School

By Hester Turner

The School was named for Hale H. Cook who was born in Michigan in 1857. He came to Kansas City in 1890 where he was a member of the Board of Education from 1905 until his resignation in 1917. At that time, he was president, having served as vice-president and on every committee through which the Board of Education administers much of its detailed work.

Hale H. Cook

The Hale H. Cook School occupies the block bounded by 73rd Street and 74h Street, Jefferson Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Its beginning dates back to the year 1912. The site on which the school stands was purchased in August of that year. In October, the first double annex was completed, and school was begun immediately with an enrollment of about five children.

The majority of these children came from what was known as the Waldo School which up to that time had been conducted in a small church not far from the present school site. The first two teachers were Miss Gertrude Hamilton, who taught the first, second and third grades and Miss Elizabeth Wark who had charge of the upper grades and also served as principal. By 1916, the Board of Education was obliged to provide another building and third teacher. In 1917, it became necessary to add a fourth teacher.

By the year 1923, more space was needed, and excavation was started on the quarter-million-dollar building by contactors G. Ims Brothers. It was constructed of brick and cut stone, and it contained ten classrooms, an auditorium that would seat six hundred people, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, a domestic science room, and a manual training room. The two entrances on 73rd Street and Pennsylvania Avenue were used by the boys and girls separately. The appearance of Hale Cook really hasn't changed. The exterior of the building has maintained the classic design of the original 1923 architects.

Several classrooms were added to the school in the 1930's. In the early 1950's, the enrollment grew to more than seven hundred pupils, and two mobile rooms were needed. By the 1970's, the enrollment had dropped to around three hundred pupils.

From 1976 until 1985, the school was run under traditional elementary standards. In 1986, Cook became a science/math investigative learning magnet school along with Hartman and Marlborough. Together they made up the District's Southwest Cluster Elementary Schools.

Hale Cook served the district for decades until it was closed in 2009 as part of an enrollment-decline-driven consolidation. In 2009 and 2010 combined the District closed 29 buildings. Most of those were either slated for sale or demolition. The Distric saved a handful of schools for potential future use. Hale Cook School had last served as a Montessori Preschool.

Not long after Hale Cook shut its doors, young families in the neighborhood began pushing for it to be reopened. Then-Superintendent John Covington told parents an enrollment of three hundred students would be necessary for the District to consider reopening the School.

It was the work of then-parents such as Paul Bartel, a real estate agent, that made Hale Cook happen. Bartel was a founding board member of the Friends of Hale Cook Elementary, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit established to build support for the School.

Along with initiating an enrollment campaign and informational meetings, the leaders served as a "communications conduit" between parents and the district. Surveys and market research contributed to a glossy, 74-page feasibility study.

They failed to hit that mark, but Covington's successor, Steve Green, agreed to start the school at Hartman while the district renovated Hale Cook. Shannon Jaax, head of the district's repurposing program, said Hale Cook was unique in that it hadn't been vandalized and had been updated, unlike most other closed schools. It needed only minor repairs before reopening. It did so with slightly more than fifty students.

The boundaries for Hale Cook stretch south from Brush Creek to around 77th Street and from State Line Road east to around Troost Avenue.

Hale Cook Elementary as it appears in 2019

In Gratitude

This booklet printed courtesy of the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance.

We are grateful to Phil Starcke, WPHA historian, Greg Robinson and the Kansas City Star, Hester Turner, and others for writing the articles, and to Shannon Ericson who spent many hours typing the original booklet from hard copies in the WPHA archives.

Join Ward Parkway Homes Association

Situated in Kansas City, Mo., between Gregory Boulevard (north), Wornall Road (east), 75th Street (south), and State Line Road (west), the Ward Parkway neighborhood is a collection of homes dating as far back as the late 1800s. You'll find Four Squares, Dutch Colonials, Dible Tudors, Arts and Crafts Bungalows and Shirtwaists — each as unique and charming as the tree-lined streets on which they stand.

The Ward Parkway Homes Association takes safety seriously. We invest in a private security patrol service through the Kansas City Police Department, which helps ensure that our neighborhood has one of the lowest crime rates in the metro. The patrol service is primarily responsible for deterring and responding to property crimes such as theft, burglary, robbery and vandalism.

We partner with the adjacent Greenway Fields, Stratford Gardens, and Romanelli West homes associations to provide patrol by KCMO police officers between the four neighborhoods. The four-hour patrol shifts are scheduled at various times of day and days of the week. Officers are in marked vehicles.

This valuable service is paid for by WPHA members who elect to support it for $60 per year (in addition to the regular membership dues). It benefits the entire neighborhood, and we encourage all members to help pitch in.

To find our more about membership, including security patrol, please visit our website at: https://wardparkwayhomes.com/